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VOL. XL.

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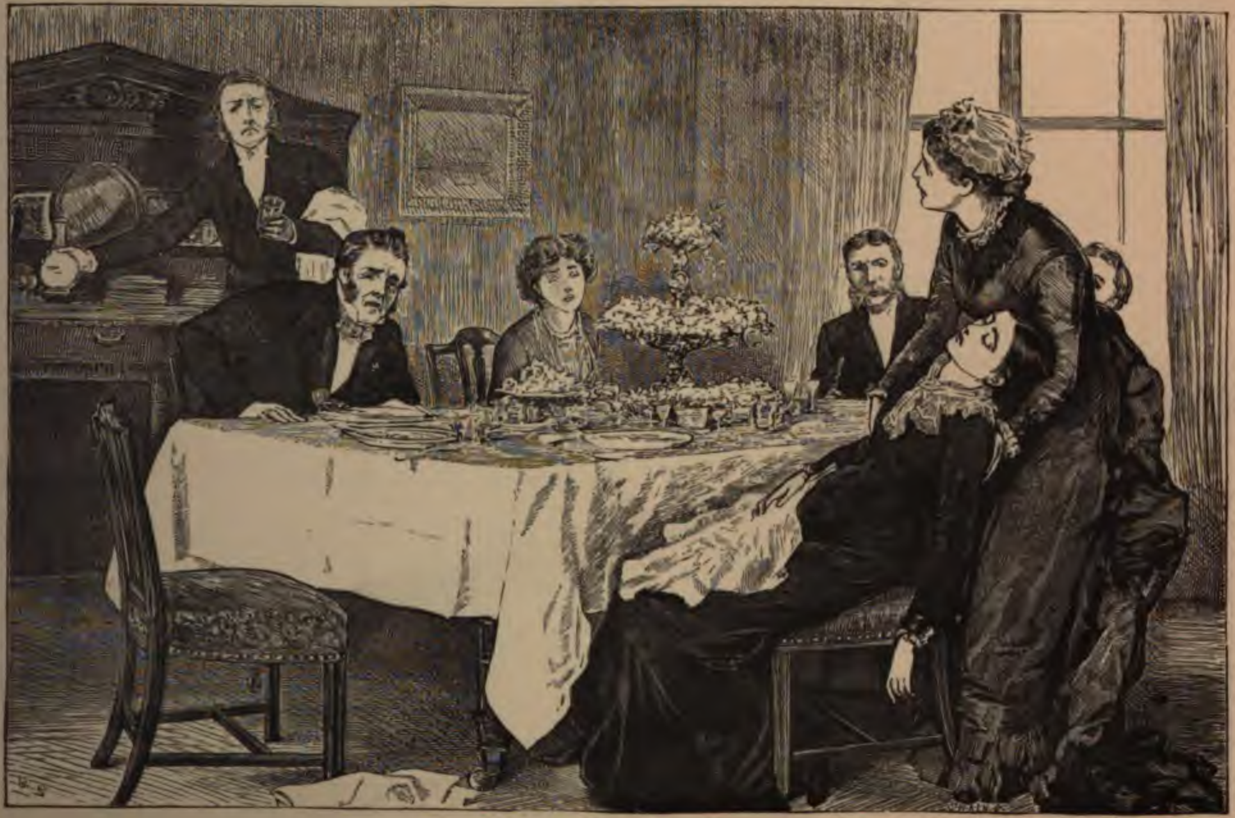


"BLESS ME! LASSIE!"

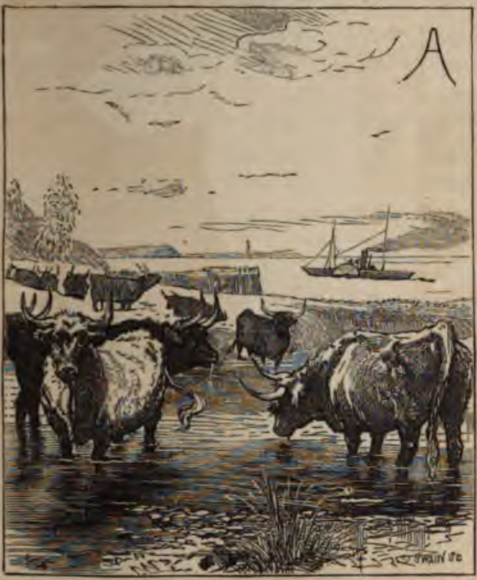
THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY, 1879.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER I.

ON THE QUAY.



A MURMUR runs through the crowd; the various idlers grow alert; all eyes are suddenly turned to the south. And there, far away, over the green headland, a small tuft of brown smoke appears, rising into the golden glow of the afternoon, and we know that by and by we shall see the great steamer with her scarlet funnels come sailing round the point. The Laird of Denny-mains assumes an air of still further importance; he pulls his frock-coat tight at the waist; he adjusts his black satin necktie; his tall, white, stiff collar seems more rigid and white than ever. He has heard of the wonderful stranger; and he knows that now she is drawing near.

Heard of her? He has heard of nothing else since ever he came to us in these northern wilds. For the mistress of this household—with all her domineering ways and her fits of majestic temper—has a love for her intimate girl-friends far passing the love of men; especially when the young ladies are obedient, and gentle, and ready to pay to her matronly dignity the compliment of a respectful awe. And this particular friend who is now coming to us: what has not the Laird heard about her during these past few days?—of her high courage, her resolute unselfishness, her splendid cheerfulness? "A singing-bird in the house," that was one of the phrases used, "in wet weather or fine." And then the enthusiastic friend muddled her metaphors somehow, and gave the puzzled Laird to understand that the presence of this young lady in a house was like having sweet-brier about the rooms. No wonder he put on his highest and stiffest collar before he marched grandly down with us to the quay.

"And does she not deserve a long holiday, sir?" says the Laird's hostess to him, as together they watch for the steamer coming round the point. "Just fancy! Two months' attendance on that old woman, who was her mother's nurse. Two months in a sick-room, without a soul to break the monotony of it. And the girl living in a strange town all by herself!"

"Ay; and in such a town as Edinburgh," remarks the Laird, with great compassion. His own property lies just outside Glasgow.

"Dear me," says he, "what must a young English leddy have thought of our Scotch way of speech when she heard they poor Edinburgh bodies and their yaumering sing-song? Not that I quarrel with any people for having an accent in their way of speaking; they have that in all parts of England as well as in Scotland—in Yorkshire, and Somersetshire, and what not; and even in London itself there is a way of speech that is quite recognisable to a stranger. But I have often thought that there was less trace of accent about Glesca and the west of Scotland than in any other part; in fact, ah have often been taken for an Englishman maself."

"Indeed!" says this gentle creature standing by him; and her upturned eyes are full of an innocent belief. You would swear she was meditating on summoning instantly her boys from Epsom College that they might acquire a pure accent—or get rid of all accent—on the banks of the Clyde.

"Yes," says the Laird, with a decision almost amounting to enthusiasm, "it is a grand inheritance that we in the south of Scotland are preserving for you English people; and you know little of it. You do not know that we are preserving the English language for you as it was spoken centuries ago, and as you find it in your oldest writings. Scotticisms! Why, if ye were to read the prose of Mandeville or Wyclif, or the poetry of Robert of Brunne or Langdale, ye would find that our Scotticisms were the very pith and marrow of the English language. Ay; it is so."

The innocent eyes express such profound interest that the Laird of Denny-mains almost forgets about the coming steamer, so anxious is he to crush us with a display of his erudition.

"It is just remarkable," he says, "that your dictionaries should put down as obsolete words that are in common use all over the south of Scotland, where, as I say, the old Northumbrian English is preserved in its purity; and that ye should have learned people hunting up in Chaucer or Gower for the very speech that they might hear among the bits o' weans running about the Gallowgate or the Broomielaw. '*Wha's acht ye?*' you say to one of them; and you think you are talking Scotch. No, no; *acht* is only the old English for possession: isn't '*Wha's acht ye?*' shorter and pithier than '*To whom do you belong?*'

"Oh, certainly!" says the meek disciple: the recall of the boys from Surrey is obviously decided on.

"And *speir* for *inquire*; and *ferly* for *wonderful*; and *tyne* for *lose*; and *fey* for *about to die*; and *reek* for *smoke*; and *menseful* for *becoming*; and *belyve*, and *fere*, and *biggan*, and such words. Ye call them Scotch? Oh, no, ma'am; they are English; ye find them in all the old English writers; and they are the best of English too; a great deal better than the Frenchified stuff that your southern English has become."

Not for worlds would the Laird have wounded the patriotic sensitiveness of this gentle friend of his from the South; but, indeed, she had surely nothing to complain of in his insisting to an Englishwoman on the value of thorough English.

"I thought," says she, demurely, "that the Scotch had a good many French words in it."

The Laird pretends not to hear: he is so deeply interested in the steamer which is now coming over the smooth waters of the bay. But, having announced that there are a great many people on board, he returns to his discourse.

"Ah'm sure of this, too," says he, "that in the matter of pronunciation the Lowland Scotch have preserved the best English—you can see that *faither*, and *twelmonth*, and *twa*, and such words are nearer the original Anglo-Saxon——"

His hearers had been taught to shudder at the phrase Anglo-Saxon—without exactly knowing why. But who could withstand the authority of the Laird? Moreover, we see relief drawing near; the steamer's paddles are throbbing in the still afternoon.

"If ye turn to *Piers the Plowman*," continues the indefatigable Denny-mains, "ye will find Langdale writing—

And a fewe Cruddes and Crayme.

Why, it is the familiar phrase of our Scotch children!—Do ye think they would say *curds*? And then, *fewe*. I am not sure, but I imagine we Scotch are only making use of old English when we make certain forms of food plural. We say 'a few broth;' we speak of porridge as 'they.' Perhaps that is a survival, too, eh?"

"Oh, yes, certainly. But please mind the ropes, sir," observes his humble pupil, careful of her master's physical safety. For at this moment the steamer is slowing into the quay; and the men have the ropes ready to fling ashore.

"Not," remarks the Laird, prudently backing away from the edge of the pier, "that I would say anything of these matters to your young English friend; certainly not. No doubt she prefers the southern English she has been accustomed to. But, bless me! just to think that she should judge of our Scotch tongue by the way they Edinburgh bodies speak!"

"It is sad, is it not?" remarks his companion—but all her attention is now fixed on the crowd of people swarming to the side of the steamer.

"And, indeed," the Laird explains, to close the subject, "it is only a hobby of mine—only a hobby. Ye may have noticed that I do not use those words in my own speech, though I value them. No, I will not force any Scotch on the young leddy. As ah say, ah have often been taken for an Englishman maself, both at home and abroad."

And now—and now—the great steamer is in at the quay; the gangways are run over; there is a thronging up the paddle-boxes; and eager faces on shore scan equally eager faces on board—each pair of eyes looking for that other pair of eyes to flash a glad recognition. And where is she—the flower of womankind—the possessor of all virtue and grace and courage—the wonder of the world? The Laird shares in our excitement. He, too, scans the crowd eagerly. He submits to be hustled by the porters; he hears nothing of the roaring of the steam; for is she not coming ashore at last? And we know—or guess—that he is looking out for some splendid creature—some Boadicea, with stately tread and imperious mien—some Jephtha's daughter, with proud death in her eyes—some Rosamond of our modern days, with a glory of loveliness on her face and hair. And we know that the master who has been lecturing us for half-an-hour on our disgraceful neglect of pure English will not shock the sensitive Southern ear by any harsh accent of the North; but will address her in beautiful and courtly strains, in tones such as Edinburgh never knew. Where is the queen of womankind, amid all this commonplace, hurrying, loquacious crowd?

Forthwith the Laird, with a quick amazement in his eyes, sees a small and insignificant person—he only catches a glimpse of a black dress and a white face—suddenly clasped round in the warm embrace of her friend. He stares for a second; and then he exclaims—apparently to himself:—

"Dear me! What a shilpit bit thing!"

Pale—slight—delicate—tiny: surely such a master of idiomatic English cannot have forgotten the existence of these words. But this is all he cries to himself, in his surprise and wonder:—

"Dear me! What a shilpit bit thing!"

CHAPTER II.

MARY AVON.

THE bright, frank laugh of her face!—the friendly, unhesitating, affectionate look in those soft black eyes! He forgot all about Rosamond and Boadicea when he was presented to this "shilpit" person. And when, instead of the usual ceremony of introduction, she bravely put her hand in his, and said she had often heard of him from their common friend, he did not notice that she was rather plain. He did not even stop to consider in what degree her Southern accent might be improved by residence amongst the preservers of pure English. He was anxious to know if she was not greatly tired. He hoped the sea had been smooth as the steamer came past Easdale. And her luggage—should he look after her luggage for her?

But Miss Avon was an expert traveller, and quite competent to look after her own luggage. Even as he spoke, it was being hoisted on to the waggonette.

"You will let me drive?" says she, eyeing critically the two shaggy, farm-looking animals.

"Indeed I shall do nothing of the kind," says her hostess, promptly.

But there was no disappointment at all on her face as we drove away through the golden evening—by the side of the murmuring shore, past the overhanging fir-wood, up and across the high land commanding a view of the wide western seas. There was instead a look of such intense delight that we knew, however silent the lips might be, that the bird-soul was singing within. Everything charmed her—the cool, sweet air, the scent of the sea-weed, the glow on the mountains out there in the west. And as she chattered her delight to us—like a bird escaped from its prison and glad to get into the sunlight and free air again—the Laird sate mute and listened. He watched the frank, bright, expressive face. He followed and responded to her every mood—with a sort of fond paternal indulgence that almost prompted him to take her hand. When she smiled, he laughed. When she talked seriously, he looked concerned. He was entirely forgetting that she was a "shilpit bit thing;" and he would have admitted that the Southern way of speaking English—although, no doubt, fallen away from the traditions of the Northumbrian dialect—had, after all, a certain music in it that made it pleasant to the ear.

Up the hill, then, with a flourish for the last!—the dust rolling away in clouds behind us—the view over the Atlantic widening as we ascend. And here is Castle Osprey, as we have dubbed the place, with its wide open door, and its walls half hidden with tree-fuchsias, and its great rose-garden. Had Fair Rosamond herself come to Castle Osprey that evening, she could not have been waited on with greater solicitude than the Laird showed in assisting this "shilpit bit thing" to alight—though, indeed, there was a slight stumble, of which no one took any notice at the time. He busied himself with her luggage quite unnecessarily. He suggested a cup of tea, though it wanted but fifteen minutes to dinner-time. He assured her that the glass was rising—which was not the case. And when she was being hurried off to her own room to prepare for dinner—by one who rules her household with a rod of iron—he had the effrontery to tell her to take her own time: dinner could wait. The man actually proposed to keep dinner waiting—in Castle Osprey.

That this was love at first sight, who could doubt? And perhaps the nimble brain of one who was at this moment hurriedly dressing in her own room—and whom nature has constituted an indefatigable match-maker—may have been considering whether this rich old bachelor might not marry, after all. And if he were to marry, why should not he marry the young lady in whom he seemed to have taken so sudden and warm an interest? As for her: Mary Avon was now two or three-and-twenty; she was not likely to prove attractive to young men; her small fortune was scarcely worth considering; she was almost alone in the world. Older men had married younger women. The Laird had no immediate relative to inherit Denny-mains and his very substantial fortune. And would they not see plenty of each other on board the yacht?

But in her heart of hearts the schemer knew better. She knew that the romance-chapter in the Laird's life—and a bitter chapter it was—had been finished and closed and put away many and many a year ago. She knew how the great disappointment of his life had failed to sour him; how he was ready to share among friends and companions the large and generous heart that had been for a time laid at the feet of a jilt; how his keen and active interest, that might have been confined to his children and his children's children, was now devoted to a hundred things—the planting at Denny-mains, the great heresy case, the patronage of young artists, even the preservation of pure English, and what not. And that fortunate young gentleman—ostensibly his nephew—whom he had sent to Harrow and to Cambridge, who was now living a very easy life in the Middle Temple, and who would no doubt come in for Denny-mains? Well, we knew a little about that young man, too. We knew why the Laird, when he found that both the boy's father and mother were dead, adopted him, and educated him, and got him to call him uncle. He had taken under his care the son of the woman who had jilted him five-and-thirty years ago; the lad had his mother's eyes.

And now we are assembled in the drawing-room—all except the new guest; and the glow of the sunset is shining in at the open windows. The Laird is eagerly proving to us that the change from the cold east winds of Edinburgh to the warm westerly winds of the Highlands must make an immediate change in the young lady's face—and declaring that she ought to go on board the yacht at once—and asserting that the ladies' cabin on board the *White Dove* is the most beautiful little cabin he ever saw—when——

When, behold! at the open door—meeting the glow of the sunshine—appears a figure—dressed all in black velvet, plain and unadorned but for a broad belt of gold fringe that comes round the neck and crosses the bosom. And above that again is a lot of white muslin stuff, on which the small, shapely, smooth-dressed head seems gently to rest. The plain black velvet dress gives a certain importance and substantiality to the otherwise slight figure; the broad fringe of gold glints and gleams as she moves towards us; but who can even think of these things when he meets the brave glance of Mary Avon's eyes? She was humming, as she came down the stair—

O think na lang, lassie, though I gang awa;
For I'll come and see ye, in spite o' them a',

—we might have known it was the bird-soul come among us.

Now the manner in which the Laird of Denny-mains set about capturing the affections of this innocent young thing—as he sate opposite her at dinner—would have merited severe reproof in one of less mature age; and might, indeed, have been followed by serious consequences but for the very decided manner in which Miss Avon showed that she could take care of herself. Whoever heard Mary Avon laugh would have been assured. And she did laugh a good deal; for the Laird, determined to amuse her, was relating a series of anecdotes which he called "good ones," and which seemed to have afforded great enjoyment to the people of the south of Scotland during the last century or so. There was in especial a Highland steward of a steamer about whom a vast number of these stories was told; and if the point was at times rather difficult to catch, who could fail to be tickled by the Laird's own and obvious enjoyment? "There was another good one, Miss Avon," he would say; and then the bare memory of the great facetiousness of the anecdote would break out in such half-suppressed guffaws as altogether to stop the current of the narrative. Miss Avon laughed—we could not quite tell whether it was at the Highland steward or the Laird—until the tears ran down her cheeks. Dinner was scarcely thought of. It was a disgraceful exhibition.

"There was another good one about Homesh," said the Laird, vainly endeavouring to suppress his laughter. "He came up on deck one enormously hot day, and looked ashore, and saw some cattle standing knee-deep in a pool of water. Says he—ha! ha! ha!—ho! ho! ho!—says he—says he—'*A wish a wass a stot*!'—he! he! he!—ho! ho! ho!"

Of course we all laughed heartily, and Mary Avon more than any of us; but if she had gone down on her knees and sworn that she knew what the point of the story was, we should not have believed her. But the Laird was delighted. He went on with his good ones. The mythical Homesh and his idiotic adventures became portentous. The very servants could scarcely carry the dishes straight.

But in the midst of it all the Laird suddenly let his knife and fork drop on his plate, and stared. Then he quickly exclaimed—

"Bless me! lassie!"

We saw in a second what had occasioned his alarm. The girl's face had become ghastly white; and she was almost falling away from her chair when her hostess, who happened to spring to her feet first, caught her, and held her, and called for water. What could it mean? Mary Avon was not of the sighing and fainting fraternity.

And presently she came to herself—and faintly making apologies, would go from the room. It was her ankle, she murmured—with the face still white from pain. But when she tried to rise, she fell back again: the agony was too great. And so we had to carry her.

About ten minutes thereafter the mistress of the house came back to the Laird, who had been sitting by himself, in great concern.

"That girl! that girl!" she exclaims—and one might almost imagine there are tears in her eyes. "Can you fancy such a thing! She twists her ankle in getting down from the waggonette—brings back the old sprain—perhaps lames herself for life—and, in spite of the pain, sits here laughing and joking, so that she may not spoil our first evening together! Did you ever hear of such a thing! Sitting here laughing, with her ankle swelled so that I had to cut the boot off!"

"Gracious me!" says the Laird; "is it as bad as that?"

"And if she should become permanently lame—why—why——"

But was she going to make an appeal direct to the owner of Denny-mains? If the younger men were not likely to marry a lame little white-faced girl, that was none of his business. The laird's marrying-days had departed five-and-thirty years before.

However, we had to finish our dinner, somehow, in consideration to our elder guest. And then the surgeon came; and bound up the ankle hard and fast; and Miss Avon, with a thousand meek apologies for being so stupid, declared again and again that her foot would be all right in the morning, and that we must get ready to start. And when her friend assured her that this preliminary canter of the yacht might just as well be put off for a few days—until, for example, that young doctor from Edinburgh came who had been invited to go a proper cruise with us—her distress was so great that we had to promise to start next day punctually at ten. So she sent us down again to amuse the Laird.

But hark! what is this we hear, just as Denny-mains is having his whisky and hot water brought in? It is a gay voice humming on the stairs—

By the margin of fair Zürich's waters.

"That girl!" cries her hostess angrily, as she jumps to her feet.

But the door opens; and here is Mary Avon, with calm self-possession, making her way to a chair.

"I knew you wouldn't believe me," says she coolly, "if I did not come down. I tell you my foot is as well as may be; and Dot-and-carry-one will get down to the yacht in the morning as easily as any of you. And that last story about Homesh," she says to the Laird, with a smile in the soft black eyes that must have made his heart jump. "Really, sir, you must tell me the ending of that story; it was so stupid of me!"

"Shilpit" she may have been; but the laird, for one, was beginning to believe that this girl had the courage and nerve of a dozen men.

CHAPTER III.

UNDER WAY.

THE first eager glance out on this brilliant and beautiful morning; and behold! it is all a wonder of blue seas and blue skies that we find before us, with Lismore lying golden-green in the sunlight, and the great mountains of Mull and Morven shining with the pale etherial colours of the dawn. And what are the rhymes that are ringing through one's brain—the echo perchance of something heard far away among the islands—the islands that await our coming in the west?—

O land of red heather!
O land of wild weather,
And the cry of the waves, and the laugh of the breeze!
O love, now, together
Through the wind and wild weather
We spread our white sails to encounter the seas!

Up and out, laggards, now; and hoist this big red and blue and white thing up to the head of the tall pole that the lads far below may know to send the gig ashore for us! And there, on the ruffled blue waters of the bay, behold! the noble *White Dove*, with her great mainsail, and mizzen, and jib, all set and glowing in the sun; and the scarlet caps of the men are like points of fire in this fair blue picture; and the red ensign is fluttering in the light north-westerly breeze. Breakfast is hurried over; and a small person who has a passion for flowers is dashing hither and thither in the garden until she has amassed an armful of our old familiar friends—abundant roses, fuchsias, heart's-ease, various coloured columbine, and masses of southernwood to scent our floating saloon; the waggonette is at the door, to take our invalid down to the landing-slip; and the Laird has discarded his dignified costume, and appears in a shooting-coat and a vast gray wide-awake. As for Mary Avon, she is laughing, chatting, singing, here, there, and everywhere—giving us to understand that a sprained ankle is rather a pleasure than otherwise, and a great assistance in walking; until the Laird pounces upon her—as one might pounce on a butterfly—and imprisons her in the waggonette, with many a serious warning about her imprudence. There let her sing to herself as she likes—amid the wild confusion of things forgotten till the last moment and thrust upon us just as we start.

And here is the stalwart and brown-bearded Captain John—John of

Skye we call him—himself come ashore in the gig, in all his splendour of blue and brass buttons; and he takes off his peaked cap to the mistress of our household—whom some of her friends call Queen Titania, because of her midge-like size—and he says to her with a smile—

"And will Mrs. —— herself be going with us this time?"

That is Captain John's chief concern: for he has a great regard for this domineering small woman; and shows his respect for her, and his own high notions of courtesy, by invariably addressing her in the third person.

"Oh, yes, John!" says she—and she can look pleasant enough when she likes—"and this is a young friend of mine, Miss Avon, whom you have to take great care of on board."

And Captain John takes off his cap again; and is understood to tell the young lady that he will do his best, if she will excuse his not knowing much English. Then, with great care, and with some difficulty, Miss Avon is assisted down from the waggonette, and conducted along the rough little landing-slip, and helped into the stern of the shapely and shining gig. Away with her, boys! The splash of the oars is heard in the still bay; the shore recedes; the white sails seem to rise higher into the blue sky as we near the yacht; here is the black hull with its line of gold—the gangway open—the ropes ready—the white decks brilliant in the sun. We are on board at last.

"And where will Mr. —— himself be for going?" asks John of Skye, as the men are hauling the gig up to the davits.

Mr. —— briefly but seriously explains to the captain that, from some slight experience of the winds on this coast, he has found it of about as much use to order the tides to be changed as to settle upon any definite route. But he suggests the circumnavigation of the adjacent island of Mull as a sort of preliminary canter for a few days, until a certain notable guest shall arrive; and he would prefer going by the south, if the honourable winds will permit. Further, John of Skye is not to be afraid of a bit of sea, on account of either of those ladies; both are excellent sailors. With these somewhat vague instructions, Captain John is left to get the yacht under weigh; and we go below to look after the stowage of our things in the various state-rooms.

And what is this violent altercation going on, in the saloon?

"I will not have a word said against my captain," says Mary Avon. "I am in love with him already. His English is perfectly correct."

This impertinent minx talking about correct English in the presence of the Laird of Denny-mains!

"'Mrs. —— herself' is perfectly correct; it is only politeness; it is like saying 'Your Grace' to a Duke."

But who was denying it? Surely not the imperious little woman who was arranging her flowers on the saloon-table; nor yet Denny-mains, who was examining a box of variegated and recondite fishing-tackle?

"It is all very well for fine ladies to laugh at the blunders of servant maids," continues this audacious girl. "'Miss Brown presents her compliments to Miss Smith; and would you be so kind,' and so on. But don't they often make the same blunder themselves?"

Well, this was a discovery!

"Doesn't Mrs. So-and-So request the honour of the company of Mr. So-and-So or Miss So-and-So for some purpose or other; and then you find at one corner of the card '*R. S. V. P.?*' 'Answer, if YOU please'!"

A painful silence prevailed. We began to reflect. Whom did she mean to charge with this deadly crime?

But her triumph makes her considerate. She will not harry us with scorn.

"It is becoming far less common now, however," she remarks. "'An answer is requested,' is much more sensible."

"It is English," says the Laird, with decision. "Surely it must be more sensible for an English person to write English. Ah never use a French word maself."

But what is the English that we hear now—called out on deck by the voice of John of Skye?

"Eachan, slack the lee topping-lift! Ay, and the tackle, too. That'll do, boys. Down with your main-tack, now!"

"Why," exclaims our sovereign mistress, who knows something of nautical matters, "we must have started!"

Then there is a tumbling up the companion-way; and lo! the land is slowly leaving us; and there is a lapping of the blue water along the side of the boat; and the white sails of the *White Dove* are filled with this gentle breeze. Deck-stools are arranged; books and field-glasses and what not scattered about; Mary Avon is helped on deck, and ensconced in a snug little camp-chair. The days of our summer idleness have begun.

And as yet these are but familiar scenes that steal slowly by—the long green island of Lismore—*Lios-mor*, the Great Garden; the dark ruins of Duart, sombre as if the shadow of nameless tragedies rested on the crumbling walls; Loch Don, with its sea-bird-haunted shallows, and Loch Speliv leading up to the awful solitudes of Glen More; then, stretching far into the wreathing clouds, the long rampart of precipices, rugged and barren and lonely, that form the eastern wall of Mull.

There is no motonony on this beautiful summer morning; the scene changes every moment, as the light breeze bears us away to the south. For there is the Sheep Island; and Garveloch—which is the rough island; and Eilean-na-naomha—which is the island of the Saints. But what are these to the small transparent cloud resting on the horizon?—smaller than any man's hand. The day is still; and the seas are smooth: cannot we hear the mermaiden singing on the far shores of Colonsay?

"Colonsay!" exclaims the Laird, seizing a field-glass. "Dear me!

Is that Colonsay? And they telled me that Tom Galbraith was going there this very year."

The piece of news fails to startle us altogether; though we have heard the Laird speak of Mr. Galbraith before.

"Ay," says he, "the world will know something o' Colonsay when Tom Galbraith gets there."

"Whom did you say?" Miss Avon asks.

"Why, Galbraith!" says he. "Tom Galbraith!"

The Laird stares in amazement. Is it possible she has not heard of Tom Galbraith? And she herself an artist; and coming direct from Edinburgh, where she has been living for two whole months!

"Gracious me!" says the Laird. "Ye do not say ye have never heard of Galbraith—he's an Academeecian!—a Scottish Academeecian!"

"Oh, yes; no doubt," she says, rather bewildered.

"There is no one living has had such an influence on our Scotch school of painters as Galbraith—a man of great abeelity—a man of great and uncommon abeelity—he is one of the most famous landscape-painters of our day——"

"I scarcely met any one in Edinburgh," she pleads.

"But in London—in London!" exclaims the astonished Laird. "Do ye mean to say you never heard o' Tom Galbraith?"

"I—I think not," she confesses. "I—I don't remember his name in the Academy catalogue——"

"The Royal Academy!" cries the Laird, with scorn. "No, no! Ye need not expect that. The English Academy is afraid of the Scotchmen: their pictures are too strong: you do not put good honest whisky beside small beer. I say the English Academy is afraid of the Scotch school——"

But flesh and blood can stand this no longer: we shall not have Mary Avon trampled upon.

"Look here, Denny-mains: we always thought there was a Scotchman or two in the Royal Academy itself—and quite capable of holding their own there, too. Why, the President of the Academy is a Scotchman! And as for the Academy exhibition, the very walls are smothered with Scotch hills, Scotch spates, Scotch peasants, to say nothing of the thousand herring-smacks of Tarbert."

"I tell ye they are afraid of Tom Galbraith; they will not exhibit one of his pictures," says the Laird, stubbornly; and here the discussion is closed; for Master Fred tinkles his bell below, and we have to go down for luncheon.

It was most unfair of the wind to take advantage of our absence, and to sneak off, leaving us in a dead calm. It was all very well, when we came on deck again, to watch the terns darting about in their swallow-like fashion, and swooping down to seize a fish; and the strings of sea-pyots whirring by, with their scarlet beaks and legs; and the sudden shimmer and hissing of a part of the blue plain, where a shoal of mackerel had come to the surface; but where were we, now in the open Atlantic, to pass the night? We relinquished the doubling of the Ross of Mull; we should have been content—more than content, for certain reasons *—to have put into Carsaig; we were beginning even to have ignominious thoughts of Loch Buy. And yet we let the golden evening draw on with comparative resignation; and we watched the colour gathering in the west, and the Atlantic taking darker hues, and a ruddy tinge beginning to tell on the seamed ridges of Garveloch and the isle of Saints. When the wind sprung up again—it had backed to due west, and we had to beat against it with a series of long tacks, that took us down within sight of Islay and back to Mull apparently all for nothing—we were deeply engaged in prophesying all manner of things to be achieved by one Angus Sutherland, an old friend of ours, though yet a young man enough.

"Just fancy, sir!" says our hostess to the Laird—the Laird, by the way, does not seem so enthusiastic as the rest of us, when he hears that this hero of modern days is about to join our party. "What he has done beats all that I ever heard about Scotch University students; and you know what some of them have done in the face of difficulties. His father is a minister in some small place in Banffshire; perhaps he has 200*l.* a year at the outside. This son of his has not cost him a farthing, for either his maintenance or his education, since he was fourteen; he took bursaries, scholarships, I don't know what, when he was a mere lad; supported himself and travelled all over Europe—but I think it was at Leipsic and at Vienna he studied longest; and the papers he has written—the lectures—and the correspondence with all the great scientific people—when they made him a Fellow, all he said was, 'I wish my mother was alive.'"

This was rather an incoherent and jumbled account of a young man's career.

"A Fellow of what?" says the Laird.

"A Fellow of the Royal Society! They made him a Fellow of the Royal Society last year! And he is only seven-and-twenty! I do believe he was not over one-and-twenty when he took his degree at Edinburgh. And then—and then—there is really nothing that he doesn't know: is there, Mary?"

This sudden appeal causes Mary Avon to flush slightly; but she says demurely, looking down—

"Of course I don't know anything that he doesn't know."

"Hm!" says the Laird, who does not seem over pleased. "I have observed that young men who are too brilliant at the first, seldom come to much afterwards. Has he gained anything substantial? Has he a good practice? Does he keep his carriage yet?"

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* "A health to you, madam!—and to the Laird, too; and may you live long and prosper! But alas, alas! those rocks. We were always afraid."

"No, no!" says our hostess, with a fine contempt for such things. "He has a higher ambition than that. His practice is almost nothing. He prefers to sacrifice that in the meantime. But his reputation—among the scientific—why—why, it is European!"

"Hm!" says the Laird. "I have sometimes seen that persons who gave themselves up to erudeetion, lost the character of human beings altogether. They become scientific machines. The world is just made up of books for them—and lectures—they would not give a halfpenny to a beggar for fear of poleetical economy——"

"Oh, how can you say such a thing of Angus Sutherland!" says she—though he has said no such thing of Angus Sutherland. "Why, here is this girl who goes to Edinburgh—all by herself—to nurse an old woman in her last illness; and as Angus Sutherland is in Edinburgh on some business—connected with the University, I believe—I ask him to call on her and see if he can give her any advice. What does he do? He stops in Edinburgh two months—editing that scientific magazine there instead of in London—and all because he has taken an interest in the old woman, and thinks that Mary should not have the whole responsibility on her shoulders. Is that like a scientific machine?"

"No," says the Laird, with a certain calm grandeur; "you do not often find young men doing that for the sake of an old woman." But of course we don't know what he means.

"And I am so glad he is coming to us!" says she, with real delight in her face. "We shall take him away from his microscopes, and his societies, and all that. Oh, and he is such a delightful companion—so simple, and natural, and straightforward! Don't you think so, Mary?"

Mary Avon is understood to assent: she does not say much—she is so deeply interested in a couple of porpoises that appear from time to time on the smooth plain of the sea.

"I am sure a long holiday would do him a world of good," says this eager hostess; "but that is too much to expect. He is always too busy. I think he has got to go over to Italy soon, about some exhibition of surgical instruments, or something of that sort."

We had plenty of further talk about Dr. Sutherland, and of the wonderful future that lay before him, that evening before we finally put into Loch Buy. And there we dined; and after dinner we found the wan, clear twilight filling the northern heavens, over the black range of mountains, and throwing a silver glare on the smooth sea around us. We could have read on deck at eleven at night—had that been necessary; but Mary Avon was humming snatches of songs to us, and the Laird was discoursing of the wonderful influence exerted on Scotch landscape-art by Tom Galbraith. Then in the south the yellow moon rose; and a golden lane of light lay on the sea, from the horizon across to the side of the yacht; and there was a strange glory on the decks and on the tall, smooth masts. The peace of that night!—the soft air, the silence, the dreamy lapping of the water!

"And whatever lies before Angus Sutherland," says one of us—"whether a baronetcy, or a big fortune, or marriage with an Italian princess—he won't find anything better than sailing in the *White Dove* among the western islands."

CHAPTER IV.

A MESSAGE.

WHAT fierce commotion is this that awakes us in the morning—what pandemonium broken loose of wild storm-sounds—with the stately *White Dove*, ordinarily the most sedate and gentle of her sex, apparently gone mad, and flinging herself about as if bent on somersaults? When one clambers up the companion-way, clinging hard, and puts one's head out into the gale, behold! there is not a trace of land visible anywhere—nothing but whirling clouds of mist and rain; and mountain-masses of waves that toss the *White Dove* about as if she were a plaything; and decks all running wet with the driven spray. John of Skye, clad from head to heel in black oilskins—and at one moment up in the clouds, the next moment descending into the great trough of the sea—hangs on to the rope that is twisted round the tiller; and laughs a good-morning; and shakes the salt water from his shaggy eyebrows and beard.

"Hallo! John—where on earth have we got to?"

"Ay, ay, sir."

"I say WHERE ARE WE?" is shouted, for the roar of the rushing Atlantic is deafening.

"'Deed I not think we are far from Loch Buy," says John of Skye, grimly. "The wind is dead ahead of us—ay, shist dead ahead!"

"What made you come out against a head-wind then?"

"When we cam' out," says John—picking his English, "the wind will be from the norse—ay, a fine light breeze from the norse. And will Mr. —— himself be for going on now?—it is a ferry bad sea for the leddies—a ferry coorse sea."

But it appears that this conversation—bawled aloud—has been overheard. There are voices from below. The skylight of the ladies' cabin is partly open.

"Don't mind us," calls Mary Avon. "Go on by all means!"

The other voice calls—

"Why can't you keep this fool of a boat straight? Ask him when we shall be into the Sound of Iona."

One might as well ask him when we shall be into the Sound of Jericho or Jerusalem. With half a gale of wind right in our teeth, and with the heavy Atlantic swell running, we might labour here all day—and all the night too—without getting round the Ross of Mull. There is nothing for it but to turn and run, that we may have our breakfast in peace. Let her away, then, you brave John of Skye!—slack out th main-sheet, and give her plenty of it, too: then at the same moment Sandy from Islay perceives that a haul at the weather topping-lift will clear the boom from the davits; and now—and now, good Master Fred—our much-esteemed and shifty Friedrich d'or—if you will but lay the cloth on the table, we will help you to steady the dancing phantasmagoria of plates and forks!

"Dear me!" says the Laird, when we are assembled together, "it has been an awful night!"

"Oh, I hope you have not been ill!" says his hostess, with a quick concern in the soft, clear eyes.

He does not look as if he had suffered much. He is contentedly chipping an egg; and withal keeping an eye on the things near him, for the *White Dove*, still plunging a good deal, threatens at times to make of everything on the table a movable feast.

"Oh, no, ma'am, not ill," he says. "But at my time of life, ye see, one is not as light in weight as one used to be; and the way I was flung about in that cabin last night was just extraordinary. When I was trying to put on my boots this morning, I am sure I resembled nothing so much as a pea in a bladder—indeed it was so—I was knocked about like a pea in a bladder."

Of course we expressed great sympathy, and assured him that the *White Dove*—famed all along this coast for her sober and steady-going behaviour—would never act so any more.

"However," said he thoughtfully, "the wakefulness of the night is often of use to people. Yes, I have come to a decision."

We were somewhat alarmed: was he going to leave us merely because of this bit of tossing?

"I dare say ye know, ma'am," says he slowly, "that I am one of the Commissioners of the Burgh of Strathgovan. It is a poseetion of grave responsibility. This very question now—about our getting a steam fire-engine—has been weighing on my mind for many a day. Well, I have decided I will no longer oppose it. They may have the steam fire engine as far as I am concerned."

We felt greatly relieved.

"Yes," continued the Laird, solemnly, "I think I am doing my duty in this matter as a public man should—laying aside his personal prejudice. But the cost of it! Do ye know that we shall want bigger nozzles to all the fire-plugs?"

Matters were looking grave again.

"However," said the Laird cheerfully—for he would not depress us too much, "it may all turn out for the best; and I will telegraph my decision to Strathgovan as soon as ever the storm allows us to reach a port."

The storm, indeed! When we scramble up on deck again, we find that it is only a brisk sailing breeze we have; and the *White Dove* is bowling merrily along, flinging high the white spray from her bows. And then we begin to see that, despite those driving mists around us, there is really a fine clear summer day shining far above this twopenny-halfpenny tempest. The whirling mists break here and there; and we catch glimpses of a placid blue sky, flecked with lines of motionless cirrhus cloud. The breaks increase; floods of sunshine fall on the gleaming decks; clearer and clearer become the vast precipices of southern Mull; and then, when we get well to the lee of Eilean-straid-ean, behold! the blue seas around us once more; and the blue skies overhead; and the red ensign fluttering in the summer breeze. No wonder that Mary Avon sings her delight—as a linnet sings after the rain; and though the song is not meant for us at all, but is really hummed to herself as she clings on to the shrouds and watches the flashing and dipping of the white-winged gulls, we know that it is all about a jolly young waterman. The audacious creature: John of Skye has a wife and four children.

Too quickly indeed does the fair summer day go by—as we pass the old familiar Duart and begin to beat up the Sound of Mull against a fine light sailing breeze. By the time we have reached Ardtornish, the Laird has acquired some vague notion as to how the gaff topsail is set. Opposite the dark-green woods of Funeray, he tells us of the extraordinary faculty possessed by Tom Galbraith of representing the texture of foliage. At Salen we have Master Fred's bell summoning us down to lunch; and thereafter, on deck, coffee, draughts, crotchet, and a profoundly interesting description of some of the knotty points in the great Semple heresy case. And here again, as we bear away over almost to the mouth of Loch Sunart, is the open Atlantic—of a breezy grey under the lemon-colour and silver of the calm evening sky. What is the use of going on against this contrary wind, and missing, in the darkness of the night, all the wonders of the western islands that the Laird is anxious to see? We resolve to run into Tobermory; and by and by we find ourselves under the shadow of the wooded rocks, with the little white town shining along the semicircle of the bay. And very cleverly indeed does John of Skye cut in among the various craft—showing off a little bit, perhaps—until the *White Dove* is brought up to the wind, and the great anchor-cable goes out with a roar.

Now it was by the merest accident that we got at Tobermory a telegram that had been forwarded that very day to meet us on our return voyage. There was no need for any one to go ashore, for we were scarcely in port before a most praiseworthy gentleman was so kind as to send us on board a consignment of fresh flowers, vegetables, milk, eggs, and so forth—the very things that become of inestimable value to yachting people. However, we had two women on board; and of course—despite a certain bandaged ankle—they must needs go shopping. And Mary Avon, when we got ashore, would buy some tobacco for her favourite Captain John; and went into the post-office for that purpose, and was having the black stuff measured out by the yard when some mention was made of the *White Dove*. Then a question was asked; there was a telegram; it was handed to Miss Avon, who opened it and read it.

"Oh!" said she, looking rather concerned; and then she regarded her friend with some little hesitation.

"It is my uncle," she says; "he wants to see me on very urgent business. He is—coming—to see me—the day after to-morrow."

Blank consternation followed this announcement. This person, even though he was Mary Avon's sole surviving relative, was quite intolerable to us. East Wind we had called him in secret, on the few occasions on which he had darkened our doors. And just as we were making up our happy family party—with the Laird, and Mary, and Angus Sutherland—to sail away to the far Hebrides, here was this insufferable creature—with his raucous voice, his washed-out eyes, his cropped yellow-white hair, his supercilious manner, his bull-dog face, and general groom or butler-like appearance—thrusting himself on us!

"Well, you know, Mary," says her hostess—entirely concealing her dismay in her anxious politeness—"we shall almost certainly be home by the day after to-morrow, if we get any wind at all. So you had better telegraph to your uncle to come on to Castle Osprey, and to wait for you if you are not there; we cannot be much longer than that. And Angus Sutherland will be there; he will keep him company until we arrive."

So that was done, and we went on board again—one of us meanwhile vowing to himself that ere ever Mr. Frederick Smethurst set sail with us on board the *White Dove*, a rifle-bullet through her hull would send that gallant vessel to the lobsters.

Now what do you think our Mary Avon set to work to do—all during this beautiful summer evening, as we sat on deck and eyed curiously the other craft in the bay, or watched the firs grow dark against the silver-yellow twilight? We could not at first make out what she was driving at. Her occupation in the world, so far as she had any—beyond being the pleasantest of companions and the faithfullest of friends—was the painting of landscapes in oil, not the construction of Frankenstein monsters. But here she begins by declaring to us that there is one type of character that has never been described by any satirist, or dramatist, or fictionist—a common type, too, though only becoming pronounced in rare instances. It is the moral Tartuffe, she declares—the person who is through and through a hypocrite, not to cloak evil doings, but only that his eager love of approbation may be gratified. Look now how this creature of diseased vanity, of plausible manners, of pretentious humbug, rises out of the smoke like the figure summoned by a wizard's wand! As she gives us little touches here and there of the ways of this professor of *bonhomie*—this bundle of affectations—we begin to prefer the most diabolical villany that any thousand of the really wicked Tartuffes could have committed. He grows and grows. His scraps of learning, as long as those more ignorant than himself are his audience; his mock humility anxious for praise; his parade of generous and sententious sentiment; his pretence—pretence—pretence—all arising from no evil machinations whatever, but from a morbid and restless craving for esteem. Hence, horrible shadow! Let us put out the candles and get to bed.

But next morning, as we find ourselves out on the blue Atlantic again, with Ru-na-Gaul lighthouse left far behind, and the pale line of Coll at the horizon, we begin to see why the skill and patient assiduity of this amateur psychologist should have raised that ghost for us the night before. Her uncle is coming. He is not one of the plausible kind. And if it should be necessary to invite him on board, might we not the more readily tolerate his cynical bluntness and rudeness, after we have been taught to abhor as the hatefullest of mortals the well-meaning hypocrite whose vanity makes his life a bundle of small lies? Very clever indeed, Miss Avon—very clever. But don't you raise any more ghosts; they are unpleasant company—even as an antidote.

And now, John of Skye, if it must be that we are to encounter this pestilent creature at the end of our voyage, clap on all sail now, and take us right royally down through these far islands of the west. Ah! do we not know them of old? Soon as we get round the Cailleach Point we descry the nearest of them amid the loneliness of the wide Atlantic sea. For there is Carnaburg, with her spur of rock; and Fladda, long and rugged, and bare; and Lunga, with her peak; and the Dutchman's Cap—a pale blue in the south. How bravely the *White Dove* swings on her way—springing like a bird over the western swell! And as we get past Ru-Treshnish, behold! another group of islands—Gometra and the green-shored Ulva, that guard the entrance to Loch Tua; and Colonsay, the haunt of the sea birds; and the rock of Erisgeir—all shining in the sun. And then we hear a strange sound—different from the light rush of the waves—a low, and sullen, and distant booming, such as one faintly hears in a sea-shell. As the *White Dove* ploughs on her way, we come nearer and nearer to this wonder of the deep—the ribbed and fantastic shores of Staffa; and we see how the great Atlantic rollers, making for the cliffs of Gribun and Burg, are caught by those outer rocks and torn into masses of white foam, and sent roaring and thundering into the blackness of the caves. We pass close by; the air trembles with the shock of that mighty surge; there is a mist of spray rising into the summer air. And then we sail away again; and the day wears on as the white-winged *White Dove* bounds over the heavy seas; and Mary Avon—as we draw near the Ross of Mull, all glowing in the golden evening—is singing a song of Ulva.

But there is no time for romance, as the *White Dove* (drawing eight feet of water) makes in for the shallow harbour outside Bunessan.

"Down foresail!" calls out our John of Skye; and by-and-by her head comes up to the wind, the great mainsail flapping in the breeze. And again, "Down chub, boys!" and there is another rattle and roar amid the silence of this solitary little bay. The herons croak their fright and fly away on heavy wing; the curlews whistle shrilly; the sea-pyots whirr along the lonely shores. And then our good Friedrich d'or sounds his silver-toned bell.

The stillness of this summer evening on deck; the glory deepening over the wide Atlantic; the delightful laughter of the Laird over those "good ones" about Homesh; the sympathetic glance of Mary Avon's soft black eyes: did we not value them all the more that we knew we had something far different to look forward to? Even as we idled away the beautiful and lambent night, we had a vague consciousness that our enemy was stealthily drawing near. In a day or two at the most we should find the grim spectre of the East Wind in the rose-garden of Castle Osprey.

The "Egils Saga."

THERE were two heroic periods in the antique life of Iceland—the one eminent for its action, the other for its intellect. During the tenth century those magnificent deeds were performed for which the thirteenth century found no less magnificent expression in literature; the first without the second would have been forgotten, the second without the first would have had no value or significance. Hence it follows that we expect the noblest Icelandic writing to be that in which a poet of about 1230 relates the adventures of a viking of about 930; nor are we disappointed. According to the most exact scholarship, the finest works of an imaginative kind were produced between 1220 and 1260, the sagas long floating piecemeal in tradition receiving then, from hands unknown to us, that artistic and epic form in which they have come down to us, as one of the wonders of the literary world. Of the whole body of Icelandic literature, if we set aside the mythical sagas and the historical writings of Snorri and Sturla, the absolute flower and glory consist in four great sagas, each dealing with the personal history of a noble family, and each exhibiting in its purest form life in the Icelandic Com monwealth before the introduction of Christianity. The longest of these is *Njála*, the Story of Burnt Njál, translated, in a version that has become classical, by Sir George Dasent. The other three are unknown to English readers; they are the *Laxdæla Saga*, the *Egils Saga*, and the *Erbyggia Saga*. From the *Laxdæla* Mr. Morris has borrowed the plot of one of the noblest poems of our day, the "Lovers of Gudrun," but the other two remain absolutely uninterpreted, and thus some of the finest literature in the world remains to us a sealed letter. The best Icelandic sagas come closer to the lofty ideal of the Homeric epic than any other production, except perhaps the *Chanson de Roland*. It is a great error to suppose that their chronicle character deprives them of any artistic shapeliness, or that the incidents related in them are loosely set down. The work is built upon a recognised plan, with the most stately art. The hero is introduced after a full account of his ancestors, and of the events which coloured the fate of his family. He arrives on the scene at the critical moment, when that fate has to be wound up to a crisis; that crisis is the story of his life—is, in other words, his *saga*. In the hand of a master his figure never passes out of our sight, and in any one of the great sagas we detect at once the presence of a spurious chapter by its inartistic irrelevance. But the plan upon which these works were composed can, after all, be best understood by following the story itself. I propose, therefore, to give a brief analysis of one saga, the story of Egil Skallagrimsson, known as *Egla*, or the *Egils Saga*. In the following pages the story will be concisely told, with occasional translations, very literally given, to show something of the spirited simplicity of the original. The *Egils Saga* is considered to be the oldest of the four great epics, and to have been written about 1220. We must remember that Iceland at that moment held the foremost place in the world of letters. The brief, luxurious blossom of poetry in Provence and in Austria was withering. The bud of more vital promise in Italy and in Persia was still unbroken. For forty years, at least, the finest imaginative work in the world was being produced in a remote island close under the Arctic Circle. It is unknown who wrote the *Egils Saga*. Dr. Gudbrand Vigfussen, whose conjecture on these subjects carries more weight than the assertion of most other men, believes that he traces in it the style of Snorri Sturlason, whom the *Sturlunga* distinctly states to have been a writer of sagas. This extraordinary personage, the greatest of Icelandic writers, was about forty years of age at the time when our saga is believed to have been composed, and the polished beauty of its style favours the supposition that it is a work of Snorri's manhood. He was, moreover, descended from Egil, through his mother, Gudny; and in his genius, his brilliant life, and his tragic death, he is himself so characteristic a type of the turbulent Icelandic noble, that we like to see in him the author of the saga which is, *par excellence*, the poem of aristocratic pretension, the lyrical apology for and eulogy of ancestral arrogance.

Before we dip into the story, it may be added that many more or less complete fragments of this popular saga exist, and that one rag of vellum seems to belong to about the year 1240. The edition I have used in the following epitome is that published at Reykjavík in 1856, edited by Einar Thordarson, *Sagan af Agli Skallagrímssyni*. The period embraced by the events described is from about 870 to 980, and closes with the introduction of Christianity into Iceland. It should further be remarked that the numerous poems embedded in the body of the work are of a double character; some are spurious—that is, belong to the date of the saga-writer; others, and these the most important, are two hundred years older, are believed to be the actual composition of Egil himself, and are considered by scholars to be of the very highest literary and philological interest; they are not only full of periphrases, but arranged in metric form so curiously, that they are hardly intelligible without a prose key. The *drapas*, or long poems of praise, are not quite so cryptic as the improvised staves in eight lines, which are extremely difficult and odd in construction. It is one of the strangest puzzles connected with this archaic literature, that the heroic personages are represented as throwing off in the heat of excitement little improvised poems in a metrical form more exacting than any known to modern poetry. With them, at least, inspiration does not seem to have demanded sixes and eights, and they would have had no difficulty in pouring their passion and indignation into the limits of a villanelle. With these introductory remarks we proceed to the story itself.

There lived a man in Norway called Wolf. By his mother's side he was descended from the ancient clan of Hrafnista. He was a very tall and powerful man, who had spent his youth in viking and in harrying, in company with Kári, his bosom-friend, a pirate like himself. They were both berserks—that is to say, they were subject to fits of *berserksgángr*, violent attacks of frenzy in which men foamed at the mouth, bit their shields, and were almost irresistible. At last they settled down in Norway, and Wolf married Kári's fair daughter Salbjörg. He was a very practical man of business and much respected, but he became first so enraged, then so sleepy, at sundown, that the people called him Evenwolf, and thought that he must be *hamram*—that is, must have the magical power of changing his shape at nightfall. He had two sons, the elder named Thorolf, the younger Grim. They were both tall, capable men like their father, but while Thorolf was handsome, bright, and loveable, Grim was dark of complexion and moody. Thorolf went a-viking when he was old enough, and his mother's brothers, Eyvind and Ölvir, went with him, and these three became fast friends. It was a good time for vikings: they spent the summer as pirates on the southern seas, pushing the prows of their long ships far into fertile estuaries and havens, and they feasted at home in the winter. But Ölvir fell in love with Earl Atle's daughter, Sólveig the Fair, and so lost all taste for sea-fighting and fell to making love poems. So Thorolf and Eyvind went to sea without him. Now it was that Harald Fairhair became king, and would rule over all Norway. The liege of Evenwolf was a certain king Audbjörn, who called upon him to help him against Harald. But Evenwolf would not interfere, and Audbjörn was overcome and slain. King Harald then held a great court at Throndhjem, whither Ölvir set out to join him, and became the king's poet. Harald then sent for Evenwolf to pay him allegiance, but the old man refused on the score of age, and Grim his son also would not go. The king was angry at this, but Ölvir pacified him, going himself to fetch Evenwolf, but in vain. Evenwolf is here shown us as the type of the hereditary aristocrat, whose independence was threatened by the unity of Norway, and who would rather die or go into exile than pay submission to the king. All this happened in the summer, and when Eyvind and Thorolf returned from viking and heard of these great changes, they blamed Evenwolf and Grim for their obstinacy, and Thorolf begged his father's permission to go to the court at Throndhjem, and thither he and his uncle went.

Before all this happened, there had lived up at Torgar, near the Arctic Circle, an old man, with the blood of the giants in him, named Björgólf. He was a widower, with a grown-up son, a mighty man named Brynjólf. At a feast at the house of one of his farmers the old man saw an extremely pretty girl, named Hildiride, the daughter of the man of the house. Björgólf was so taken with her that he hastily married her, and she had two sons by him, named Hárek and Hroerek. But the old man soon after died, and his son Brynjólf, in coming into the estate, drove Hildiride away as if she had been a slave-woman, for he was jealous for his own son Bárd. So she patiently went away to Leka to her father's house, and brought up her children there. They grew to be men, and so did their nephew Bárd, who was of the same age as they. And one day when Bárd was shooting in the north, he came to Sandness, a house on the island of Álöst, and there he saw Sigrid, who was the daughter and heiress of the richest man in all Hálogaland, whose name was Sigurd. He wooed her, and it was agreed that next summer they should be married. That same summer King Harald insisted on receiving the homage of all the nobles in Hálogaland, and so Bárd and his father Brynjölf went up together to Throndhjem. The king was pleased with them, made Brynjölf landsman (*lendrmadr*), or governor of his province, and took Bárd into his retinue. Ölvir was with the king already; and this was the same autumn that Eyvind and Thorolf came there. Bárd became the friend of these men, but most of all the dear friend of Thorolf, by whom he sat in the king's court. Next summer Bárd asked leave of the king to go away to his home to be married, and Thorolf went with him. When they arrived at Torgar, they sent a message to prepare Sigrid for their coming, and presently set out for Sandness, where Bárd and Sigrid were married. In the autumn they all went south again to the court, and that winter Brynjólf died. Bárd prayed the king for leave to go home to get his inheritance; Harald not only did this, but made him landsman in his father's room. So Bárd ruled in Hálogaland, but no one thought of Hildiride's sons.

But King Harald heard that there were still men who rebelled against his rule, so he gathered together a great fleet and sailed from Throndhjem southward to crush the rebels. Thorolf went with him on his own ship, and so did Bárd, Ölvir, and Eyvind. They met the enemy in Hafrsfirth in Rogaland, and there was fought the greatest of all King Harald's battles. There was hardly any one unwounded, except those upon whom no iron would bite, namely, the berserks. Thorolf got many wounds, but Bárd more, and Thorolf slowly recovered, but Bárd grew worse. Then, as Bárd felt himself dying, he prayed that the king would come to his bed-side; and when Harald came, he begged that, as he had no son, his dear friend Thorolf should be his heir, and this the king promised. Then Bárd died, and was honourably buried and much lamented. So in the autumn Thorolf went north to possess the heritage that proved his bane; but at first all went well, and the king made him landsman in Hálogaland. At Torgar he was well received by the kinsman of Bárd, and one evening he sailed over to Sandness, where lived Sigrid, the widow of Bárd. She greeted him kindly, and he asked her in marriage of her father Sigurd. The wedding was the most splendid ever seen in those parts, and when, in the winter, Sigurd died, Thorolf inherited his estates. But now came the uncles of Bárd, the sons of Hildiride, and demanded their shares of the inheritance of their father Bjorgólf; but Thorolf answered them that they were bastards. The matter hung upon a nice point of Norse law; they asserted that their mother had been bought with *mundr*, that is, the fixed sum always paid by a bridegroom, and that she was therefore the wife of Bjorgólf; but Thorolf held that Hildiride was *hernuminn*—carried away by force; in which case no future ceremony could make her children legitimate. So the men went home unsatisfied. Now Thorolf grew a mighty man. He made war with the Finns and subdued them, and carried away a great booty of beaver-skins for the king. Moreover he had a long-ship built for him, with a dragon's head, and this he filled with cod, stock-fish, seals, and birds' eggs, and brought all this booty back to Sandness. Then the king came north to visit him, with 300 men; and as there was in Sandness no hall great enough, Thorolf turned a huge barn into a feasting-hall, and made it splendid with shields and hangings. But when the king saw how rich Thorolf was, and how many retainers he had, he turned red in the face, and after staying only three nights, he went away angry.

The sons of Hildiride invited Harald to visit them while his envy was still hot against Thorolf; and Hárek, the eldest, who had a bitter tongue, poisoned the king's ear, and asked for Hálogaland for himself and his brother. Now Thorgils, who was Thorolf's head man, came to Throndhjem with the spoil of the Finns, and the king consented to be pleased with the fine beaver-skins. Ölvir spoke kindly of Thorolf, and the king was inclined to forget the slander of the sons of Hildiride. Then the King of the Quains called upon Thorolf to help him against a savage people named in the saga Kyrjálar, who were destroying his lands; and Thorolf sailed to shore, and crossed the mountains after these nomads, who seem to have lived in Swedish Lapland, and entirely conquered them, bringing back great spoils of beaver-skins. When he came back his people told him of the plot made by the sons of Hildiride, and of the suspicion of the king, and he was sorrowful, for he loved the king. However, the sons of Hildiride continued to backbite him, and at last he determined to go up to Throndhjem to see King Harald. But his friend Ölvir met him, and warned him that the king's heart was changed towards him; yet he persisted, and, standing up in the court, he spoke out and told the truth to Harald. The king desired him to give up his governorship, and come back to live at court; but he, looking round on the body of his retainers, scornfully refused, and went home in haste. He had hardly left Throndhjem before the king outlawed him, and gave his place to the sons of Hildiride, sending a message to that effect to Thorolf.

But Thorolf was himself almost a king, and defied Harald's mission He continued to enrich himself in many ways. He fitted out a great trading-ship, with blue and red stripes on the sails, and sent Thorgils with her to England. She was laden with stock-fish and ermine, and she soon returned with a cargo of wheat, honey, wine, and raiment. Hárek, the son of Hildiride, told all this to the king, and it angered him extremely. There were two men with the king at that time, brothers, and of the royal race; they were powerful and skilful men, but much hated for their violence; their names were Sigtrygg and Hallvard. To them the king deputed the task of spying after Thorolf's great ship, and if possible, of capturing her. They found her on her second voyage from England in a haven of South Norway, fell upon the crew suddenly, and sailed away with their prize to King Harald. But Thorgils and the crew went away and complained to Thorolf's father, Evenwolf, who gave them small comfort, and bade Thorgils urge Thorolf to leave the land. But Thorolf took the loss with seeming indifference, and stayed at home in Sandness all that winter. Next spring he went a-viking on the coast of Denmark, but got little spoil until the autumn, when on the coast of Sweden he caught one of King Harald's merchant-ships, laden with malt, wheat, and honey. Having captured this ship, he sailed up to the house of Sigtrygg and Hallvard, at the mouth of the Gota River, and burned it, hewing off at the same time the hand of their younger brother Thorgeirr. With another prize, a great ship laden with meal, he made his way to his father Evenwolf and his brother Grim. Evenwolf prophesied that he should see his son no more, and then Thorolf sailed again, and came home to Sandness. When Hallvard and Sigtrygg told the king what mischief Thorolf had done them, the king warned them that they were not his match, but gave them leave to kill him if they could. So they gathered together two hundred men and sailed with two ships out of the fjord; but the wind blew from the north-east, and they made but little way. But King Harald was not content that the glory of killing Thorolf should rest on Sigtrygg and Hallvard; so in great haste he had four ships made ready, and with all his court, four hundred men, he crossed the fjord, and took ship again further north. He had now six ships, and they rowed day and night, for it was the season of the midnight sun. One evening they came to Sandness, and there lay a great ship in the offing, for Thorolf had determined to leave Norway. The king's men went up quietly and surrounded the house, and no one knew of this, for they all sat drinking. Then the king's men shouted their war-cry, and Thorolf's people snatched their arms down, each from the wall above him. Then the king sent one to shout at the door, that all women, children, and old people, servants, and bondmen, should go out. So Sigrid went out, and all the rest behind her, and she asked if her husband's uncles were there with the king, and they said yes. She bid them beg the king for peace, and Ölvir did so; but Thorolf would not accept the king's mercy.

"So the king cried, 'Set fire to the hall; I will not waste my men, and fight with him outside. I think that Thorolf may do us great harm if he comes out, though he has fewer folk than we.' There was fire laid to the hall, and it caught swiftly, for that the timber was dry and the walls were pitched, and the roof was thatched about with bark.

Thorolf bade his men break up the planks of the wainscot, and seize the gable-beams, and so break through the partition-walls; and as soon as they got hold of the beams, as many men as could took each a beam and thrust the other end of it into the corners so hard that the bolts flew out and the walls fell asunder, so that there was a great passage made. Thorolf was the first man that went out, then next Thorgils Gjallandi, and then one after another. Then began the hardest fight, so that there was about an hour while their strength seemed even, for the hall was there to back them. The king lost many men, but the hall began to burn. Then the fire found them out. Many fell dead of that. Then Thorolf leaped forward and hewed on either hand. Little it served to bind the wounds of those men that he struck. He sought, then, to see where the King's Mark (the Standard) was, and in that moment fell Thorgils Gjallandi. And when Thorolf reached the wall of shields, he pierced the standard-bearer through, and cried, 'Now came I short by three feet!' Then was he run through with sword and spear, and the king himself it was who gave him his death-wound, and Thorolf fell forwards over the king's feet. Then the king called out and bade that they should cease to slay men, and so it was done. Then the king let his men go down to the ships."

The uncles of the slain man stayed at Sandness, to comfort Sigrid and to set the house in order; but they were angry in their hearts, and asked the king's leave to quit his court and service. This Harald would not hear of; Eyvind he told to marry Sigrid and settle at Sandness; but he could not part with Ölvir because of his great gifts as a poet. Meanwhile, Ketil Hæing, Thorolf's friend, was coming to his help, when he heard what had happened; so he turned aside to Torgar, where the sons of Hildiride were, and slew them both, and then sailed over to Iceland.

With the murder of Thorolf, the introduction to the Saga closes. Thorolf was the only member of his family who acknowledged the authority of King Harald, and his untimely end justified the suspicions of his father and his brother. From this point the house of Evenwolf is united in hating the royal family, and in rejecting its pretensions; while the theme of the Saga from this time forth becomes the revenge which the outraged nobles took upon the king. Grim, Thorolf's brother —henceforth called Skallagrim, or Grim the Bald—had by this time married Bera, the daughter of a rich landsman, named Yngvar. The news soon reached them of Thorolf's death, and Evenwolf, who was very old, straightway took to his bed. Ölvir took occasion next summer to hint to the king that, by the law, there was recompense due to Evenwolf for his son's murder; and the king therefore sent Ölvir to make inquiries as to Evenwolf's demands. But the savage old man would not give up the luxury of his rage, nor would Grim go to the king's court. At last, however, Ölvir persuaded the younger man to return with him. But Grim took twelve men-at-arms, several of whom were *hamram*, and could not be wounded by iron, for he did not conceal his suspicion of the king. They were like giants, and Grim was the tallest of them all. He marched noisily into court with this following, and when the king asked him if he would be his man, answered "No!" so loudly, that Harald became blood-red in the face. Then Ölvir bent over to Grim and bade him be gone; and he went out: whereupon Ölvir hurried down to the harbour and disabled the king's ships, not too soon, for the king decreed Grim's outlawry, and bade his servants follow him swiftly and slay him. But this was enough for Grim, and in the early spring Evenwolf and he set out with two great ships containing all their families and their goods, and sailed for Iceland. But they stayed awhile when they came to the Solundir Islands, at the mouth of the Sogne Fjord, and there a happy adventure befell them; for Guttorm, Harald's uncle, being dead, the king sent his cousins Hallvard and Sigtrygg south to the town of Tönsberg, to set Guttorm's house in order; and, on their return, as they were leisurely crossing the Sogne Fjord one evening, Evenwolf and Skallagrim fell upon them, boarded their vessels, and while the latter slew Sigtrygg, old Evenwolf split the helmet and head of Hallvard. Many of the king's men leaped overboard, but were slain. The victors set a few prisoners on land for the king's information, loaded the captured ship with wealth, and then sailed out of the fjord. As soon as the excitement of the battle was over, Evenwolf took to his bed again. They then set their prows for the west, and sailed over the North Sea to Iceland. It was about the year 900 that this happened, and about a quarter of a century later than the first exodus of Norwegian nobles under Ingolf. The Commonwealth of Iceland was now already settled under Thorolf, the first pontiff, and the annual Parliament, the Herjar Thing, was instituted. Nothing that Harald could do served to prevent the best and proudest blood of Norway from seeking voluntary exile. On the voyage out Evenwolf died, and at his own desire was thrown into the sea, in a chest, which was driven ashore, just as the columns of Thorolf's Temple of Thor had been driven ashore, in Faxafirth, on the western coast of Iceland. Skallagrim landed at a place called Knarrarness, a great promontory running into the sea, and Evenwolf's body came to shore a little higher up the bay; so here they built their settlement, and called it Borg. The whole peninsula between Borgarfirth and Faxafirth was taken by Skallagrim, and he spent a long time in exploring it and marking his boundaries. It was rich marsh-land, with thick woods between it and the mountains. There is no wood, of course, in this or any part of Iceland now. To the south ran a large stream, the White River. Skallagrim built another house at the mouth of Borgarfirth, at Alptaness. So few men had come that way before, that the whales came up the firth, and had no fear; there was much salmon in all the streams. By-and-by Yngvar, the father-in-law of Skallagrim, came out to Iceland to be rid of the king, and to him Skallagrim gave the house at Alptaness to live in. Skallagrim was a cunning smith, and smelted much iron in the winter. He found, however, that his men could find no stone hard enough for an anvil; so one night, when all were gone to bed, he rowed out into the middle of the firth, anchored against an islet, and dived, bringing up in his arms a great stone, which he put in the boat. Then he rowed to land and laid the stone at the smithy-door, and that stone was still at Borg two hundred years afterwards, when the Saga was written. All Skallagrim's first children died; then he had Thorolf, a son, then two daughters, Sæunn and Thorunn, and then a son, Egil, the hero of this Saga. This last child was dark and rough, like his father; but from babyhood he was extremely large and powerful. Before he was four years old he had begun to surprise every one by improvising staves of poetry, two of which are given in the Saga.

It is now necessary to tell as briefly as possible a picturesque episode which interrupts the progress of the story. In Norway, a little after Skallagrim left the country, a spirited young viking, named Björn, had forcibly carried off, against the consent, first of her brother Thorir, and then of her father Brynjolf, a noble maiden named Thora; for this he had to leave the country, and he set sail for Dublin, but was cast upon the Shetland Isles. To carry off a woman in this way was considered a great crime, and the king not only outlawed, but sent men after him to Dublin to slay him. However he had stayed, as we have said, at Shetland, and there married Thora. But hearing what the king had done, he thought it best to sail away to Iceland, which was at that time a Cave of Adullam to all outlawed persons. Accordingly he sailed into Faxafirth, and by an accident ran into Borg, where Skallagrim, who had not heard of his adventures, received him warmly. The guests stayed there all the winter, and Thorolf, Skallagrim's eldest son, became thoroughly devoted to Björn. However, in the autumn ships came from Norway, and the secret leaked out. Skallagrim was excessively angry and would have turned Björn and Thora out of his house, as outlaws; but Thorolf persuaded him to forgive the deceit. Moreover, Thorolf suggested that his father, who was an intimate friend of the injured brother, Thorir, should send a message of peace to Norway, which he did, Björn all the while remaining his guest at Borg. Altogether the strangers stayed three winters with them, and a daughter was born to Thora, named Asgerde. When at last Björn determined to go back to Norway, his little daughter remained at Borg, but Thorolf, who was now grown a man, got leave from his father to go with Björn. They were kindly received in Norway, and they lived awhile with Thora's father Brynjolf.

Next summer Björn and Thorolf went viking in the Baltic. Erik, afterward's King Erik Bloodaxe, King Harald's favourite son, was being brought up by Thorir, Björn's brother-in-law. The friends happened to be on a visit to Thorir, when Thorolf saw the boy Erik gazing longingly at his ship, so he made a gift of it to him, and won the king's son's love by that. Thorolf was doubtful whether the king would let him live in Norway, but Erik made peace for him; and for many years

Thorolf and Björn went a-viking every summer, and spent the winter in Norway with Brynjolf or with Thorir. Harald was now become very old, and Erik Bloodaxe was made regent in his place, and showed much favour to Thorolf.

Meanwhile in Iceland Egil was growing up, a child in every way puzzling and embarrassing, even in so rude a condition of society. They were fond of athletic sports at Borg, and in particular of the game of *knattleikr*, a sort of bat, trap, and ball, which was a great favourite with the old Scandinavians. Skallagrim still played it better than any one else, although he was now getting old. One winter, when there was ice upon the White River, there was a great assemblage to play *knattleikr*, and a young man named Thord, a favourite clansman of Skallagrim's, took little Egil, who was in his seventh year, to see the sport. While the men were playing, Egil got up a game with a big boy of eleven, called Grim, who beat him at it. In a passion Egil took up the trap and struck his playfellow with it, but got a sound beating in return. He then walked up to his friend Thord, and borrowed his *skeggja*, the little halberd that men habitually wore. He then ran back to the place where the boys were still playing, and buried the weapon so deep in Grim's brain, that he could not pull it out again, and the lad fell dead. Thord took Egil home, and his father said nothing about the event, except to pay the blood-money to Grim's clan, but Bera, his mother, prophesied that Egil would be a great viking as soon as he was old enough to have a war-ship. And the child, overhearing it, sang this stave :—

This meaneth, my mother,
That for me must be bought
A fley and fair oars :
That I may fare around with vikings,
Stand high up in the stern,
Steer precious ships,
Hold at last to havens,
Hew down men and strangers.

When Egil was twelve years old, he was already as tall and strong as many men, and he was trained in all manly accomplishments by his friend Thord, with whom he was used to challenge his father Skallagrim to friendly combat. And hereupon rests a most curious story. The winter that Egil completed his twelfth year he and Thord were playing *knattleikr* with Skallagrim, who became tired, and was being beaten. But when the sun went down, things took, as the Saga says, "a worse turn for Thord and Egil," for Skallagrim's berserk fury came upon him, and he lifted Thord up into the air, and threw him down with so much violence that he died. Then he turned on Egil.

"But Thorgard Brák, who was one of Skallagrim's bondwomen and had been Egil's foster-mother, was very tall, as strong as a man, and deeply skilled in the art of witchcraft. She cried out : 'Art thou mad, Skallagrim ! against thy son ?' Skallagrim then let Egil loose, and groped after her. She broke away from him, and ran down, and Skallagrim after her. So they went down to the very outward point of Digraness. Then she leaped off the cliff into the sea. Skallagrim cast after her a great stone, and smote her between the shoulders, and she never rose again. That sea is now called Brákarsund. And then in the evening, when they came home to Borg, Egil was there already. Skallagrim sat at table and all the other men. But Egil was not in his place. He went out into the fire-house (kitchen) and to a man who was the overseer and money-taker of Skallagrim, and of whom he was most fond. Egil struck him a death-blow, and then went back to his seat. Skallagrim said nothing about this, and no harm came of it."

The innocent reader must not imagine that Egil avenged his foster-mother; it was Thord's death that demanded a sacrifice. But this was a very terrible child of twelve years old; and we are presently assured that no one could master him, not even, as indeed we have seen, his father.

But Thorolf, Egil's eldest brother, began to pine for home, and back to Iceland he came, bringing from King Erik a splendid axe as a gift to Skallagrim. But the old noble scorned the gifts of kings, and he hung the axe up in his chimney, till it was black with smoke. While Thorolf was in Iceland, the famous Ketil Blund came out, and after spending a winter with Skallagrim, took land and settled at Thrandarholt. Then in process of time Thorolf returned to Norway, taking with him to her parents Asgerde, now grown a wise and lovely woman. When he came next time to Iceland, Egil was a fierce, unruly boy, as big as a man. He entreated and tormented Thorolf to take him back with him to Norway, and when Thorolf refused, Egil went down one stormy night to the anchorage, and loosed his brother's ship, so that it drifted out to sea and was thrown on shore a long way off. But by degrees Thorolf became very fond of his young brother, and at last consented to take him over to Norway. They found Brynjolf dead, and his son Thord was landsman in his place. Björn and Thorir received them with great affection, and Egil entered into the warmest friendship with Thorir's son, Arinbjörn, a lad of his own age. It was now agreed that Thorolf should marry the beautiful Asgerde, and a grand wedding was prepared. But when all were starting for it, Egil was taken ill, and could not go. He soon got well, and for want of better occupation, went off on an excursion with Thorir's bailiff, whose name was Ölvir. They started in a ship, and Egil was armed like a warrior, with sword, lance, and shield. They were driven by stress of weather to an island called Atley, where lived a man named Bárd, who entertained them hospitably, but not in his own house. While they wondered at this, there came to Atley a great crowd of people, and they saw King Erik and his Queen Gunnhilde, with all their court, enter the house of Bárd. The king hearing that certain of Thorir's men were there, bade Ölvir and Egil be called; and thereupon the horns of ale went round, and every man must empty his horn. Egil drank so much that all noticed it, and at last Queen Gunnhilde, in malice, bade the host to put poison in the horn, and this was done. But Egil, who was shouting insolent staves against Bárd, took the horn when it was given to him, and wounding himself in the hand, wrote runes in his blood upon the horn, so that it broke in two, and the poisoned ale flowed down into the straw upon the floor. Then he rose in a rage and slew Bárd before the king and queen, and rushed into the night. He swam to a neighbouring island, and after many wild adventures got safe back to Thorir. Next summer Thorolf and Egil went a-viking in the Baltic, and invaded Courland. They made a raid upon an inland village, but while they were burning it, Egil and his troops divided from the rest and, pushing into the woods, were lost. The natives surrounded them, and they were obliged to surrender. They were just about to be slain, when it was decided to keep them alive until the morning, and they were bound to the posts of a house. In the depth of the night, Egil, by dint of sheer strength, got free, and loosed his comrades. They found some Danish men, who had been imprisoned the summer before, and they, being set free, showed the Norsemen where the weak points of the house were, and how the Courlanders stored their riches. Having robbed their captors, they then made for the sea, but first Egil with his own hands fired the house and killed all the chief men in their feasting-hall. They then sailed away for Denmark, where Harald Bluetooth then was king, and hearing of the wealth of the city of Lund, they landed in the Sound, and marched up the country, plundered Lund and burned it, and then returned to their ships. They proceeded up the Cattegat, and paid a friendly visit to Earl Arfinn in Halland, whose fair daughter proved to be Egil's rival in the art of improvisation, and from whose house they all returned with great booty to Thorir. It was now desirable to find whether the king had forgotten what happened at Atley, and Thorir went to the court for that purpose. Erik he found inclined to forgive Egil, but Queen Gunnhilde was implacable.

The wrath of Gunnhilde was the element which was required to prevent the possible reconciliation of the family of Evenwolf to the reigning house of Norway, and hence it is strongly dwelt upon by the aristocratic Saga-man. The queen had two brothers, named Eyvind and Alf, and to these young men she confided the task of slaying the sons of Skallagrim. In the summer there was held at Gaular, a place in Central Norway, where the Parliament sat, a great *blót*, or sacrificial feast. There was a temple there, and people assembled from far and wide. Thorir had an inkling that treachery was intended, so Egil was left at home, and Thorolf was left alone neither by night nor day. Eyvind accordingly only contrived to stab a cousin of Björn's, named Thorvald, who died within the precincts of the temple. Instead, therefore, of helping his sister's cause, he had committed a very serious crime, and had become *vargr í véum*, a wolf in the sanctuary—that is to say, a man outlawed and excommunicated for a religious murder. He was obliged to leave

Norway, so he went and served the Danish king, Harald Bluetooth. In the next spring, Thorolf and Egil went viking on the coasts of Jutland and North Friesland: when they were coming back in the autumn, they learned that Eyvind was lying in wait for them. So Egil got up very early one morning, and stole along the shore till he saw Eyvind's ships, and fell upon them, so that Eyvind barely saved his life by swimming to land, and lost his master's ships. After this Thorolf said they could hardly go back to Norway. "Very well," replied Egil, "then let us go elsewhere." They decided to go back again; and so, after leisurely harrying the coasts of Saxland and Flanders, they crossed the Channel and came to London. It is unfortunate that all this part of the Saga, which would be of the first interest to us, is deeply tinged with mythical colour. According to *Egla*, however, Æthelstan received the young vikings with delight, and they became his men. England in those days was Christian, and it was suggested to the Icelandic warriors that they should change their faith. They were not inclined to do this, but they did not object to receive the *prima signatio*—persons so marked being considered as catechumens, and within the outer pale of Christendom. The great enemy of Æthelstan is represented as being a Scottish king, Olaf the Red, who gathered a great army, conquered Northumberland, and drove Earl Alfgeirr before him. Thorolf and Egil commanded the entire viking contingent in the army sent out by the English king to resist the invaders, and it was they who summoned Olaf, in Æthelstan's name, to fight a pitched battle on a field marked out by hazel-poles, after which, whoever was victor should be king of all England. The place that Æthelstan chose is called Vinuskóga in the Saga, but we all know it under the far more famous name of Brunanburh. After all sorts of mediation, they came at last to fight. The political significance of the battle was not understood by the Saga-man, but he had a most vivid and sonorous vision of the fighting itself. Thus he describes the close of the victory of Brunanburh:—

"They stood back against the wood. Then the battle began in earnest. Egil sought for Adils, and there were hard blows to be given and taken. Great were the odds, yet fell there most on the side of Adils. Then Thorolf grew so mad that he flung his shield behind him, and took his sword in his two hands. Then leaped he forward, and hewed and cut on both sides. Men winced back from him on either hand, and he slew many. So he cleared a way through to Earl Hring's standard, and stayed not till he reached it. And he slew the man who bore Earl Hring's standard, and hewed down the staff of the standard. After that he laid his lance at the earl's breast, and through his coat of mail and his body, so that it went out between the shoulders, and he lifted him up upon his halberd over his head, and then thrust the handle of the lance into the ground; but the earl died upon the lance, and that all saw, both his own men and his enemies. Then Thorolf drew his sword, and hewed with both his hands. His men also followed him. Then fell many Britons and Scots, and some hastened to flee away. But when Earl Adils saw his brother's fall, and the great loss of his men, and how some fled, and that he himself was in sore straits, he fled also, and ran away into the woods; he fled into the woods, and his army with him."

So the first day resulted in victory for Æthelstan; but in the next battle Thorolf was pierced through by Adils, and though Egil rushed forward with his sword Snake, and slew Adils, and gained a great victory, yet the body of his brother was found dead upon the battle-field. While the Englishmen were rejoicing, he went and piously washed the body of Thorolf, dug a grave and buried his brother in it, with his arms and garments. He sang two poems in his honour, and then he went up to the king's drinking hall, and sat down at his place; but he would neither drink nor speak, for his heart was heavy for his brother. And at this point the Saga describes its hero:—

"Egil was a man with prominent features, a broad forehead, heavy brows, nose not long, but wide and fiery, lips thick and large, chin wonderfully broad, and all round the jawbone the same, thick in the neck, and very large in the shoulders; moreover, he grew harder of countenance and fiercer than other men when he was angry. He was well-built, and taller than any man, had thick, wolf-grey hair, and early in life grew bald."

A formidable personage surely, and now in his grief, he looked so fierce that there was an uncomfortable silence in the court of Æthelstan; but the king took a great gold ring off his arm, and reached it to Egil on the point of his sword, and consoled him with this honourable gift. Egil remained in England all the winter after the battle of Brunanburh, but in the spring he announced his wish to go back to Norway to see after the affairs of his brother's widow, Asgerde. Æthelstan gave him leave, and he started with more than a hundred men. He found Thorir dead, and his son Arinbjörn become landsman in his stead; Arinbjörn gave him a warm welcome, and he remained in Norway quietly all that winter. Meanwhile he fell in love with Asgerde, through pity of her sorrow, and fain would have married her, but feared that she would scorn him because he was so bald. He took to singing strains so extremely cryptic that even Arinbjörn could not understand him, but this was merely a lover's whim, for Asgerde loved him, and before the spring they were married. Then he went back to Iceland, having been away for twelve years. He stayed a long while with Skallagrim at Borg, while his friend Thorfinn married Egil's sister Sæunn. But after some years Egil heard of troubles in Norway, and of the rage of his old enemy, Queen Gunnhilde, so he set off for Norway, but left Thordis, his step-child, Thorolf's daughter, at home in Iceland. A man of the name of Önund had seized Asgerde's Norwegian property, so Egil summoned him before the Gula Thing, the Assize-court of Central Norway, and a great law-suit was opened. Arinbjörn encouraged Egil to fight it out, though the king was known to be unfavourable to him. The suit turned on the legitimacy of Asgerde, whose mother, it will be remembered, was forcibly carried off by Björn. The queen, seeing that the arguments were going in favour of Egil, bade her brother Alf to break up the court; Egil then challenged Ölund to fight a duel, *holmgáng*, but he refused, and the king taking a high hand in the matter, Egil was declared an outlaw. In revenge for this Egil sought King Erik's life, and they had a battle at sea, Egil with great difficulty escaping. King Erik being in the South of Norway, fighting his own brothers, Egil harried the lands around the Sogne Fjord, and killed Rögnvald, the king's favourite son. He performed a feat of extraordinary courage and skill, sailing up the fjords by night to Fenring, and slaying his enemy Önund in a wood, pretending to be a bear. After this the berserk fury came upon him, and he slew men on all sides. Then before leaving the country he set a horse's head up on a hazel-pole, and called upon the gods of the land, in mystic runes, to curse Erik and Gunnhilde, and to drive them from the country. Then he sailed out to sea, and to Iceland, where, finding Skallagrim very old and decrepid, he took the rule of the house upon himself. At last Skallagrim died; his body was put into a ship and taken out to Digraness, where he first landed; it was then buried upon the promontory, with his horse, his weapons, and his smith-tools, but with no money. Egil's step-daughter Thordis stayed with him, and he loved her much.

But in process of time, Hakon, King Erik's brother, sailed out from England to Norway, and conquered Erik, who had to fly, and Arinbjörn fled with him. They came to England, and Æthelstan made Erik Governor of Northumberland. But Gunnhilde longed to see Egil, her enemy, and as she was a great witch, she contrived by magic that he should have no rest till he came to her. Accordingly, Egil, in Iceland, began to lose his spirits, and at last determined to start for England. He landed at the mouth of the Humber, and rode up to York, where Erik held his court. He found Arinbjörn at supper, and persuaded him to take him before the king. When Gunnhilde saw Egil, she rejoiced, and would have had him slain at once, but Arinbjörn got leave to take him back as a prisoner for that one night. Arinbjörn then proposed to Egil to compose a *drapa*, a poem in praise of Erik, "and, if you are wise," said he, "you will not make it of less than twenty stanzas."

Egil answered that he would try, and was left alone with ale and meat in his bed-chamber. But when Arinbjörn came in at midnight to see how the poem was progressing, Egil said he could not begin, because a swallow on the window-sill would pipe so loud that he could think of nought else. But Arinbjörn watched and found that this discordant creature was a *hamhleypa*, a witch in disguise, perhaps Queen Gunnhilde herself, and he kept guard at the window all night, while Egil forged his great *drapa*, and at dawn the poem was finished.

Next morning Arinbjörn and Gunnhilde contended with one another for Egil's life, and Erik lent now to this argument, now to that, until Egil stood forward and recited his *drapa*, and this appeased the anger of Erik. He gave him leave to ride out of York, and the Icelander made swift use of this permission and went off to Æthelstan in London, parting very affectionately from Arinbjörn, to whose courageous fidelity he owed so much. Soon after this Arinbjörn determined to help his young nephew Thorstein to recover his father's possessions, so he took him up to London, and induced Egil to go with him to Norway and help him. So Egil and Thorstein started in the autumn, and sailed up what is now the Christiania Fjord, and Egil helped Thorstein to secure his rights. King Hakon was spending the winter at Throndhjem, so as soon as the spring weather arrived, Egil and Thorstein went by land, over the Dovrefjeld, to the court, and there were received very graciously, and Thorstein was made landsman in his own province. But Egil could not get peace with the king, for though Hakon was at war with his brother Erik Bloodaxe, he could not forget that Rögnvald, the boy whom Egil slew in the fjord, was his nephew. So Hakon would not let Egil be his man, but parted from him in peace and recognised his legal claims.

Then Thorstein and Egil returned, but when they came to the ridge of the Dovrefjeld, they parted, and Thorstein went home, but Egil turned westward down Romsdal to the sea. He paid a visit to Björn's sister Gyda, who lived with her young son Fridgeirr. They received him hospitably, but he perceived that they were melancholy, and that Fridgeirr's sister, a very beautiful maiden, was often weeping. At last they told him that a terrible berserk, Ljot the Pale, a hateful and turbulent bully, had demanded the girl's hand, and when they refused had challenged Fridgeirr, who was young and slight, to *holmgáng*. Then Egil remembered Arinbjörn's kindness, and said he would stay to see the fight. The consequence was that at the *holmgáng* Ljot preferred to fight with Egil. Then Egil took his sword and sang—

Hew with hilt-wands polished,
Hold the shield with the sword,
Shift the moon of shields,
Redden the sword in blood,
Cut off Ljot from life,
Play sorely with the Pale one,
Calm the brisk coil with weapons.
(To the eagles with the carrion!)

After a long fight Ljot was slain, and by the law which gives a berserk's goods to any man whom he challenges and who slays him, Egil became his heir. But he spent the winter with Thord and did not try to take the property. He had, however, not yet won the lands that Ölund had taken from his wife Asgerde, so he went up to Atle the Short, Ölund's son, and summoned him to the Thing at Gula, where Egil challenged Atle to *holmgáng*. Atle had by magical arts made his body impregnable to iron, so Egil could not touch him; but finding this, Egil ran in and caught him round the body, and threw him back so that his neck was broken, and Atle died. So Egil recovered his wife's lands.

Next summer Egil sailed back to Iceland. He grew a very rich and great man, and Asgerde bore him two daughters, Thorgerde and Bera and three sons, Bödvar, Gunnar, and Thorstein, all handsome and promising children. But tidings came that King Erik Bloodaxe had died in viking, and that Gunnhilde having fled to Denmark, Arinbjörn had gone back in peace to Norway, so Egil began to long to pay him a visit. So he set out with a man named Önund, who was a hamram berserk, on whom iron could not bite; Arinbjörn received them very affectionately, and gave them many gifts. But after Yule, Arinbjörn noticed that Egil was growing exceedingly melancholy, and soon he spoke not a word. It came out at last: Egil was brooding over the fact that he could not obtain the property of Ljot the Pale, which King Hakon had seized. Arinbjörn, out of good nature, tried to get this back from the king, but Hakon was stubborn; and in order to console Egil, Arinbjörn gave him a great store of silver out of his own estate. So Egil was comforted. The next spring Arinbjörn proposed that the two old friends should go a-viking once more, and so he and Egil took three ships and three hundred men and harried Saxland, that is, the country around the Elbe, all the summer, and Friesland all the autumn. The saga gives a curious account of the flat lands, protected against the sea with dykes, and intersected with broad ditches. One of these last well-nigh became Egil's bane, for chasing a party of Frisians one day, he lightly leaped across the ditch, but no others of the Norsemen could. So the Frisians seeing but one man against them, rallied and would have slain him, but he killed eleven of them, and found a bridge by which he went back to Arinbjörn. After this they sailed to Denmark, and there they parted, for Arinbjörn went home, but Egil went up the Christiania Fjord to visit Thorstein at Oslo.

King Harald Fairhair had conquered all Wermland, in Sweden, as far east as Lake Wener, and had levied a tribute on this province; but things went slackly while his sons fought one with the other, and Earl Arnvid, who ruled the province, sent in but small tribute. So King Hakon sent twelve men to collect the money, but they were slain, and this happened twice. The third time he called on Thorstein to go, but he refused; Egil was then staying with Thorstein, and he agreed to go to Wermland with King Hakon's men, with three of Thorstein's men to help him. But when they reached Sweden, Hakon's men gave Egil the slip, and returned to Norway. But Egil pushed on through a wild, over-grown country to the house of a certain Armod Beard, a rich noble who treated him treacherously, but on whom he took a horrible revenge. At the next house they came to, they were very hospitably received, and as they sat at meat, Egil saw a sick woman lying on a bed, and asked what ailed her. It appeared that she was Helga, daughter of Thorfinn, the host, and that she had been bewitched by a young man, and was dying of sleeplessness. So Egil bade them search her bed, and under the bed-clothes they found a piece of fish-bone, engraved with runes. He burned this with fire, and repeated some other runes, and she felt better, though still very weak. Then Egil went on again, and passed through a wood where men lay in wait, but durst not attack him, and he came at last to the house of Alf the Rich, a man who hated Earl Arnvid. Then they pressed on and came to the place where Earl Arnvid held his court. When Egil complained of the fate of the convoys previously sent by King Hakon, Arnvid expressed great surprise, and said that he knew nothing about it. He collected the tribute, partly in silver, partly in furs, and presented it to Egil, who then departed. As soon as he was gone, the Earl called his two brothers, and bade them hide in the woods and slay Egil with all his men. So when Egil was returning to the house of Alf, a party of thirty men rushed out of the wood at them, and there was a great fight in the bed of a frozen stream. But Egil struggled up the ravine and made a great slaughter of the Wermlanders, though he was sorely wounded himself. But his wound healed, and when he came to the house of Thorfinn he found there great rejoicings, for Helga was cured. He then made his way, with the tribute, through the woods and tortuous paths of the border, back to Thorstein, and sent the tribute to King Hakon, who made peace with him and his family. Then in the summer Egil manned a long-ship and sailed out again to Iceland, and he left his home no more.

There now comes in the saga an episode about Lambi and the fire there was at Alptaness; but we may pass over this. A man named Grim Svertingsson, who lived at Mossfell, asked for the hand of Thordis, Egil's step-daughter, and Olaf Höskuldsson, who was the handsomest man in Iceland, married Egil's daughter Thorgerde. But all did not go so smoothly as this, for Bödvar, Egil's eldest son, who was the apple of his eye, and a fine promising lad, powerful as his father had been at his age, died in a storm, which upset a ship which he was helping to unload, close to Borg. His body was washed ashore at Einarsness. Egil went down to the shore, and taking the body of his son across his knees, rode with it up to the tomb of his father Skallagrim upon Digraness, opened the grave and laid the lad beside his grandfather. Egil wore tight hose and a close red fustian coat, and both of these were rent with his agony. He rode home at sundown, and locked himself into his bedchamber, and would not speak nor eat. On the third day Asgerde sent to her married daughter Thorgerde to come, and she bade her father open the door to her. She lay down as he was doing, and announced that she too would die; very cunningly she persuaded him to drink some milk, and then not to die until he had written a poem in honour of his son; thus she dissuaded him from starving himself. He composed *Sonar-torrek*, "The Loss of the Son," a long elegy in four and twenty stanzas, which is one of the finest examples we possess of ancient Icelandic poetry. As he composed his poem Egil's spirits rose, and he recited it with animation to his family. Thorgerde then returned home to her husband.

After this Egil became very old. He learned that his faithful friend Arinbjörn had received great honours in Norway, and he wrote a long poem, the *Arinbjarnardrapa*, fragments of which we possess, to congratulate him. In his great age there came out to settle in Broadfirth a young man, Einar Helgasson, who was a very clever poet. Egil and he met at the Thing and fell to discussing the art of poetry, *Skáldskap*, a subject that amused them both, and after this they became great friends. Einar was a noble and generous man, but as poor as the typical poet. There is a curious story about him, which contains one of the few jokes in Saga literature. Einar came one autumn to visit Egil, but found him away from home. He waited for him three days at Borg, and it was not etiquette to stay any longer. So he hung up a precious shield he had over Egil's seat, and bade them tell him that it was Einar's gift. When Egil came home he pretended to be in a great rage, for he said he knew that Einar meant to force him to make a poem on the gift. He called for his horse, and said he must ride after Einar and kill him. Einar and Egil remained fast friends all their days, and Egil took the shield with him everywhere, till one day at a bridal feast it fell into a tub of sour milk and was spoiled. This story of the shield is the only humorous point in *Egla*.

Thorstein grew up an extremely handsome and capable man, but he did not get on very well with his father, so when at last Asgerde died, Egil gave Borg up to his son, and went away to Mossfell to live with his stepdaughter Thordis and her husband Grim, for he loved Thordis better than any one else in the world. Thorstein, left to himself, soon quarrelled with his nearest neighbour, a man named Steinar. The dispute was brought before the Thing, and Egil was deputed to decide it: he gave his decision very forcibly in favour of his own son. Thorstein had great troubles after this, and his eldest child, Grim, a beautiful boy, was murdered by Steinar. The last thing Egil did will remain a mystery for ever. He had become blind, and the women chid him for coming in their way in the house, so that he was very miserable. He became jealous of his wealth, and one night he bade a horse be saddled for him, and started off with two coffers of silver money and two slaves. He said that he wished to bathe in the darkness, but next morning when folk were rising, there stood Egil with the horse outside the house, alone. He would not say where he had been, but long afterwards he admitted that he had killed the slaves after burying the money, but where he would not say. The autumn after this he died, and was buried in his arms and garments upon Tjaldaness. But when the land became Christian, Thordis had Egil's skull brought and laid in Mossfell Church; and there it was found three centuries afterwards by Skapti Thorarinsson the priest. It was unusually large and heavy, and the surface of it was waved and striped like a harp-shell. And that was the end of Egil Skallagrimsson.

E. W. G.

In Assynt.

THE first view of Sutherlandshire is apt to be disappointing. It is often gained by the traveller along the western route in this wise. The *Clydesdale* rounds Ru Coygach to roll a good deal in the sea that sets into the Minch; but as soon as the entrance to Loch Inver is gained, the steamer is less buffeted by the fast-running swells. More especially is this the case when it leaves Sheep Island behind—a bare oblong rock tenanted by a few of the animals which give it a name. Once in Loch Inver itself, eager eyes are directed towards the shore from the dank and dripping steamer. The cold dark Laurentian rocks are seen edged with foam. All above is smothered in mists. It is impossible to discern anything which is forty feet above the sea-level. The Captain politely points out the quarter where Suilven should gloom against the sky, and Quinaig majestically wear her diadem of quartz, and, beyond all, Ben More raise his mighty mass. Alas! the keenest gaze cannot pierce their mist veils, and nothing can be more tantalising than the various criticisms on the rival mountains uttered by those round the visitor familiar with the view. But there the mists are, and they impress him as at the outset of his tour he stands, his "sea-gown scarfed around him," with the conviction that no one should go to Sutherlandshire who cannot give the climate plenty of time to recover from these frequent fits of sulkiness. Like a spoilt child, even in summer Sutherlandshire hides her face, it may be for days, and then, without the least apparent motive, the mist-clouds rise, the sea brightens out against the great brown mountains, and the beholder is delighted at the change. The Highlanders themselves do not try his patience so much as the coy moods of their mountains.

But let us take a different scene. It is eleven o'clock on a balmy July night, and Loch Assynt sleeps far spread below in lustrous beauty, watched by Quinaig on one hand, like a lion couchant, and on the other flanked by dark rock walls, rounded and tufted with bushy trees every here and there, till they give way to heather on the higher altitudes. These crags culminate in Canisp and Suilven, whose massive heads peer over the nearest range of cliffs. A strange amber light diffuses itself everywhere—such a light as Poole would paint for the setting of an enchanted land, and Turner might have despaired of ever reproducing in all its copiousness of aërial transparency. The setting sun has flooded the opposite heights with a deep golden glow, which fades to rich saffron, and then to this singularly warm twilight, which is seldom or never seen away from the Northern mountains. A few black cattle and many heaps of peat speck the valley below. Every rocky shelf around is brought into vivid distinctness. The perfect stillness is almost oppressive. No swallows are found here; no swifts dart screaming overhead as they would in England. The distant rumble and screech of the locomotive is here unknown. Not a murmur from the great world invades the landscape's peace. Only a thin light hum rises and falls in the air, a gnat thirsting for your blood, for here these troublesome insects abound. Fortunately the "clegs" (or still more fell gadflies) have ceased to be aggressive at sundown. You draw out your watch; it is eleven, but quite light enough to enable a letter to be read. So you linger drinking in draughts of balmy air and mountain beauty. Their summits are now purple, while gloom gathers below, and gradually creeping upwards, displaces the purple tints with cold grey outlines. And now like ghosts of their daylight selves the mountains stand clear-cut against a starry sky. Small wonder is it that, after several such evenings, the visitor bears away lively reminiscences of Sutherlandshire.

Thanks to the careful regulations and wise policy of the Duke, Sutherlandshire, when once reached, can offer fair accommodation to tourists, together with plentiful, if homely fare, and rooms of perfect cleanliness. To such minute matters of detail does the Duke's supervision extend, that it is a capital crime for an innkeeper to cheat or overcharge a visitor. Consequently, no one need go north with the melancholy forebodings which Boswell entertained when he dined for the first time with Johnson—"I supposed we should scarcely have knives and forks, and only some strange, uncouth, ill-drest dish." The result is sure to agree with the model biographer's experience, who found everything "in very good order." The larger holdings are mostly let on a nine-years' lease, while smaller farms are held on a yearly agreement. This enables a prompt change of tenants to be effected, should any house be troublesome for poaching. By these and similar measures keepers find their office a sinecure, so far as detecting poachers is concerned. None of those lawless midnight brawls occur which disgrace more thickly populated districts of England. A couple of keepers are enough for a stretch of land thirty miles across; and the Duke is known familiarly as the "good Duke," "the best of all the Dukes we have had." The cordiality of the relations subsisting between him and his numerous tenantry greatly adds to the pleasure of residing in his domains. Yet few tourists, pure and simple, find their way so far north. Naturalists and, above all, fishermen, form the bulk of the visitors. The talk is everywhere of "flees" and "sawmon powles;" of lochs and burns and fishing-days and spates. The salmon-rivers are let; but all lochs and burns and rivers may be whipped by trout-fishers, with a few exceptions, which may be learnt from the different landlords of the inns. Trout appear at every meal, and salmon is so often served that the guest is involuntarily reminded of the apocryphal story of maid-servants and apprentices, who used in the good old times in England to covenant specially with their masters that they were not to be fed on this fish more than three days in the week. Sooth to say, of all dishes, salmon is the one which soonest palls on the appetite, whereas, when sharpened by exercise, hungry fishermen can always eat trout. This is fortunate, as the parish of Assynt possesses some three hundred lochs in its 97,000 acres, and many of them abound with trout.

The eastern side of Sutherlandshire is the scene of the Duke's experiments in clearing the moor and establishing farms. Assynt, on the opposite shore, is as great a contrast to these trim square fields as can be imagined. Rough moor and heather-tufted rock alternate with lochs, which lie under some of the wildest and most imposing mountains of Scotland. Everywhere in Assynt four of these, Suilven, Canisp, Quinaig, and Ben More, are conspicuous; that is to say, when not hidden in mists. These are the oldest mountains in the British Isles; the three former being composed of Cambrian conglomerate and sandstone, Quinaig being capped with silurian quartzose, while Ben More is made up of silurian quartzite and traps.* The strip of the Laurentian system on the coast is overlaid by silurian beds as the traveller advances inland, and the two result in a bare bleak country, treeless, almost devoid of bushes, intersected by a streak of limestone, which runs up into gigantic terraces and buttresses at Stromechrubie by the back of the little hotel of Inchnadamph. These bony processes, as it were, of the country are clothed with a scanty covering of appropriate vegetation,—heath and bog plants, with a few rare ferns in the sheltered recesses, down which burns flow to the lochs. It is a country which must be very much loved or very much detested. The ordinary tourist, away from the comforts of hotels and railroads, falls under the latter category. We have never heard that the enterprising Mr. Cook ever "personally conducted" his myrmidons here, though he marshals them at the North Cape, to see the midnight sun. But to the artist, the lover of nature in her sterner and grander moods, and above all, to the naturalist and angler, Assynt is a delightful reality at the time of visiting it, while afterwards it fades into a dreamland of stately mountains and lochs studded with water-lilies. Thither we mentally retire when the facts of common life obtrude themselves too much, when troubles and business, and the hurry of daily existence, weigh down the spirits. It is astonishing what fine stags can often at such times be stalked on the lonely corries which the golden eagle sweeps across from Quinaig, where he yet lives and thrives—how we can watch him swoop down upon the alpine hare, which, aware of the shadow dimming the sunlight overhead, darts rapidly into his cave in the crags, and escapes the royal bird;—and how we can battle successfully with monster salmon on the Inver, or catch trout of grand weight on Loch Awe. Thus it is that fancy compensates for the monotony of work, and in every beautiful spot that we visit grows the "bright golden flower" of blissful content—

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* Lyell's *Elements of Geology*, 2nd ed. p. 89.

> More med'cinal than that moly
> That Hermes once to wise Ulysses gave,
> Of sovran use
> 'Gainst all enchantments, mildew blast, or damp,
> Or ghastly furies' apparition.

For this flower of simple happiness transmutes the dullest scene into an enchanted land. Certainly it grows abundantly, if a man can only find it, on the bare crags of Assynt.

Little has been written respecting the district of Assynt itself, but two or three books may be recommended to those who would have a general knowledge of Sutherlandshire. First must come *A History of the Earldom of Sutherland*, by Sir Robert Gordon, written in 1630, but not published until 1813. It contains a celebrated passage on the fauna of the county, but many of the creatures' names require an antiquarian to identify them. "All these forrests and schases are verie profitable for feiding of bestiall, and delectable for hunting. They are full of reid deer and roes, wulffs, foxes, wyld cates, brocks, skuyrrels, whittrets, weasels, otters, martrixes, hares, and fumarts. In these forrests and in all this province, ther is great store of partriges, pluivers, capercaleys, blackwaks, mure-fowls, heth-hens, swanes, bewters, turtle-doves, herons, dowes, steares or stirlings, lairigigh or kuag (which is a foull lyk unto a paroket, or parret, which maks place for her nest with her beck in the oak tree), duke, draig, widgeon, teale, wildgouse, ringouse, routs, whaips, shot-whaips, woodcok, larkes, sparrowes, snyps, blackburds or osills, meweis, thrushes, and all other kinds of wild foull and birds, which ar to be had in any pairt of this kingdome" (p. 3). Save the vermin in this list, the "weasels, martrixes," &c., the generality of these birds and beasts yet flourish in Assynt, though their numbers and distribution have, of course, been greatly affected by the system of preserving game. The chronicler occasionally deals in the marvellous, as when he tells us of certain forked-tail deer inhabiting a mountain called Arkill, and still more amusingly (though the air of the county deserves the compliment), "ther is not a ratt in Sutherland, and if they doe come thither in shipps from other pairts (which often happeneth), they die presentlie, how soone they doe smell of the aire of that countrey, and (which is strange) their is a great store and abundance of them in Catteynes, the verie next adjacent province" (p. 7). For sea-birds and fishing, Wilson's *Voyage Round the West Coast of Scotland* is useful. He was brother of Professor Wilson, an ardent sportsman and amusing writer, and, landing occasionally on his upward voyage, found time to fish and make observations on natural history. Another book, more valuable in its day than at present, but still useful from the many acute remarks of its enthusiastic writer, is Mr. St. John's *Tour in Sutherlandshire* (2 vols., 12mo., London, 1849). The book also is somewhat of a misnomer, as only three parts of the first volume are devoted to extracts from a journal describing a ramble through Sutherlandshire; the rest consisting of field notes, remarks on deer-stalking and fishing. Still it takes the reader back to the time when Assynt was infinitely more primitive than it now is, and it was easier to find a man who had been to the North Cape than one who knew anything of this charming district. In those days, say forty years ago, the osprey might be seen. It bred in several localities near Kylescu and Scourie, and especially at Loch Assynt, where, two years before Mr. St. John wrote, it had been shot, and that by no less a sportsman than himself, though no one would guess it from his words (vol. i. p. 119):—"At Loch Assynt on a peninsula (once an island, and now occasionally so), there are the ruins of an old castle. On the summit of the highest part of the wall is an immense pile of weather-beaten and bleached sticks, which, two years ago, formed an osprey's nest; but unluckily this most interesting bird has been killed or driven from its picturesque and exposed dwelling-place." The fisherman yet looks up with regret to the platform on which a cartload of sticks used to form the osprey's nest, and listens to the recitals of the natives on the picturesque manner in which the ospreys used to dash into the lake in front while feeding, and then reflects with something of the feeling which prompted the celebrated exclamation, *Et tu, Brute*, that their destroyers were two of the most eminent sportsmen and naturalists of the time. To such lengths will a longing for specimens carry collectors! And now the ornithologist's malison is said!

A curious feature of Assynt is the Loch Muloch corrie, or Gillaroo Loch, as it is sometimes called, from being tenanted by the variety of trout called gillaroo. The peculiarity of this fish consists in a thickening of the gizzard, apparent on dissection, and which is said to arise from its feeding largely on pond snails. To an ordinary eye the fish do not differ from the common trout of the country, but a gillie or experienced fisherman will at once detect the gillaroo. This loch lies high up on the limestone hills over Inchnadamph, and, if a guide be not taken, can only be found by a compass. The best way is to ascend from the road by Loch Assynt up the course of the Trailigill burn, and when some two miles have been conquered, then to strike over the swelling wastes of heather to the right. The burn itself is a typical mountain stream, now leaping down a dark narrow chasm into a deep pool edged with stunted elders, now spreading out over boulders and gravel, now brawling over rock-shelves with brilliant golden blossoms at the side and little trout glancing over the shallows, but never forgetting its mission to gain the lower ground and carry down to Loch Assynt the drainage of the hills. The heather slopes above are indented with singular cup-like hollows, supposed by some to be the site of a camp or a village, but we think that a dispassionate examination will show them to be natural features. Every here and there a lonely shealing, or a shepherd's hut, is passed. A few hens stride over the "midden" in front, where pestilential odours poison the sweet mountain air; some cabbages in a plot, overrun with weeds and fenced in rudely with stones and hurdles, are growing on one side. On the other is a decrepit peat-shed. The cottage itself is low, of rough stone, roofed with peat and heather, fastened down with straw bands, and there are sure to be two or three bare-legged lads and lassies in front playing with a kitten. As for sanitary arrangements, there are none, but the fresh air and pure water around forbid disease. At a little distance nothing more picturesque than such a cottage can be imagined, nothing more suitable to the *genius loci*, with its thin column of blue "peat reek" ascending against the purple slope of the hill. There are other institutions and customs of the Scotch equally fair—at a distance.

Wearily do we plunge through the heather which rises almost up to the middle in some sheltered corries, and at length discern a colley far in front. Soon a second appears, and then their owner, a thin, spare man, clad in jacket and home-spun trowsers and wearing a huge "Tam O'Shanter" bonnet. Nothing loth, both of us "foregather," turning to have a look at Assynt spread far below, and the huge tops of Canisp and Suilven peering over nearer mountains beyond. We admire his colleys, a sure way to win the shepherd's heart, and are told how they sleep with the children and have the remains of their porridge, and are in every respect treated with consideration as being valuable allies. What would a shepherd's life be worth on a wild December afternoon when the east wind carries the sleet straight into his face, had he not Donald and Wallace? They are eminently "douce" dogs too, and every Sabbath accompany their master to kirk in a very different frame of mind to their ordinary alert and frolicksome mood. Is this an hereditary result of the long Gaelic sermons to which their progenitors listened? All the shepherds and gillies here are allowed by the Duke to fish for trout—a kindly as well as a politic measure, the only restrictions being that they are not to fish a stream before a gentleman if he is seen advancing down it, nor are they permitted to fish within sight of a high-road. The privilege is greatly valued, as may be supposed, and is the means of many a salmon being spared on the breeding-beds and many a callow brood of grouse being rescued from Wallace's maw. We part with mutual good wishes and stumble upon the Gillaroo Loch, exactly where we had settled it ought to be, thanks to the compass. Its shores are shallow, and the centre is a good deal choked with weeds, but, by leaping from rock to boulder, we get out some way, and, letting out much line, just manage to secure one fish for a specimen. Then the sun blazes out, as it only does on these Highland hills in July, and we give up fishing as useless, making a *détour* to avoid the steeper parts of the craggy hill-side overhanging the little inn at Inchnadamph, and so down an abrupt descent leading to the burn, stumble upon Harry Malcolm, the keeper.

All who are fond of natural history and sport naturally like a chat with a keeper. No one else is brought into such familiar relations with the birds and beasts on the hill-side. The Scotch poacher is a pleasant companion owing to his enthusiasm and anecdotes. Kingsley depicts him exactly :—

> I'm aff and away to the muirs, mither, to hunt the dun deer,
> Ranging far frae frowning faces and the douce folks here;
> Crawling up through burn and bracken, leaping down the screes,
> Looking out frae crag and headland, drinking up the summer breeze.

But he has not the time requisite to make the acquaintance of the wild creatures at home. He must kill and be off with his booty, instead of lying motionless in a heather clump at early dawn and watching at leisure the many animals which love to roam at night stealing homewards to their dens. Edward, the Banff naturalist, in his nocturnal rambles, only coincides with the conviction possessed by sportsmen and observers all over the world, that he who would see the lower animals in their most fearless and congenial moods ought to watch for them at night or early morn. Malcolm's intelligent face shaded by an old solar-topee matches his wiry and athletic form ; and both together assure a casual visitor to the kingdom of the birds, now as fairly baffled with regard to the right track as Execestides himself,* that he will readily point out the direction in which the shortest path lies and give information on the many interesting birds and beasts of this district. Accordingly we sink into the heather and gain the following facts from our chat with him :—"Eagles? Yes, there are golden eagles now, a pair of them on Quinaig in front, but they are not often seen on this side. Sometimes, however, they sweep overhead at a great height in circling eddies, and, of course, they are on the look-out for a dead sheep or weakly lamb. The blue (or alpine) hare is also a favourite dish ; their persecution has developed in this hare a need of a den for retreat, which ordinary hares never think of. Thus they seize upon any hole or cranny in the rocks around us, and, when attacked, flee into it, when they are at once safe. I have seen a golden eagle blockade one, so eager was it, but the hare would not venture into the open until the eagle somewhat reluctantly took wing. Eagles abounded much more even in 1846 when I came here as keeper. At that time it was possible to see nine in the air at once. I shot three in one day, and no less than sixteen in three weeks. Now eagles and peregrine falcons are strictly preserved by the Duke. The favourite prey of the peregrine is the grouse, and the opinion has prevailed that by striking down the last and therefore the weakest of the covey, the bird was assisting nature in exterminating or reducing to very small proportions the grouse disease. My district? It is twenty-two miles long and some fifty miles in circumference. It was swarming with vermin when I first came. But blood-money was promised us, and the scheme was but too fatal. For every eagle we shot or trapped 1*l.* was allowed ; for every dog-fox, 10*s.*, but for the vixen, 2*l.* ; every cub (till August 12, when they were supposed to have become adult foxes), 10*s.* ; hawks, buzzards, &c., brought in 1*s.* each.

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* See Aristophanes, *The Birds*, 11.

The grey or scaul crow was worth 1*s*., but the raven 2*s*. 6*d*. Have kept tame eagles, which would sit on my arm, but would never let me see them feed, as they would spread their wings and turn round as often as I sought to see what and how they eat. They could not bear dogs or strangers, and often attacked them. I came in for their anger at times, and had to kick them off in self-defence. Finally, they took to evil ways—chicken-killing and the like. I could not bear to shoot them, so set my dogs on them and drove them off to the mountains. The deer are generally feeding in the corries on the other side of Ben More at this time of the year, but you may see them coming down to Loch Assynt at times. Last summer a fine stag used to feed among the cattle evening after evening in the meadow at the head of the Loch. The herd-boys amused themselves by stalking it and trying who could approach nearest. It was almost always seen on the Sabbath evenings, but was at length shot. The badger is very scarce now, if not exterminated. I killed the last which has been seen hereabouts, and it is now stuffed in the museum at Dunrobin." And so, taking a "richt gude willie-waught" with the keeper, we rise refreshed and pursue our stroll.

If anyone should wish to know more of the birds and beasts of Sutherland than these scraps, picked up during a noontide halt, he may be confidently recommended to two excellent papers on them published in the Natural History Society of Glasgow's *Transactions*, by Mr. E. R. Alston and Mr. J. Harvie Brown. From these papers it may be gathered that 115 species of birds breed in the county; but their numbers, and their abundance or scarcity in different years, present many curious problems to the ornithologist. Thus there are no blackbirds at Inchnadamph, near Assynt, though they are common some fourteen miles off at Loch Inver; instead of them we saw ring-ousels pilfering the black currants which grew in the inn-garden. The rook too is uncommon, and local in Assynt. We saw not a single swallow or marten during our stay. The wild-cat is certainly not extinct on the higher crags, nor the common marten, though they escape the notice of casual observers. The curlew breeds on the moor near Loch Awe; we were attacked by the parents and a brood of five, all of whom screamed and whistled as they flew near us in a very insulted manner. The lesser black-backed gull is a positive nuisance to the angler on Loch Assynt, from the manner in which she swoops down upon him and abuses him in the choicest of bird-Billingsgate. It is very pleasant to see birds thus tame and fearless of man, and speaks volumes for the treatment they obtain at the hands of the few natives. The Isle of Handa on the west coast of the county forms, it is well known, the breeding-place of thousands of gulls and such like birds.

On the edge of Loch Assynt, the ruins of Ardvreck Castle are very conspicuous. Sir R. Gordon, himself a younger son of the family of Sutherland, born in 1580, gives a good account of the solitary incident which has rendered this ruin famous, the capture of the great Montrose.

In general his history is weary reading, but the episode of Montrose is a purple patch in the dull chronicle. How would the reader enjoy page after page of the following character? "Tormat Macloyd, Laird of Assint, was one of the sons of Rory Moir Macloyd of the Leenes. Tormat Macloyd of Assint had thrie sones: Angus (who was called Old Angus, who travelled into France and Italie); John Reawigh, who possessed the Cogigh; and Tormat Bane, who went to Rome with his brother Old Angus," &c. &c. (p. 262.) David Leslie had sent his officers, Hacket and Strachan, to capture Montrose; and having defeated his little band on April 27, 1650, they pursued him and the Earl of Kinnoul, who had together made their escape into Assynt. The whole of that night and the next two days the fugitives held on, though sorely in want of food, when (and here the chronicler shall tell his own story, his book being exceedingly rare) "the Earl of Kinnoul, being faint for lack of meat and not able to travel any further, was left there among the mountaines, where it was supposed he perished. James Graham had almost famished, but that he fortuned in this miserie to light upon a smal cottage in that wildernesse, where he was supplied with some milk and bread. Immediatly after the fight, Captain Andro Monro did write to Neil Mackleud, Laird of Assint, who hade married his sister, desiring him earnestlie to apprehend any that should come in his countrie, and chiefly James Graham. The Laird of Assint was not negligent, but sent parties everywhere. Some of them met James Graham, accompanied only with one Major Sinclare, ane Orknay man. The partie apprehends them both, and brings them to Andwreck (the Laird of Assint his chief residence). James Graham made great offers to the Laird of Assint, if he would goe with him to Orknay, all which he refused, and did write to the leivtenant-generall. James Graham was two nights in Skibo, and from thence he was conveyed to Brayn, and so to Edinburgh. Being presented there before the parlament, he was sentenced to be hanged publiclie at the merkat crosse of Edinburgh, and to be quartered; his head to be put above the tolbuith of Edinburgh, where his vncle (the Earl of Gowrie) his head was formerlie placed, the year one thousand sixth hundreth; his four quarters were appointed to be sent to Glasco, Stirlin, Saint Johnston, and Aberdeen, there to be hung vp; and his bodie to be buried in the Borrow-Mure, where the most odious malefactors are vsuallie hanged and buried: all which was dewly performed. He was executed the twentie one day of May, one thousand six hundreth and fiftie years. He hade bin formerlie forfalted and excommunicated. The ministers dealt verie earnestlie with him to acknowledge his offence, that he might be absolued from the dreadfull sentence of excommunication, which he refused to doe, and so died obstinat. He hade sent a seditious declaration into Scotland the preceding winter, full of arrogance, sedition, and vain glorie; and he hade caused printe ane historie of his proceedings formerlie in Scotland, full of lies and untruths. One of these was put vpon either of his shoulders when he was vpon the scaffold, which were both formerlie burnt by the hand of the hangman. Thus perished James Graham (sometime Earl and Marquis of Montros), when (in his own conceit) he was at the top of his glorie; a man certainly indued with great gifts, if they hade bin rightlie imployed."

Of the many lochs in Assynt there are two which, from their beauty and the abundance of trout in them, are specially dear to fishermen. Loch Beannoch Beg is some four miles from Loch Inver village over the moorland. The walk may be enlivened by a glance at the wild duck with her young ones flapping down the shallows of the river, by putting up a little family of grouse, and collecting the characteristic plants of the locality. This Little Beannoch is a circular sheet of water surrounded by dark rocks, and full of water-lilies, which rise and fall on the mimic breezes of a summer day, and lend animation to what would otherwise be rather a dreary spot. The fish are of good size and flavour, but difficult to catch, as there is no boat, and when hooked from the side they at once make for the lilies. Here a pair of black-throated divers build regularly on an islet; the female scorns to fly away from her dusky fledgeling, but contents herself with swimming to the opposite side as the angler fishes onwards, and utters loud guttural barks at the intruder. On a rock which projects slightly above the surface, a lesser black-backed gull with her young one take their stand, in no ways alarmed at the fisherman's approach. Long may it be ere these interesting birds are destroyed or driven from their secluded loch.

The other, or Large Loch Beannoch, is considerably larger, and contains several islands, some of which are well wooded for this county, and on the birch-trees of one of these, often at a height of not more than six feet, is a heronry. The nests are built of sticks and heather, and, as there is a boat here, the ornithologist can approach and notice the ungainly attitudes of the old birds, as they alight to feed the little ones; but their screams are so harsh that he will soon be glad to leave them and row elsewhere to throw his flies in peace. Rocky points, plumed with heather, jut into deep water; shelves of nature's cyclopean masonry crop out unexpectedly; blocks, grey with lichen or warm with velvety moss, show themselves here and there above the surface; lilies and water-plaintains float in the mimic bays. Forests of tall green reeds, like the papyrus, bow before the evening breeze at one end, where the scenery is almost tropical from the luxuriance of these water-weeds, and the angler momentarily expects to see the dark snout of a crocodile peering at him, or a flock of rice-birds fluttering over the reeds, until he raises his eyes to the barren background of mountains. Stern and impressive are they, with no clumps of palm seen against a deep blue sky, no impervious greenery clothing their sides; mists shroud the farther giants, and a few wreaths of vapour soften the faces of the nearer brotherhood. A corbie utters his ill-omened cry over a dying sheep, or an eagle sails overhead to its eyrie. Reassured that he is in "Caledonia stern and wild," the "poetic child" resumes his fishing.

It may be that the wind rises and the mists descend in alarming showers at first, but towards evening in decided dogged rain. With old Roderick (well known at Loch Inver village) as his gilly, the tramp home across the spongy heather may be much shortened if the angler judiciously leads him on to speak of witchcraft and second-sight. Think not, oh! tourist, self-confident in the abundance of thy gold and thy powers of banter, to unlock his "buke full of brownyis and bogilis" by a few scoffing inquiries. The Scotch peasantry distrust all searchers into their tales of the dark art. The belief in these lies deep in their own hearts, under their strong sense of religious awe, and unless they meet with a sympathetic nature they are very chary of so much as naming any northern superstition. The same distrust and diffidence may be seen in the feeling of the ancient Greeks towards the Eumenides and the Mysteries, and it is instinctively rooted in human nature. The first night on which Roderick carried our fish from Loch Beannoch he was impenetrable to any questioning. Though an excellent fisherman, he is the exact type of a seer, with his reverent old-world beliefs and somewhat dreamy eye. Scott might have drawn his Allan-Bane from him—

A grey-haired sire! whose eye, intent,
Was on the visioned future bent.

But in the steady drizzle he replied with an amazed negative to all our inquiries whether he knew no story of witches and warlocks, whose cantrips might beguile the way. Spaewives and women who will send a favourable wind, Thomas the Rhymer or Merlin, Tamlane and the Fairy Queen—had he never heard of them? "'Deed, no, sir; I did never hear tell of them," and he looked at us with a serious look, as if he expected we were not altogether "canny." In despair, we told him of village queans turning into mawkins (hares), and *vice versâ*, of professors of witchcraft we had known, of pentagons and horoscopes, and all the commonplaces of the wizard's art. He only listened in awestruck silence. But he became more at home when we related how we had once met a veritable witch on Tweedside, evidently proved to be such because she was walking without being wet through a violent thunder shower; and how, next day, a terrified hare ran under the wheels of the carriage in which we drove hard by, and was killed. It was easy to connect the two occurrences, and a much slighter coincidence in old days would have sufficed to condemn the poor beldame. When Roderick found out, however, that we were to be trusted, a night or two afterwards he treated us to a choice display of witchcraft, and spoke with amusing force and evident conviction, the charm of which we despair of conveying to our readers. He began by instancing the witch of Endor (being like all Scotch peasants well-read in the Scriptures); and on our rejoining that ventriloquism might account for the words of Samuel, and reminding him that after all Saul is not said to have seen the prophet, he answered earnestly, "The men of those days were very big and wild fellows; but there is witches about still, in many places."

Finding him now inclined to be communicative, we turned the conversation to the Mhor Venn (or Big Witch), one of the curiosities of modern Sutherlandshire witchcraft. One Sarah Benn (*alias* Big Benn or Witch Benn) seems to have lived near Cape Wrath about the beginning of this century, and to have been renowned for her many "cantrips." The commonest of these was to sail in an empty eggshell to Stornoway opposite. At length, four young men seized her, and as they could not hang her in the ordinary way (which is said to be impossible in the case of a witch), they, with much cruelty, passed a rope under her own door, and putting it round her neck on the outside, pulled it from within, thus strangling her on her own doorstep. "I did know one of them myself," added Roderick; "he was called Rory McLeod, an old white-headed man, and he lived long after her murder; but what was very remarkable, none of the rest came to a quiet end—some were drowned, some killed other ways whateffer."

We ventured to interrupt, and ask whether they were ever tried for the murder. Roderick's recital was so singular, was told with such earnestness of belief, and is so amusingly repugnant to the boasted critical accuracy of the present day, that it is worth while (at the risk of appearing to steal Mr. Black's style) to set it forth as closely as may be in his own words. Still it lacks the intensity of his utterance; and the impressive scenery in which it was told, of course, greatly enhanced its effect.

"Old McLeod of Girvan, in Rossshire, you must know was very intimate with the witches of his time, and especially with the mother of the Mhor Venn; but how, I did not hear whateffer. Well; he was taken very ill. He had been a soldier, and had had a piece of one of his ears shot off in the wars with Napoleon. He was dying before long, and was so ill that one of the McLeods was sent over to Loch Inver to tell of his approaching death. He had a fery long walk over the hills, and it was a fery rough night—

> That night a child might understand
> The deil had business on his hand.

Well, sir, at Altnoi (that is, the Long Burn), half way between Inchnadamph and Altnagellagach, some twenty miles up this fery road, he walked over the bridge and heard some one saying, 'We'll manage ye, Donald; we'll manage ye; we'll tak' ye.' He looked and saw two witches sitting in the middle of the road before him, moulding an image of clay, which was all stuck over with pins;* but, somehow or other, they could never get the tip of the ear, which had been shot off, you know, to stick on to their image. Donald was a fery strong man whateffer, and rushed at them, and knocked them both over. Then he seized their image, and ran with it home to Girvan to McLeod; for, being witches, they could not cross the running water of the burn. He took it up to the chamber where his master lay, and gave it to him. First they drew out one very big pin from his heart. I mind those big pins well. He was at once much better. Then they took out the smaller ones, one after the other, each giving him greater relief, till at length, on the last one being removed, he was quite well.

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* This part of the story may be compared with the bewitching of Sir George Maxwell, in 1656, when a young girl named Janet Douglas divulged that a certain widow kept an image of Sir George, thrust through with pins, in a hole behind her fire. She was burnt to death. Burton says (*Anatomy of Melancholy*, i. cap. 3), "The devil's instruments are many times worse, if it be possible, than he himself, as Erastus thinks."

"About the same time, McLeod one night sent a servant to Dornoch on an errand. The man rather hung back. It was a wild night, and he would have to cross the Tain, which is always a mischancy river, with many dangers round it of ford and evil things. McLeod noticed his hesitation, and roared out at him, 'Tak' the gray horse, and the deil himself will not stap ye!' He took it with sair misgivings, and rode into the darkness till he reached the ford over the Tain. In the midst of this he found his bridle seized by two witches, one on each side. Says he (for he was fery bold), 'I have been waiting to see you of this long time.' Says they, 'And we are fery welcome to see you; all you have to do is to sign your name in blood in this parchment book in the name of the devil.' Well, he did not make more ado, but took a pen and pricked himself till the blood came, and then, laying the book open on the saddle before him, was about to write, when all at once he gave the gray a slap behind with his open hand; up he sprung, far in the air, and threw down both witches into the water, and then sprang round and sped home like the wind, while the man held the book tight under his arm. He was soon at McLeod's house, as you may suppose, and gives him the book. He opens it, and, believe me, sir,"—here it is hopeless to express the mysterious tones and agitated manner of Roderick as he held up his hand, with close-set lips and staring eyes—"believe me, sir, there was the names written therein of all the richest women of Ross-shire. Yes; he had them all down there! McLeod next proclaimed on the ensuing Sabbath, in the kirk, that if any harm were done to him or his by witches, he should know who had done it; and sure enough no harm was ever done him. He was very intimate, sure enough, with the witches.

"Now when the young men who had murdered the Mhor Venn were seized and taken to prison, nothing could save them. Being, however, clansmen of McLeod of Girvan, Ross-shire, they managed to send a man to tell him of their plight and ask his help. McLeod's son met them outside the window of the room in which his father sate, and after hearing the story, shakes his head and says nothing can be done. His father inside saw this, and hitching up his trousers—they all wore short trousers then—came out and said, 'Yes; it can be done, and it shall be done.' Accordingly he went to the court, and there produced the image and the book, and of course they got off at once."

How we longed that Sir Walter Scott had ever met Roderick! He would certainly have been immortalized. Finding him in the vein to continue these eerie recitals, we encouraged him to tell about the mother of the Mhor Venn. "She was sent to prison, sir, after this, to Dornoch, and for a whole year she neither ate, drank, nor spoke, but remained leaning on her stick, thus—" and he came to a halt in the rain, leaning upon the landing net. "It was a great wonder. Well, when at length nobody could make her speak, a young minister said, 'I am sure I can;" so he went, and what he said I never could rightly hear, but she spoke, and the first words she said were, 'Thou hast deceived me, O devil, saying that no one born of living woman could ever make me speak!' 'Oh, no! he has not deceived you,' said the young minister, 'for my mother died just before I was born on the island in Loch Ness.' So saying, he kicked away her stick, and she fell to the ground a heap of dust."

Having duly marvelled at this story (the *dénouement* of which will remind the reader of one of Edgar Poe's *Tales of Mystery*), we hazarded the heterodox opinion that there were no witches in the land at present.

"Ah, but there is though!" answered Roderick, with great animation, "there is witches in the Lewes for all that! Now my son Roderick —my youngest son, who is twenty-one next month—was last year at the herrin' fishery at Fraserburgh. One night he went ashore, and met a strange woman and man walking. They did stop, and did ask who he was and where he did come from. 'From Loch Inver,' says he. 'And so do we,' says they (which was singular as he did never set eyes on them before). 'Come with us, and we will give you a drink—' of beer, or of rum, or of whisky, or of gin, I do not rightly mind which it was whateffer. You must know, sir, that each boat, at the herrin' fishery time, takes a woman on board to cook meat and wash for them; there will be many women go to sea in this manner. Well, they did ask my son at the tavern, 'Did you have good luck with the herrin' to-day?' 'No; very bad.' 'Did you yesterday?' 'No; worse again.' 'Ah! but,' says she, 'you will have to-morrow.' Well, sure enough, he did fill his boat next day with fery many crans of herrin', and did get 15*l.* for his share that one day. It was a wonderful thing. But he did tell me that gold did do him no good; he had no idea how it did get spent whateffer. That day he did go looking about after the man and woman all over, but he did never see them again; I did not hear of his ever again seeing them.

"'Roderick!' I said to him when he told me, 'Roderick! I do hope you will never again have anything to do with these witches.' 'No, father; I fill never again, so long as I do live.' He is away to Fraserburgh this year again.

"I did hear of another witch in the Lewes fifteen year agone. She lived at Stornoway; and did sell winds to sailors. One of our Loch Inver boats did not get away that autumn for weeks. The wind was always dead against them. Well; they did go to her, and what they paid her I did not hear, but she gave them a black string tied with three knots, and said, 'Ye'll be getting awa' to-morrow. Now, if the wind is not strong enough, loose one knot; if even then it is not enough, loose the second; but, on your life! on your life! dinna loose the third!' Well, they got off sure enough next morning with a fair breeze; and then the skipper loosed one knot. On the boat sprang, and the wind rose. Soon he loosed the second, and they tore over the waves, and were very soon over the Minch near Loch Inver. They got to the entrance of the harbour, near the new stone house—ye ken it? on the right—and the skipper says, 'We're a'richt now; if the deil himself withstands me I will loose the third!' He did loose it, and though so near home, the boat only got ashore in little bits! She was altogether broken up! The men were all saved."

The little inn at Inchnadamph now came in sight, with its few ash-trees shining in the general outlook of water and mist. Roderick found time, however, to tell us that the former landlord once shot a hare, on a mountain side, overhanging a little cottage near. The animal escaped wounded; but the woman who tenanted the cottage, Elspeth McKenzie, became ill and took to her bed. Daily she grew worse for some months, and Roderick had himself seen her when "very ill whateffer." At length she died, and the women who came to perform the necessary offices found her legs riddled with shot, the small shot shining yet blue in them.

With such tales will an aged gilly beguile the way for the angler in Assynt, if the sportsman possess the art of gaining the man's confidence. These stories were told the writer in July last, and testify to a marvellous mass of superstition and tradition overlaying the Gaelic mind, on which the superstructure of religion is built almost exclusively, in outlying districts, by careful study of the Word of God. It is this Bible reading which has given the Scottish character the steadfastness and gravity which it has possessed since the days of the Covenanters.

The mention of Altnoi burn reminds us that another kind of witchcraft flourished there this summer, as we were wont to cross it, in order to fish Loch Awe, attended by a stalwart young gilly of very impressible age, and halted at times to dash the whisky in our flask with the sparkling streams that eddied over the brown rocks, and caused the golden gravel at their edge to flash like uncertain fairy gold. It was certainly an uncanny spot to Ronald. His heart had been pierced, not by any malignant twilight beldame, but by a comely lassie with bare ankles and loosely snooded hair, who was daily busied "hagging the peat" amongst the little stacks on our right. An artistic eye could not help noticing the flashing of those ankles against the black heaps of peat; but we soon saw poor Ronald's cheek change colour as he saw her—perhaps ourselves having been winged with a kindred flame in the south country—while the lassie was evidently pleased to draw nearer by ten yards, and exchange (as our erstwhile lover's eye told us) the least glance of sympathy with the blushing Ronald. It was the fairy tale of youth and hope told over again in the sunshine of this lovely Highland strath, and the song instantly came into our mind—

At kirk or at market, whene'er ye meet me,
Gang by me as though that ye cared na a flee;
But steal me a blink o' your bonnie black ee,
    Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me,
    Yet look as ye were na lookin' at me.

We trust that teetotallers will now applaud us for the virtuous action of stopping every time we passed and, even when the flask was dry, drinking unconscionable draughts of the cold water in the bed of the stream, while Ronald, on the stone bridge above, had thus time (as we ascertained by Tom of Coventry's peeping craft) to reply, with many a wave of the hand, to the blooming damsel's salutations some hundred yards off in the wet peat hag. How opportune must he have thought our thirst! May Ourania Aphrodite be propitious to us in like need! How easy to picture, when far away, that they are now happily married. Ronald had a few savings, we discovered, and though the girl's father, doubtless some neighbouring shepherd, would deprecate a hasty match (every true love ought to be crossed at least once), she would be sure to win consolation from her mother, if the old Border song be true—

Out spak the bride's mither,
  "What deil needs a' this pride?
I had na a plack in my pouch
  The night I was a bride;
My gown was linsey-woolsey,
  And ne'er a sark ava';
And ye hae ribbons and buskins,
  Mae than ane or twa."

At all events, these are pleasant dreams of what is going on in Assynt in November, when inns are closed, tourists unknown, every mountain smothered in snow, and the mail-cart, that with difficulty winds along the road at their base, to deliver the few letters that in winter cheer the natives, always has a saddle under the seat, so that when the driver is stopped (as not unfrequently happens) by snow-drifts, he may mount the horse, put the bag on his saddle-bow, and abandoning the "machine" till better times, make his way, half-frozen, to the nearest clachan for shelter. So we invariably stopped at Altnoi during our sojourn in the strath, and after a decent interval, unsuspected, went on watching Ronald's lips move, and helped by Clough to interpret their sentiment:

"*Slan leat, caleg Looach!*"

"That was the Gaelic, it seemed, for 'I bid you farewell, bonnie lassie!'" (*The Bothy of Tober-na-Vuolich.*) And then we mischievously whistled, hoping that Ronald did not know the Lowland song—

Alas! my son, you little know
The sorrows that from wedlock flow.
Farewell to every day of ease,
When you have gotten a wife to please!
    Sae bide you yet, and bide you yet,
    Ye little ken what's to betide you yet;
    The half of that will gang you get,
    If a wayward wife obtain you yet!

With which Sutherlandshire idyll our reminiscences of Assynt may well end.

The Comédie-Française.

THE origins of the national theatre of France are remote and manifold. It was not made in a day, nor was it the work of a single man. To say nothing of the fact that a new literature had to be created to make its foundation desirable, its institution was the result of several distinct processes of combination and assimilation, extending over a long period of years and dealing with a vast quantity of wide-scattered and heterogeneous material; and the privileges of monopoly and state protection were necessary to its well-being from the time of its establishment in its present likeness. The project has been often mooted of endowing England with a national stage; it is not impossible but the idea may take shape of some sort after all. And, with thus much in view, it may be neither uninteresting nor unprofitable to trace the story of what would be our pattern institution, from its beginnings downwards to those later and not less honourable developments that are near and familiar to ourselves.

I.

The Théâtre-Français, as we know it, is the foundation of Louis XIV. Into his work he put whatever was worth preserving of the three chief theatres that kept Paris in amusement during the first eighty years of the seventeenth century. These three theatres were that of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, that of the Marais, and that one established by Molière, at the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon first of all and afterwards within the Palais Royal, and transferred at his death, by his friend and comrade La Grange, to the Hôtel Guénegaud.

Of these three, the oldest and in some ways the most important, was the theatre of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, situate in the Rue Mauconseil, and owing its existence to the histrionic initiative of the Brotherhood of the Passion. At what moment this initiative began is not precisely determined, documentary evidence in the matter going back no further than 1398, when the Provost of Paris forbade the Brotherhood's performances within his limits. In 1402, however, the Brothers got a charter from Charles VI., authorising their association and establishment as actors in Paris. Their first stage was erected in the great hall of the Hospital of the Trinity, where they began by playing mysteries, and went on presently to play farces as well. They filled it for 137 years, and had its privileges confirmed by letters patent from Francis I. in 1513. In 1538 they shifted their scene to the Hôtel de Flandre; and in 1548, in the dismantlement by royal order of that refuge, they purchased a large slice of the site of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, unoccupied since the death of Charles the Bold, and gone entirely to ruin. In the same year they got a confirmation of their privilege from the Parliament, and were granted a monopoly of Parisian theatricals. The only condition imposed was to the effect that the subjects of their plays should be no longer taken from the Scriptures; so that, though this condition seems to have been interpreted with great freedom, 1548 may be regarded as the birth-year, not only of the French stage, but also of the French secular drama. Letters patent from Henri II. (1554 and 1559) and from Charles IX. (1569) established the Brothers yet more firmly in their place; and from him of the Saint Bartholomew, like all the Valois an artist to his finger-ends, they received material encouragement of some value. Their influence about this time was none the less upon the wane. The spirit of change was abroad. The Renaissance had made men literary and intolerant of ignorance; the good Brothers were unlettered and conservative, and their simple art, disdained of the studious and serious enthusiasts into opposition with whom it had survived, had outlived its means and its function, and was found no more acceptable. Their farces and moralities were treated as mere horseplay and foolery—*badineries et folies*; and at the various colleges about them Ronsard and his following were putting before the very public which had applauded them pieces antique in interest and novel and ambitious in form, and were doing their utmost to shatter into nothingness the respectable tradition they had worked so hard and so long to establish. Naturally the Brothers took to standing on their rights and defending their position. Backed by the Parliament, they shut up a theatre of farce, opened in 1571; they drove over the Alps in 1576 the famous Italian company called the Gelosi, though it had letters patent from Henri III., and had been summoned by him to amuse into inaction the States-General of Blois, and was composed of artists of the stamp of Flaminio Scala and of Gabriel of Bologna, creator of the type of Francatrippa; they expelled the capital in 1584 a provincial company that had ventured to quarter itself at the Hôtel de Cluny. But these moves availed them nothing. The Italian actors came back on their hands again and yet again; they could get no encouragement from the poets, and the public had grown tired of them; the students and the strollers were better liked than they. They ended by being wise and provident; in 1585 they let their stage to a company of actors better qualified to adorn it than themselves, and these, after arguments and petitions and devices innumerable, succeeded (1676) in dispossessing them of their theatre.

At the date of its cession the play-house appears to have been in no sort of good repute. It was thoroughly out of repair; it had earned the qualification of a "cloaque et maison de Sathan;" its audiences, 'tis said, were wont to assemble some two hours or so before the curtain rose, and to spend the interval in dicing, immodest talk, gluttony, drunkenness, and other pleasing pastimes. The new tenants do not seem to have sweetened its fame, and they soon got into trouble of another sort. After caricaturing Mayenne and the League, they were on the point of seeing their occupation gone and their room filled with a Jesuits' college. Henri IV., however, got the upper hand of the League, and as he loved to laugh and amuse himself, the actors went on playing in safety. In safety, if not in peace. Impudent strollers insisted on opening playhouses at the fairs; a whole cloud of theatres, including that of the Marais, came into being and action about them; and though, by persecuting these relentlessly, and by rigidly enforcing the terms of their monopoly, they succeeded in keeping themselves at the head of things, and in making their rivals a source of income, they did not succeed in keeping the ground to themselves. For the moment this was of little consequence to them. They were successful, and that was enough. Enriched with a royal grant of 12,000 livres a year, in 1629 they called themselves the "Comédiens de l'élite royale," and they were presently known as the Troupe Royale—the Royal Company: a title to which they had every right, and out of their pride in which there proceeded not a little of the suspicion and contempt they were afterwards to bestow on the pretensions of Molière.

They began by playing farce. On their stage at one time or another figured the accomplished buffoons known to fame as Turlupin, Bruscambille, Gros-Guillaume, Galinette la Galine, Gaultier-Garguille, Dame Gigogne, and Guillot-Gorju: singers to a man of questionable songs, and artists of questionable modesty. But gradually they rose to higher things; their speciality got to be the arts of tragedy and tragi-comedy. Herein they were unrivalled. Bellerose, the player whom Richelieu, a passionate lover of the theatre, did not disdain to provide with apparel, was their manager from 1629 to 1643. Montfleury, of the mountain-belly, an ancestor of the illustrious Dangeville; Bellemore, the Miles Gloriosus of his epoch; Beauchâteau, a butt of Molière; Hauteroche and De Villiers, the author-actors; Raymond Poisson, poet and player, the original Crispin, whose naturalness was envied and admired by the maker and creator of Sganarelle himself; Alizon, the Hubert of the company, famous in old women, and in nurses and servants; Brécourt, the Dutchman, desperado and ruffian, dicer and drinker, adventurer and artist; the illustrious Josias de Soulas, Sieur de Primefosse, called Floridor, the most accomplished tragedian of his decade; Marie Desmares, better known as Mdlle. de Champmeslé; Mdlle. Beaupré, one of the first women to appear upon the boards, and aunt of the Marotte Beaupré who fought a duel with Catherine des Urlis—all these artists figured, early or late, on the stage of the Hôtel de Bourgogne. That stage, moreover, was actually the stage of *Cinna*, of *Horace*, of *Polyeucte*, and was presently to be that of *Mithridate*, and of *Phèdre*, and as the nursery, if not actually the birthplace, of French tragedy, it was a stage with a tradition and a reputation. It is, indeed, the parent stem of the Théâtre-Français. Its company was an association formed for the acting of plays, sharing its profits and expenses day by day and year by year, selling its vacancies at high prices for the common weal, presenting the heirs of such of its associates as died in harness with a sufficiency of pistoles to indemnify them for their loss, playing but thrice a week, setting the example in theatrical procedure, and exercising indisputable authority in stage questions and in all matters connected with the art of tragedy. Racine, befriended liberally and sincerely by Molière, took over to the Hôtel de Bourgogne his second play, although it was already cast, mounted, and rehearsed by the company of the Palais-Royal. The best poets were proud to write for it. The elocutionary system of Mdlle. de Champmeslé, who became one of the original associates of the Théâtre-Français, was a tradition of histrionic art till Adrienne Lecouvreur replaced it with her own; and the name of Michel Baron, who left La Grange in 1673 to join the Royal Company, is greatest in the early history of the French stage.

The Marais theatre was of infinitely less authority, though 'twas actually from its boards that the classic comedy, the classic tragedy, and what is now called the spectacular drama, were introduced to France and such of the world as has been exampled by her. Opened somewhere in the latter years of the sixteenth century, and affected from time to time by actors in revolt against the tyranny of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, it acquired no real importance until 1629. The quarter, abominably paved and lighted and situate afar from the modish parts of Paris, was a quarter in ill repute; it was infested with cut-purses and cloak-snatchers, with blackguard sworders and disreputable women; and only in its unused tennis-courts—the refuge in those days of strollers seeking a local habitation—could room be found for such actors as stooped to its use. In 1629, however, *Mélite*, the first play of the illustrious Corneille, was produced in the Rue Mauconseil, apparently through the influence of the celebrated Montdory. This notable man, a great actor and an able manager, was chief of a company of strollers, knew Corneille at Rouen, and was the means of introducing him to fame. He took *Mélite* from the Royal Company and played it for himself in the Marais. In 1632 he and his followers were established in the Fountain Tennis Court; and in 1633, protected by Richelieu, who esteemed him greatly, he was able to snap his fingers at a parliamentary mandate ordering him to discontinue his performances, which had disgusted the inhabitants of the street by reason of the noise and crowding attendant on them. In the same year Louis XIII.—possibly to annoy Richelieu—drafted six of his best actors into the Royal Company. But Montdory, who was a troop in himself, and who had still the services of Floridor, Bellemore, and De Villiers, established himself in a tennis court in the Rue Vieille-du-Temple. The public loved and admired him greatly; he was very notably protected; he produced good pieces, and mounted his productions with exceptional tact and skill; and he succeeded splendidly. Scarron, Mairet, Tristan l'Hermite, and Scudéry were among his authors. Corneille, after giving him *La Galerie du Palais*, and *L'Illusion Comique*—a play revived in our own time, for M. Got to create anew and with extraordinary humour and art the original part of Bellemore—gave him the *Cid* (1636), and the year afterwards the success of this famous play was almost eclipsed by that of Tristan's *Mariamne*. The effect produced by Montdory's Herod seems to have been akin to that produced on contemporary audiences by Salvini's Conrad. Unhappily the part was so tremendous in its quality as to cost Paris her greatest actor. Montdory was struck down with apoplexy after a performance of it, and rose a paralytic. As he was a favourite with Richelieu, the courtiers were liberal to him in the matter of pensions; he retired worth 10,000 livres a year. With him the theatre lost its vogue. Tragedy and comedy ceased to be proper to its artists; and though Corneille returned to it (1646) with *Le Menteur*, it gradually declined to the uses of spectacle and farce. Of the former of these, in Molière's day, it had come to make a speciality. On its stage was produced, in 1661, the *Toison d'Or* of Pierre Corneille, with elaborate engines and contrivances, the invention of the crack-brained, the litigious, the mechanical Marquis de Sourdéac, who was afterwards to be a thorn in the flesh of La Grange and the young Théâtre-Français. And in 1669 Rozimont, the author-actor, believing that a so famous subject could hardly fail of success if taken in connection with "*ces superbes ornemens de théâtre qu'on voit d'ordinaire chez nous*," wrote for it a version of the legend of Don Juan that may be read with interest even after those of Molière and Tirso de Molina.

II.

When the manager of the Illustre Théâtre—itself, through Madeleine Béjart, an offshoot of the Marais—returned to Paris in 1658, he found these two chief play-houses in full working order. There was, besides, a company of Spanish actors, playing chiefly for the amusement of their country-woman, the Queen. There was a company of Italians, in receipt of a royal grant of 15,000 livres a year, and ruled by Tiberio Fiurelli, known for the greatest of all the Scaramouches. At the fairs of Saint Laurent and Saint Germain there were booths of strollers always. The Jesuits were fast acquiring an indomitable habit of college theatricals. The beginnings of the Opera were a fact. At the Court, which was even more choregraphically bent than that of our own Elizabeth, they danced in interminable ballets, contrived by M. de Benserade and others, with a gravity and a determination unparalleled in history. It was a time, indeed, when play-acting and play-making were popular professions, and for a man who had ideas on the subject of both, there was room in it and to spare. Rotrou, the valiant artist, had been eight years in his grave, and the world had got from Corneille the best he was ever to give; Racine was a lad of nineteen, studying the Greek poets with Claude Lancelot and learning *Theagenes and Chariclea* by heart. The comedy of the epoch was either caricature or extravagance. The *Visionnaires* of Desmarets, the *Dom Japhet* of Scarron, the *Pédant Joué* of Cyrano, were stock pieces; and audiences had not much to content them but the rodomontades and stramazouns of the Captain, the pedantic brutalities of the Doctor, the knavish nastiness of the Valet. Among these well-worn types the men and women of Molière had not much to do to make a place for themselves; beside the stale exaggerated fun of the hack authors, his humour—fresh, spontaneous, abundant, human—had but to be heard to be recognised and acclaimed. The hour had come, and the man was there to keep tryst with it.

As for the way in which his works and those of his great associates were produced, it differed strangely from the ways of to-day. The French have lost, it may be, the knack of masterpieces, but their knowledge and practice of the art of scenic decoration have mightily increased. In the beginning the theatres opened their doors but thrice a week—on Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays: all Mondays being days of departure, all Wednesdays and Saturdays market days, and all Thursdays walking and visiting days: and the play-goer, studying the red bill of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, whether it was couched in plain prose or in trivial verse—read on it but the names of piece and author, and saw no mention whatever of actors. Under Louis XIII. the curtain rose at two of the afternoon; under Louis XIV., who loved to dine and kept his courtiers waiting while he dined, it got to rise as late as five. Usually the house was lighted with tallow; but when the King was of the audience, he sat superbly among wax candles supplied by his officers. You could get into the pit—where cooling drinks and sweetmeats were sold in summer, and comforting and strengthening cordials and cough-mixtures could be got in winter—for fifteen sous on ordinary occasions; but on extraordinary, you had to pay thirty sous for your standing-room. After the crush there was to see the *Cid* at Montdory's theatre, the sides of the stage, once the refuge of the poor author, became the fashionable part of the auditorium; there you could see and be seen, you could get in the actors' way, you could bring in a performing dog with you, and show off his tricks between the alexandrines of Polyeucte and Pauline; you could interrupt the play with all possible ease and security; and the cost of it all was but a single half-louis, or five livres ten sous. Money was in those days about four times as dear as now it is, and it was the habit of a certain class of spectators to try and see the play for nothing, and so put themselves on the footing of the officers and soldiers of the household brigade. Naturally this was one of the burning questions of the period, and a subject for royal ordinances. Of pages, lackeys, and broken soldiers there was always a sufficiency; a playhouse porter's best qualification was his swordsmanship; and La Grange notes more than once the payment of surgical expenses for doorkeepers wounded in the discharge of their duty. For riots were frequent: Molière and Du Croisy took part in one that was fatal to some of the rioters; and in M. Campardon's last publication* are documents relating to a disturbance that took place as late as 1691. As a rule, the scenery and decorations were simple almost to absurdity. For the *Cid* they had but "A room with four doors. An armchair for the king;" for *Héraclius*, "une salle de palais à volonté" and "three papers;" for *Bajazet*, a "saloon à la Turque" and "two daggers;" for *Pourceaugnac*, which by comparison was richly equipped, the necessaries were "two houses in front and a town behind; three chairs or stools; two musketoons," and seven or eight specimens, "en fer blanc," of an implement which those who have had the good luck to see M. Got as the excellent gentleman from the Limousin know for a fear-inspiring implement indeed. Disdaining the employment of supernumeraries, they seem, ere now, to have improvised a battle by letting down a painted cloth figured over with warring legions. The musical arrangements were of a kindred type; Molière began with three fiddles at the wings, or in a box in the front of the house, and, as Chappuzeau benevolently explains, if these fiddles did not know their cues, it was necessary to shout at them from the stage. Add to all this the fact that you could, while listening to the high-pitched, stately, rhythmic chant of the Champmeslé as Camille, or admiring Poisson in the typical boots of Crispin, provide yourself quite easily with occasion for a duel or two, and it is not difficult to conclude that a theatrical performance must at that time have had for one of its main attractions a lively tendency toward the Unforeseen and Unexpected.

It was after a stroll some twelve years long in the provinces of the West and South that Jean Baptiste Poquelin came back to Paris to settle and become world-famous as Molière. He had put forth the *Etourdi* at Lyons in 1655 and the *Dépit Amoureux* at Béziers in 1656, and in these and lesser works had approved himself an intelligent and able student of the Italian drama; he had played tragedy until he had come to believe himself a tragedian; he had made of the poor little Illustre Théâtre, of which since 1645 he had been manager, a company that was to found a comic tradition and to be a chief element in the composition of a national stage; above all, he had in him stuff that would presently take shape as *Tartufe*, the *Misanthrope*, *Scapin*, *Pourceaugnac*, the *Médecin*, *George Dandin*, the *Festin de Pierre*. After winning the regard of Louis XIV. and his brother Philippe, called Monsieur, at a performance in the Louvre, he and his fellows were taken into Monsieur's service, and were settled in the theatre contrived in the great hall of the Hôtel du Petit-Bourbon. They shared it with Tiberio Fiurelli and his Italians, who had for some time the Sundays, Tuesdays, and Fridays for their own, and received from Molière the sum of 1,500 livres for the use of their theatre on the four off days of the week, when audiences could but be thin and receipts not very satisfying. The production at the Petit-Bourbon of the *Précieuses* and the *Cocu Imaginaire* (1659–60) approved their author a competitor of no mean force; the Hôtel de Bourgogne took fire at the discovery; and in the latter of the two years, by an intrigue that reminds you strangely of the machinations in Balzac's novels, he and his following were turned neck and crop out of their holding and left without a stage. Fortunately Monsieur was at their elbow to demonstrate the shameful injustice of the proceeding; fortunately they had succeeded in pleasing the King; and three weeks after their expulsion they started afresh on the stage within the Palais-Royal. The theatre was a good one; it had been built and furnished by Richelieu for his own *Mirame* and for the five-handed plays he used to have of the staff of poets he kept at piece-work. It was out of repair; but it had a pit nine fathoms wide by eleven deep: there were two gilded galleries running round the three sides of it, it would hold on a pinch between two and three thousand people, it was a royal property, and as long as it liked his Majesty the actors were safe from any kind of interruption. In 1665, after the production of the two *Ecoles*, the *Impromptu*, and the *Mariage*, the company was taken into the King's service and received, with an annual grant of 6,000 livres (increased to 7,000 in 1670), the official title of the King's Company. That there was a good deal of ill-feeling between the two troops, the Royal and the King's, is sufficiently proved by the two *Impromptus*—of *Versailles* and of the *Hôtel de Condé*—the *Critique*, the *Portrait du Peintre*, and the *Vengeance des Marquis*, with the journalism attached to them. But Molière was in good odour at court. Louis made less of him than his enthusiasts will confess; but he amused: he was ingenious as a maker of ballets and diversions; while he lived he was almost as important a person as Lulli and Benserade, and stood on what was, perhaps, a higher plane of royal favour than Scaramouch-Fiurelli himself; and after expelling him the Petit-Bourbon, the Hôtel de Bourgogne could for the moment prevail against him no more. Things changed briskly enough in 1673. Molière dead, Baron, La Thorilière and the two Beauvals were tempted over to the opposition at once; and so little account was made of the remainder of his company, that, though it yet included Mdlles. Molière and de Brie, the epoch's most accomplished actresses of comedy, with Hubert, the original Pernelle and Madame Jourdain, and La Grange, the creator of all Molière's "young firsts" from Don Juan downward, an attempt at association was contemptuously stayed, and the artists of Molière were left to their own devices without a chance of appeal.

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* *Les Comédiens du Roi.* Paris, 1879.

Fortunately for the French stage La Grange, Molière's orator and acting-manager, was at the head of affairs, and La Grange was an able and an indefatigable man. His business capacity was at least equal to his powers as an actor, and his devices were eminently wise and eminently profitable. Thrust out from the Palais-Royal at the instances of Lulli, who wanted the theatre for his own enterprise, and got the occupants evicted at a moment's notice, the King's Company, deprived of its pension and its stage, remained homeless for several months. Then the Marquis de Sourdéac—of *Toison d'Or* and stage-engineering renown—sold La Grange a playhouse built by him for the performance of opera, but thrown on his hands by the action of Lulli, the all-powerful. It was situate at the Bottle Tennis Court, in the Rue Mazarine, and is known historically as the Théâtre-Guénegaud. Here in 1673 did La Grange and his following set up their rest. A royal order had abolished the playhouse in the Marais and drafted certain of its artists into the broken ranks of the King's company; the best of them all, poor Claude Roze, called Rozimont, had been engaged by La Grange before the break-up to replace Molière in Molière's own parts. In the society, thus enlarged, there were nineteen members; it had Joseph Béjart, one of the original associates of the Illustre Théâtre, for a pensioner; its estate was one of seventeen and a half shares, two of which were the property of Sourdéac and his partner, while the rest were divided, in various proportions, among the nineteen associates. La Grange, not uninfluenced in all probability by the companionship of the sometime actors of the Marais, turned for profit to the spectacular drama. As the greater part of the Molièresque repertory was as much the property of the Hôtel de Bourgogne as of the Hôtel Guénegaud, he purchased the services and interest of De Visé, the journalist and hack, and of Thomas Corneille, and started on his career as a purveyor of spectacle, with great intelligence and varying fortune. Gaining largely by the production of *Circé*, a piece whose mounting cost the sum, unprecedented thitherto, of 10,842 livres 17 sous, he appears in 1676 to have been so pinched for means as to have been unable to pay his bill-sticker. He none the less went on with his enterprise: manipulating into verse and inoffensiveness the audacious prose of the *Festin de Pierre*, and achieving in 1679 a quite extraordinary success with the *Devineresse* of Corneille and De Visé, a scandalous melodrama pieced together out of the story of the notorious Madame Voisin. The popularity of the *Devineresse* was certainly gall and wormwood to those of the Hôtel de Bourgogne; but its bitterness could have been as nothing to that of the cup that was brewing for them. La Grange's next stroke of policy was, indeed, a masterstroke. The Sieur de Champmeslé, an actor-author of some parts, and Mademoiselle, his wife, long the *amie intime* of Jean Racine and the original exponent of all the heroines of his second period, from the plaintive Andromaque to the passionate and terrible Phèdre, were persuaded to abandon the Hôtel de Bourgogne for the Hôtel Guénegaud. As this move of the Sieur de La Grange put him in possession of the whole repertory of both the great French tragics, and made his company as well qualified to excel in tragedy as it had always excelled in comedy, and as about the same time there occurred the death of the deserter La Thorilière, an actor trained in Molière's school and actually an exponent of Molière's tradition, it is to be assumed that the Hôtel de Bourgogne was in poorer case at this moment than at any other of its history, and that there was no way for it out of its difficulties but the way it was forced to take.

That way was the work of Louis XIV. He lived to centralise, as he had lived to dance and to dine, and had determined on the centralisation of the dramatic art with the others. On August 18, 1680, an order for the fusion of the two companies, the Royal and the King's, was sent from him at Charleville by the Duc de Créqui. It was accompanied by a list of the artists to be retained in the royal service, and was instantly obeyed, the united company playing eight days afterwards at the Hôtel de Guénegaud for the first time. The pieces, I should add, that were chosen for this solemn occasion, were *Phèdre* and *Les Carrosses d'Orléans*; of the latter I confess to knowing absolutely nothing. On October 21, a *lettre de cachet*, dated from Versailles, and signed "Louis" and "Colbert," and a final list of artists appended to it, gave the new society a monopoly of the French theatre in Paris, and ordered the Lieutenant-General of Police forthwith to see to the enforcement of its provisions. The institution thus established was the Théâtre-Français.

III.

The artists chosen to represent the histrionic ability of France were twenty-seven, fifteen of them men and twelve women. Among them were the two La Granges, the two Raisins, the two Barons, the two Beauvals, the two Guérins (Guérin, it should be remembered, married Molière's widow), and the two Champmeslés; with Mdlles. de Brie, Dupin, and Dennebaut, and Raymond Poisson, Hauteroche, Hubert, Villiers, and Rozimont. The estate affected to them was divided into twenty-one and three-quarters shares, a half-share of which was retained by the King. The twenty-one and a quarter shares remaining were distributed among the associates. A contract between the members of the society (1681) provided for the payment of future pensions and the due recognition, in case of necessity, of heirship in an associate's next of kin. In the same year the King bestowed his half-share on Le Comte, a diligent and useful actor, and a coadjutor of La Grange's till that father of the Français died; in 1682 he ordered the reception of Brécourt, also a half-share holder, and so changed the composition of the estate to one of twenty-two and a quarter shares; and some months afterwards he assured to the associates a yearly grant of 12,000 livres. For a couple of years more the company appear to have been as much their own masters as in the free and easy times of old; but in 1684 they were placed under the control of the First Gentleman of the Chamber. And in 1685 the number of shares was fixed definitely at twenty-three, and at twenty-three their number remained until the Revolution.

A time was at hand, however, when the very being of the institution was in peril. The Louis of Maintenon was not the Louis of Montespan. The devotee in him had mastered the man of pleasure; the devil had turned hermit. Since seventeen years his dancing days were done; his fondness for the theatre had declined; his dietary itself had become (comparatively speaking) austere. In the formal practice of piety, he forgot alike to live and to let live. Thus, when in 1687 the dignitaries of the Sorbonne had scruples about opening their new College of the Four Nations within a furlong of such a villanous haunt as was the Théâtre-Français, they found in the reformed monarch an intelligent, a repentant, and a sympathetic listener. The actors were ordered out of the Hôtel Guénegaud at three months' notice. Argument and expostulation availed them nothing; Maintenon and the Sorbonne had ordained, and there was nought for it but to obey. La Grange and Le Comte had need of all their courage and their conduct. The associates agreed to buy land and build a theatre of their own, but clerical influences were paramount at Versailles, and the actors were hunted from parish to parish as though their trade were unmentionable, and they themselves fit inmates for For-l'Evêque and the Salpêtrière. Half-a-dozen sites in succession were chosen and bargained for by La Grange, and were declared improper and impossible by the Court. At last, however, he was permitted to conclude a purchase; and in the Rue Neuve-des-Fossés-Saint-Germain-des-Prés, on the site of the Star Tennis Court, a theatre designed by François d'Aubry was run up, and opened, with *Phèdre* and the *Médecin*, to a house of 1,870 livres, in the April of 1689. The price of the ground alone was 60,000 livres; and in the end the actors found that, in good hard cash, the prudery of the Sorbonne had cost them close on 200,000 livres, and was to keep them in debt for many years. The theatre served its turn, of course, and was not abandoned till 1770, when decay had made it unsafe, and it could be used no more.

In 1699 the "Droit des Pauvres" was instituted, and the theatre was ordered to pay a seventh of its gross receipts to the General Hospital. In 1716 a further percentage was demanded of it, ostensibly for the Hôtel-Dieu, but really to provide an official person with cash, which brought the impost up to one of a fourth of its earnings. In evading the payment of this charge, and in doing battle with the lawless petty theatres about them, the associates appear to have shown a great deal of ingenuity, and not less of determination. They cooked their accounts quite faithfully, and they showed no mercy; these were their chief aims of life. The theatre was ordered by the First Gentlemen of the Chamber, with the Duc de Richelieu at their head; and, bad as was the rule of these noble creatures, whose interference, at once vexatious and stupid and immoral, was felt in all its concerns, it was, æsthetically speaking, quite admirably efficient. Among its actors were Grandval, Lekain, Préville, and Molé; among its actresses were Lecouvreur, Dangeville, Gaussin, Dumesnil, Clairon, Dugazon, and Vestris; and its staff of poets included Voltaire, Regnard, Lesage, Marivaux, Piron, Gresset, Marmontel, Diderot, Vadé, Beaumarchais, and Ducis (with an adaptation of *Hamlet*). Financially, however, its position was abominable; Louis XV.

had, in the end, to double the royal grant, and to pay the theatre's debts, which amounted to upwards of 240,000 livres. At Vigarani's playhouse in the Louvre, whither the associates removed in 1770, they added to their number Dazincourt and Mdlles. Raucourt and Contat, and produced (1775) the *Barbier* of Beaumarchais, determining by their niggardly treatment of that restless and indomitable adventurer the foundation (1777) of the Société des Auteurs Dramatiques. And in 1782 they shifted their scene to the Odéon, and there, in the *Mariage de Figaro*, they put forth, amid squabbles of all sorts (1784), the last of the classic comedies. They played it intelligently enough as artists, for Molé was the Almaviva, and Dazincourt, a very king of Crispins, was the Figaro. But as politicians, they learned its lesson not at all; they neither heard nor did they understand. Almaviva, befooled and jested and shamed, with his *droit de seigneur*, a mere conventionality to be mocked at and despised, was, if they could but have known it, a type of themselves. Like him, they had outlived their day; like him, they had forgotten nothing and learned nothing. All about them the Figaros of art were brawling and watching and scheming; their privilege, though never so sound in theory, was in practice dead and decayed; their lordship of things theatrical was on its last legs, they were part of an opposition that was beaten ere it came to a division. The Opéra Comique had been founded in spite of them; Nicolet and Audinot, the famous showmen, had fought and won the battle of theatrical liberty; playhouses suppressed by them were reopened otherwhere and under other names almost ere the ink had dried on their papers; and five years after the production of the *Mariage*, the Revolution had split their society itself into two camps, and the old order of circumstances was at an end for them. Headed by Talma, the Democrats among them went to play patriotic tragedy—a poor and dull thing it seems from this distance of time—in the Palais-Royal, at what was then the Variétés-Amusantes, and at what is now the Comédie-Française. The Loyalists, under the captaincy of Dazincourt, stayed on at the Odéon, and got presently into hot water; they were denounced by Robespierre in civic terms of considerable force, they were arrested in a body, and they were sent to durance. Collot d'Herbois, with all the bad actor's ferocious jealousy of his chief, wanted very much to cut off Dazincourt's head; but Dazincourt succeeded in keeping it on his shoulders, and lived to use it as a professor at the Conservatoire and as Napoleon's Directeur des Spectacles. Talma received the rebels when the term of their prison life was past; and at what was called in turn the Theatre of Liberty and Equality, the Theatre of the Nation, and the Theatre of the Republic, the association was for a brief space held together. Then came quarrels, partings, new attempts at a common understanding; and in 1799, the company, with its debts paid and a State pension in hand, started once more at the Odéon. It was burnt out of that theatre in the same year, and for some time there was no Comédie-Française.

Bonaparte, however, was fond of plays and acting—almost as fond of them as Richelieu himself; and though he did suppress the chair in the Institute set apart by a liberal Convention for the better honouring of histrionic art, he took the fortunes of the broken Comédie into that strong resolute hand of his, and in 1803 the old Variétés-Amusantes received the associates once more, strong this time in the master's protection, and rich in an annual grant of 100,000 francs. Nine years after, he found time, in the stress of his Russian campaign, to think out and despatch the famous Moscow decree, which is supposed to be the Theatre's Great Charter and the authority for its present constitution. It divided the estate into twenty-four shares, and allotted twenty-two of them to the society; established a complete system of pensions, retirements, and *débuts*; settled finally the vexed question of the possession of parts; determined a connection between the theatre and the Conservatoire; and providing, in fine, for every contingency of every kind, set the association on a broader, firmer, and less disputable basis than till then it had occupied. It contains 101 clauses, and if I do not analyse its provisions at greater length, it is that I am informed that the house is ruled in great measure according to tradition, use, custom, and that the associates consider themselves and their conventionalities to be, in a manner, of superior mould, and so beyond the influence of ordonnance and law.

The Restoration replaced the Comédie, it need hardly be said, under the rule of the Gentlemen of the Chamber; but after the flight of Charles XI. the Moscow decree came into force again, and the associates, nominally under official control, became their own masters. They made but a poor use of their liberty. The literary revolution of 1830 was as unintelligible to them as the political of 1789. They continued faithfully to represent the classic principle in art, and they paid dearly for their fidelity. The multitude flocked to hear Hugo and Dumas, and to see Frédéric Lemaître and Dorval at the Odéon and the Porte-Saint-Martin; and on one occasion in 1831 the Comédie-Française had the honour of playing *Tartufe* and *Le Legs*—Molière at his strongest and Marivaux at his brightest—to a house of 67 francs. The associates owed a matter of 600,000 francs, and though Louis-Philippe increased their pension from 200,000 francs to 240,000 francs, and lent them some 300,000 francs besides, they could not make ends meet for some time. In 1850, after various attempts at self-government under tutelage, the association was given into the charge of the Minister of the Interior and of an Administrator-General in his nomination; and six years afterwards its grant was fixed at 240,000 francs. There, for the moment, ends its story. Amongst its administrators have been MM. Arsène Houssaye and Edouard Thierry; and it is on record that the higher officials of the Second Empire were used to abuse its function as that function had been abused under Louis XV., to the profit of ladies not distinguished for the possession of either talent or reputation. Of late, however, under the guidance of M. Emile Perrin, the theatre has succeeded both artistically and financially. The receipts of the last few years have been largely in excess of the million (of francs, of course), and are steadily increasing. And putting tragic art aside—in which, such accidents as the "temperament" called Sarah Bernhardt notwithstanding, the Comédie-Française is not now eminently distinguished—and taking as representative artistic figures so complete and finished as MM. Got, Delaunay, and Coquelin, and Mdlles. Brohan and Favart, it is lawful to conclude that the Theatre's present is such as may challenge comparison with the most brilliant epochs of its past.

As we see it, indeed, the Comédie-Française is almost the ideal theatre. Not only has it a library, a museum, a vast collection of archives, a peculiar literature; not only is its connection with the Société des Auteurs Dramatiques quite special and extraordinary; it has also a style, a tradition, a standard, a position, an authority of its own. Fed yearly from the Conservatoire—which is better able to deal with its scholars than it was when Alexandre Dumas, who knew well enough what he was talking about, could cry out (1849) that he could more easily make an actor of a National Guard or a retired shopkeeper than of a pupil of the Conservatoire—it takes to itself the best of the youngsters sent forth to be tested on its stage, schools and trains them into intelligence and capacity, assigns to each of them his proper walk in art, and by precept, example, practice, encouragement, constraint, makes artists of them at last, and fits them to do for their juniors what it has done for them. A part of its function is the discovery and encouragement of young authors; a play has only to be sent in to its committee to be publicly read and discussed, and accepted or rejected, as the case may be, officially. It has authority to call into its pale any artist of promise or of parts without it, and is thus enabled incessantly to renew its strength and fill up the breaches in its ranks. As its associateship is the Garter or the Golden Fleece of the stage, and entitles its possessor not only to a fitting salary and a share in the profits of the year, but to a pension and consideration in after times, its staff is always as complete as the quality of the epoch will permit, and it is able of its every performance to make a lesson, authoritative and practical, in histrionic art.

W. E. H.

Hours in a Library.

No. XXI.—Gray and his School.

A remark is every now and then made about Gray by somebody who has just been reading his charming letters. Gray, it is announced, was one of the first prophets of the true faith, or, as others call it, the modern superstition, of which mountains are the temples and Alpine clubs form the congregations. Their creed may be compressed into the single article that a love of mountains is the first of the cardinal virtues. To that doctrine, with some slight reservations, I yield a very hearty assent and consent; and I am glad to reckon Gray amongst its sound adherents. A mountainous country alone, he says, can furnish truly picturesque scenery. His early enthusiasm for the Chartreuse, his admiration in later years of the vale of Keswick and the pass of Killiecrankie, are symptoms of an orthodoxy creditable, because rarer in his time than our own. But, though Gray shared the sentiment which was then growing up, it would be absurd to attribute to him any influence in its propagation. His descriptive letters are admirable, and show that he had a true eye for scenery; but they were not published till after his death, and certainly his *Life and Writings*, clipped and docked by the precise Mason, was not the kind of book to generate a new enthusiasm. The real glory of revealing to mankind the new pleasure must be given—so far as it can be given to any individual writers—to men like Rousseau, whose passionate rhetoric made the love of nature a popular watchword, and Saussure, who first showed a thorough appreciation of the glories of the Alps. But in England, and not in England alone, even Rousseau was, in this respect, eclipsed by Ossian. The general estimate of those singular poems, considered as descriptive of a mountainous region, coincides, I imagine, with that of Wordsworth. The mountains of Ossian are mere daubs, vague abstractions of mist and gloom, gigantesque unrealities which speak of anything but first-hand impressions of actual scenery. You may read through Ossian—if you can read through it at all—without gaining any more distinct impressions of Highland scenery than you would have received in the Highlands themselves any time since last November. But the extraordinary influence of Ossian upon the minds of MacPherson's contemporaries is a matter of history. When Goethe went to Switzerland, he evidently considered it the correct thing to have passages from Ossian at his fingers' ends for application to the Alps; it was the mountaineer's text-book, to be quoted in Switzerland as a later generation quoted Byron or the present the writings of

Mr. Ruskin. Gray was one of the earliest enthusiasts, and, though he had a critical qualm or two, was apparently more moved by the new poems than by any literary event of his time. He is "*extasié* with their infinite beauty," makes "a thousand inquiries" about their authenticity, and in one letter declares himself to be "cruelly disappointed" with the *Nouvelle Héloïse*, and able to admire nothing but Fingal. He studies Croma (who now knows Croma even by name?), and picks out the finest phrase in it as though he were criticising a book of the *Iliad*.

The Ossian fever was symptomatic of a widely-spread sentiment or fashion, due to causes far more general than the influence of any individual. It would be easy enough to show that worshippers of the picturesque had discovered the chief beauties of England before Gray wrote his letters. The tourist was already abroad. When Gray visited Gordale Scar, in Craven, he already found landscape painters settled at the neighbouring inn and preparing views for the engraver. The reader of that maddest of books, *John Buncle*, may remember that the hero contrives at one place to emerge out of a mysterious cavern in the mountains of Westmoreland. He observes on the occasion that the vale of Keswick is considered to offer the finest views in England, and that they were, in truth, finer than even the Rev. Dr. Dalton had been able to make them appear in his descriptive poem. Yet Buncle thinks that Keswick is surpassed by the "shaded fells" in the neighbourhood (apparently) of Ambleside, and that the cascades there are superior to "dread Lodore." The "Rev. Dr. Dalton" appears to have published his poem—a poem, I am sorry to say, unfamiliar to me—in 1755, some years before Gray's visit. But it is needless to enlarge upon this point. It is clear enough, from many symptoms, that the love of picturesque scenery was becoming fashionable in the middle of the century, and that Gray, as a man of taste, was amongst the first to feel the impulse.

The whole matter is, perhaps, of less importance than is sometimes attached to it. There is, after all, a good deal in Macaulay's common-sense explanation of the phenomenon—that a love of mountain scenery means simply the formation of good roads and comfortable inns in mountain districts. But Gray's taste in this respect is at least significant as to Gray's own position. His contempt for Rousseau and his love of Ossian are inversions of the judgment of later times; for no one would now deny the power of Rousseau, or find much pleasure—unless possessed by some antiquarian or patriotic mania—in the epics of the mythical bard. And yet we can see that Gray represents a vein of sentiment allied to some modern modes of thought, and generally regarded as antipathetic to the spirit of his own time. With all his popularity, he appears to be an isolated phenomenon. Everybody knows his poetry by heart. The *Elegy* has so worked itself into the popular imagination that it includes more familiar phrases than almost any poem of equal length in the language. The *Bard* and the lines upon Eton have become so hackneyed as perhaps to acquire a certain tinge of banality. If few English poets have written so little, none certainly has written so little that has fallen into oblivion. And yet, though Gray is in this sense the most popular poet of his day, though he is more read than Young, or Thomson, or Collins, or Goldsmith, or many others, we do not think of him as stamping his image upon the time. He stands apart. His poetry is taken to be like an oasis in the desert; it is a sudden spring of perennial freshness gushing out in the midst of that dreary didactic, argumentative, monotonous current of versification poured forth by the imitators of Pope. He never used Pope's measure for serious purposes, except in one fine fragment—the least read of his poems—and is, as it were, an outsider in the literature of the time. And yet, again, it must be remembered that Wordsworth picked him out for special condemnation as the worst offender in the use of conventional language. He definitely accepted and has enlarged upon the theory which Wordsworth attempted to upset—that poetry should use a language differing from that of common life. Indeed, he gets upon stilts as deliberately and consciously as any poet of the day, and is nervously sensitive to the risk of a lapse into the vernacular.

It would be easy to give a paradoxical turn to these remarks, and to show how Gray was at once the opponent and the representative of the poetical creed of his day. The puzzle, such as it is, arises from our habit of absurdly exaggerating the difference between ourselves and our grandfathers, and speaking as if everybody was "artificial" in the reign of Pope and "natural" in the reign of Wordsworth. No two words in the language cover more confusion of thought than those famous phrases. It would be easy enough to twist them so as to prove that Wordsworth was more artificial than Pope, quite as clearly as the opposite is so often demonstrated; and, for my part, I am fully convinced that there was just as much human nature and as little affectation in the days of Queen Anne as in those of Victoria or in those of Elizabeth. The contrast usually drawn has, I doubt not, an important meaning; but it is so obscured by the vague talk about "nature" that I never see the word without instinctively putting myself on my guard against some bit of slipshod criticism or sham philosophy. I heartily wish that the word could be turned out of the language. Though that, alas! is impossible, we may try to avoid the misleading associations which it continually introduces. Gray, at any rate, was a human being who liked looking at trees and hills as much as anybody does now; and he certainly succeeded in writing some verses which concentrate into a couple of pages a depth of genuine emotion such as would furnish whole volumes of modern verbiage. It is another question whether he ought to be called a natural or an artificial poet.

In the first place, however, it may be observed that Gray was not so solitary a phenomenon as we might at first sight fancy. He never entered the circle of literary men who lived in London, and who, in the later part of his career, acknowledged Johnson as their dictator. He shrank from the roughness of the "great bear," who, in his turn, seems to have despised Gray as a literary fop—a finikin and affected spinner of verses, who tried to be grand and succeeded only in being pompous and obscure. Gray, in his quiet cloister, led the life of a recluse and followed his own fancies with little direct reference to the public opinion of accepted dispensers of literary reputation. But no man is really independent of his time, and Gray had his allies and his followers. Amongst them were men still worth remembering, though all of them, like Gray himself, stood more or less apart from the main current of literature. In one of his early letters he speaks of the Odes just published by two young authors, who "both deserve to last some years, but will not." Collins, the first of these, has lasted, though destined to an early death, and scarcely more voluminous than Gray himself. Collins, like Gray, was sensitive and solitary, though in a still more morbid degree. It is recorded of him—and I know of no similar case except that of Landor in regard to *Pericles and Aspasia*—that he repaid his publisher for the loss incurred by his Odes. It is, perhaps, not irrelevant to add that his mind soon gave symptoms of approaching imbecility. The other young poet was Joseph Warton, still remembered for his essay on Pope, the elder brother of Thomas Warton, the historian of poetry; and the two brothers were the heads of what was once called the school of the Wartons. The "school" was not a very large one, and the poems of both the brothers—though Thomas is held to be better than Joseph—are not amongst the things that have lasted. The influence of the Wartons, however, was very conspicuous in reviving the study of the earlier models of our literature. Joseph tried to persuade the world—unsuccessfully at the time—that Pope was inferior to Spenser; and his brother's history is a considerable landmark in that revival of interest in poetical antiquities indicated by such works as Percy's *Reliques*, or by the forgeries of Chatterton and MacPherson. I might have quoted Joseph Warton's earliest poem (1740) to show that what is called the love of nature was by no means a novelty when Gray went to the lakes. It is enough to give the title—*The Enthusiast; or, The Lover of Nature*—and to observe that Warton wishes to seat himself on a "pinetopt precipice, abrupt and shaggy," and to listen to "Boreas' blasts" and the sounds of "hollow winds and ever-beating waves," in the most approved romantic fashion. Both brothers, too, have a taste for the "moss-grown spire and crumbling arch;" and Tom's best sonnet—one much admired by Lamb—is written on a blank leaf of Dugdale's *Monasticon*, and expresses his delight in surveying the records of "closter'd piety"—

> Nor rough, nor barren, are the winding ways
> Of hoar Antiquity, but strewn with flowers.

In another he wishes to know whether "his pipe can aught essay to reach the ear" of that "divine bard" Mr. Gray, for whose *Elegy* and *Bard* he expresses the warmest admiration.

The similarity of taste shown by the Wartons and Gray does not appear to have led to personal intercourse. They were divided by that broad, though to the outward world invisible, gulf which still separates Oxford from Cambridge. Gray's most enthusiastic disciple, Mason, had come under his influence at Cambridge, and his first performance led to a passage of arms with Tom Warton. Mason attacked the Jacobitism of Oxford in a poem called *Isis*, stating, of course in a purely poetical sense, that Oxford men held "infernal orgies" to the foes of freedom. Warton replied in verses which Mason admitted to be better than his own. Modesty, however, was not Mason's strong point. Years afterwards, when riding into Oxford, he remarked that he was glad that it was already dark; otherwise, as he intimated, a mob would naturally have gathered to avenge his insults to the University. Mason's odes and choruses are so obviously an echo of Gray's that one is rather surprised to find Gray praising them in language which implies that he was not aware of his responsibility. Mason himself was cordially proud of the relationship, though he took amazing liberties as an editor of his master's letters, and occasionally gave himself airs of equality, or even patronage, which strike one as a little absurd. A more distant, but perhaps still more enthusiastic, admirer of Gray was Beattie, whose early odes (which he judiciously endeavoured to suppress) are feebler echoes than Mason's of the same model, and who reverently submitted his best poem, the *Minstrel*, to Gray's correction, and, more wonderful to relate, accepted one or two of his critic's emendations. And, finally, we must include in the school of Gray the man whose levity and coxcombry has blinded many readers to his very remarkable ability. Horace Walpole, who quarrelled with Gray, as with many others of his friends, for a time, and who, unlike Gray, was thoroughly immersed in the central current of London society, was no poet, but was in thorough sympathy with Gray's antiquarian tastes, and by the *Castle of Otranto* and the sham Gothic of Strawberry Hill did more than profounder antiquarians to restore an interest in mediæval art.

The names thus brought together, to which others might of course be added, give a sufficient indication of the general tendencies of what I have called the school of Gray. They did not form a clique, like most schools, for they lived in remote regions, and most of them showed the touchiness and even sensibility which is rubbed off by the friction of large societies. Tom Warton, who was certainly sociable enough in a fashion, was buried at Oxford for nearly fifty years. Gray was so secluded in his Cambridge cloister that the young men made a rush to see him in later years—leaving their dinners, it is said, but that is scarcely credible—when he appeared by some rare accident in the college walks. Beattie stuck with equal persistence to his college in Aberdeen, and could not be induced even to take a professorship in Edinburgh, being afraid, apparently, that his *Essay on Truth* would expose him to unpleasantness from the more metropolitan circle which admired and respected his antagonist Hume. The alarm, indeed, was more reasonable than Mason's alarm about Oxford, for the essay was not only vehement in its abuse, but had succeeded in making a great stir in the world. Mason, again, fixed himself in his Yorkshire living and his canonry, emerging only at intervals to pay a few visits to his aristocratic friends. And even Walpole made a kind of sham cloister at Strawberry, and, though a man of the world, a gossip, and a politician, was as irritable and uneasy a companion as the most retired of hermits. The great movements of thought generally spread, it is supposed, from the metropolitan centres, where intellectual activity is stimulated by the constant collision of eager and excited minds. But a new taste may make its appearance in the corners to which sensitive men retire from the uncongenial atmosphere of the world, and cultivate at their ease what is first an individual crotchet and afterwards developes into a fashionable amusement.

Gray, beyond all doubt, was the one man of genius of the school after the early death of Collins, for it would be strained to give a higher name than talent even to Horace Walpole's remarkable intellectual vivacity. Tom Warton's biographer (it is impossible to speak of Thomas) has drawn an elaborate parallel, in the proper historical fashion, between his hero and Gray. They were both dons, professors, students of antiquities, lovers of nature and of the romantic, composers of odes, and so forth. The parallel contains a good deal of truth, but it is consistent with an amusing contrast. Tom Warton was the thoroughly jovial, undignified don of the period. His poetry—even if his *Triumph of Isis* be superior to Mason's *Isis*, and his sonnets deserve some praise in a century barren of sonnets—is not generally refreshing; the poor man had to construct some of those fanciful pieces of verse which laureates in those days were bound to manufacture for the sovereign's birthday, and one cannot glance at them (nobody can read them) without profound sympathy. But his humorous verses have still a pleasant ring about them. There is a contagion in the enthusiasm with which he celebrates the virtues of Oxford ale. When he imagines himself discommuned for his indulgence, and unable even to get longer " tick " at the pothouse, he daringly compares himself to Adam exiled from Paradise. In another poem we have the characteristic triumph of the steady don, who has stuck to a bachelor life, over the misguided victim to matrimony and a college living. Thus will the poor fellow lament as butcher's bills and school fees become heavier year by year :—

> Why did I sell my college life
> (He cries) for benefice and wife?
> Return, ye days when endless pleasure
> I found in reading or in leisure,

When calm around the common room
I puffed my daily pipe's perfume,
Rode for a stomach, and inspected
At annual bottlings corks selected,
And din'd untaxed, untroubled, under
The portrait of our pious founder!

These of course are youthful productions; but, if all tales be true, the tastes described did not die out. Once, it is said, Warton's presence was required on some grand public function. The Professor was not to be found till an ingenious person suggested that a drum and a fife should be sent through the streets performing a jovial and Jacobite tune; and before long the sweet notes enticed Warton from a public-house, pipe in mouth and with rumpled bands, to be miserably deceived in his hopes of fun. More creditable, and apparently more authentic, anecdotes relate how he took part in the boyish pranks of his brother's pupils at Winchester, and once at least composed a copy of Latin verses for a youthful companion, and insisted upon taking the half-crown which had been offered as a reward for their excellence before the mild imposture was detected.

Most men grow tired of pipes and ale and the jolly bachelor life of common rooms soon after they have put on their master's hood. In the old days, before commissions and reform, when the Universities were more frequently regarded as a permanent retreat for men who could find a pipe a sufficient substitute for a wife, such jolly fellows as Warton formed a larger part of the college society. Most of them, however, were duller dogs than Tom Warton, who, with all his enjoyment of such heavy festivities, managed to write some laborious books. A proud, fastidious, and exquisitely sensitive man like Gray looked upon the whole scene with infinite contempt and scorn. It does not appear to be very clearly made out why he should have resided permanently at Cambridge, except for the sake of the libraries. Apparently he had resented some of Walpole's supercilious conduct, and possibly conduct which deserves a harsher name; for it is said that Walpole opened a letter addressed to Gray in the expectation of finding some disrespectful notice of himself. Anyhow, Gray erased Walpole from his list of friends, though he consented to resume acquaintanceship. He might previously have condescended to accept some of the appointments which Walpole could have easily procured during his father's ministry. But the father was turned out of office whilst the son was a discarded friend, and Gray, unwilling to enter the struggle of professional life, settled down at the University, though he always regarded it and its inhabitants with unqualified contempt. Gray—as his letters prove—had a very keen sense of humour, and when he chose could put a very sharp edge to his tongue. He let his fellow-residents know that he thought them fools—an opinion which they were perverse enough to resent. The poem with which he greeted

Cambridge on first returning from his travels, headed a *Hymn to Ignorance*, is a curious contrast to Warton's enthusiastic *Triumph of Isis*.

> Hail, horrors, hail! ye ever gloomy bowers,
> Ye Gothic fanes and antiquated towers,
> Where rushy Camus' slowly winding flood
> Perpetual draws his humid train of mud—

is the opening of his uncomplimentary address to his *alma mater*. "At the very time," says Parr, in that style of delicious pomposity which smells of his immortal wig, "in which Mr. Gray spoke so contemptuously of Cambridge, that very University abounded in men of erudition and science, with whom the first scholars would not have disdained to converse; and who shall convict me of exaggeration when I bring forward the names" of the immortal so-and-so? The names include, it is true, some which have still a right to respect—Bentley, Waterland, and Conyers Middleton, for example—but the most eminent were just dead or dying when Gray came into residence, and dignified heads of houses, like Bentley and Waterland, were in a seventh heaven of dignity, quite inaccessible to the youthful poet. It does not now appear that it can ever have been a great privilege to live in the same town with "Provost Snape," "Tunstall the public orator," or "Asheton of Jesus." Gray knew something of Middleton (who died in 1750, when Gray was 34), and speaks of his house as the only one in Cambridge where it was easy to converse; and he takes care to add that even Middleton was only an "old acquaintance," which is but an indifferent likeness of a friend. He made a few intimacies—chiefly with younger men, like Mason, who soon ceased to be residents—but the bulk of the University was in his eyes contemptible; and, on the whole, contemporary evidence would lead to the conclusion that his opinion was not far wrong. Cambridge had possessed very eminent men in the days of Bentley, Newton, Waterland, Sherlock, and Middleton, and it has had very eminent men at a later period, but Gray was himself almost the only man in the middle of the eighteenth century whom anybody need care to remember now. At any rate, there was a large proportion of that ale-drinking, tobacco-smoking element amongst the jolly fellows of the combination room, whose society Warton might relish, but whom Gray regarded with supreme contempt. The fellow-commoners appear by his account to have exceeded in audacity the young gentlemen who lately exhibited their sense of playful humour by defacing certain statues at Oxford. The wits of an earlier day put poor Gray in fear of his life. He ordered a rope ladder, to be able to escape from his rooms in case they set the college on fire; and, if I remember the tradition rightly, they set a "booby trap" for the poet, and, raising an alarm, induced him to descend his rope ladder into a water butt. Anyhow, poor Gray was driven from Peterhouse to Pembroke, and there abstracted his mind from the academical noises by a course of study which, according to his admirers (but who shall answer for the admirers?), made him profoundly familiar with every branch of learning except mathematics. Meanwhile his appearance and manners were calculated to emphasise and provoke the mutual dislike between himself and his rougher surroundings. His rooms were scrupulously neat, with mignonette in the windows and flowers elegantly planted in china vases; he spoke little in general society, and compiled biting epigrams or classical puns with a derisory application to his special associates. In short, in outward appearance he belonged to the class fop or *petit-maître*, mincing, precise, affected, and as little in harmony with the rowdy fellow-commoners as Hotspur's courtier with the rough soldiers on the battle-field.

The want of harmony between Gray and his surroundings goes far to explain his singular want of fertility. In fact, we may say—without any want of respect for a venerable institution—that Gray could hardly have found a more uncongenial residence. Cambridge boasts of its poets; and a University may well be proud which has had, amongst many others, such inmates as Spenser, Milton, Dryden, Gray, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Byron, and Mr. Tennyson. If a sceptic chooses to ask what share the University can claim in stimulating the genius of those illustrious men, the answer might be difficult. But, in any case, no poet except Gray loved his University well enough to become a resident. If it were not for Gray I should be inclined to guess that a poet don was a contradiction in terms. The reason is very obvious to anyone who has enjoyed the latter title. It is simply that no atmosphere can be conceived more calculated to stimulate that excessive fastidiousness which all but extinguished Gray's productive faculties. He might wrap himself in simple contempt for the ale-drinking vanity of don. He could, in the old college slang, "sport his oak" and despise their railings, and even the shouts of "Fire!" of the worthy fellow-commoners. But a poet requires some sympathy and, if possible, some worshippers. The inner circle of Gray's intimates was naturally composed of men fastidious like himself, and all of them more or less critics by profession. The reflection would be forced upon his mind, whenever he thought of publishing, What will be thought of my poems by Provost Snape, and Mr. Public-Orator Tunstall, and Asheton of Jesus, and those other luminaries whom Dr. Parr commemorates? And undoubtedly their first thought would be to show their claim to literary excellence by picking holes in their friend's compositions. They would rejoice greatly when they could show that faculties sharpened by the detection of false quantities and slips of grammar in their pupils' Latin verses were equal to the discovery of solecisms and defective rhymes in the work of a living poet. Gray's extreme sensitiveness to all such quillets of criticism is marked in every poem he wrote. Had he been forced to fight his way in literature he would have learnt to swallow his scruples and take the chance in a free give and take struggle for fame. In a country living he might have forgotten his tormentors and have married a wife to secure at least one thoroughly appreciative and intelligent admirer. But to be shut up in a small scholastic clique, however little he might respect their individual merits, to have the chat of combination rooms ever in his ears, to be worried by bands of professional critics at every turn, was as though a singing bird should build over a wasp nest. The *Elegy* and the *Odes* just struggled into existence, though much of them was written before he settled down as a resident; but Gray, like many another don of great abilities, finished but a minute fragment of the work of which he more or less contemplated the execution. The books contemplated but never carried out by men in his position would make a melancholy and extensive catalogue. The effect of these influences upon his work is palpable to every reader of Gray. No English poet has ever given more decisive proof that he shared that secret of clothing even an obvious thought in majestic and resounding language, which we naturally call Miltonic. Though he modestly asserts that he inherits

> Nor the pride nor ample pinion
> That the Theban eagle bear,
> Sailing with supreme dominion
> Through the azure deep of air,

yet we feel that none of his contemporaries—perhaps none of his successors—could have equalled, in dignity and richness of style, the noble passage in which that phrase occurs. And yet we must also feel that if his "car," as he says of Dryden's, is borne by "coursers of ethereal race," they are constantly checked before they can get into full career. He takes flight as if the azure deep were the natural home in which he could sail suspended like the eagle without perceptible effort. But the wings droop before they are well unfurled, and the magnificent strain ceases without giving the promised satisfaction. Even the *Elegy* flags a little towards the end; the "hoary-headed swain" becomes rather flat in his remarks, and the concluding epitaph has just a little too much twang of epigrammatic smartness. I fully agree, indeed, with Wolfe that it was a far greater achievement to write the *Elegy* than to storm the heights of Abram, and, for my part, hold that only a soldier, or author, or civilian of ultra-military enthusiasm could suppose that such a comparison involved condescension on the side of the general. Gray and his personal admirers seem to have been annoyed at the preference given to this above his other writings. It proved, so he argued, that the stupid public cared for the subject instead of the art; that they liked the *Elegy* as they liked Blair's *Grave*, and would have liked it as well if the same thoughts had been expressed in prose. Undoubtedly the public will always refuse to make that distinction between form and matter which seems so important to the critical mind. It is not, however, that they are unaffected by the artistic skill, but that they are affected unconsciously. The meditations of Blair, of Young, and of Hervey, equally popular in their day, have fallen into disrepute for want of the inquisitive felicity of language which has preserved the *Elegy*. It is a commonplace thing to say that the power of giving freshness to commonplace is amongst the highest proofs of poetical genius. One reason is, apparently, that it is so difficult to extract the pure and ennobling element from the coarser materials in which any obvious truth comes to be embedded. The difficulty of feeling rightly is as great as the difficulty of finding a worthy utterance of the feeling. Everybody may judge of the difficulty of Gray's task who will attend to what passes at a funeral. On such an occasion one is inclined to fancy, *à priori*, mourners will drop all affectation and speak poetically because they will speak from their hearts; but, as a matter of fact, there is no occasion on which there is generally such a lavish expenditure of painful and jarring sentiment, of vulgarity, affectation, and insincerity; and thus Gray's meditations stand out from other treatments of a similar theme not merely by the technical merits of the language, but by the admirable truth and purity of the underlying sentiment. The temptation to be too obtrusively moral and improving, to indulge in inappropriate epigram, in sham feeling, in idle sophistry, in strained and exaggerated gloominess, or even on occasion to heighten the effect by inappropriate humour, is so strong with most people that Gray's kindness and delicacy of feeling, qualities which were perceptible to the despised public, must be regarded as contributing quite as much to the success of the *Elegy* as the technical merits of form, which, moreover, can hardly be separated from the merits of substance.

Indeed, when we come to the other odes which have similar qualities of mere style, we are at no loss to explain the difference of reception. The beautiful *Ode upon Eton*, for example, comes into conflict with one's common sense. We know too well that an Eton boy is not always the happy and immaculate creature of Gray's fancy; and one feels that the reflections upon his probable degradation imply a fit of temporary ill-humour in the poet, supervening, no doubt, upon a deeper vein of melancholy. The sentiment is too splenetic to be pleasing. The *Bard*, which has, I suppose, been recited by schoolboys as frequently as the *Elegy*, is a more curious indication of the peculiarities of Gray's method of composition. Mason gives an account of the remarkable transformation which it underwent. Gray's first intention, it appears, was that the bard should declare prophetically that poets should never be wanting "to celebrate true virtue and valour in immortal strains, to expose vice and infamous pleasure, and boldly censure tyranny and oppression." Undoubtedly this gives a meaning to the ode worthy of the beginning. The victim could not make a more effective retort. But, unluckily, when the bard had got into full swing it struck him that the facts were not what his theory required. Shakspeare, says Mason, liked Falstaff in spite of his vices; Milton censured tyranny in prose; Dryden was a court parasite; Pope, a Tory; and Addison, "though a Whig," was a poor poet. The poor bard was therefore in the miserable position—one of the most wretched known to humanity—of a man who has begun a fine speech and does not see his way out of it. If Gray had taken a wider view of the poet's true function, he might still have found some embodiment for his thoughts; for English poetry, though it may not have been Whiggish, may certainly be regarded as the fullest expression of the more liberal and humanising conceptions of the world which have to struggle against the pedantry and narrowness of prosaic professional theorisers. But the bard required sound Whig poetry to point his moral, and it was not forthcoming. Consequently he has to take refuge in the very scanty consolation afforded by the bare reflection that Spenser, Shakespeare, and Milton would begin to write some time after the descendants of a Welshman had ascended the throne. One would not grudge any satisfaction to an unfortunate gentleman just about to commit suicide; but one must admit that he was easily pleased.

This want of any central idea converts the ode into a set of splendid fragments of verse, which scarcely hold together. Contemporary critics complained grievously of its "obscurity"—a phrase which seems ill-placed to us who know by experience what obscurity may really mean. An obscurity removable by a slight knowledge of English history and a recollection of the fact that Richard II. is said to have been starved instead of stabbed, as in Shakespeare, by Exton, is not of a very grievous kind; but the absence of any intelligible motive in the bard's final rupture is more serious. A poet surely might have acted upon the *tant pis pour les faits* theory, and proceeded to make his general assertion without waiting for confirmatory evidence. A writer who, like Gray, secretes his poetry line by line and spreads the process over years, seems to fall into the same faults which are more frequently due to haste. He pores over his conceptions so long that he becomes blind to defects obvious to a fresh observer, and rather misses his point, as he introduces minute alterations without noticing their effect on the context. One wonders how a man of Gray's exquisite perception could have introduced the lines—

> And gorgeous dames, and statesmen old
> In bearded majesty appear—

without seeing that we are only saved by a comma, and a comma easily neglected, from assuming that a Julia Pastrana would have been a usual phenomenon at the court of Elizabeth. Correction continued after the freshness of the impression has died away is apt to lead to such oversight.

The learned and fastidious don shows through the inspired "bard" by many equally unmistakable indications. His editor, Mitford, collected a number of parallel passages which curiously indicate the degree in which his mind was saturated with recollections of poetical literature. It seems to be now considered as unjustifiable plagiarism for a poet to assimilate the phrases of his predecessors. We may, indeed, find abundant proofs of familiarity with Shakespeare in Shelley, and in more recent writers; but they are generally of the unconscious kind, and would be avoided as sins against originality. The poets of the last century, such as Goldsmith, and especially Pope, had no scruples in the matter. Their work did not profess to be a sudden and spontaneous inspiration. It was a slow elaboration, with which it was perfectly allowable to interweave any quantity of previously manufactured material so long as the juncture was not palpable. Gray's adaptations seem sometimes to make the whole tissue of his poetry. He owns to an unconscious appropriation from Green (author of the *Spleen*) of the main thought of his *Ode to the Spring*, the comparison of men to ephemeral insects. But everywhere he is giving out phrases which he has previously assimilated. So in the very spirited translation from the Norse, "Uprose the king of men with speed," we have a verse from the *Allegro*—"Right against the Eastern Gate"—cropping up naturally in quite a fresh connection. A single phrase seems to combine several semi-conscious recollections. The words in the *Bard* "dear as the ruddy drops that warm my heart" come from Shakespeare, and the preceding "dear as the light that visits those sad eyes" are perhaps from Otway. But it is useless to accumulate instances of so palpable a process.

It is only in character, again, that Gray should have clung to a peculiar dictum, as he would have insisted upon wearing his proper academical costume in a performance in the senate-house. He would no more have dropped into Wordsworth's vernacular than he would have smoked a pipe in one of Warton's pot-houses. Wordsworth considered this dignity to be unnatural pomposity; and undoubtedly the language is frequently conventional and "unnatural," and a stumbling-block of offence to the generation which gave up wigs. Equally annoying was Gray's immense delight in semi-allegorical figures. We have whole catalogues of abstract qualities scarcely personified. Ambition, bitter Scorn, grinning Infamy, Falsehood, hard Unkindness, keen Remorse, and moody Madness are all collected in one stanza not exceptional in style—beings which to us are almost as offensive as the muse whom he has pretty well ceased to invoke, though he still appeals to his lyre. This fashion reached its culminating point in the celebrated invocation, somewhere recorded by Coleridge, "Inoculation, heavenly maid!" The personified qualities are a kind of fading "survival"—ghosts of the old allegorical persons who put on a rather more solid clothing of flesh and blood with Spenser, and with Gray scarcely putting in a stronger claim to vitality than is implied in the use of capital letters. The "muses" were nearly extinct, and in Pope's time the gods and goddesses had come to be regarded as so much "machinery" invented by Homer to work his epic poetry. They were, in fact, passions and qualities in masquerade; and they therefore found it very easy, in the next generation, to drop even this thin disguise, and fit themselves for poetic usage, not by taking the name of a pagan deity, but by a simple typographical device.

What would Gray have done under more congenial circumstances if he produced such inimitable fragments under such adverse conditions

—when his learning threatened to choke his fire, when his exquisite taste was pampered with excessive fastidiousness, and his temper and position alienated him from the most vigorous intellectual movement of the day? Perhaps—for the region of the might-have-been is boundless—he would have produced a masterpiece of the "grand style," worthy of a place by Milton's finest work; or, as possibly, he would have done nothing. It is an amusing exercise of the imagination to place our favourite authors in different countries and centuries, and to trace their hypothetical development a century earlier. I fancy that Gray would have buried himself still more profoundly from the political convulsions which attracted Milton's sterner and more active spirit; he would have studied Plotinus and Maimonides, and found sympathetic companionship amongst the Cambridge Platonists; he would have written some fragment of semi-mystical reverie, showing stupendous learning and philosophic breadth of thought, and possibly have composed some divine poems for the admiration of Henry More or John Norris. Warton, doubtless, would at any period have enjoyed Oxford ale, and joined in the jolly song, "Back and side go bare, go bare;" he would have sometimes accompanied Burton on the rambles where he was thrown into fits of laughter by listening to the ribaldry of the bargees at the bridge end; he would still have been an antiquarian, and his note book might have contributed quaint scraps of learning to the *Anatomy of Melancholy*. Mason, anxious not to sink the man of the world in the country parson, would have racked his unfortunate brains for conceits worthy to be placed beside the most fashionable compositions of Donne or Cowley. Horace Walpole would, of course, have been at any time the prince of gossips; he would have kept most judiciously on the safe side in the most dangerous revolutions, and have come just near enough to collect the most interesting scandals in the courts of the Stuarts; but probably his lively intellect would have led him to drop in occasionally at the meetings of the infant Royal Society, and to have been one of the early cultivators of a taste for ancient marbles or a judicious patron of Vandykes. It is, perhaps, harder to assign the precise place in our own days, when the separate niches are not so distinctly marked off, and even the Universities scarcely afford a satisfactory refuge for the would-be recluse; but at least one may assume that each of them would have been æsthetic to his fingers' ends, and have been thoroughly on a level with the last new developments of taste, whether for mediæval architecture or the art of the Renaissance, or that style which is called after Queen Anne. The snapdragon which Cardinal Newman saw from his windows of Trinity, and took for the emblem of his perpetual residence in the University, was probably flourishing when Warton's residence in the same college ceased; and Warton, in spite of that love of ale which is perhaps more prominent than it should be in our impressions of his character, would beyond all doubt have been a member of that school of which his successor was the greatest ornament, and which has given a new meaning to the old phrase High Church. It was amongst the Wartons and their friends that the word "Gothic," used by earlier writers as a simple term of abuse, came to have a more appreciative meaning; they were the originators of the so-called romanticism made popular by Scott, and which counts for so much in the Anglo-Catholic development.

The paradox, in short, with which I started comes simply to this: that Gray and his friends were eclectics. This taste for the "Gothic" was a kind of happy thought, a lucky discovery made by men feeling round rather vaguely for a new mode of literary and artistic enjoyment—not quite content with the exceedingly comfortable and respectable century in which they lived, and yet not clearly seeing how to improve upon it. Horace Walpole, the shrewdest of all and the least of a recluse, was, on one side, a thorough man of his time; he was a freethinker of the Voltaire type; believed—so far as he believed in anything—in Pope's poetry and Locke's philosophy; he sneered at enthusiasm and sentimentalism, and at any revolutionary movement calculated directly or indirectly to deprive Horace Walpoles of comfortable sinecures. But he had a taste, and money to spend upon it; so he made Gothic chapels and halls of lath and plaster, played with antiquarian researches, and wrote a romance which was made of literary lath and plaster to match the materials of Strawberry Hill. Gray's dilettanteism was far more serious and systematic, but it necessarily took the same direction. He did more than dabble in antiquarianism; he read with insatiable appetite; he became, I suppose, profound in Gothic architecture, so far as isolated efforts could make a man profound. But his attempts at putting his theory in practice were clearly of the Strawberry Hill kind. He instructs his friend to buy bits of plain coloured glass, and arrange the tops of his windows in a "mosaic of his own fancy," only observing that, to give them a "Gothic aspect," it will be enough to turn the fragments "corner-ways." Then he manages to procure "stucco paper" at 3*d.* a yard, which is "rather pretty and nearly Gothic," and apparently represents Gothic arches and niches. It will produce an awkward effect, as he admits, where the pattern has to be turned the wrong way; and, indeed, he is awake to the inadequacy of the crude revival. Painters, as he says, make objects which are more like goose pies than cathedrals. The new toy was still in a very imperfect and rickety state.

One of the quaintest illustrations of the Gothicism of that time is in Mason's *English Garden*. It is a weary bit of didactic poetry, and a most amiable and lenient critic, Hartley Coleridge, pronounces it to be the dullest poem which he ever attempted to read. It is hard, says Coleridge, to suppose it "wholly destitute of beauties, especially" (why especially?) "as it consists of 2,423 lines of blank verse;" but he does not seem to have discovered any. Had the critic persevered to the end of the fourth book, he might at least have been rewarded by a smile at the author. Mason tries to enliven his performance by a story about a pattern man of taste and virtue, named Alcander, whose tragical sorrows are soothed by religion and landscape gardening. It is enough to notice his performances in the last capacity. Alcander, as his name suggests, is an English country gentleman, possessed of an ancient mansion

> Coeval with those rich cathedral fanes
> (Gothic ill named) whose harmony results
> From disunited parts.

Alcander shows his taste by a restoration in the manner of the time. Let every structure, he proclaims,

> needful for a farm
> Arise in castle-semblance; the huge barn
> Shall with a mock portcullis awe the gate
> Where Ceres entering, o'er the flail-proof floor
> In golden triumph rides; some tower rotund
> Shall to the pigeons and their callow young
> Safe roost afford, and every buttress broad
> Whose proud projection seems a mass of stone
> Give space to stall the heifer and the steed.
> So shall each part, though turned to rural use,
> Deceive the eye with those bold feudal farms
> Which Fancy loves to gaze on.

He afterwards adopts a similar method

> To hide the structure rude where Winter pounds
> In conic pit his congelations hoar;

concealing his ice house and dairy behind a modern "time-struck abbey." Alcander thus displays those admirable qualities of head and heart which enable him to bear with resignation the melancholy death of a beloved object. He finally consoles himself by placing her monument in a sham hermitage. The Gothic revival of a century ago sounds absurd enough to our ears, and it must be confessed that our foolery is more systematic and scientific, as it is probably more destructive. Alcander, happily, did not "restore" his castle, though he surrounded it with those queer farm buildings and brand-new ruins. Pope, it seems, had set the fashion of landscape gardening on the little plot of ground which, as Horace Walpole tells us, he had "twisted and twirled, and rhymed and harmonised, till it appeared two or three sweet little lawns opening and opening beyond one another, the whole surrounded with thick, impenetrable woods." Mason, Spence, Shenstone, and other persons of literary note helped, according to their opportunities, to promote the revolt against the old-fashioned style in which, as Mason puts it, Folly combined with Wealth

> To plan that formal, dull, disjointed scene
> Which once was call'd a garden.

He denounces the stiff canals, the clipped yews and holly hedges, and the geometric patterns of "tonsile box" with the zeal of a reformer. The theory seems to be that a garden ought to look as if it were not a garden. The change of taste, however, was doubtless symptomatic of the growing "love of nature," though I do not presume to discuss its merits. It was a development parallel to the literary change implied in the renewed taste for old ballads, for archaic poetry, or what passed for such under the names of Ossian and Rowley, and for Elizabethan literature.

Such tastes, however significant of the advent of a literary revolution, did not imply any revolutionary purpose in their cultivators. If Gray loved Spenser he was even more enthusiastic about Dryden, from whom he professed to have learnt the art of versification. Cowper tried to supersede Pope's Homer. Gray declared that nobody would ever translate Homer as well as Pope. Gray was as orthodox in his literary as in his philosophical profession of faith; and his most avowed disciple Mason was, on the whole, of the same persuasion. In Warton and Beattie there is clearly some anticipation of Scott's romanticism, but Mason's experiments were rather in the classical direction. His *English Garden* was his most ponderous and unsuccessful performance. In some other efforts he showed a keenness of style, a causticity of satire, which induced the late Mr. Dilke to suggest him (not quite seriously, I fancy) as a possible candidate for the questionable honour of being the real Junius. It would be difficult indeed to imagine that Junius could by any possibility have been a country clergyman, living for the greatest part of the year at a distance from the political gossip of the day, however much interested in the spread of sound Whig principles. It is amusing to read the correspondence between Mason and his two friends Gray and Walpole, and to note how the respectful disciple, reverently receiving from his teachers little hints of criticism—laudatory, it is true, for the most part, but also dashed with tolerably sharp sarcasm—gradually developes into the rather dandified clergyman, anxious to show that the man of the world is not altogether sunk in the rustic parson; that he is no pedant, but a man of taste, and capable of tagging his remarks with bits of fashionable French, and even of occasionally repaying in kind his correspondent's affluence of the latest scandals. Mason's clerical gown did not sit very well upon him, though he seems to have been conscientious and independent, and not without some genuine kindliness of nature. But he always gives one the impression of being out of place in his cassock. It would not be easy to find a more quaint expression of the unprofessional turn of mind in a clergyman than a defence of Christianity in one of his sermons. "If," he says, "the British Constitution will not enable a man to dispense with religion, we must admit that nothing can;" and he proceeds to establish a proposition which certainly would not be considered as requiring defence in a modern pulpit—that even the Magna Charta and the Bill of Rights did not supersede the Gospels. His claims to be a conceivable Junius seem to depend chiefly upon the clever squib called *Heroic Epistle*, which is an amusing burlesque of the architectural crotchets of Sir W. Chambers, and implies a want of reverence for

George III. Mason took immense pains to conceal the authorship of this and some less successful sequels, and so far followed the steps of Junius; but it is impossible to fancy that the great pamphleteer would have made such a cackling over such a trifle, or have been so sensitive to the praises of his confidant Walpole.

Gray speaks of Mason's "insatiable reforming mouth," and remarks that he has no passions "except a little malice and revenge." There was a good deal of acidity in his nature, developed, perhaps, by his uncongenial position and by domestic trouble, if he had not the rancour and force which make a great satirist; but in earlier days Gray found in him a simple-minded and enthusiastic disciple, who read little or nothing, but wrote abundance, "and that with a design to make a fortune by it." His two poems *Elfrida* and *Caractacus* were fruits of this early fluency. They have been criticised elaborately by Hartley Coleridge, but belong, I think, to that kind and class of literature upon which serious criticism would be rather wasted. It is not that they are bad; rather they suggest an uncomfortable reflection upon the quantity of real talent, as well as conscientious effort, which may be thrown away in producing work unmistakably second-rate and void of genuine vitality. We can better estimate the extreme rarity and value of genius by measuring it against the achievements of remarkable cleverness. Hastily read, or read whilst still possessing the gloss of novelty, Mason's work might look like Gray's. Here, for example, is the first stanza of a chorus from *Caractacus*, which Gray not only praised to Mason, but cites in one of his notes as a proof that sublime odes could still be written in English :—

Hark! heard ye not yon footstep dread,
That shook the earth with thund'ring tread?
  'Twas Death. In haste
  The warrior past;
High towered his helmed head:
I mark'd his mail; I mark'd his shield;
I 'spyed the sparkling of his spear;
I saw his giant arm the falchion wield;
Wide wav'd the lickering blade, and fir'd the angry air.*

Longer quotation might be tiresome; but Mason continues to the end with all the manner of a genuine poet, and doubtless cheated himself as well as Gray into the impression that he had the real stuff in him. The effect is respectable at a little distance, though the work will not bear a moment's inspection.

The general design of the plays, however, is more to my purpose than the merits of their execution. At that time the worship of Shakespeare, though sometimes extravagant, had not become a mere slavish idolatry. It was still permitted to see spots in the sun; and not yet fashionable for poets to try to revive the Elizabethan style, though Mason made one feeble attempt at a play "on the old English model." Gray, with his catholic taste, admired Racine, and began a play in imitation of *Britannicus*; and the faithful Mason decided that a "medium between the French and English taste would be preferable to either." He had also a fancy that the ancient chorus might be restored, so as at once to give greater opportunities for poetical descriptions and the graceful introduction of "moral reflections." Though Gray ridiculed his arguments pretty sharply, he stuck to his plan as obstinately as Sam Weller when insisting, in defiance of paternal remonstrances, upon a poetical conclusion to his love letter. Accordingly, in *Elfrida* and *Caractacus*, certain bands of British virgins and druids talk the twaddle and burst into the lyrical irrelevance which are the function of a chorus. Mason had abundant self-complacency; and though his plays had only a moderate success, owing to the bad taste of the public, he felt that his ingenious eclecticisms combined the various merits of Sophocles, Racine, and Shakespeare. Unsuccessful authors may well invoke blessings on the man who invented conceit. But Mason, after all, writes like a cultivated scholar, with sensibility to poetic excellence, though without real poetic power; and if we laugh at his taste, our grandchildren will probably laugh with equal self-satisfaction at ours.

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* The last line is an emendation for "Courage was in his van and Conquest in his rear," a line still more *à la Gray*, but removed in compliance with a criticism of Gray's.

In truth, this fashion of writing plays not intended, or scarcely intended, for the stage, of which Mason was one of the first originators, is characteristic of the whole school. I will not argue a large question here, or deny that something may be said for the practice; and yet it seems as though a play which is not to be acted has a more than superficial resemblance to the feudal castles which were not meant for defence, and the abbeys in which there were to be no monks. The farm is dictated by conditions which are no longer present to the writer's mind, and are therefore apt to be a mere encumbrance. If you build a portcullis to let in cows, not to exclude maurauders, it is apt to become rather ludicrously unreal. If you know that your play is to be read and not to be seen, the whole dramatic arrangement is on the way to become a mere sham. It does not grow out of the poetical conception, but is fitted on to it in compliance with a fashion. Why bother yourself to make the actors tell a story, when it is simpler and easier to tell it yourself?

In this sense literature grows more "artificial" as it is encumbered with more dead forms having no significance except as remnants of extinct conditions. There was a time, we are told, when art was perfectly spontaneous, and the critic was happily not existent. People sang or recited by instinct, without asking how or why. That golden age—if it ever existed since men were monkeys—had long passed away even in the beginning of modern literature. Spenser and Shakespeare, for example, probably thought about the principles of their art almost as much as their modern critics, and were very consciously trying experiments and devising new forms of expression. But, as the noxious animal called a critic becomes rampant, we have a different phase, which seems to be illustrated by the case of Gray and his fellows. The distinction seems to be that the critic, as he grows more conceited, not only lays down rules for the guidance of the imaginative impulse, but begins to think himself capable of producing any given effect at pleasure. He has got to the bottom of the whole affair, and can tell you what is the chemical composition of a *Hamlet*, or an *Agamemnon*, or an *Iliad*, and can therefore teach you what materials to select and how to combine them. He can give you a recipe for an epic poem, or for communicating the proper mediæval or classical flavour to your performance. If he is as clever a man as Mason, he will perhaps go a little further, and show not only how to extract the peculiar essence of a Racine or a Shakespeare, but how to mix the result so as to produce something better than either. In one respect he has clearly made an advance. He is beginning to appreciate the necessity of a historical study of different literary forms. In such quaint, old-fashioned criticism as Addison applied to Milton, where Longinus, and Aristotle, and the learned M. Bossu are invoked as final authorities about the "fable" and the "machinery" and the character of the hero, we perceive that the critic is still persuaded that there is one absolutely correct and infallible code of art, applicable in all times and places. Milton and Homer are regarded as belonging to the same class, and are to be judged by the same laws. The later critic, taking a wider survey and rummaging amongst the antiquarian stores to discover any pearls hidden under Dryasdust's accumulations, began to see that there were many different types of art, each of which possessed its own charm and characteristic excellence. He scarcely saw at first that each form was also the outgrowth of a particular set of conditions, and could not be produced independently of them. It seemed easy to restore anything that struck him as picturesque or graceful. He could give the old ballad air by an arbitrary combination of bad spelling, or make his ruined abbey out of a scene painter's materials.

This early race of critics had no direct hostility to their own century or to its early classicalism. They were not iconoclasts, but only adding some new idols to the old pantheon. They aimed at being men of finer and more catholic taste than their neighbours, but wished to extend the borders of orthodoxy, to repeal the anathema which had been pronounced upon the "Gothicism" and barbarism of our old authors, not to anathematise the existing order in revenge. They were quiet, orthodox, and substantially conservative, even if nominally Whiggish, and feared or detested revolutionary impulses of any kind from the bottom of their hearts. Such men as Mason or the Wartons tried literary experiments which are now of no great value, because they represent at best the attempts of a superficial connoisseur of talent. They did something by attracting interest to researches which produced greater results when carried on by more thorough workers in the same mine. But it is also true that they were amongst the first to fall into the blunders, since repeated on a more gigantic scale by successors, who have tried more systematically to galvanise extinct forms into a semblance of vitality.

Gray, the man of real poetic genius, was also, if his friends judged rightly, the most profound antiquarian and the most deeply read of the whole school. Many of his critics have lamented the time which he spent in making elaborate tables of chronology, in studying genealogy, and annotating Dugdale's *Monasticon*, or Grosier's *History of the Chinese Dynasties*, or the *Botany* of Linnæus, when he might have been writing more elegies. There is so much to regret in the world that one would not waste much lamentation upon might-have-beens. It is a thousand pities that Burns took to drink, that Byron quarrelled with his wife, that Shelley was drowned in a squall, and that Gray wasted intellect upon labours which were absolutely fruitless; but we cannot afford to sit down and cry over it all. We must take what we can get, and be thankful. But neither can one quite accept the optimist theory that Gray really did all that he could have done under different circumstances. The fire was all but choked by the fuel, and the cloisters of Pembroke acted as a tolerably effective extinguisher upon what was left. The peculiar merit of Gray is that he had force enough, though only at the cost of slow and laborious travail, to find an utterance for genuine emotion, which was enriched instead of being made unnatural by his varied culture. The critic in him never injured the quality, but only reduced the quantity, of his work. What little he left is so perfect in its kind, so far above any contemporary performances, because he never forgot, like some learned people, that the ultimate aim of the poet should be to touch our hearts by showing his own, and not to exhibit his learning, or his fine taste, or his skill in mimicking the notes of his predecessors. He could rarely cast aside his reserve, or forget his academical dignity enough to speak at all; but when he does speak he always shows that the genuine depth of feeling underlies the crust of propriety. He cannot drop, nor does he desire to drop, the conventionality of style, but he makes us feel that he is a human being before he is a critic or a don. He wears stately robes because it is an ingrained habit, but he does not suppose that the tailor can make the man. In his letters this as clear as in his poetry. His habitual reserve restrains him from sentimentalising, and he generally relieves himself by a pleasant vein of sub-acid humour. But now and then he speaks, as it were, shyly or half afraid to unbosom himself, and yet with a pathetic tenderness which conquers our sympathy. Such is the beautiful little letter to Mason on the death of his wife, or still more the letter in which he confides to his friend Nichols how he had "discovered a thing very little known, which is that in one's whole life one can never have more than a single mother." Sterne might have written a chapter of exquisite sentimentalising without approaching the pathetic charm of that single touch of the reserved and outwardly pedantic don. His utterance is wrung from him in spite of himself, and still half veiled by the quaintness of the phrase.

Gray's love of nature shows itself in the same way. He does not make poetical capital out of it, and indeed has an impression that it would be scarcely becoming. He would agree with Pope's contempt for "pure description." Fields and hills should only be admitted in the background of his dignified poetry, and just so far as they are obviously appropriate to the sentiment to be expressed. But when he does speak it is always with the most genuine feeling in every word. There is a charming little description of the Southampton Water and of a sunrise—he can "hardly believe" that anybody ever saw a sunrise before—which are as perfect vignettes as can be put upon paper within equal limits, worth acres of more pretentious word-painting. He rather despised Mason's gardening tastes, it seems, on the ground that his sham wildernesses and waterfalls could never come up to Skiddaw and Lodore. To spend a week at Keswick is for him to be "in Elysium." He kept notes, too, about natural history, which seem to show as keen an interest in the behaviour of birds or insects as that of White of Selborne himself. And yet his sensibility to such impressions has scarcely left a trace in his poetry, except in the moping owl and the droning flight of the beetle in the *Elegy*. The Spring has to appear in company with the "rosy-bosom'd hours," and the Muse and the insects have to preach a pathetic little sermon to justify the notice which is taken of them. Obviously this is not the kind of mountain worship which would satisfy Scott or Wordsworth. Gray was, perhaps, capable of feeling "the impulse from the vernal wood," as truly as Wordsworth, but he would have altogether rejected the doctrine that it could teach him more than all "the sages," and resisted the temptation to throw his books aside except for a brief constitutional. A turn in the backs of the colleges was enough for him, as a rule, and sometimes he may thoroughly enjoy a brief holiday by the side of Derwentwater as a delightful relief after the muddy oozings of the Cam. Nobody could, in this sense, love nature with a more sincere and vivid affection; but such a love of nature is not symptomatic, as with Wordsworth, or Cowper, or Rousseau, of any preference of savage, or rustic, or simple life to the existing order of civilised society. It implied at most the development of a new taste, inadequately appreciated by the cockney men of letters of his own or the preceding generation, but not that passionate longing for relief from an effete set of conventions, poetical, political, and social, characteristic of the rising school. His head, when he travels, is evidently as full of Dugdale's *Monasticon* as of Ossian, and he reconstructs and repeoples Netley Abbey in fancy to give a charm to the Solent. He places in it a monk, who glances at the white sail that shoots by over a stretch of blue glittering sea visible between the oak groves, and then enters and crosses himself to drive away the tempter who has thrown that distraction in his way. Gray himself pretty much shared the sentiments of his imagined monk, and only catches occasional glimpses of natural scenery from the loopholes of his retreat in an eighteenth-century cloister.

French and English Pictures.

"After all, France is a bigger country than England." Such was the trite reflection which I made to console myself for the impression produced by the first glimpse of the Paris Salon, and such is the power of platitude that it did bring to me some small amount of consolation. But when one comes to consider the matter carefully, there does not seem to be any very potent reason why the size of the country should render the arrangement of its picture galleries superior in proportion to that size, but rather the reverse would seem likely to be the case, and the smaller country would be expected to provide adequate accommodation for its works of art with greater facility. Taking other things to be equal, it must be easier to find room for a thousand pictures than for five thousand, and London must be small and poor indeed, if she cannot afford the space or the money to show her artists' work in a decently satisfactory manner. We know, however, that in truth London is neither small nor poor, and that when money is required for any adequate object it flows in from many sources almost too profusely. Is it possible, therefore, that we do not consider it to be an adequate object that the works of our artists should be properly displayed, that the accommodation for such works and those who come to see them should be ample, and that even the minor wants of the visitors—as, for instance, rest, fresh air, sensible refreshment, and perhaps even the possibility of a few whiffs of pipe or cigar—should all be considered carefully? And if we do not consider this to be necessary or desirable, would it not be well if we were to pause for a moment in our admiration for pictures, and ask ourselves why we are thus minded—why we crowd a gallery as if it were a railway station, provide eatables and drinkables of a kind which is unknown except during the mad five minutes which we spend at a railway refreshment bar, why we shut out the fresh air, and restrict the seats, and forbid smoking as severely as at a Dorcas meeting?

Think how different all this is at Paris: you stroll up the Champs-Elysées till you come to a building which is about as large as Charing Cross Railway station, and you pay your franc and enter. Surely this cannot be a picture gallery! No one takes away your umbrella or your cigar, and you advance into an enormous hall, roofed with glass, and filled with flowers and statues—flowers of every conceivable kind, not displayed in boxes or arranged in glasses or bouquets, but growing in profusion in the long beds, and almost concealing the pedestals of the statues; everywhere flowers and seats, and groups of people standing before the statues, chattering and laughing, smoking, whispering criticisms, or eating, but neither angry, hurried, nor tired. And when you leave this hall and ascend to the galleries above, you still meet with the same amount of fresh air and possibility of free movement. The rooms are so large and lofty, and there are so many of them, that they are never really crowded, and even on Thursday and Sunday, when the people are admitted without payment, the pictures can at all times be comfortably seen. What reason is there in the order of things why all this should not be the case in England? I will tell you; for, strange as it may seem, this trivial question of the nature and arrangement of the exhibition, leads us down to the main cause of the difference between French and English art. The reason for our indifference to the bad arrangement of our picture galleries, is that we do not care for our pictures. It would shock us if the Prince and Princess of Wales were to live, say, in an inn on the Edgware Road, but we should see no incongruity in housing our best pictures in any water-tight room, no matter how unsightly or how inconvenient. Pictures or statues are nothing to us, except appropriate objects to fill spaces on our walls and dark corners in our drawing-room, and, were we able, we should degrade all the best art of England, to the decoration of a sofa or the pattern of a plate. That is the real reason why we can only have uncomfortable picture galleries, inadequate alike for the artists and the spectators. We have, we think, gone beyond art, have advanced into high intellectual regions whence we can afford to look down upon the pretty plaything which has in former ages raised the enthusiasm, heightened the joy, and soothed the sorrow, of every civilisation that has left its mark upon the world's history, and so we are growing daily more contemptuous of art, more wrong-headed in our way of looking at its influence and its aims. Rightly understood, the present fashion for art patronage is even a worse sign than the neglect that preceded it; for the fashion is founded upon no real love or wish for what is beautiful and true, but only on a sort of desire to present to the world the sight of an enlightened public who encourage in a generous manner all the refinements of life.

This is the first contrast between the Salon and the Academy: that the first with all its errors—and, as we shall proceed to show, they are very many and very great—is still the work of men who have in their hearts the right feeling for art, even when they fail to grasp its expression; and the second is the work of those who do not in their hearts care for art or understand its power. And in each case the real moving agency is the way in which the nation thinks; for it is the nation which moves the artists as well as produces them, and you can no more have a body of good artists when all right feeling for art has been lost, or is yet unborn in the hearts of the people, than you can have fruit and flowers from a tree, without the sun and air which nourishes its growth.

And now I can fancy that my readers will be likely to remark that I am all wrong in this assertion, that art is not really cared for and understood by the English people, and they will point triumphantly to the wall-papers, dados, lustred pottery, and art needlework, and ask if all that does not show the fondness of the people for art. So I will venture to devote a few words to the explanation of what seems to me to be the function of the highest art; for it is only by clearly understanding that, that we can form any correct judgment as to our own or our neighbours' merits or shortcomings. To do this, we must consider very briefly the relation in which painting stands to the sister arts of poetry and music. In Lessing's *Laocoon*, the chief book which has treated of this relation in any adequate manner, painting and sculpture are placed in an inferior relation to poetry, the author limiting their expressional value to one instant of time, and thence drawing various conclusions as to the inferior rank they must necessarily hold to an art which may cover an almost infinite series of actions. So far as this goes, it is undoubtedly correct; but it does not go far enough to express the truth, as may be seen from thinking for a moment of the scope of poetry. In the highest developments of this art, we find that the chief merit is that of placing ordinary events and actions before us in a manner which throws a new light upon them—the thought or the action being precise and definite in itself, no matter how many avenues of thought and feeling it may open up—and, taken as a rule, we discover that in the greatest poets the more simple is the material, the more powerful is its effect. Thus the new light which Shelley throws upon the song of the skylark, or the manner in which Homer paints the simple love of Hector and Andromache, is of greater value than when the one describes the divinities of the air, or the other the revels of the gods. Newman's *Dream of St. Gerontius* is magnificent poetry, but it is far inferior to his expression of simple faith in "Lead, kindly light;" and Tennyson is greater, when he paints "the long fields of barley and of rye, that clothe the wold and meet the sky," than when he shows us the fairy barge moving across the still lake to the island-valley of Avillion.

Thus the essential function of poetry, is not to describe the things which have "not entered into the heart of man," but to glorify those that have, to shed the inconceivable light over things not only conceivable, but even common, to touch with the glory and the dream our most prosaic facts.

This is the chief power of poetry; and if you examine the great masters, from Homer to Tennyson, you will always find their principal beauty to lie in the fact that they have been essentially human in their sympathies. Now think for a moment of music. Certainly it is evident that the mission is widely different. You may gladden men's hearts with a tune on a fiddle, or rouse their warlike energies with the clashing of cymbals and the braying of trumpets, or wake their laughter with merry ditties; but when you come to music at its utmost height, you make men neither glad, nor angry, nor mirthful, and, if you do not make them sad, it is only because you arouse in them the thoughts that "lie too deep for tears." Notice that the great contrast of poetry and music is, that in the first the poet illuminates his reader with some of his own wisdom, in the second the hearer illuminates himself. The poet may direct our thoughts into a new channel of fuller knowledge, the musician reveals to us depths of feeling which lie behind our thoughts, unknown and unsuspected. The one changes, the other creates. Thus, while a recited poem will say the same thing to all who hear it, a piece of great music will say as many things as there are hearers. Its interpretation will depend entirely upon the personality to whom it is addressed; or rather it has no interpretation at all, and is but a means of creating within another's mind some conception which has no actual resemblance to the creating power. What poetry and music do perfectly, painting does in a lesser degree, combining the work of both. It will express an old story or thought in a new way, so as to add to its meaning; and it will do more than this, for it will take up the province of music after having exhausted that of poetry, and express in the harmonies of form and colour, that which finds perfect expression only in the harmonies of sound. Thus, for instance, you may express perfectly in poetry the beauty of a fresh spring day, and you may express in music the gladness of heart which such a day arouses; but in painting alone can you combine the two, and express alike the gladness and the beauty of the scene. The two great divisions of the best painting, might be called the musical and the poetical—the latter including those works where the artist had shown a clear interpretative and illustrative intention; the former where he had striven to arrive at the very heart of things, and had painted what we should commonly call an ideal picture. Below these, again, would come the two correlative schools of pure realism and unessential idealism—the one where the artist had simply copied nature as well as possible; the other where he had chiefly impressed some passing sentiment of his own upon the scene. From these we should descend again to records of picturesque incidents and picturesque places, treated in a more or less pictorial manner, and to scenes from history or social life treated after academic principles, which latter may be briefly defined as the attempt to do by rule, what can only be done by intense feeling and perfect knowledge. Then we should have pictures of pretty dresses, or old books, or ginger pots, or any other artificial productions which happened to give a good opportunity for placing pretty colours or agreeable forms in juxtaposition. And, lastly, we should have pictures which were not even beautiful or pleasing, but simply attempts to exhibit the master's skill, and to surprise the spectator into admiration.

Enough has, I think, now been said to show the point of view from which this criticism is written, and without further delay I will now speak briefly of the main points of difference between the works of the two schools, and give a few examples from this year's exhibitions in Paris and London.

On first entering the picture galleries of the Salon, we notice that we are in a different atmosphere altogether from that of an English exhibition, and the first impression is to most people by no means a pleasant one. On every side we see large, even gigantic pictures, any one of which would be considered as a landmark in our Academy if only from its size and the importance of its subject. But most of these works are more daring in conception than they are beautiful or interesting. The amount of labour bestowed upon them is enormous; but it is rarely equally or wisely distributed, and the painting, the mere brush-work of the pictures and their colouring, is almost invariably deficient in delicacy. Size appears to be sought for its own sake, and often at the expense of other qualities of greater importance, and the artist appears to have been more intent upon astonishing the spectator, than delighting him. The composition, too, of the pictures is apt to be of a kind which is more skilful than it is interesting, being based upon strict academic principles. Thus one of the largest pictures in the exhibition is one by Debat Ponsan, entitled "The Piety of St. Louis towards the Dead," in which the king is raising in his arms a putrefying body, in order to set the example to his knights, of giving burial to the dead soldiers who lie about in the foreground of the picture. The king's knights are grouped behind him picturesquely enough: two enormous horses, the king's and his standard-bearer's, form an impressive dark mass in the centre of the picture, and give the pyramidal form to the composition which is considered necessary, and the cliffs on either side slope down towards the centre of the picture, in the most orthodox manner. The work, however, is uninteresting in the highest degree; there is no sign that the artist has understood the spirit of the scene, or cared anything about it. The one little bit of naturalism in the whole composition, is in one of the Crusaders' figures on the extreme left, and he is—holding his nose. Now, it is worth while to dwell a little on this picture, as it exemplifies another of the French errors in painting, besides that of supplanting feeling by arrangement. This is their liking for choosing repulsive subjects, and not only liking to paint them, but painting them in the most ordinary matter-of-fact way, as if they would, of course, be beautiful to the spectator, if treated according to the artistic laws. Pictures such as this, and "La Tentation" by Jules Garnier, and "La Femme de Putiphar" by Schutzenberger, and "Mort d'Orphée" by Gustave Doré, are all repulsive subjects, treated in an unpleasant manner. Let me not be misunderstood. I do not assert that art is only concerned with pleasing things, but that it is no part of an artist's business to deal with what is in itself coarse, horrible, loathsome, unless he does it with a clearly evident purpose. Now, in the pictures we have mentioned, and in dozens if not hundreds of others in this gallery, it is quite evident that the artist has had no such purpose—nay, that in the picture of "The Temptation" he has actually revelled in the coarseness of his conception. The reason for these pictures is curiously enough connected with the reasons which give French art a certain supremacy over that of our own and other countries—namely, the fact that painting, when it is truly alive, reflects the opinions and practices of the people amongst whom it flourishes. Given true feeling for art throughout France, given also the life of a certain considerable number of Parisians, and pictures of the sort we have mentioned follow as the night the day.

And we should have them in our own country were it not for two causes: the first that the majority of our artists only paint subjects which are pleasing in themselves; and second, that art has never as yet really grown up in England and become a power, but is allowed only to work under certain restrictions, and is even then jealously watched. A coarse man in France, will paint coarse subjects coarsely, because such subjects please him. A coarse painter in England, dependent entirely upon public favour, will, as a general rule, be afraid of public censure, and will paint subjects alien to his nature. The result of this is a very curious one; for it follows that while in France, one sees the coarse subject, and the reverse, side by side, in England we see subjects of one kind only, that approved by public opinion, which shakes Falstaff, Hamlet, and Hotspur, all into the same little mould.

With regard to the historical pictures in the Salon which are not concerned with subjects unpleasing in themselves, there are many that impress us with their ability, but few that please us as pictures. Flameng's large work of "L'Appel des Girondins" suffers intensely from that dreary classicalism which is the bane of the more serious French artists, and the colour can hardly be criticised as that of an oil-painting. It is simple, hard, and cold, and resembles more a gigantic cartoon for a fresco than a finished picture. The figures and faces of the Girondins are well drawn, and not without character; but when the composition and the grandeur of the conception have been admired, there is nothing left to say for the work. It is a great solution of difficulties, but not a great picture. Very much the same may be justly said of Lecomte du Nouy's enormous work, "Saint Vincent de Paul secourt les Alsaciens et les Lorrains après leur réunion à la France." Here the colour is of a less ghastly hue than in the work of Flameng, but it still appears to be seen under some cold electric light which renders all tints of the same effect. There is much more action and variety of sentiment than in the former work, and there are difficulties of drawing and composition attempted which are not to be met with in the former picture; but, on the whole, it suffers from the same faults. The flesh is cold-grey in the shadows; the arrangement of the picture is elaborate, but hardly productive of a natural effect; and, above all, the dreary allegorical figures of Alsace and Lorraine, at the top of the picture, take us back to what Mr. Wilkie Collins, in one of his novels, calls "Art Mystic," and defines as always producing a great depression upon the mind of the beholder.

Let us take another example, and this time it shall be one of the works of the greatest French religious painter, M. Bouguereau. His chief work in this year's Salon is a classical, or rather mythological subject, entitled "La Naissance de Vénus." The subject is treated in the usual style. In the front of the picture, rising out of and swimming on the waves, are Cupids on dolphins, nymphs and Tritons blowing conch-shell horns; in the background rises a train of Loves, leading the eye from the groups of nymphs far into the sky. In the centre of all stands Venus, on a rosy shell, in an attitude of languorous exhaustion, both arms raised to the rich masses of her chestnut hair. The whole is painted with a smooth perfection of finish that no English painter can rival, unless it be Sir F. Leighton in his best moments, and the execution throughout is unfaltering and thorough. The first moment's glance is almost necessarily one of extreme admiration. The picture seems so perfect in its subtlety of composition and refined grace that one is tempted to ask whether it can be possible to excel such work. If, however, we reflect that it is an almost invariable quality of great art that it does not reveal its worth at the first hurried glance, and so fall to examining this work in detail, it grows momentarily less attractive. After all, have we not seen this, or much the same thing, though not perhaps in such perfect treatment, from our youth upwards? In what do these Cupids and Tritons differ from those that we remember in half a hundred pictures? In what is this round-limbed beauty more of a Venus than any other fair woman? If there is nothing very new in the forms or the arrangement of the figures, is there anything in the colouring? Still less is this the case; there is little if any positive colour in the picture, and the brilliance of the whole is not the brilliance of sunlight. Where the light falls upon the bodies of the nymphs, it whitens them with a cold radiance of which we know nothing in nature, and in the shadows there is no warmth, only a pale chill grey. Again, the light and shade of the picture are hardly to be accounted for, except by attributing them to the painter's caprice, and the effective relief gained thereby is gained at the expense of truth, and adds to the artificial impression produced by the whole picture. The composition throughout is of an intensely academical character, carried out with a skill to which we have, as far as I know, no parallel in England; but the effect of this arrangement is rather to draw the attention of the spectator to itself than to heighten the interest of the picture. Directly one notices it, it becomes apparent that the subject was chosen to afford the painter an opportunity of displaying his skill, rather than because he wanted to tell us something fresh, or because he was possessed with the beauty of the incident. The feeling of the scene has not been grasped, and the best proof of this is that it is with extreme difficulty that we can turn our eyes from the beauty of the painting to the consideration of the subject. We keep returning, in spite of ourselves, to the artist's ability, to the beautiful balance of parts, to the exquisite arrangements of line, to the manner in which every detail leads the eye to the principal figure.

If we turn to our English Academy, we may find some points of comparison between this work and that of "Elijah in the Wilderness," by Sir Frederick Leighton; though we must premise that there is in the work of our President a depth of colour far superior to that of M. Bouguereau. This picture of Elijah is probably well known to our readers, and I need only remind them of the main details of its composition: Elijah on the right of the picture, half reclining upon a mass of rock, and on the left the angel bringing him the heavenly food, a landscape representing a rocky desert, and a sky of deep blue, and heavy white cumulus clouds. Whatever praise is due to this picture—and in truth it is not a favourable specimen of the President's work—is due to the solution of the problems of drawing the naked figure in such a very difficult attitude, and arranging it so as to give a fine combination of lines. There is no success, probably no desire of success, in depicting the spirit of the scene, or inspiring the beholder with any emotion in regard to it. The prophet is not a famished Hebrew, but an athlete rather out of condition; and the angel, so far from showing in her face any of the divine love or pity which one might suppose to be appropriate to the occasion, is smiling cynically. In so far as sentiment and feeling go, the picture is a *tabula rasa*; in so far as skilful drawing and composition are sought for, it is a work of great merit. Think for a moment of the "Atalanta's Race" by Mr. Poynter in last year's Academy, and you will find exactly the same merits and drawbacks. There Milanion's figure was simply a study of the nude, and Atalanta's an attempt to depict arrested motion, and a difficult piece of foreshortening. None of the intense emotion of the man who was running for his life and his bride, or of the woman whose fate hung upon the result of her exertions, was attempted to be shown. It is to be noted that the French are much more consistent in this academic rendering of a subject than are the English, for as a rule in these large pictures of theirs they never attempt to represent the glow of actual life. The tints used are broad and simple, the shadows usually grey, and the effort is frankly one to gain dignity of composition and grandeur of outline, at the expense of a surrender of the more vital human emotions and interests. English painters, however, can rarely bring themselves to treat subjects thoroughly in this manner, and the consequence is that they select scenes like these of Atalanta and Elijah, where the human element is, or rather should be, distinctly the great thing in the composition, and then reduce it to a nullity by the style of their work.

Let us look at another great department of French art, their battle-pictures, and see where they differ from those of our own country. It is almost unnecessary to mention that they are ten times as numerous, for we have never cared in England for pictorial records of our fighting. The truth is that we are not at heart, whatever may be said by Lord Beaconsfield, or sung by Mr. Macdermott, a fighting nation. We do it thoroughly, when we are about it, in the cool business-like way in which we conduct our other concerns, but we have no national equivalent for the

La Gloire of France; and when the fighting is over we like to forget all about it as soon as possible, carrying the forgetfulness sometimes so far as to postpone paying the bill for the little expenses we have incurred. But there are other very notable differences between the battle-pictures of the Salon and the Academy, than the greater number and size of the former; for we find on looking at the French pictures that they represent war as it is for the nation, and that the English represent it as it is for the individual. To the Frenchman, a picture of Waterloo means the confusion and carnage of an army with the thousand details of conflict, suffering, pursuit, and retreat; to an English painter, it means the feelings of a group of young recruits as they await the attack of a handful of the French cavalry. I have taken this instance from the Academy of two years since, when Philippoteaux's "Waterloo" and Miss Thompson's "Quatre Bras" hung almost side by side; but it might be equally well shown by any other example. I think this different way of painting battles comes from the feeling which I have already described as prevalent in France—that of looking at the abstract rather than the personal side of a question. They can bear in their pictures, and even glory in, details of wounds and suffering, looking beyond them to the victory gained thereby; whereas the Englishman, with a more sluggish imagination but a more feeling heart, forgets the gross result of victory or defeat, but lingers lovingly over the elements of terror, humour, or pathos, which he can find in the individual soldiers, and throws a veil of oblivion over the horrors of which he could hardly endure the representation. Here there is no question of superiority of painting, but merely one of feeling. Is it better that we should enjoy, as do the French, the idea at the expense of the individual, or minimise our records of great victories till we produce only a few pathetic incidents, such as "The Roll-call" and "The Remnants of an Army," instead of representations of the war itself? I must confess that to me the latter is the preferable method. The range of painting is so enormously wide, that it may well omit from the pages of its record one phase of pain and sorrow; and I do not believe that all the battle-pictures with which Horace Vernet has lined the walls of Versailles, ever strengthened one of his countrymen in endurance, or roused him to compassion.

It is, however, well to recognise how limited is the scope of our battle-paintings, and that really such pictures as those of Mrs. Butler (Miss Thompson) stand in the same relation to those of such artists as Philippoteaux, Dumaresque, Regnart, Regnier, &c., as the pattering of the summer rain does to the torrent of Niagara.

Having spoken, though very inadequately, of the two great departments of French art—the historical and the warlike—and having shown that in both of these we must confess to some share of inferiority, if it only be an inferiority by choice, we now come to the romantic or idyllic school, one which, perhaps, is larger than all the rest put together, for we must include under this head the great mass of the figure paintings here which do not belong to either of the above classes. Illustrations of social life, illustrations of sayings, illustrations of poetry, novels, and the drama, and so on, all come under this heading. Throughout the whole of this class there runs one damning fault which goes far to utterly nullify all the cleverness and originality of conception which we find here. This fault is the one which we have spoken of before as want, or, perhaps, rather artificiality of feeling. There are dozens of pictures here of home scenes—parents lecturing sons, mothers instructing their daughters, old ship captains smoking their pipes with their children on their knees, young lovers strolling through the woods or sitting in sunshine, barges being towed up the river by slow horses, grandfathers bringing presents to the youngsters, and so on, through infinite varieties of simple incident. Now, in all of these, in my opinion, the French art fails, and falls far short of our English work. Such a picture, for instance, as that one of Mr. G. D. Leslie's in the Academy this year, of the two sisters in the fruit garden, would be impossible to find in the Salon: the atmosphere of peace and rest and simple kindliness is foreign to the French mind. Two exceptions, however, must be made to this statement. The first is where the artist, in painting one of these simple scenes, has been able to connect it in his mind with some more or less abstract sentiment, and so make the incident the vehicle for conveying a wider meaning; as, for instance, where Lobrichon, in his picture of a mother taking her child to the bath, has expressed very tenderly and beautifully the sentiment of maternal love; or where Bastien Lepage, in the little idyll called the "Season of October," has managed to combine the labours of the poor with the sentiment of his landscape very perfectly. The second exception to the want of feeling in these pictures is where the emotion suggested is one of sorrow or pain in humble life. It is a most extraordinary fact that if we wish to discover pictures in which a true note of sympathy is struck with the poorer classes we cannot find it in English painters, but shall constantly find it in France. We must not dwell upon this, as space is already failing us, but would suggest that it may in some measure arise from the truer light in which poverty is regarded on the Continent than in the United Kingdom. Here it is a disgrace, there only a misfortune; and the intense snobbery of the English nation with respect to the class it belongs to, every one wishing to appear as if he or she belonged to the next rank above them, is almost entirely unknown in France. Whatever be the reason to which the fact is due, it is certainly true that an English picture of the lives of the poor is almost invariably a false one; while the French painters are not afraid to grasp, or ashamed to paint truly, the hard lives of the labouring classes. There is a picture here by Raffaelli, called "La Rentrée des Chiffonniers," which is quite perfect in its simple truth of feeling; and of such kind, too, though touched with a far more elevated meaning, are the works of Jules Breton and Israels, though it is not fair to quote the latter as belonging to the French school.

Before passing to the consideration of the landscapes, I must say a few words about the portraiture of the Salon. If we take it throughout, it possesses a degree of excellence to which we cannot even approach; for one good portrait painter that we have, there are in Paris at least a score. If we look at the highest developments of the art, I think we need not fear comparison. Marvellous as is the power of Bonnat and Carolus Duran, in neither of them do I find the strength of penetrative insight, or the sympathy with their subject, which is to be found in all the finer portraits by Mr. Watts. They are superior to anything that Watts has done if regarded from one point of view. The presentation of a great man, with his greatness legibly written on his countenance, is, I think, better done by Bonnat than it has ever been done before, and this is where he excels Mr. Watts. Mr. Watts never makes one start back from his picture with the mental exclamation of "What a wonderfully lifelike portrait of Victor Hugo!" No; the unique power of Mr. Watts's portraiture consists in this, that one looks at his picture and says: "Is *that* So-and-so? I never thought he had all that in his face." In a man's face there are two series of facts. One shows what he is on the outside, perhaps even what his ruling desires and passions are, and that series every one can read. The second shows the man's inner nature; it reveals to you what the man is in his finer moments, when he is less crushed by antagonism and less thwarted by circumstance—not only what he is, but also what he might be. This is to be read by only one or two men in a generation, and this it is the painter's final triumph to see and interpret. It is in this way that Mr. Watts stands above all living painters of portraits. If we had to seek for the nearest approach to Mr. Millais amongst the painters of the Salon, we should probably be right in selecting M. Bastien Lepage, who, although he paints in a very much slighter key of colour than our English artist, has yet very much of his power of delineating brilliant flesh tints, and is as subtle and delicate in his arrangements of colour, as his rival is powerful. The portraits of Tripet, Saintin, and especially the portrait of Gérome by Glaise, are all first-rate of their kind, and painted throughout with a care and a simplicity very rare in similar work in England; their chief fault is a certain hardness of flesh painting.

We must pass over with slight mention the various decorative works of the Salon, for their discussion would lead us into quite a new field, decoration in France being understood in a far wider sense than it is in England, and embracing the most dissimilar schemes of colour and modes of treatment. In this, as in most other branches of painting, the French aim at perfection, and that on the grandest scale; designs for decoration in pure bright colours and of a gigantic size, such as the composition of the Genius of Industry (or Peace, or the Republic, we forget which) inaugurating the Exposition Universelle from the tower of the Trocadéro, having no parallel in our Academy, or any other English exhibition. The style of dusty colouring, and arrangement of beautiful forms in pale delicate hues of colour, in which Mr. Albert Moore* is such a proficient, has a parallel in the Salon in the two large decorative designs of "Nymphs on the Sea-shore" and "The Prodigal Son." It is to be noted that M. Pavis de Chavannes, the painter of these works, is perfectly aware of their limitations, and, indeed, describes his picture of "The Prodigal Son" as a design for a decorative panel; while, in the work of Mr. Moore, the decorative tendency of the pictures is not frankly acknowledged, but there is somewhat of an attempt to give them the qualities of deliberate oil-painting—an error which only draws attention to the artist's shortcomings. In the delicacy of his arrangements in grey, pink, and palest buff, M. de Chavannes ranks as highly as Mr. Moore, and there is, besides, an amount of subject and thought in his pictures, which is decidedly greater than that of our artist. The execution, however, is somewhat slighter, and there is not that delicacy of invention in the arrangement of transparent drapery which is always the most attractive portion of Mr. Moore's work. The enormous painting of M. Laugée of the "Triumph of Flora," may be mentioned as another style of work of which we have none in our own country—a style where there can hardly be said to be any distinct pictorial motive, save to introduce as many Cupids and nymphs as possible into the picture, and arrange them in the most picturesque manner.

In Mrs. Barrett Browning's *Aurora Leigh* there is a passage where Aurora says:—

> The English paint a thistle and an ass,
> Because they love it and they find it so.

This really gives the key to the great gulf which is fixed between the landscape of the two countries; there is in the Gaul none of the peculiar love for nature, *quâ* nature, which exists in England. A Gallic painter will paint a brilliant effect of sunshine, or a grand effect of storm, and paint it well; he will even paint quiet scenes of nature, if they are such that he can arouse in himself any specific feeling, dramatic or contemplative, by them; but in no French picture with which we are acquainted, has the painter sat down to quiet, deliberate reproduction of nature unmoved by any specific emotion or conception, and only desirous to reproduce to the utmost of his power the facts before him. He will carry the study of details as far as he thinks is required to help his design, but he will never carry it as far as he possibly can for the sake of getting out of each separate detail all the beauty possible. To a nation that habitually views everything in the light of some broad idea, which is accustomed to leave no fact ungeneralised even for a moment, there is a distinct barrier to landscape painting on what may be called the English system. I call it the English system; for though it is, perhaps, not followed by the majority of English painters, yet it is the one which is gaining ground day by day, and is, besides, distinctively English, being followed out at present by no nation but our own. I have shown elsewhere, and have no space to repeat here, how this style of landscape arose in England; how it was that we came to paint things with the utmost fidelity we could master, instead of continuing to treat them in a more or less superficial manner. The extraordinary artistic movement which is known as pre-Raphaelite, if it has done nothing else, has taught us one fact of the most vital importance to art; and that is, that it is only by following Nature that we can ultimately conquer her, that it is hopeless to try and paint an ideal picture before you can paint a real one.

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* See his works at the Grosvenor Gallery.

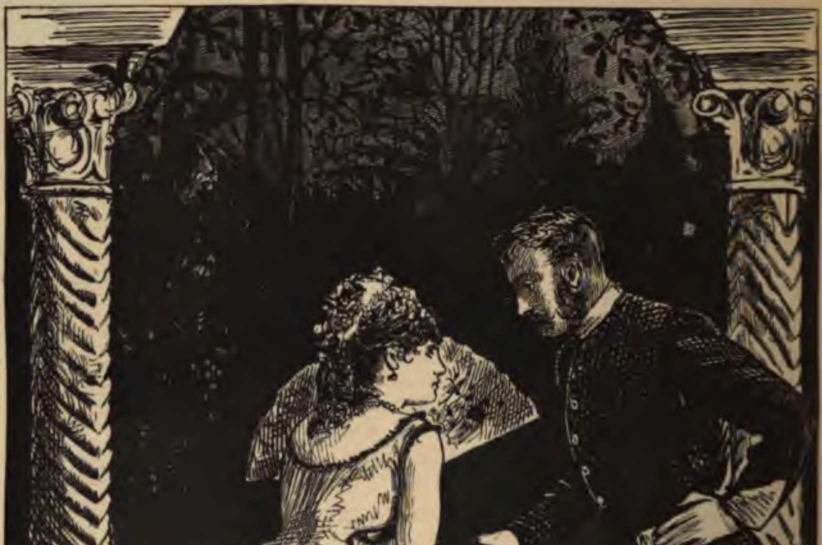
If we look through the more important of the landscapes in the Salon, we find that there is in the better works an amount of dignity which we have hardly obtained in landscape. In place of the patient reproduction of pre-Raphaelitism, we find in these works a style of treatment in which, while details are given in abundance, they nevertheless are held in strict subordination to the ruling feeling of the painter. It seems to me that the influence of great traditions of painting, which has such a disastrous effect upon the figure compositions of the French, is at the root of the breadth of conception which is to be found in their representations of natural scenery, and that, considering there is no trace to be found amongst French artists of the pre-Raphaelite love of nature's detail, this academic tradition is, on the whole, a good thing; it at all events prevents the artists from treating landscape in the fashion of the Scotch painters, and reducing it to a mere record of transient gleams of sun and clouds of mist.

If we do not get pictures which tell us how keenly the artist has felt the beauty of the scene, we certainly get some which tell us with what feeling he has regarded it; we have an illustrative rendering of nature, if not a transcription of her essential beauty. Thus, for instance, in a picture, like that by C. Bernier, of "The Abandoned Avenue," we have a rendering of a scene which is both natural and beautiful, but in which neither nature nor beauty is the chief quality, nor is even the solitude of a deserted park the chief meaning of the painter. What the artist wishes to impress upon us is a sentiment peculiarly national—the feeling that even the most beautiful scenes of nature are desolate when they are abandoned by man—a sort of quaint, half conceited, half pathetic regret for the forest, in which the *frou-frou* of Worth's dresses is no longer heard. This feeling of the profound connection between humanity and nature is, I think, very imperfectly realised by my countrymen, and is partly the reason of much of our *bad* realistic art. When Mr. Millais painted "Chill October," why was it that every one delighted so much in the picture? Reeds and water and cloudy grey sky had all been done as well before. The secret was, that the artist had caught the feeling of lost summer and coming winter, had combined an intense impression with beautiful painting, and then given the spectator a key to his thought, so that its truth was immediately recognised. If you think that it was only because of the masterly painting of the picture, will you tell me why none of the subsequent landscapes by this master have attracted the same liking? The painting in "Scotch Firs" and "Winter Fuel" was even more wonderful than in "Chill October;" but who, except the penny press, cared for those pictures in the same way? Why is it that Mr. Vicat Cole paints year after year, in entrancing hues, the most beautiful scenes of woodland and river in our land, and yet never awakens in us a thought or a feeling beyond admiration for his skill? It is because he is (as far as can be seen in his works) utterly without any feeling for the scenes which he paints, and is only intent upon making a beautiful picture.

So I would hold that the chief merit of the French landscape painting, is its clear recognition of the human element which is necessary before paintings of scenery can affect us powerfully. When their paintings are without this, they are distinctly inferior to the majority of English works, and in the element of colour they are nearly always either deficient or exaggerated. Thanks to a few determined English artists who have borne their banner triumphantly through a perfect storm of ridicule, our painters in general have grasped the great fact, that the grass is green and the sky blue; but our neighbours have yet to learn it. Water-colour painting, which has done so much to spread right notions as to landscape, is still in France in a very immature state, and used more for slight sketches and tinted drawings than for completed pictures. Such work as that of Walker, Pinwell, Boyce, Alfred Hunt, and dozens of others, has nothing to come near it in the Société des Aquarellistes; there is hardly a picture which attempts even to give the delicacy of the medium employed. This is especially noticeable in the treatment of skies and water. It seems that this arises more from a mistaken notion as to the capabilities of the material, than actual incompetence on the part of the artists, for in the work which they attempt in water-colours the French are as delicately skilful as could be desired. But the works in this medium seem only to be designed for albums, and there is a bewildering spottiness of bright patches of colour, and a general look of unnatural lightness and unsubstantiality, very unworthy of the name of serious art. If I wished to point out, to any admirer of the French colouring, its essential want of depth and feeling, I should take him to this water-colour gallery, and then to Boissier's sweetmeat shop on the Boulevard, and ask him to notice how exactly similar was the colouring of the comfits and the pictures.

We have had in the Salon large works of historical, allegorical, and sentimental interest treated from the outside point of view, and dependent for their interest on the arrangement of their figures, the gracefulness of their lines, and the accuracy of their treatment. We have had also *tableaux de genre*, of which we have found the great fault to be a certain staginess of treatment, which gave an unreal air to the most ordinary occurrences, except where the motive was one connected with labour and sorrow, both of which are in the main depicted simply and truly. We have had various styles of landscape, in which the greatest kind has been almost invariably actuated chiefly by the personal sentiment of the painter, and various styles of portraiture comprehending all but the very highest department of that art; and we have also had decorative pictures and minute realistic works of many kinds. So much for the Salon. In the Academy we have found that of great historical works we have hardly a trace; but that of the academic principle, which is so fully appreciated and carried out by the French, there are evident traces, though it is by no means such pure academicism as in France. We have glanced at the greatest merit of our portraiture, and tried to show that it is superior to any that the French possess, and noted the great drawback of the large landscapes both of our English and Scotch schools, and also of men like Millais and Brett, and we have rather hinted at than explained the true distinction between pre-Raphaelite and picturesque landscape.

So we see that of what I defined in the beginning of this article as the greatest art we have found no specimens, and, as far as I am aware, there are only two painters in England who are capable of producing such work, and these are Rossetti and Burne Jones. Of the former it would be useless for me to speak, since it is years since the public has had any opportunity of seeing his pictures, but "The Annunciation" of the latter hangs in the Grosvenor Gallery; and I think, if any of my readers will take the trouble to examine it quietly for themselves, they will understand why I place such work on a level by itself, far above the various styles which I have described. There is in it not only beauty and thought, though there is much of both, but there is that which is far beyond either, and can hardly be characterised in words—something which cannot be explained if it is not felt. One might as well try to explain the reason why we feel glad on a bright spring morning. I desire especially to avoid all charge of finding imaginary beauties in pictures, or of using extravagant eulogy; but it is my sincere belief that this work is one of the highest class of spiritual art, and that, whatever its errors and inconsistencies may be, they are not to be dwelt upon for a moment in comparison with the great truth and deep insight which are here displayed. Thus I think that if a fair comparison be instituted between French and English art, we shall come to the conclusion that, though the former is considerably wider in its range, and far more daring and varied in its conceptions, yet we have in English pictures three things, and those of the highest importance, which are hardly to be found across the Channel. We have portraiture painting which excels in depth of feeling and penetration any foreign rivalry; we have a school of landscape-painting which paints nature with absolute truth as far as its power extends; and we have figure painting which can seize the inner meaning of a scene, and clothe its representation with an amount of poetry and beauty before which we can only bow our heads in admiration, and to which we can find no parallel even in the "pleasant land of France."

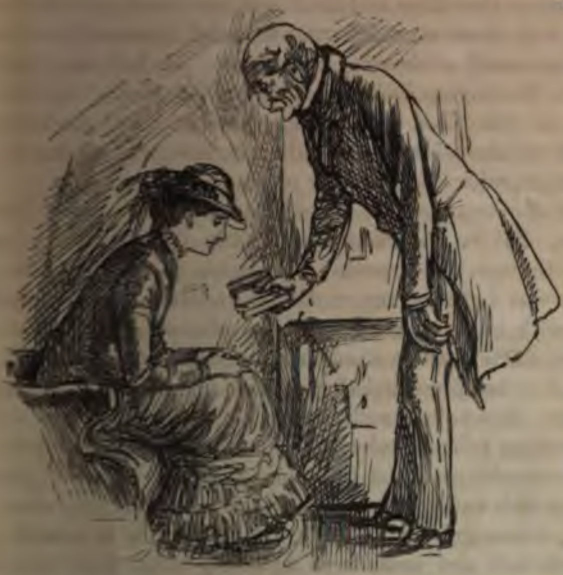


"TELL ME, MONSIEUR, DO YOU FIND HER VERY ATTRACTIVE?"

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XVI.

MADAME DE VAUBLANC STIRS UP EVIL PASSIONS.



"THE question is," mused Barrington, "whether a man who isn't a soldier doesn't look more or less of a fool in soldier's clothes? But then, again, what is the use of dragging a Yeomanry uniform about the world if one is not to wear it? And Frenchmen always think it rather odd if one appears in plain evening dress on a gala occasion. I suppose I had better put the thing on."

The subject of these hesitating reflections was a very smart blue tunic, loaded with a profusion of silver lace, which lay outstretched on Barrington's bed beside a pair of trousers with a broad silver stripe, a sword, and a white-plumed helmet.

"It is tight, it is uncomfortable, and I am not sure that it isn't a little bit ridiculous; but it don't do to seem wanting in respect, and that sort of thing. I hope the Governor-General will take my appearance in it as a compliment," concluded Barrington, who in truth loved bright colours and showy apparel, and never by any chance missed the Yeomanry ball which closed his short annual period of training. And so he struggled into his nether garments with a sigh of mingled resignation and contentment.

A few doors off M. de Saint-Luc, who had worn a gay jacket long enough to have grown tired of it, was arraying himself in the plainest of plain clothes, in preparation for the same festivity as that to which Barrington had been bidden. Not without sundry misgivings had he decided to present himself at the ball; for he was by no means sure what Jeanne would think of his reappearance in society so soon after the shattering of all his hopes, nor could he feel any certainty with regard to the footing upon which he would now stand with her, or as to whether he might venture to ask her for a dance or not. Yet, since they must meet before long, what signified time and place? The first encounter might be a little awkward, but it would soon be over; and as to his future line of conduct, that must be regulated in a great measure by hers. He did not delude himself into the belief that success could be won by any other means than time and much patience; and, as he had a limitless supply of both these necessaries at command, it seemed best to take the earliest opportunity of drawing upon them. He had completed his toilet long before Barrington had done studying the effect of his full-length figure before his pier-glass, and, calling a passing *fiacre*, presently joined the stream of vehicles which was wending its slow way up the hill of Mustapha Supérieur, where the summer palace stands.

The majority of the company had already arrived when Saint-Luc made his entrance, and it was with some little difficulty that he threaded his way through the crowded approaches to the ball-room, where the orchestra was in full swing, and where toilettes Parisian and Algerian, mingled with uniforms of every conceivable cut and hue, produced a bewildering, shifting effect of colour and glitter which, taken as a spectacle, might, to a less preoccupied man, have seemed worth gazing at for a few minutes. But Saint-Luc had seen it all before, and was not in the mood for studying *tableaux vivants*. The generals and admirals; the Spahis in their scarlet, and the Chasseurs d'Afrique in their pale blue, jackets; the préfets and sous-préfets in their green and gold coats the portly mayors, whose gold embroidery, not content with covering their breasts, overflowed, and meandered agreeably down their broad backs; the violet robes of a stray ecclesiastic or two; the white burnous of some Arab chief, against which the cross and red ribbon of the Legion of Honour showed somewhat incongruously; the swarthy Moors and black-eyed, bediamonded Jewesses—all these were objects with which he had long been familiar; and it was neither to look at them nor to admire the graceful Oriental architecture of the palace and the beauty of the illuminated gardens that he had forsaken his nocturnal cigar and the quietude of his own chamber. But she whom he had come out to see was nowhere to be discovered; and, instead of greeting her, he found himself ere long compelled to shake hands with a lady whom he would gladly have avoided.

Madame de Trémonville was not one of those persons who can be avoided without their own good will and pleasure. She was far too well satisfied with herself to suppose that any man could really wish to escape from her, and interpreted Saint-Luc's rather distant bow and abstracted gaze as a mere indication of that boredom which was, in her eyes, one of the chief evidences of his superiority to the common herd.

"You do not amuse yourself too well, M. le Vicomte," said she, pausing beside him, and dismissing her attendant cavalier with an unceremonious nod. "*Ma foi!* I am not surprised. From Paris to Algiers—from the Tuileries to Mustapha—what a change! Were you ever in such a crowd of droll people before? What faces! what manners! what clothes!"

And Madame de Trémonville disdainfully shrugged her plump shoulders, which were thickly coated with *blanc de perles*, and heaved a piteous sigh.

"Madame, you are too severe upon the company," answered Saint-Luc, pulling himself together. "I have been but a few minutes in the room, and already I see one face and one toilette which could not be surpassed either in Paris or elsewhere."

"Oh, monsieur!"

"Beauty and good taste always find imitators. With such an example before them, these ladies will assurėdly learn soon to reform any little errors in their dress or conduct," pursued Saint-Luc. "(How shall I get rid of this detestable woman?) But it is a sin to expose your exquisite lace flounce to the risk of being torn in such a crowd. Will you not allow me to find you a seat?"

"Let them tear it—so much the better if they do," answered Madame de Trémonville, passing by the hint. "I have worn it half-a-dozen times already, and I am tired of the sight of it. There is the music beginning again; shall we dance? Quick! I see my partner coming for me."

Saint-Luc, who always accepted the inevitable with a good grace, passed his arm round the waist of his fascinating companion, and floated away with her into the whirling throng of dancers, while the young officer whom he had supplanted looked after the couple with mingled sorrow and reproach.

"What a strange world it is, and how little any of us know of our fellow-creatures!" thought the philosophical Vicomte, with an inward laugh. "That young fellow, who would quarrel with any of his brother-officers for robbing him of a partner, does not dream of interfering with a man of my prestige. Such a career as mine has been fills him with admiration and respect. I suppose he thinks he would be perfectly happy if he could change places with me, and be looked upon as a hero by a few fools, and flirt with this painted, vulgar woman, who has already managed to get into the society of her betters, and is miserable because she will never reach a still higher circle. I daresay there are even people who envy Madame de Trémonville too. Is there such a thing as contentment, I wonder? and does everybody wish for something he has not got, and hate it as soon as he gets it? Is it because what I long for would make me so supremely happy that I feel such a certainty of failure?"

Saint-Luc had time to debate all these questions, and sundry others, while he was mechanically piloting Madame de Trémonville in and out among the erratic couples who revolved around him. He had just arrived at the sage conclusion that the happiest of mortals is the man who has ceased to seek for happiness, when his meditations and his career were alike cut short by the apparition in the doorway of a cap whose violet bows could only belong to Madame de Vaublanc.

"She is coming!" thought Saint-Luc, forgetting all his philosophy; and he brought his partner to a sudden standstill.

Madame de Vaublanc indeed it was; but where, alas! was the tall, graceful figure and the pale, proud face that should have followed her? Saint-Luc, peering anxiously out into the corridor, could discover no familiar countenance save the puzzled and angry one of Mr. Barrington, frowning above the silver lace of the Royal Surrey Yeomanry Cavalry. "I am not the only one who is disappointed to-night," thought he, with a smile and a sigh, as he turned to greet Madame de Vaublanc, who clutched his hand as a drowning man seizes a rope.

"*Mon Dieu*, monsieur!" she exclaimed, "how glad I am to see you! What a terrible crush, is it not?—and not a person here whom I know—and I who have crowds in horror! Is there a possibility, do you think, of my finding a chair anywhere?"

Madame de Trémonville pounced upon the bewildered old lady before Saint-Luc could reply, and saluted her with a *feu-de-joie* of shrill ejaculations.

"What, dear madame! You at a ball, and alone too! But where is your charming *protégée*? What have you done with Mademoiselle Jeanne? I have been looking for her arrival, that I might present to her some most agreeable young men who are dying to make her acquaintance—M. de Monceaux, M. d'Arville——"

"Mademoiselle de Mersac is not with me," interrupted the old lady, sourly; "and if she were, I should not think it my duty to allow her to dance with the first that came."

"Oh, madame! you know that I am discretion itself. My friends are all persons of the highest respectability; if they were not alive at the accession of Louis XVIII. that is neither my fault nor theirs. But I trust Mademoiselle Jeanne will join us before the evening is over."

"She is not coming at all," answered Madame de Vaublanc, too full of her grievance to refrain from speaking of it, even to the enemy. "She wrote to me at the last moment to say she had the *migraine*. It is very inconsiderate—very inconvenient, I mean. Having accepted the Maréchale's invitation, I felt bound to come here, much as I dislike such entertainments. Indeed, it is only out of politeness that I sometimes attend even the small Monday receptions, though there, of course, I am more among my friends."

At this moment a young aide-de-camp, whose pinched-in waist and voluminous trousers gave his figure somewhat the appearance of a brightly-coloured hour-glass, shouldered his way towards the little group. He was an acquaintance of Madame de Trémonville's, who put on one of her most telling smiles to receive him; but he passed her with a bow, and bent down to offer his arm to Madame de Vaublanc.

"Madame la Maréchale sends me to say that she has a seat for you beside her, madame," said he. "Will you permit me?"

So the violet cap-ribbons went bobbing and nodding away through the crowd beside the blue jacket, and presently Madame de Trémonville had the satisfaction of making out her old friend, seated at the far end of the room, among a circle of magnates whom, bold as she was, she dared not approach. The lady who at that time exercised vice-regal sway over the society of Algeria was generally thought to have leanings towards Legitimists, and was notoriously averse to fast women of the type of Madame de Trémonville. The latter had never been able to obtain an invitation to those Mondays of which Madame de Vaublanc had spoken, and this was a very sore point with her.

"Of all the people I have ever met, I think that old woman is the ugliest, the most ill-natured, and the most ill-bred," she cried, with a fine hearty emphasis and unaffected warmth which made Saint-Luc laugh a little.

"Poor old soul!" said he. "She resembles a walnut in character as well as in the appearance of her skin. If you want to get at the good in her, you must break through a hard outer shell of obstinacy and prejudice, beneath which lies a not very thick covering of bitterness against the human race, which has not treated her over well; but the good qualities are there, and not so hard to discover after all."

"Bah! everybody has good qualities," returned Madame de Trémonville, impatiently. "I may say, without vanity, that I also have good qualities. We all know that that frightful old Vaublanc and the Duchesse de Breuil and Mademoiselle de Mersac give money to the poor and visit the sick occasionally; but that is not what society requires of them. If they say their prayers regularly and keep all the ten commandments, so much the better for them—that is their affair. Society does not concern itself with such things, but simply asks that they should show some signs of *savoir-vivre* and good breeding, and that is precisely what none of them does."

"Pardon me, madame, but I must differ from you entirely, so far as Mademoiselle de Mersac and the Duchess are concerned. I never met two ladies of more perfectly refined and amiable manners. As for Madame de Vaublanc, she is a little brusque; but I find that, as I grow older, I value people more for what they are than for what they seem to be, and——"

"Enough! enough!" cried Madame de Trémonville, throwing up her hands with a gesture of simulated terror. "One does not go to a ball to hear a sermon. Go away, M. le Vicomte; you weary me."

"I must obey your commands, madame, however cruel," replied Saint-Luc, with suspicious alacrity.

"Stop! Before you go, take me to that M. Barainton. I want to ask him what is that fine uniform he wears. I did not know he was *militaire*," said Madame de Trémonville, whose tastes in more respects than one were identical with those of the Grande Duchesse de Gérolstein.

People who have the harmless mania of ferreting out the original sources of great events are fond of proving, or seeming to prove, that the course of the world's history has been affected over and over again by some paltry occurrence to which no one paid any attention at the time, nor recollected until long afterwards. A fit of indigestion, they tell us, costs thousands of lives; an apple falling from a tree leads to a scientific discovery of incalculable importance; an angry word decides the fate of an empire. As regards such important matters, the chain of reasoning is, perhaps, more curious than valuable, and serves, at most, only to show how the inevitable may be hastened or delayed by trifles; yet there can be but few men who, looking back upon their past lives, will deny that their personal history has been fashioned less by what they have done than by what has happened to them. Wise and foolish, strong and weak, must yield alike to the influence of trivialities, in which some see the hand of Providence, some the blind, uncontrollable working of an infinitely complicated machine, and some mere accident. If Madame la Maréchale had not, out of pure good nature, sent an aide-de-camp to look after an unattractive old woman; if Saint-Luc had not happened to annoy his volatile partner; if Barrington's silver lace had been a little less conspicuous, Madame de Trémonville would never have worked the mischief that she did that night, and the course of more than one life would have taken a different direction.

She was not an ill-natured person, this quick-witted, underbred little Frenchwoman. She did not want to injure or afflict anybody, and was no more capable of hatred than she was of love. Her vulnerable point was her vanity, and if that were touched she would show spite and temper for a time, as a cat arches her back and spits when a big dog stalks past her without turning his head. Because she had been ignored and Madame de Vaublanc honoured, she felt it a necessity to say some sharp things of that lady and her clan; and since Saint-Luc did not seem disposed to swallow her little dose of calumny, she thought she would administer it to Mr. Barrington, whom she knew to be also a constant visitor at the Campagne de Mersac.

Long afterwards, when he recalled that evening, and Madame de Trémonville's envious disparagement of one whom he knew to be immeasurably her superior, Barrington used to wonder how he could have allowed such vain babbling to produce even a passing impression upon his mind. Earlier in the day he would, perhaps, hardly have attended to it; but at that moment he was annoyed and perplexed by Jeanne's failure to keep her appointment, and the misgivings which he had only half stifled in the morning had begun to return upon him. The mind, as well as the body, has seasons at which it is more liable to receive poison than at others, and, having received it, is less able to shake it off.

After all, it was nothing very terrible that Madame de Trémonville said. They were standing, she and her partner, on a broad verandah, whither they had escaped from the heated air of the ball-room. Before them stretched the garden with its trim lawns, its flower-beds, its trees and shrubs, its coloured lamps, its expanses of light and dark patches of shadow. Barrington, leaning against a marble pillar, and looking out upon the soft beauty of the night, was listening, not very attentively, to his companion's rapid chatter. She had been denouncing and ridiculing the Duchesse de Breuil and Madame de Vaublanc. She had mimicked, rather cleverly, the high and mighty manner of the one, and the harsh, rasping voice of the other. "A pair of old ogresses, who fancy themselves princesses; nobody is cruel enough to disabuse them of their error," she said. Barrington listened to it all, not without amusement. He thought the two ogresses were very well able to stand up for themselves—as indeed they were—and did not feel called upon to undertake their defence. Now it was Jeanne's turn.

"Tell me, monsieur," cried the little lady, resting her rounded arms upon the marble balustrade, and fluttering her fan as she looked up in the Englishman's face, "you who are so well acquainted with her—do you find her very attractive?"

Barrington had found her very decidedly so; but he replied, in a tone of judicial impartiality, "Well, yes; he should say that Mademoiselle de Mersac was certainly an attractive person."

"Really? But gentlemen and ladies so seldom agree on these points. The truth is, that one woman is always a fairer judge of another than any man can be."

Barrington observed that the world at large had long ago arrived at a diametrically opposite conclusion.

"I know that; but the world is mistaken, as it very often is. The world starts by assuming that all women are jealous of one another—which is absurd. It is easy enough for a woman to please men; beauty alone will do that, not to speak of a hundred other weapons which she learns to use before she is out of the nursery. But if she wishes to be loved by other women, she must have a heart. Jeanne de Mersac has no heart. She is as cold as a stone; she has no real affection for anybody; and that is why I, for one, am repelled by her."

"You will allow, at least, that she has some affection for her brother?" said Barrington.

"Affection? I do not know. She is kind to him, and does a great deal for him; but that explains itself. *Tenez*, M. Barainton, I will give you the key to Jeanne de Mersac's character in three words—love of power. She has one of those natures—happily not very common among young girls—which can be magnanimous, generous, amiable even, to subordinates, but which revolt against all authority. Have you remarked her passion for animals? It is easily understood; they do not question her orders. She devotes herself to her brother—why? Because he does nothing without consulting her. When he begins to act for himself, she will abandon him, and seek for some other slave. Madame de Breuil, who is completely under her thumb, she tolerates, but does not like; because, after all, the most easy-going of chaperons must occasionally lay some restrictions upon her charge. In short, this girl, who might have made herself talked of if she had been born to a throne, will never be anything but an insupportable wife; and, for my part, if I were M. de Saint-Luc, I would not marry her, though she had twice her beauty and ten times her fortune."

"Possibly she may decline to marry M. de Saint-Luc," said Barrington.

"For his sake, I hope with all my heart that she may. Her husband will have two alternatives open to him. Either he will have to submit to her at once and unreservedly, to allow her to control everything, not excepting his expenditure—in which case she will doubtless manage his affairs well, and treat him with every consideration—or he will have to fight a long battle, out of which he can only come victorious at the cost of his happiness. No man is very likely to adopt the former course, and it is not every one who will succeed in the latter. All things considered, I do not envy Mademoiselle Jeanne's future husband," concluded Madame de Trémonville, as she turned to re-enter the ball-room.

Barrington donned his helmet and his martial cloak, and went clanking down the hill, pensive and vaguely uneasy. The broad high road before him was barred by black shadows from the acacia trees that bordered it; and, as he walked, it seemed to him that he was looking forward into his own future path in life, and could see some such patches of gloom lying across it. "Love of power her only passion"—"She will never be anything but an insupportable wife"—"She is as cold as a stone"—what were all these accusations but the reflections of his own forebodings magnified, perhaps a little distorted, by an angry woman? Or was it only that they were rendered more distinct? Well, if it were so, that did not make them more real. It is oblique lights—half lights—that fling shadows, and seem to convert them into tangible realities. When the sun is high overhead, and all dark nooks and corners are illuminated, they vanish away. But then common sense stepped in, and pointed out that similes were not facts, and that after making every allowance for the exaggerations of a hostile critic, there still remained some basis of truth to support her assertions. Jeanne was, undoubtedly, fond of her own way, and accustomed to get it. She had a certain royal fashion of issuing her commands to those about her without assigning reasons for them; she was far more disposed to unbend in the presence of her inferiors than in that of her equals, and towards the latter her bearing was almost invariably cold and indifferent. Barrington had long since remarked these traits in her character, and had been attracted by them. Had she been more like the rest of the world, he would hardly have fallen in love with her. But then, is originality a desirable quality in a wife? The whole question lay there. Would not the very incentives which had called his passion into existence contribute more strongly than anything towards its extinction "in the knot there's no untying"? All experience seemed to answer Yes. If only the present state of affairs could be infinitely prolonged, and the question of marriage adjourned *sine die*! thought Barrington, as he toiled wearily upstairs to his bedroom, a prey to doubts and fears with which, it is to be hoped, that no one will feel any sympathy.

The French mail had come in late that evening, and a pile of letters lay on his table awaiting perusal.

"Ernest Seymour's fist," muttered Barrington, as he took up one of them, and sank into an arm-chair. "I wonder what he has got to complain about now; he never writes unless he has some grievance. Amelia ill again, I suppose."

"110 Portland Place: June 5.

"MY DEAR HARRY,

"The anxiety and distress which, during the last three days, have almost overwhelmed me must be my excuse for not having written to you before this. I am positive that I several times gave directions to have a telegram sent to Broadridge, but it seems that, through the negligence of the servants, this was not done; and now, to my great surprise, I have just learnt from your Aunt Susan that you have not yet returned from Algeria.

"I have not ventured as yet to communicate this news to dear Amelia, who is constantly asking for you, and I shall try, if possible, to tranquillise her with assurances of your speedy arrival. In her present exhausted state she does not, I think, take much note of the passage of time. Were I to let her know how many days must necessarily elapse before we can hope to have you with us, the shock would, I am convinced, have a most deleterious effect upon her.

"Alas, poor dear! she has had one of her most alarming attacks. For twenty-four hours she was almost entirely unconscious; and, though she has now to some extent rallied, it is impossible to describe her state otherwise than as one of extreme peril. Her emaciation is frightful, and, as for nourishment, I may say that for days past she has taken literally none. Even the Liebig, which you may remember that we have found so useful hitherto, she has been unable to retain; and though the light farinaceous food ordered by the doctor has, up to the present time, been kept upon her stomach, who can say how long it may remain there? But I must not afflict you with these painful details.

"Sir William Puffin, whom we called in some days ago, seems to hesitate about giving any decided opinion upon the case, but tells me he does not apprehend any *immediate* danger. Dear Amelia herself, however, has little exceptation of ever leaving her bed again.

"Your Aunt Susan tries to cheer us up in her well-intentioned but rather rough way, and says the whole thing is nothing but hysteria, and will go away as suddenly as it came. She is opposed to my recalling you to England; but I am sure that you will feel, with me, that I am right in doing so. How difficult it seems to be, to thoroughly robust people, to sympathise with those who are in constant ill health! To hear your Aunt Susan talk, you would imagine that Amelia and I were to *blame* for being the wretched invalids that we are!

"I myself am very far from well; and Puffin being in the house, I thought it only prudent to consult him. But I doubt whether, in the very short interview he thought fit to grant me, he can have properly grasped the significance of my symptoms. He says I am dyspeptic, and that may be so; but dyspepsia cannot possibly account for all the strange sensations that I have experienced of late. A continual and most distressing singing in the ears, sudden and unaccountable pains in the back and limbs, palpitation of the heart, giddiness, distaste for food, drowsiness, and sad depression of spirits are only a few of these. Should my life be spared until the summer, I propose, with Sir William's permission, to give a trial to the cold water cure at Malvern. What the effect of that drastic treatment will be upon so enfeebled a frame as mine time alone can show; but I am willing to run the risk, and am, I hope, justified in so doing."

The same interesting subject was pursued through two more closely-written pages, which Barrington dismissed with a hasty glance, and then threw the letter aside. The Amelia, whose sufferings were so touchingly depicted therein, was his only sister, Mrs. Seymour, who, having been delicate, nervous, and fanciful all her life, had developed into a confirmed invalid, after linking her fortunes with those of a valetudinarian husband. This was neither the first, nor the second, nor the third time that Barrington had been summoned, in all haste, to attend her death-bed, and had arrived to find her on the sofa, and not much worse than usual. She was always dying, but, somehow or other, never died. At the same time it was undeniable that so fragile a creature might die upon small provocation; and though Barrington felt very little alarm on the present occasion, and was rather disposed to coincide with the views of the unfeeling Aunt Susan mentioned by Mr. Seymour, he could scarcely hesitate to obey the summons conveyed to him. The only question was whether he could and should see Mademoiselle de Mersac before sailing for England. Now as the Marseilles boat did not sail till noon on the following day, and as Barrington was aware that Jeanne was a very early riser, it is evident that he might have obtained an interview with her if he had so desired it; but, in truth, he desired no such thing. To see Jeanne again would be pleasant; to hear from her own lips that she loved him would be pleasanter still; but to find himself an irrevocably engaged man would be—well, a shade less pleasant. Circumstances not of his creating or seeking had, as it appeared to this prudent lover, put it in his power to gain the very thing that he wanted—namely, the continuance of his present relations with the girl whom he loved. And why should he not take advantage of them? He had no thought of giving Jeanne up; nevertheless, he was not prepared immediately to ask her to be his wife. He wanted to blow hot and cold at the same time, in short, and thought he could now see his way to the accomplishment of this impossible feat. He resolved, therefore—though not without many sighs—that he would deny himself the delight of meeting her once more before his departure, and sat down to write her a letter instead.

Yet, when he had composed and addressed this missive, he was more than half inclined to tear it up again, and would very likely have done so if Madame de Trémonville's prophetic words had not hung in his memory, and warned him against straying from the safe path of delay.

CHAPTER XVII.

IN WHICH M. DE FONTVIEILLE TELLS AN OLD STORY.

"MY DEAR MADEMOISELLE DE MERSAC,—I cannot tell you how disappointed I was at not meeting you at the ball last night. I was very sorry at the time, but I am a great deal more sorry now; for, as it turns out, I have not only missed the opportunity of a few pleasant dances with you, to which I had been looking forward immensely, but also that of bidding you good-bye.

"I little thought, when I rode away from your door yesterday, that I had taken what may very likely be my last look of that dear and familiar house where I have passed so many happy hours and have met with a hospitality and kindness for which, I assure you, I am not ungrateful, though I have said little about it. But so it was to be. The mail brought me a letter from my brother-in-law, telling me of my sister's serious illness, and begging me to return to England immediately. One cannot very well disregard a request of that kind, although in this particular instance it might perhaps be possible to do so without any real heartlessness or indifference. All my previous experience of my sister's illnesses leads me to anticipate that, when I reach my journey's end, I shall find that I might quite as well have remained where I am, and where I wish with all my heart that I could stay. But there is, of course, the possibility of matters being more serious than I imagine, and therefore I have no alternative but to go. By the time this reaches you I shall be on board the *Euphrate*, and outside the harbour, I daresay. I wonder whether you will be looking down at us from the terrace where I have so often stood beside you and watched the great steamers crawling away like toy-boats towards the horizon. I shall fancy you there, at any rate, and shall keep my eyes upon the old cliffs and woods until their outlines melt into the blue mass of a hilly coast, which, in its turn, will gradually fade into a dim cloud, and grow fainter and fainter till it vanishes altogether, and Algeria, for me, resolves itself into a memory.

"I am sure I need not say how much I regret leaving in this abrupt manner; but, as you see, it is no fault of mine, and I am longing for the time to come when we shall meet in Switzerland, for I take it for granted that I am to be allowed to join you there. Would it be asking too much of your kindness to beg you to let me have a few lines as soon as your plans are fixed, saying when and where I may hope to see you again? A letter addressed to the Conservative Club, St. James's Street, or to the Travellers', Pall Mall, London, will always find me.

"Will you please make my excuses to the Duchesse de Breuil, and remember me very kindly to your brother and M. de Fontvieille?

"And believe me,
"My dear Mademoiselle de Mersac,
"Most sincerely yours,
"H. BARRINGTON."

Looked upon in the light of a written farewell intended to imitate the letter of an engaged man to his *fiancée* as closely as may be without actually compromising the writer, the above composition can hardly be reckoned a success. Taken, on the other hand, as the last word of an unfortunate who has gone a great deal further than he meant, and sees no safety for himself but in flight, it may, perhaps, be considered as sufficiently suitable for its purpose—the manner in which such unfortunate may choose to blunder out of the meshes being of very slight importance. But, as the reader is aware, it was in the former, not in the latter character that Barrington regarded himself, and wished to be regarded; and if he had been a few years younger and a little less mortally afraid of committing himself to paper, he might possibly have produced some less clumsy expression of his sorrow at parting.

As it was, he was fully sensible of the defects of his letter, and had the grace to feel thoroughly ashamed of it. He perceived that it was too long, too constrained in tone, and, worst of all, too apologetic. He knew that after what had passed between him and Jeanne, he ought either to have said more or less. He even went further, and acknowledged to himself that, unless he were prepared to indite a formal offer of marriage, he ought not to have written at all. But in that case he must have resigned all intention of making such an offer at any future time; and this also he was not prepared to do. So, dissatisfied as he was with the result of his labours, he thrust it at length into an envelope, with a groan and a despairing shrug of his shoulders, feeling that the difficulties of the emergency were too many for him, and being, moreover, if the truth must be told, a trifle pressed for time, for no man, lovelorn or otherwise, can set out upon a journey without having first packed up his clothes.

And in due course the missive reached its destination. It was brought up to the Campagne de Mersac by a messenger from the Hôtel d'Orient, and was handed to Jeanne as she sat at the breakfast-table, round which, as ill-luck would have it, were grouped the Duchess, M. de Fontvieille, and Léon. Not half a dozen times in as many weeks did the Duchess leave her room before the afternoon was well advanced; scarcely more often was M. de Fontvieille wont to demand hospitality of his neighbours; while, as for the young master of the house, his avocations frequently led him miles away from home at the breakfast hour. But on this particular morning of all others, Madame de Breuil had woke up feeling unusually brisk and strong; M. de Fontvieille's cat had made a raid upon the fried soles and the dish of small birds to which that gentleman had been looking for his midday sustenance; and Léon, being in sore trouble of mind, had fallen out with Pierre Cauvin, and had ridden back in the sulks, leaving his day's duties half accomplished. Thus it came to pass that Jeanne had to open her letter in the presence of three witnesses; and, what was worse still, had to read it with six inquiring eyes fixed upon her face.

People who have intelligence of a startling nature to impart ought to send their communications in the ordinary manner, through the post. In these days, everybody gets one or two letters at breakfast-time, and may, by exercising a little self-command, make shift to receive a sharp epistolary blow without displaying unbecoming emotion, or exciting the attention of those who sit at meat with him—especially if, as is to be anticipated, the latter be busy over the study of their own correspondence. But a note delivered after post-hours must, in the nature of things, create some slight stir of curiosity in the least inquisitive and best-bred circles, which is sometimes apt to be a little hard upon the recipient, upon whom the consciousness of being more or less furtively watched can hardly fail to produce a sensation of discomfort. Had Barrington been possessed of that nice consideration for the feelings of others which he imagined—and still imagines—to be one of his most salient characteristics, he might possibly have thought of this, and put a stamp upon his letter. But being what he was, and having before his mind's eye a sentimental picture of Jeanne standing on the terrace and wistfully gazing after the good ship which was bearing her lover away beyond seas, he chose rather to expend five francs upon sending it up the hill by special messenger. The consequence was that M. de Fontvieille was interrupted in the middle of a piquant anecdote, and was fain to wind it up in a hurried and lame manner; for he and his audience too were naturally anxious to learn what news could be contained in Jeanne's lengthy epistle, and as naturally tried to discover from her features whether it were of an agreeable or interesting nature.

They might, however, as well have looked at each other, or at the pictures on the wall. Jeanne, who was habitually pale, seldom changed colour, and was never more outwardly calm than when she was most deeply moved. She perused her letter very slowly and deliberately, folded it up again, restored it to its envelope, and then, without saying a word to anybody, resumed her occupation of breaking up dog-biscuit for Turco's breakfast.

If there was one thing that irritated the Duchess more than another, it was conduct of this kind. She was an inquisitive old body, who liked to have a finger in every one's business, and to be consulted in every emergency. She hated secrets (except, of course, her own, which she made a prodigious fuss over), and could not bear the thought that anything in the shape of a mystery should exist under the same roof with her. Sooner, indeed, than that matters should remain in so unsatisfactory a condition she would clear them up by means of direct questions; but this was a humiliating mode of procedure to which she seldom resorted until she had essayed to work round to her end through a series of artless circumlocutions.

Upon the present occasion she drummed upon the table impatiently with her withered, jewelled fingers for a minute or two, and then, addressing herself to nobody in particular, remarked that it was a strange thing that people never came to see her now. And yet, she resumed, after a momentary break, perhaps it was not such a very strange thing after all. She was a very old woman, and loneliness was one of the necessary evils of old age. "You and I, my dear M. de Fontvieille, have been out of the race for many years past; and, perhaps, it is too much to expect that young people should take the trouble to amuse us. They have their own interests and their own pleasures, which they keep to themselves, without thinking, perhaps, that we, too, like to have our share in what goes on around us. Very likely they find us in the way. Well, they have the consolation of knowing that we cannot interfere with them long."

"My letter is from Mr. Barrington. Would you like to read it, madame?" asked Jeanne, who did not like circumlocutions.

"I make it a rule never to read correspondence which is not addressed to me," answered the old lady, with dignity, "particularly when it is written in a language which I do not understand."

Whereat M. de Fontvieille had a little laugh all to himself behind his napkin.

"He writes to say that he has been suddenly called away to England by the illness of his sister, and to apologise for not having been able to call and say good-bye to us," continued Jeanne. "He particularly begs me to make his excuses to you, madame."

"And so he is really gone!" said the Duchess. "I regret it very sincerely. He was an amiable and entertaining young man, and I had become accustomed to seeing him here. The house will seem quite dull at first without him."

"We shall all miss Mr. Barrington," observed Léon; "and Jeanne more than any of us."

"I shall miss him very much," said Jeanne, steadily; "but in any case he could hardly have remained here much longer at this season of the year. That is the worst of making friends with birds of passage. As soon as one has got to know them tolerably well they are off, and one probably never sees them again."

"I should be sorry to think that we had seen the last of Mr. Barrington," remarked the Duchess. "Does he not speak of returning, Jeanne?"

"Oh, no! He says something about meeting us in Switzerland in the summer."

"I shall never be able to drag myself as far as Switzerland," sighed the old lady—"never, I am convinced. The next journey I shall undertake will be a short one—only as far as the cemetery. I dread the hot season here, but I will not run the risk of dying in an hotel and leaving Jeanne with all the trouble and inconvenience of arranging about the funeral. If Léon could be with me, I should not so much mind."

"I will certainly accompany you, madame, if you wish it," said Léon, speaking without much alacrity.

"No, no, *mon enfant*, you have your own affairs to attend to; and, besides, I prefer to be buried here. I have my piece of ground waiting for me, as you know, and as soon as I have arranged one or two little matters I shall be ready enough to occupy it. By-the-bye, what has become of M. de Saint-Luc? It is a century since I have heard of him."

In this way Barrington's departure escaped further remark; and, for the next quarter of an hour, the conversation turned chiefly upon matters of local gossip. Jeanne took her share in it from time to time, and was neither more nor less taciturn than usual; but M. de Fontvieille, who was an observant old person, noticed that she left the remainder of her breakfast untouched.

I suppose that everybody is, in a greater or less degree, dowered with that blessed gift of self-deception without which the infinite sadness of life would become almost unendurable; but some, no doubt, are more highly favoured in this respect than others. Jeanne, for instance, though quite able, and even rather prone, to form a mistaken estimate of characters and motives, had a singularly clear vision and defective imagination where facts were concerned; and it was upon the basis of facts, and not hypotheses, that she was accustomed to shape her actions. Barrington's letter left her no room for pleasant delusions either as to his meaning or as to her own destiny. She had said to herself the day before that he should decide her fate; and now he had emphatically done so, though in a different manner from that which she had anticipated. For her she knew that there could henceforth be no more uncertainty. The die was cast, and the remainder of her life must be spent not with the man whom she loved, but with one for whom, at that time, she felt an absolute abhorrence. At the first moment the one thing that seemed to her most necessary was that she should so bear herself as that no one should guess at the wound she had received; and of this task, as we have seen, she acquitted herself not discreditably, failing only in that one point of inability to swallow food.

When breakfast was at an end, she betook herself to her own room, and, sitting down before her dressing-table, took the letter from her pocket, and read it over again from beginning to end. There was no misunderstanding it, she thought, as she laid it gently aside without a shadow of resentment against the writer. She was a hundred miles from interpreting it correctly, and never doubted of the necessity of Barrington's journey to England; but she plainly saw that, had he intended asking her to be his wife, he would not have left Algeria without doing so. How could she have made so terrible a mistake? That was the question which was uppermost in her mind, and which she asked herself over and over again with bitter mortification. She—a woman in her twenty-third year—a woman, too, who was not by nature romantic, and had seen more of the world and of men than ninety-nine French girls out of a hundred are permitted to do—she to confound intimacy with love, and to take a few light words *au grand serieux*, like any child of seventeen just released from the convent! It was not an agreeable thought.

"I have only myself to blame," she murmured. "I have allowed myself to love him—Heaven grant I may not have allowed him to see that I love him!—and now I must suffer for it. What is done cannot be undone; and, if it could, I am not sure that I should wish it to be so; all that remains for me to do is to save the family from disaster, and to gratify the wishes of all my friends. It is a sort of consolation; and I care so little now what becomes of me, that there is no fear of my courage failing—only I wish M. de Saint-Luc were a little less contemptible."

Jeanne was not altogether heroic. She was ready and willing to make the great sacrifice which, as she conceived, duty and affection required of her; but there she stopped short. Of what she might owe to her future husband she did not think at all. He had played a game of cards for her, and had won his stake; let him be satisfied. What more could such a man claim from her than that she should carry his name untarnished to her grave? As for affection—*allons donc*! "I may forgive you in time, but him I shall never forgive," she had said to Léon the day before; and her altered circumstances had produced no change in her sentiments. She had already, in some sort, pardoned her brother, but towards Saint-Luc she harboured no feeling save one of mingled anger and disdain.

Nor was she insensible of the tremendous loneliness of her position. Self-reliant and self-contained as she was, a chill ran through her when she remembered that no living soul would pity her; that she would receive congratulations from all sides upon an act of moral suicide; and that, for the rest of her life, she must manage to get on without the support of any sympathy. Nothing but pride and utter indifference could carry her through, she thought, as she slowly descended the staircase, and stepped out into the garden, where sympathy, in an unexpected form, had been patiently waiting for her half an hour, or more.

M. de Fontvieille, excellent man, had preserved, under a thin veneer of cynicism of which he was inordinately proud, a heart still open to the generous impulses of youth, and easily touched by any episode of a sentimental nature. Less blind than the Duchess and Léon, he had long ago discerned the nature of the friendship which had sprung up between Jeanne and the Englishman; the incidents of the Kabylian excursion had not been thrown away upon him; by degrees, his hope of seeing his *protégée* well married to one of her own countrymen had yielded to a kindly desire that her hand might follow where her heart had already been given; and, understanding, as he did, the cruel nature of the blow which had now fallen upon her, he was determined that at least she should not lack such solace as it is in the power of a sympathetic spirit to bestow.

If Barrington, leaning over the taffrail of the steamer, and gazing sentimentally up at the wooded heights of El Biar, had been provided with a sufficiently powerful telescope, he would have made out, not the tall graceful form which he fondly hoped might be stationed there, but a grotesque little straw-hatted figure gesticulating like a marionette, and from time to time shaking a puny fist towards the sea.

"Go, perfidious Æneas!" cried the old gentleman, apostrophising the faithless one in the style of the year 1810. "Go, and leave the noble and unhappy Dido to consume upon the pyre of unrequited love! Go back to the chill fogs of thy melancholy island, and languish there, a prey to remorse and the spleen! Go—and the devil go with thee!"

Somewhat relieved by this outburst, M. de Fontvieille strutted back towards the house, whence poor Dido, a little pale and heavy-lidded, had just issued. Removing his Panamà hat, and bowing more profoundly than usual in homage alike to beauty and misfortune, "Mademoiselle," said he, "I come to beg a favour of you. My collection of gems——"

"But, monsieur, I inspected them from the first to the last only two days ago," pleaded poor Jeanne, who wanted to be left alone.

"Pardon me, mademoiselle, there was one drawer which you did not see then, and have never seen yet. It is that which I propose to show you to-day."

"But I must go to the dairy; and I have the linen to count, and——"

"Mademoiselle, I am convinced that your admirable Fanchette is capable of replacing you for an hour. For the rest, I will not detain you long; but I have a fancy to display my greatest treasures to you to-day, and you are too kind to thwart an old man's whim."

Not seeing her way to resisting this appeal, Jeanne resignedly put up her parasol, and accepted M. de Fontvieille's proffered arm. She would have walked more comfortably alone, for she was a good head taller than her companion; and age, together with the unconscionable tightness of his varnished boots, had deprived him of absolute control over his legs, so that it took a good deal of humouring and management to keep his head straight, and preserve him from sudden involuntary inroads into the flower-beds; but to decline such an equivocal support would have been to grievously affront the old gentleman, who held it an essential point of courtesy to conduct all lady-visitors to his door in this slightly ridiculous fashion, and who to-day seemed anxious to surpass himself in small marks of attention towards his young guest.

When he had led Jeanne into his little dark *salon*, and had made her seat herself in the most comfortable arm-chair that the room contained, he trotted away, and returned presently, bearing in his arms a worsted-work footstool, which he placed under her feet, and, recovering his perpendicular not without an effort, remarked triumphantly, "Now we are at our ease!"

Then he unlocked the folding doors of the old-fashioned cabinet which held his precious collection, and rapidly pulled out the first few drawers, closing them again without daring to glance at their contents lest the temptation to mount his hobby should prove too strong for him. "All these we have already seen," he said, "and I will not fatigue you by going over them again, though I have some rubies here which well merit—but no matter, let us proceed. You may perhaps have noticed that I have never opened the lowest drawer in your presence. There is nothing in it, as you perceive, but an old leather case, which, to tell you the truth, is not worth five francs, including what it contains. But now I will tell you something that will give you a little interest in it. That leather case was made for me half a century ago; and from that day to this, nobody has ever looked inside it but myself. If I may say so without profanity, it is, in a manner, like those *châsses* which you may see in certain cathedrals, and which are only opened once in every ten or twenty years. They contain nothing more than the usual fragments of the true cross, or garments of the Blessed Virgin, or whatever it may be; but when the day comes for the exhibition of the *Grandes Reliques*, people flock from miles round to contemplate them. And why? Because they cannot do so every day."

He had been fumbling at his watch-chain while he was speaking, and now he detached therefrom a small gold key, which he pressed into the lock of the case.

"*Voilà mes Grandes Reliques, mademoiselle*," said he, lifting the lid, and drawing back a step to allow her to approach.

Jeanne bent forward, and saw very much what she had expected to see—two or three brown, withered flowers, which had once been roses, a long kid glove yellow with age, a scrap of ribbon, and a miniature representing a lady with a high forehead, an enormous pair of black eyes, and a little prim, smiling mouth.

"You do not find her beautiful," remarked M. de Fontvieille. "*Mon Dieu*, you are right! she never was so; although I must say that that miniature gives no more idea of what she was than the photographs of the present day will do of you and your contemporaries. It is only great artists who can produce a faithful likeness, and my poor Madeleine had not the means of paying a great artist, or even a mediocre one. She was only the daughter of a country gentleman of good family, but small fortune, who lived all the year round upon his property in the Bourbonnais, and cultivated his vines, and knew little and cared less about the outer world. His estate adjoined that of an uncle of mine, and it was while upon a visit to him that I first met Madeleine. I was at that time about eight-and-twenty, and in many respects an older man than I am now, when my age may be nearly represented by the same figures in reversed order. I had lived in Paris from the day I had left my college; I had tried every form of pleasure, I had made myself acquainted with every grade of society, and I flattered myself that the world had no new sensation left to bestow upon me. I was more than half tired of life, as young men often are when their health begins to give way from the effects of dissipation, and when they are up to the eyes in debt. I was sick of dicing and brawling, and—and the rest of it; and yet I did not see how I was to kill time without the help of these amusements. In short, I was so disheartened and disgusted with myself and my prospects that I had more than once gravely debated the advisability of entering a Trappist monastery when I encountered Madeleine, one sunny morning, in the village, and abandoned all idea of taking vows for which I was perhaps hardly fitted by nature.

"As I have already said, she was no great beauty; but she was as innocent as an angel, as gay as a lark, and her manners had an easy, naïve grace which came from natural good breeding, not from the acquired elegances of an artificial society. There was a charm about her which exceeded the charms of the *grand monde* to which I was accustomed, as the fresh scent of a tuft of wild thyme excels the sickly odour of the stephanotis. It was not, however, for these reasons, but simply because she was herself, that I fell in love with her; and if all the philosophers in the world were to lecture to you upon the origin of love, for hours together, they could give you no clearer explanation of the phenomenon than this. There are people, I firmly believe, who go down to their graves, after a long life, without ever having been in love at all. For myself, although I was at one time somewhat notorious for adventures of a kind which I can do no more than allude to in conversation with you, mademoiselle, and although I may have felt for certain ladies a sentiment which, for want of a better word, we dignify by the name of love, I can assure you in all seriousness that I have only been in love once.

"Whether my dear Madeleine was ever attached to me in the same manner as I was to her, I cannot say. Probably not. But, at all events, she loved me well enough to make me as happy as a king during the three weeks that I was betrothed to her. At the expiration of that time our engagement came to an end in the stupidest and most commonplace way in the world. In order to obtain her father's consent to our union, I had been compelled to deceive him a little as to the state of my affairs, and especially to draw a veil over the history of my life in Paris. A good-natured relation of his, whom I had met some half-dozen times in the capital, was kind enough to tear down this veil, and to exhibit to the worthy man such a picture of my past career as caused him to cry out in horror that he would never entrust his daughter's happiness to the care of a spendthrift and a libertine. In vain I protested that I had repented of my evil ways, and was determined to lead a new life. The risk was too great, he said; and, to put an end to further discussion, he hastily betrothed Madeleine to one of his neighbours, a sober, red-headed young man, who had never done wrong in his life, through sheer lack of sufficient originality to leave the strictly religious groove into which his parents had pushed him.

"My poor little *fiancée* yielded without making much resistance—she would as soon have thought of cutting her father's throat as of disobeying him—and I went back to Paris, crazy with despair, and ready to put an end to myself. As you perceive, however, I did not do this. I continued to exist; and eventually married Madame de Fontvieille, with whom I lived in perfect harmony for twenty years. She was an excellent woman; she brought me a handsome *dot*; and I never disturbed her peace of mind by showing her the poor relics which now lie before you. The fact of my having preserved them is sufficient evidence that through all that has come and gone—through sorrow and mirth, sickness and health, marriage and old age—I have remained faithful in my heart to my only love. Perhaps if my dream had been realised, I might have been less constant; I cannot tell. It is a common saying that marriage kills love, but I am not convinced that it does so in all cases. However that may be, I have always felt that I owe Madeleine not only eternal love, but eternal gratitude. But for her I might have never suspected the existence of that divine spark in my nature which is common to all human beings. I might have lived and died like a beast, as thousands do. Having known and loved her, I could never fall back again under the sway of my five senses, nor persuade myself that the object of life was to gratify them. I cannot boast of having performed many good actions; but if I have helped a fellow-creature here and there, if I have forgiven an injury or two, and abstained occasionally from harming those whom I have been tempted to wrong, the credit is Madeleine's. Ah, *mon enfant*! this world is a dismal purgatory, full of liars and thieves and traitors and wretches of all kinds. It would be impossible to believe in the perfectibility of the species if we did not know that we are capable of loving one another. Such, at least, is my notion; and that is why I conclude that to have loved another is a thing to be thankful for in itself, whether one succeed or fail in gaining the object of one's desire.

"Why have I told you this long history to-day? Partly because I have bequeathed my jewels to you, and I wish you, as soon as I am dead, to take the case that you know of, and, without saying anything to anybody, to slip it quietly into my coffin; and partly because the experiences of the old are sometimes a comfort to the young. If, by any chance, a man finds himself in the midst of a sandy desert and is not very sure whether he will ever escape from it, it is something to come across the traces of others who have passed by the same way, and who have neither fainted nor died. It is something——"

M. de Fontvieille stopped short, fearing lest he might have said too much; but Jeanne was not offended. She had perceived from the outset that her old friend had discovered her secret, and she was not altogether sorry that it should be so. Few people like to be openly pitied; but there are extremities in which even the proudest are glad to think that some discreet person can understand their trouble, and secretly feel for them. Jeanne had listened to M. de Fontvieille's narrative with genuine interest. This octogenarian weeping over a withered rose, dilating upon the divine origin of love, mixing up sentiment, vanity, and bathos with the most innocent unself-consciousness, had not appeared to her ridiculous. His fidelity touched her; his ideas in some sort chimed in with her own. If the mere delight of memory had sufficed to brighten his whole life, why should not the same source of consolation be open to her? It was true that as yet she could hardly bring herself to fancy that it could be so. Her wound was too fresh; her heart ached with too bitter a longing to see Barrington again, were it but for an hour; but time would doubtless bring her more calmness. After all, the worst part of the ordeal which lay before her was that of which her would-be consoler knew nothing. The prospect of a lonely life—of devoting herself to the service of others, or of entering a convent—would have had no terrors for her; but to be chained for the rest of her days to an uncongenial companion, as the unhappy convicts used to be at the Toulon *bagne*—to know that no escape from him was possible, and to be forced, in sheer self-defence, to treat him at least as a friend—what more unhappy destiny than this could any woman accept? Following out this train of thought, she spoke at length:

"Why did you marry, monsieur? You were not obliged to do so."

M. de Fontvieille shrugged his shoulders. "Obliged!—no; but it seemed expedient. When I gave up my old mode of life and my old companions I was very dull. After a time I thought the best thing I could do would be to ally myself to a good, sensible woman who could contribute her share towards the payment of the household expenses; and I assure you I never regretted having taken the step. Marriage is an admirable institution, but a trifle prosaic: the essential thing is that the husband and wife should start by understanding one another. I never pretended to any romantic affection for Madame de Fontvieille, nor did she ever look for anything of the kind from me. You, who have been educated a little *à l'anglaise*, probably regard marriages of convenience with horror; for my own part, I think they are very good things. In every man's life there comes a time when he feels the necessity of having a home of his own, and domestic interests. Women, from the nature of their position, must experience the same want far more keenly. If lovers are able to marry, so much the better for them; but I see no reason why two people who esteem one another should not live together quite contentedly without any warmer feeling. I married Madame de Fontvieille because I required a home, and I told her so honestly. I never let her know that my heart belonged, and would always belong, to another woman; but if she had happened to find it out, she would have had no right to complain."

"You do not think, then, that it is wrong for a woman to marry one man, and continue to love another?"

M. de Fontvieille made a grimace. This was not exactly the doctrine he had intended to inculcate, and he felt that he was getting upon dangerous ground.

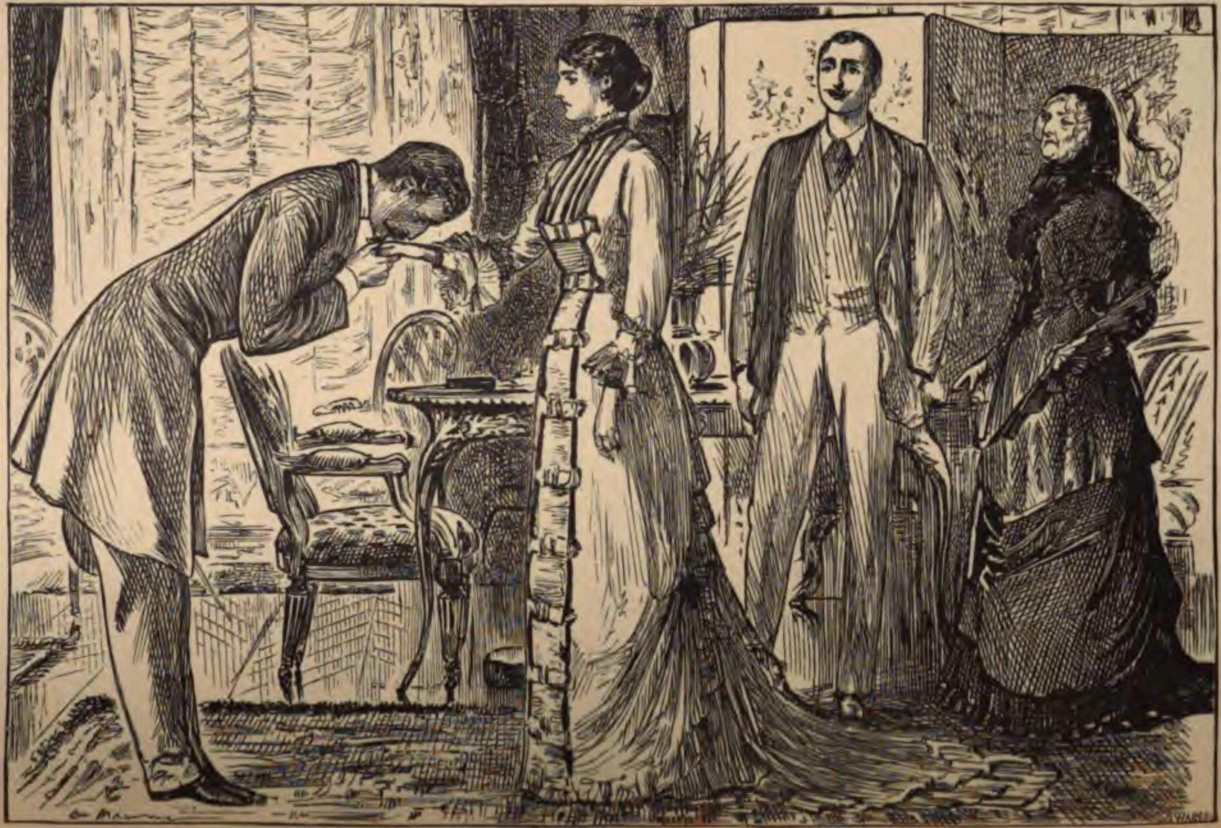
"*Mon Dieu!*" he said, "that depends a little. In matters of this kind it is impossible to lay down a general rule which will fit all cases. My object in relating my own experience to you was to show that it is a good thing to have loved—even in vain."

"No doubt," answered Jeanne, gravely. "I have understood what you have meant," she resumed, after a short pause; "it would be absurd to pretend that I have not, and I am grateful to you for confiding in me, and sympathising with me; but——"

"My dear child," cried M. de Fontvieille, waving his yellow silk pocket-handkerchief, "it has been a sweet consolation to me to reopen my old wounds in your presence. Only those who have suffered themselves can truly feel for the suffering. In future you will freely confide you troubles to me—we will mingle our tears——"

"No," broke in Jeanne, "I am not one of those who enjoy shedding tears." Then seeing that the old gentleman looked hurt, she added, "You know that if I could speak to anybody upon—the subject you have alluded to I would speak to you; but you must see that, for the future, the less said about it the better. I shall not forget what you have said, and you may be sure that I will carry out your instructions about the little leather case when the time comes. And now I must really go to the dairy."

"Marvellous is the power of love!" ejaculated M. de Fontvieille, after he had seen Jeanne to the door, and had carefully locked up his precious cabinet. "Here is a woman who is told that jewels to the value of some hundred thousand francs will be hers in a few years' time at furthest, and who does not think the announcement worth so much as a word of notice. Ah, animal of an Englishman! what have you ever done to merit such devotion?"



He bent respectfully over it, just touching it with his lips.

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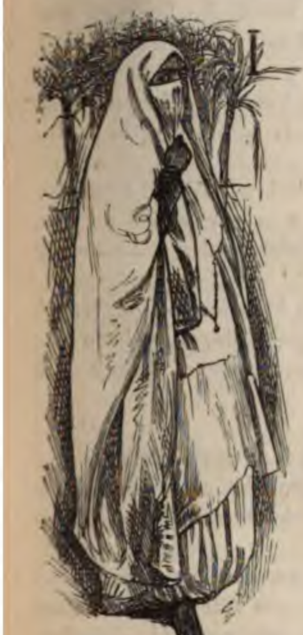
Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XVIII.

IN WHICH M. DE SAINT-LUC HEARS OF SOMETHING TO HIS ADVANTAGE.



It is an ill wind that blows nobody any good—even an east wind is welcome to outward-bound ships—and Barrington's hasty exit from Algeria, if it caused some heart-aching in one quarter that we know of, was productive of nothing but unalloyed delight in another.

Saint-Luc, as he stood upon his balcony, and watched the *Euphrate* steaming slowly out of harbour, rubbed his hands in glee, feeling that a formidable obstacle had been removed from his path. Whatever difficulties might yet intervene between him and the successful issue of his suit—and he was not disposed to underrate either their number or their magnitude—that of the presence of a possible rival need no longer be included among them; nor would it henceforth be necessary for him so to time his visits to the Campagne de Mersac as that they should not clash with those of the inevitable Englishman.

He rode up the same afternoon to inquire whether Mademoiselle de Mersac had recovered from her indisposition; but he only left a card at the door, without dismounting, fearing lest a too speedy appearance upon the field so lately vacated by the enemy might savour of undue precipitation. In a like prudent spirit he refrained from any endeavour to meet Jeanne until the return of Madame de Breuil's weekly reception-day afforded him an excuse for once more turning his horse's head in the direction of El Biar; and even then, as it turned out, he failed to obtain the interview he had hoped for.

Madame la Duchesse had discontinued her receptions for the summer months, the servant told him, in answer to his inquiry; but he would ask whether she was well enough to see monsieur. Mademoiselle Jeanne had already gone out. Under the circumstances, Saint-Luc did not much care about being admitted; but as he could hardly say so consistently with politeness, he waited at the door, in a broiling sun, while the man departed on his mission, and was presently rewarded by a request that he would be so kind as to walk upstairs, the Duchess being unable to leave her bedroom.

The Duchess's bedroom was spacious, airy, and luxuriously furnished. It belonged to the modern portion of the house, and had nothing Moorish either in its construction or in its appointments. The low bedstead, with its lace-bordered covering, the soft-cushioned chairs of all shapes and sizes, the Louis XIV. writing-table, the inlaid cabinets, and the numberless knicknacks were as evidently of Parisian origin as was the owner of all these pretty things, who, from the sofa upon which she lay, with her quilted silk peignoir wrapped about her, greeted Saint-Luc in feeble and rather querulous accents.

"Come in, monsieur, and sit down. I do not apologise for receiving you here; the bedroom of a dying old woman is as much open to the world as a *chapelle ardente*."

Saint-Luc, with the best possible intention, declared that, if he might judge by appearances, he was in the room of a lady who had a great many years of life and health before her; but his observation was not well received.

"Eh, eh! what is the use of repeating such *banalités* as that," cried the Duchess, petulantly. "I am hundreds of years old, and I have ailments enough to kill a Hercules. Add to that, perpetual anxiety and worry, for which you are chiefly answerable."

"I, madame?"

"Certainly. You know that my one wish is to provide a home for Jeanne before I take my leave of her and of this troublesome world. How many months is it that I have been waiting, waiting to hear that you have arranged matters with her?"

"Madame, you will allow that I am just as anxious as you can be to arrive at the result which we both desire. But you will also allow that the case is an exceptional one. And no doubt, too, you will remember that when I formally requested Mademoiselle de Mersac's hand, shortly after my arrival in Algiers, you yourself told me that I could never hope to obtain it in that simple fashion, but that I must gain her affections before her consent."

"*Mon Dieu*, yes; I told you that it would be necessary to woo her *à l'anglaise*; but I suppose that even the English put some limit to their wooing. We do not live in the days of the patriarchs; and if you are content to play the part of Jacob, I am not so sure that Jeanne is prepared to accept that of Rachel, while it is absolutely certain that I am no Rebekah. The whole winter through you have been showering bouquets and compliments and tender glances at the girl, and for my part I cannot see that you are any nearer the end than you were when you started. To tell you the truth, M. de Saint-Luc, you astonish me. It is inconceivable that you, who, if half the stories one hears be true, know how to make yourself irresistible among the ladies of Paris, the most *blasées* women in the whole world, should have any difficulty in captivating a child like Jeanne."

Saint-Luc smiled, and made a deprecating gesture.

"The knowledge which you attribute to me, madame, is not likely to help me much here. It is precisely because my experience of your charming sex has lain entirely within the limits of a certain class that I am altogether at sea when I am removed from it. It may be very ridiculous, but it is unfortunately true, that I have no idea how to set about attracting the affections of a lady whom I not only love, but respect."

"Ah, bah! All women are the same, my dear Vicomte, and you ought to know it. It is not by sighing and looking piteous that you will obtain anything of them. A lover who understands his business neither argues nor entreats—he simply takes what he wants."

"I doubt whether that method would succeed with Mademoiselle de Mersac."

"Why should it not succeed as well with her as with another? At least you might give it a trial, for it would be better than your present method—admitting that you have one. If you will not even ask, how can you expect to receive?"

"Supposing that I had already asked, and had been refused?"

"What!" cried the old lady, starting up from her recumbent position. "Do you mean me to understand that she has actually refused you, and never said a word to me about it? It is too bad! But in that case there is no more to be said; and I have been wasting, Heaven only knows how much good time and patience! You are aware that Jeanne is completely her own mistress. If she has declined your offer, it is apparently because you have failed to please her. I deplore her decision, but I can assure you, if you do not know it already, that I have no power to make her alter it."

"I have no illusions upon that point, madame. I have only a hope—a faint one, I admit—still just a hope that, in process of time, she herself may reconsider her choice. I am in every respect unworthy of her;

but for all that, I think I can offer her a more complete devotion than she is likely to meet with elsewhere. All that I have to trust to is the chance that she may sooner or later discover this, and that it may have some influence upon her."

The Duchess did not seem to think much of this forlorn hope. She pursed up her lips, wrinkled her brow, and reflected.

"You are too modest," she said at length. "Keep on repeating to a girl that you are unworthy of her, and the chances are that she will end by believing you. It is possible that, as you say, you may make her love you at last by mere force of loving her. I have heard of cases of that kind, though I cannot say that I have ever personally known of such a one. But the truth is that the experiment demands more time than we can give you, or than you have a right to ask. Come, M. de Saint-Luc, you are a man of the world, and you will not be offended if I speak to you frankly. You, very naturally and very prettily, look at this matter from the romantic point of view. I, as naturally, if not quite as prettily, view it in its practical aspect. I have no ambitious or selfish aims to serve; all I wish is that Jeanne should get a good husband and a comfortable home; and I know that, so long as I live, the connections which I have still kept up will enable me to put such chances in her way. When I am gone, the case will be very different. Only this morning I had a letter from France, telling me of two young men, highly suitable in every way, who are anxious to settle down, and form an alliance with some lady of good birth and moderate fortune. For my own part, if I could see any reasonable probability that your hopes would be realised, I should ask nothing better than to send these gentlemen about their business; but candidly, do you think I ought to do so?"

"You must act as you think best, madame," answered Saint-Luc with a sigh.

"Yes; but don't you see that if another suitor is to appear upon the scene, your presence would become a little embarrassing? I think I may fairly ask that this question should be settled now, one way or the other. Repeat your proposal, and let there be an end of it."

"That would be worse than useless. I admit the justice of what you say, madame, and I am ready to withdraw, if you ask me to do so; but I decline to subject myself to the certainty of a second rejection."

"Then let me speak for you. Possibly I may be able to plead your cause more effectually than you could do yourself. At all events, I can tell you one thing for your comfort; if there be the faintest chance for you, I shall be much more likely to discover it than you would be. I will have a little talk with Jeanne to-night, and you shall hear the result to-morrow morning."

"The result," observed Saint-Luc, getting up, and taking his hat, "is not very doubtful. As soon as I receive your intimation that it is all up with me, I shall take my passage for Marseilles. I love Mademoiselle de Mersac too well to remain here as an obstacle in the way of her happiness, or even of her convenience. But if, as is possible, the two candidates whom you speak of should prove no more fortunate than I have been, I shall ask your permission to return some day."

"You will not require my permission," answered the Duchess, a little touched by so much docility, "but you shall have it, with all my heart—and my best wishes into the bargain."

So Saint-Luc went his way sorrowfully; and being disposed neither for sleep nor society, sat up nearly all the night through, with dull care to keep him company. In the Duchess's powers of persuasion he had no confidence at all, and he was far indeed from suspecting what fruit his careless suggestion, thrown out merely as a means of quieting what appeared to him an absurd and boyish scruple on Léon's part, had already borne. All the more profound was his stupefaction when, early the next morning, he received the following brief note:—

"What possessed you, my dear monsieur, to give me violent emotions and upset my health without any reason? I should be tempted to call you hard names if I were not too contented to be vexed with anybody. Jeanne, dear child, offers no opposition whatever to our wishes; and if you will look in upon us this afternoon, you shall hear from her own lips what I hope you will consider good news. To think that you should have reached your time of life without discovering that when a woman says no, she almost invariably means yes! I felicitate you, and press your hand cordially.

"Louise de Breuil."

If these few lines had been written in Chinese instead of in the clearest and most explicit French, they could not have puzzled Saint-Luc more utterly. Between the time when they were handed to him by his servant and that which he deemed the earliest permissible for obeying the invitation they conveyed, he had ample leisure to peruse and re-peruse them till he had got them by heart; but at the end of all he could extract from them no more agreeable deduction than that there must be some mistake somewhere. It was all very well for Madame de Breuil to reiterate the old dictum that feminine negatives are usually equivalent to affirmatives, but this, like most general propositions, failed to hold water when applied to a particular instance; and Saint-Luc was neither foolish enough to believe that Jeanne was in love with him nor clever enough to guess at the true state of affairs. He was therefore in no wise sanguine or jubilant, and spent the greater part of the day in pacing up and down his room, and in exclaiming at intervals, "It is impossible!"

Thus it came about that M. de Saint-Luc displayed less ease and *aplomb* upon the occasion of his first meeting with his future bride than might have been expected from a gentleman so renowned for good breeding. For when he was shown into the drawing-room, Jeanne rose, in her slow, stately way, from the sofa upon which she had been seated, and advanced a few steps towards him, holding out her hand, and behind her stood the Duchess, all smiles, and Léon, smiling too, but looking a little puzzled and anxious withal; and it was evident that he, on his part, was expected to do or say something, and that nobody was going to help him out with his task. No form of polite dismissal would have found him unprepared, and he would have known how, in such a case, to retire without loss of dignity; but so little had he believed in his good fortune that he had omitted to rehearse any scene in which he might be called upon to act the part of an accepted lover, and now, in his surprise and perplexity, he searched in vain for some appropriate words.

At length, after a pause, during which Jeanne contemplated him with perfect impassibility, and the Duchess began to fidget a little, he did what was perhaps, upon the whole, the best thing he could have done, he took the cool white hand offered to him, and bent respectfully over it, just touching it with his lips. And as he did so, he noticed that Jeanne shivered ever so slightly. She returned to her sofa without any other display of emotion, and then the Duchess's tongue became loosened.

"You see, monsieur, that I am not such a bad ambassadress, after all. Have I acquitted myself of my mission to your satisfaction? Then come and thank me, for I deserve some thanks. Ah, how contented I am! I am ten years younger since yesterday. You will not get rid of me as soon as you expect perhaps. Henceforward you will be as a son to me, for you know that I have always looked upon Jeanne as my daughter. Apropos, what is your Christian name? Charles? What a comfort!—that is a good name—a name that can offend nobody. Do you know that I have been tormenting myself all the morning with a horrid fear that it might be Achille, or Alcibiade, or something grotesque. It is a point upon which I am rather particular. Once—I shall never forget it—my poor father wished me to marry a man named Léonce. Happily there were other objections to him, and the affair fell through. Léonce! It would have been impossible for me to address him without laughing. I detest classical names—the Republic and the Empire have vulgarised them for ever. Jeanne is a pretty name, do you not think so? But of course you do. I am a silly old woman to ask such a question."

Under cover of this artillery of prattle Saint-Luc managed to collect his scattered ideas. By the time that the old lady had paused for want of breath, he had got his little speech ready, and he delivered it in straightforward and unaffected language.

"You know, madame—and so do you, Léon—and so also does mademoiselle herself—how little I have ventured to expect the happiness that has come to me. All I can say is that I will do my best to show myself worthy of it. It would be ridiculous presumption on my part to assume that mademoiselle has any such feeling for me as I have for her—indeed I know that it is not so. But this I can promise to her, and to you all, that if she ever comes to repent of her choice, it shall not be through any fault of mine."

He looked a little wistfully at Jeanne as he spoke the last words, but she only inclined her head slightly, without speaking, and he turned, with a half sigh, towards Léon, who promptly grasped him by the hand, thinking that the proper thing to do under the circumstances, and remarked felicitously that he had always known things would come right in the end, and had said so, if Saint-Luc remembered, at Fort Napoléon. Then, murmuring something about being obliged to go to the stables, he slipped quietly away, and when he was fairly out in the open air, drew a long breath, and congratulated himself in that he had passed over an uncertain piece of ground without making any false steps.

In the drawing-room an awkward period of silence supervened. Saint-Luc had said his say; Jeanne did not choose to speak at all; and the Duchess's spirits were somewhat damped by the solemnity of the younger people.

"I think I will go upstairs and rest for a little," she said, gathering up her shawl, her book, and her other belongings; "all this excitement has tired me. I shall find you here when I come down again no doubt," she added to Saint-Luc, who rose to open the door for her.

"If mademoiselle will put up with my company for so long," he answered, trying to smile.

Jeanne had got up, when he turned round after closing the door, and was standing, with her elbow resting upon the mantelpiece, fanning herself leisurely with one of those dried palmetto-leaves which no Algerian lady is without during the hot months.

"Why not?" she asked, replying to his last remark, although it had not been addressed to her. "We shall have to put up with one another now until one of us dies."

"The prospect is not an agreeable one to you, mademoiselle, I fear," said Saint-Luc, stung through all his humility by her cool contempt.

"Not very; but it does not much signify. It is unfortunate for me that I was brought up to think that girls should choose their own husbands, as they do in England. In my case it has turned out a mistake; and in truth I suppose it is better that every nation should keep to its own customs. Let us endeavour to think that I am altogether French, and that our betrothal is one of the ordinary kind. You marry me because you wish to settle down, and I marry you because my family desire it. There need be no question of love between us."

"Pardon me, there is a great deal of love; but it is all on one side. I do not complain of that; but, mademoiselle, I love you so dearly that I would far rather go away now, and never see you again, than condemn you to a life of unhappiness. If, as it seems, I can inspire you with nothing but repugnance, why——?"

"Why have I accepted you? I thought I had already answered that question. Because my family wish it. For the rest, I did not mean you to understand that you were repugnant to me. I certainly do not love you—after what passed between us at Fort Napoléon you must be aware of that; but I shall do my duty; I shall try to like you, and—respect you, if I can."

"Be it so. I do not despair. Love begets love, they say, and some day I may gain yours."

"Pray, pray do not expect that," returned Jeanne, with great earnestness. "It can never be. I am not submissive, and I am not always good-tempered, I am afraid; but I will do my best to make your home comfortable if you will not talk about love. More than that I cannot do;—and you cannot expect more," she added, with a touch of defiance.

"I am contented," answered Saint-Luc, looking, however, a little sad over it.

The man's excessive meekness exasperated Jeanne. The colour mounted into her cheeks, and she tore off a corner of her palmetto fan and crushed it between her fingers.

"I cannot in the least understand you!" she exclaimed half involuntarily. "It seems to me that you are doing a very foolish thing; but I suppose you must be the best judge of your own actions, and at any rate I have not deceived you. And now I have something to say which had better be said at once and done with, for it is about a disagreeable matter which I do not intend to allude to again. I wish you to know that Léon has told me about the money which he lost to you at cards, and about the manner in which you and he seem to have agreed that it should be paid."

Saint-Luc looked vexed. "I wish Léon had not spoken to you about that silly affair," he said. "It was all a misunderstanding. There is no real debt at all; but he took an absurd notion into his head that he was bound to pay me an immense sum which I never had the remotest intention of accepting from him; and he was so obstinate over it that, to quiet him, I suggested the first way out of the difficulty that occurred to me. I am sorry now that I did not happen to hit upon some other solution, because, as things have turned out, it may look to you as if I had presumed too much upon the probability of your accepting my second offer. Nothing could be further from the truth, I assure you; and I need hardly say that I never imagined that any account of the transaction would reach your ears."

"I should have thought you must have known that Léon has no secrets from me. But that does not much matter. In any case, I must have been told before the money could have been paid."

"I had hoped that, as there need be no actual transfer of coin, he and I would have been able to arrange the matter without troubling you about it. But, to tell you the truth, mademoiselle, I did not give much thought to the details; as I told you before, the debt is a purely imaginary one."

Jeanne bit her lip. Believing, as she did, that her present unlucky plight was the result of a deliberate plan laid by Saint-Luc, it cost her an effort to refrain from openly charging him with needless duplicity. Nothing could justify his behaviour; but if he had thrown himself upon her mercy, pleading his love for her as his excuse, he might perhaps have been allowed the benefit of an extenuating circumstance. As it was, there was nothing to be said for him.

"I do not understand how a debt can be imaginary," she answered coldly. "If Léon lost the money to you, he owes it to you, and will pay it. Let us treat it simply as a matter of business, if you please. I am not quite certain as to what legal rights our marriage may give you over my property, and it is not desirable that anyone but ourselves should know of this unfortunate business. I desire, therefore, to have your solemn assurance that you give up all claim to 255,800 francs of my dowry."

The business-like air with which this very unbusiness-like demand was enunciated might have provoked Saint-Luc to a smile if he had not been too much hurt to see the comical side of the situation.

"I pledge you my word of honour, mademoiselle, that it shall be so," he said; "and I will bind myself by an oath if you feel any fear of my robbing you. But, believe me, you are attaching a great deal too much importance to a stupid blunder. Will you permit me to give you my version of the story?"

"No, thank you. I have your promise that you will not oppose my handing over the requisite sum to Léon, and that is sufficient. I do not wish to hear another word about the matter."

"Very well. I also should be glad to let the whole thing be forgotten, only I fancied you were blaming me——"

"I am blaming nobody," interrupted Jeanne, with sudden irritability. "Pray do not harp upon it; let us talk of something else."

Saint-Luc did not press the point. In spite of Jeanne's assurances, he perceived plainly that he was being condemned unheard; but he was content to waive his right of self-defence in deference to the will which was henceforth to be his law. Deliberately, and of his own choice, he bowed his neck beneath the yoke, saying, with a smile—

"As you please. I will never say or do anything that is disagreeable to you, if I can avoid it," and then began to talk about the Governor-General's ball.

If Madame de Trémonville could have been present in the spirit—if she could have seen her silent partner of the previous evening putting forth all his conversational powers in the vain effort to interest his indifferent hearer, and Jeanne scarcely so much as pretending to listen to him—she would have felt that her prophetic sketch of Mademoiselle de Mersac's married life was justified before the event, and her respectful admiration for M. de Saint-Luc would probably have suffered some diminution. Who, indeed, respects humility in this world? The virtue is so rare a one that most people fail to recognise it when they see it, and usually set it down as one of the meaner vices. It must be admitted that Jeanne, who ought perhaps to have known better, was in no wise propitiated by her lover's submissiveness. She did not understand that it was an exaggerated sense of his own unworthiness that made Saint-Luc mentally prostrate himself before her; she saw only the ignoble, crouching attitude, and trod him under foot without compunction.

"Why will you insist upon it that I am always in the right?" she exclaimed once, rather cruelly. "Surely I must be wrong sometimes? Let us try to discover some point upon which we can differ, or we shall never agree."

But this was some days later, after Jeanne had had to put up with a long course of unbroken acquiescence. Upon this first afternoon she bore two hours of Saint-Luc's society without open murmuring, and suffered him to depart at last with no worse punishment than a somewhat curt dismissal.

"It is time for me to go and dress for dinner," she said. "I suppose you will be coming here every day now. I am always busy in the morning, but after three o'clock you will generally find me disengaged. Good-bye."

CHAPTER XIX.

JEANNE QUARRELS WITH FANCHETTE, AND LÉON SINGS THE "MARSEILLAISE."

HUMAN nature, even in its moods of highest self-abnegation, is still apt to retain a sufficient remnant of love for self to long for the applause or gratitude of fellow-mortals. Curtius, when he resolved upon immolating himself upon the altar of patriotism, arrayed himself, it will be remembered, in a suit of shining armour, mounted a prancing war-horse, and disappeared into the gulf with the eyes of the awe-struck citizens upon him, and their murmurs of mingled admiration and pity in his ears. The sacrifice would have been equally efficacious, it is to be presumed, and the chasm as permanently closed, if he had walked quietly down to it, after nightfall, and slipped in, without saying a word to anybody. But he probably felt himself entitled to a more dramatic ending, and who shall blame him? Damon, waiting on the scaffold for the tardy Phintias, while the headsman stood by his side and the last sands ran out of the hour-glass, was a spectacle so sublime that the tyrant Dionysius is said to have been moved by it to make one of the silliest requests ever recorded in history or fiction. Had Damon risked his life in some commonplace manner, such as dragging his friend out of a duck-pond, he would not have been sublime at all, and would, therefore, have been the more heroic; while, if he had smilingly espoused a hideous heiress in order to pay Phintias's gambling debts, he would have accomplished a feat unsurpassed in the annals of friendship or love. There is no sacrifice so great but that gratitude will render it bearable, and none too small to be magnified into a burden by absence of recognition. Jeanne de Mersac, who was about to lay down her life for her brother in a sense which, without any figure of speech, was far more terrible to her than death, could not but feel it no slight addition to her unhappiness that he should be precluded from appreciating her devotion. It was, of course, inevitable that he should be kept in ignorance of the motives which had actuated her in accepting M. de Saint-Luc; but there was little consolation in that thought; and, moreover, Jeanne could have found it in her heart to wish that he should at least have guessed at what seemed so obvious, were it only that she might have had the satisfaction of quieting his fears. But he apparently felt no anxiety, and, at all events, did not display any. As far as his sister could understand his feelings, he was satisfied with the arrangement, though not overjoyed at it, and desirous chiefly to avoid meeting Saint-Luc, or mentioning his name.

It was, perhaps, in some degree through Jeanne's own fault that a certain coolness and estrangement sprang up at this time between her and her brother. She informed him of her engagement briefly and without comment, speaking in a certain cold, matter-of-fact voice, the sound of which was well known to Léon, and which had, from his boyhood up, always had the effect of overawing him. He looked surprised, but did not say very much in reply; nor was it until Jeanne had begun to talk about something else that he remarked hesitatingly—

"I thought, after what you said the other day about Saint-Luc——"

"Never mind what I said the other day," she interrupted. "I was in a romantic mood the other day—I am not often in a romantic mood, am I?—and I daresay I talked a good deal of nonsense. I told you that I would not marry M. de Saint-Luc because I did not love him; but now I think that objection need not stand in my way. If I could have loved him it would have been better; but as I cannot, I must be satisfied with knowing that my marriage with him will be a good thing in other ways."

Léon ought undoubtedly to have inquired in what ways, but he did not. He contented himself with murmuring something about Saint-Luc's excellent qualities, and almost immediately Jeanne left him. How far he was aware of the true causes of his sister's change of opinion it would be difficult to say; probably he managed to persuade himself that his own embarrassed position was only one of them.

Partly from a long-standing habit of acquiescence in all Jeanne's decisions, partly because it was so very desirable that she should marry Saint-Luc, and partly because he really believed that such a marriage would tend to secure her own happiness, he refrained from asking further questions, and dismissed the subject from his mind with an inward declaration that everything had happened for the best.

All this did not, however, prevent him from feeling guilty and uncomfortable in his sister's company, nor her from noticing his altered manner, and resenting it; and as Jeanne, for all her self-possession, was no adept at concealing her displeasure from those whom she loved, home soon became rather a dreary place to the young marquis, who liked laughter and soft speeches, and pleasant, smiling faces to welcome him, and who had been so accustomed all his life to these agreeable surroundings that he had come to look upon them almost as his right. The upshot of it was that he absented himself as frequently and for as long periods as he was able.

Thus Jeanne found that she must bear her burden in solitude, or in society that was worse than solitude. M. de Fontvieille, good man, had been a little shocked by the precipitancy with which his philosophical teaching had been acted upon. He would have preferred that Jeanne should have consecrated at least a year to tears and regret; and though he was always kind to her in a fussy, rather troublesome way, made no further allusion to sentimental topics. The Duchess, excited, talkative, and gleeful, was a very trying companion; and M. de Saint-Luc was simply intolerable. To escape from him now became the chief aim of Jeanne's life. She had a hundred excuses for being out when he called, or for leaving him soon after his arrival. Her wedding had been fixed to take place in the beginning of September, and the necessity for supervising the progress of her *trousseau* afforded her a pretext for constantly escaping to the convent of El Biar or to the school for Arab girls in the town, to neither of which establishments were gentlemen admitted.

Upon occasions, however, she was compelled to sit through a long *tête-à-tête* with her future husband, and then that unlucky scapegoat had a troublous time of it. Never was man more persistently snubbed, more pitilessly disdained; and never was unmerited cruelty more patiently borne.

When nature is asked to carry a heavier weight than her strength is equal to, the habitual qualities which make up a human character are apt to give way in one place or another. The generous are not always generous, nor the just always just. Great men have often stooped to mean actions, and good men to heartless ones, thereby sorely perplexing their biographers, who seem to think that inconsistency requires some explanation. In the everlasting fight between the good and evil parts of our nature, the victory, even in the best of us, cannot always be for the right side.

Long afterwards, Jeanne, looking back upon those sultry summer weeks during which she had stood with her back to the wall, fighting against despair—looking back, and viewing men and events in the changed light which time had thrown upon them—knew not which to wonder at most, her own unremitting virulence or Saint-Luc's forbearing gentleness. She had learnt then to appreciate that kind, faithful heart, and could never think of the remorseless stabs which she had inflicted upon it without an aching pain at her own. Even at the time her conscience smote her occasionally when her victim winced under her sharp speeches—for, after all, it is but poor sport to attack one who will not retaliate—but if she relented at all, it was only after his back was turned. The sound of his step in the hall was sufficient to chase away any rising compassion from her breast.

"*C'est plus fort que moi*," she said, one day, in answer to a remonstrance from Fanchette, who had overheard part of a conversation between the betrothed couple, and who was in the habit of using an old servant's privilege of speaking plainly to her mistress when so minded. "I do not want to be rude—I despise myself for being rude, but help it I cannot. He irritates my nerves beyond all bearing. I sit still and listen to him as long as I can; I bite my tongue to make it keep silent; and then at last he gives me an opportunity of saying something that I know will hurt his feelings; and I feel that I must say it or die."

The old woman held up her wrinkled hands in amazement.

"I do not recognise you, Jeanne," she exclaimed. "You to take a delight in hurting another's feelings!—it is not like you. And that poor gentleman, too, who is so good—so generous——"

"Generous?" interrupted Jeanne, with a short laugh. "Oh, if he has been generous to you, Fanchette, you have, of course, a good reason for liking him. He has never given me any money, you see, so that he has not the same claim upon my gratitude."

"He has given you his heart, which is worth more than money," cried the old nurse, reddening. "And it is not at my age, and after thirty years of service in one family, that I should be accused of taking bribes, mademoiselle. And a pair of spectacles is not money, even if they be mounted in gold. Never, since I have been in this house, has any gentleman dared to offer me a present, except as a mark of esteem. Money, indeed! I have money of my own in the bank, as you know very well; and I could treat myself to fifty pairs of spectacles to-morrow without being ruined, if I felt so inclined. Decidedly, Jeanne, you are losing your head if you believe that old friends and honest folks are capable of such baseness." And Fanchette hobbled off in deep dudgeon.

Poor Jeanne was like a wounded animal; her first impulse was to turn upon those who laid a finger upon her hurts, and she could not always restrain herself from yielding to it. Her temper at this time was certainly not angelic; but the worst that could have been said of her has now been said. No one, except Saint-Luc, had much cause to complain of her conduct. Outsiders remarked no change in her, unless it were a slight increase of taciturnity, nor was it generally suspected that she was otherwise than satisfied with her destiny. The good sisters at the convent, in whose cool parlour she spent a great part of her days, thought her softened and improved; the little colony of poor and sick people whom she visited as usual rejoiced in the receipt of an increased bounty, and united in shrill lamentations over the too probable departure of their benefactress; the children at the Arab school lifted their little brown faces from their work and showed their white teeth when the beautiful, tall lady over whose *trousseau* they were busy came in, bringing the bag of bonbons which they had learnt to expect with her.

With all these worthy people, who were not of her world, Jeanne could get on well enough; but to receive the congratulations of her friends, to reply to their inquisitive questionings and parry their amiable innuendoes, was less easy.

The story of Léon's gambling *fiasco* had leaked out, as such stories will do, and, in a more or less garbled form, had reached the ears of nearly all his acquaintances. Of these, some few were content to shrug their shoulders, remark that the young fellow was going to the devil, as they had always said he would, and to greet Saint-Luc with the additional respect due to a man of such evident ability; but the majority, and especially the old ladies, were not going to let so delicious a bit of scandal die out without examining into its details. Taking the news of Léon's heavy losses in conjunction with that of his sister's engagement to the winner, they were unanimously of opinion that there was more in it all than met the eye; and, further, that the subject was one which demanded, and would repay, careful sifting. Their congratulatory visits, therefore, were marked by sundry hints and insinuations which mystified the Duchess while they greatly alarmed Jeanne, in whom an incapacity for prevarication and a fine belief in the wickedness of lying had been implanted by her father, much to her subsequent inconvenience.

That the gossips would ere long have wormed the truth out of her is beyond a doubt, had not Saint-Luc luckily got wind of their suspicions and taken prompt measures to suppress them. He, poor fellow, had lived in a society which takes broad views of morality, and he had no scruple whatever in seeking out those old ladies, questioning them as to the information they had received, and meeting their statements with a categorical denial. He then went to M. de Monceaux, and made use of such brief and pithy arguments as to convince that gentleman that his life depended upon his contradiction of the reports which he admitted having had some share in spreading. De Monceaux made a wry face, but as he was always willing to oblige a friend in an inexpensive way, and, besides, infinitely preferred eating his words to being run through the body, he took occasion to pay a round of visits on the following day, and to mention, in the course of conversation, that he had been made the victim of a foolish hoax in the matter of young de Mersac's supposed losses—the stakes being, in reality, payable in *sous* and not in napoleons, as had been pretended.

Among those who experienced a natural feeling of disappointment at this announcement was Madame de Trémonville, whom de Monceaux met at her door in the act of alighting from her carriage. She had just returned from the Campagne de Mersac, whither she had betaken herself primed with acid-sweet congratulations, only to be refused admittance, and was consequently in no mood to wish her neighbours well.

"A hoax?" she repeated incredulously, when de Monceaux had concluded his brief explanation. "That sounds very improbable. Why should they have wished to make you think that they were playing for gold instead of copper?"

"Oh, as for that, I was not the only one taken in," replied de Monceaux, with ready mendacity. "De Mersac himself fully believed at the time that he was ruined; and a fine fright he had. It was Saint-Luc who contrived to deceive him about the stakes, and to make him suppose that he had lost about four hundred times as much as he really had.

His object was to induce the young fellow to renounce gambling by showing him what it might lead him to, as the Spartans used to exhibit a drunken man to their sons, by way of disgusting them with intemperance. And I understand that he has succeeded."

"What kindness! and what morality! M. de Saint-Luc is really becoming too good for the society of such sinners as you and I. And to think that his pupil has also been mine!—with a difference. For while he has been striving to wean the poor little Marquis from the amusements of this life, I have been doing my small best to introduce him to them."

"Saint-Luc has more than once, in my presence, warned young de Mersac against the dangers of this house," observed M. de Monceaux, remembering that he owed his friend one. "I fear that you will lose your pupil, madame."

"You think so?" returned Madame de Trémonville, with a scornful laugh. "Stay and dine with us, and I flatter myself that before the evening is over you will have changed your mind. The Marquis makes his appearance in the drawing-room as punctually as the coffee. To tell the truth, I was beginning to find him terribly wearisome, and was thinking of giving him his *congé*; but since M. de Saint-Luc permits himself to caution people against visiting me, I shall let him see that my friends come here when I please, and as often as I please."

"Non vides quanto moveas periclo
Pyrrhe, Gætulæ catulos leænæ?"

murmured de Monceaux, as he followed the little lady into the hall. He added aloud, "Madame, no one knows better than I do that you are irresistible, but is it worth while to waste your time in making a slave of a raw lad? I can answer for one full-grown man who requires no persuasion to cast himself at your feet, and who——"

"It will be worth while if it amuses me," interrupted Madame de Trémonville, disregarding this flattering avowal. But she meant that it would be worth while if it annoyed Saint-Luc.

M. de Monceaux cared very little whether Léon were subjugated or no; but he liked a good dinner, and knew that Madame de Trémonville had a *chef* (passing rich upon thirty pounds a year) whom many a London club might have envied. Moreover, he thought it more than likely that a game of baccarat would be proposed before the evening was at an end, and baccarat was a form of gambling which usually brought him luck.

As the dinner-hour drew near, three young officers, evidently *habitués* of the house, entered; and shortly afterwards the whole party sat down to table, without waiting for M. de Trémonville, who had not yet returned from his bureau.

"My husband is very busy just now," the lady of the house remarked casually, as she finished her soup. "One can never tell at what hour he may come in. For the last three days he has been perpetually receiving and sending off telegrams. By-the-by, messieurs, I hope you are all fond of Rhine wine, for I think you will drink very little else this autumn."

"Bah! there will be no war," said one of the officers.

"And why not, pray?" asked Madame de Trémonville, smiling in the superior fashion of one behind the scenes.

"Firstly, because I have no luck; secondly, because the Prussians are not ready; and thirdly, because it is impossible to declare war without a pretext. Besides, the Emperor is growing old, and the Mexican affair has damped his ardour for glory. We have already inflicted a humiliation upon the Prussians by making them withdraw their Prince Leopold, and, for my part, I scarcely see what more we should gain by a successful campaign."

"Prestige, and the left bank of the Rhine," answered M. de Monceaux, holding up his wine to the glow of the sunset.

"The revenge of Sadowa," said another.

"And of Nikolsburg," added a third.

"You none of you understand the situation," said Madame de Trémonville. "If the Emperor declares war, it will not be for the sake of glory or prestige—France has enough of both—nor to avenge fancied slights, nor even to rectify the eastern frontier—though that may become a political necessity—but to ensure peace. The Empire is peace; the country desires peace. We shall have it; but to obtain it we must make up our minds to pass through a short struggle. When our victorious armies enter Berlin, the tranquillity of Europe will be assured for the next half-century."

Madame de Trémonville was as ignorant of the history of past campaigns as she was of politics and of the art of war; but she was not more ignorant than the newspaper writers from whom she derived her information, such as it was; and, in common with the immense majority of her compatriots, she had a blind confidence in the reigning dynasty. "As for a pretext," she resumed, "that is easily found; and if we cannot discover one, we shall take the liberty of going to war without any. War is unavoidable, and we must take advantage of the first favourable moment to declare it."

"Ah, there is the question," remarked the officer who had spoken first. "Is the present moment a favourable one for us?"

Madame de Trémonville turned upon him with sovereign contempt "Monsieur de Marcy," said she, "do you take His Majesty the Emperor for an imbecile? Is it likely that he would declare war if he were not sure of success?"

"War is not yet declared," said de Monceaux; "and I confess that I am a little of M. de Marcy's opinion. I think the Government will be satisfied with having given King William a slap in the face, and will go no further. I believe we are a match for the Prussians; but they are good soldiers, and Berlin is a long way from Paris, and we have no allies."

"No allies?" cried Madame de Trémonville. "Wait a little. I know from a sure source that Austria will join us as soon as the first shot is fired. Bavaria and Würtemberg, who can put some 80,000 men into the field between them, must follow suit. In this way Prussia, with an army of something like 700,000 men, including the reserves, will be hemmed in by forces amounting in all to 1,600,000; that is to say, that she will be outnumbered in the proportion of considerably more than two to one. If you think that is not enough to put King William back in his place, I will throw you in Hanover, who has been awaiting her opportunity for four years past."

These imposing figures did not fail to produce their effect upon the company, no member of which had sufficient knowledge of his own to verify or dispute them; and Madame de Trémonville, having secured the respectful attention of her audience, went on to expatiate upon the probable future policy of the conquering Emperor. With her enemies crushed, with the temporal power of the Pope assured, with religion freed from disturbing influences, and the machinations of disaffected plotters rendered abortive by the contentment of the nation, France would be at liberty to devote herself to the fulfilment of her destiny—that of leading the world in the path of civilisation. The standing army might be reduced, taxation diminished, and a new era of government, combining the blessings of constitutional freedom with those of order and discipline, inaugurated. Under the benevolent sway of a dynasty secure alike against aggression abroad and treason at home, industry would take a fresh start, science would be encouraged, the arts fostered, and, lastly, a Court would gather at the Tuileries which for brilliancy, refinement, and elegance would surpass any known to history or tradition. Madame de Trémonville waxed so enthusiastic over this portion of her subject that she pursued it without intermission until dinner was at an end, and carried it with her into the drawing-room afterwards. She was predicting the speedy advent of a somewhat equivocal millennium when the entrance of Léon diverted her thoughts into another channel, and recalled her to actualities.

"How late you are!" she cried, greeting the infatuated youth with a reproachful look which set his silly heart beating.

"On the contrary, madame, I am ten minutes before my usual time," he answered innocently.

"But when I tell you that you are late! Do you not know, M. de Mersac, that a well-bred man never contradicts a lady? You are unpardonably rude this evening."

"Madame, I apologise most humbly."

"On your knees, then, or I will not forgive you."

The young idiot actually plumped down upon his knees in the middle of the room, and Madame de Trémonville, darting a mischievous glance over her shoulder at de Monceaux, gravely accorded the desired pardon.

"But we must have no disloyal subjects here this evening," she added. "When you came in, M. le Marquis, we were discussing the prospects of war. At such a time as this you must waive considerations of party, and cry '*Vive l'Empereur*,' or we shall send you home again."

"Madame !——"

"Do as I command you, or retire. Our patriotism will be content with nothing less."

"*Vive l'Empereur !*" ejaculated Léon in such lugubrious accents that there was a general outburst of laughter.

"Bravo!" cried Madame de Trémonville, patting him approvingly on the shoulder. You have said your lesson well, and you shall have your reward. I will sing to you, and you shall turn over my music for me."

What fascination was there about this vulgar little woman that could induce Léon, who, after all, was a gentleman, though a foolish one, to parade his subjection to her in so public a fashion? There is no answer to such questions; but the phenomena which suggest them may be witnessed any day nearer home than Algeria. The young marquis was not the first man who, falling a victim to the enchantments of this Circe, had been forced by her to exhibit himself to the world in a shape half melancholy, half contemptible. It soothed her self-love to see her admirers grovelling before her; and on this particular evening, the boast which she had made to de Monceaux caused her to be more capricious and imperious than usual. She made Léon fetch and carry for her like a dog; she bullied and petted him by turns; and to show his perfect docility, ordered him first to sing "Partant pour la Syrie," which he did with a very bad grace, and then to read aloud a newspaper article in which a lively historical parallel was drawn between the Comte de Chambord and Rip van Winkle.

It was an exhibition of much the same nature as may be seen in any travelling menagerie. An elephant balancing his unwieldy body upon an inverted tub, firing a pistol with his trunk, and raising himself clumsily upon his hind legs is not a beautiful, an imposing, or even a comical spectacle; but there are people who think such sights worth paying for, and de Monceaux was very well amused by Léon's performance, though the other young men, who all this time were left to entertain one another, thought it a trifle tedious.

A diversion was at length created by the appearance of M. de Trémonville, who walked into the room looking tired and harassed, and with no trace of his customary smiling, official sleekness about him.

"Messieurs," said he, taking off his spectacles and rubbing them slowly with his silk pocket-handkerchief, "I bring you the news of the declaration of war."

A volley of exclamations and questions greeted this announcement. Everybody began to speak at once. When had the news arrived? Was it certainly true? Had France or Prussia declared war? What was the cause assigned?—and so forth. When M. de Trémonville could get a hearing, he satisfied the impatience of his questioners to the best of his ability. The Governor-General had received a telegram announcing that the King of Prussia having refused to give audience to M. Benedetti, diplomatic relations between the two countries had been broken off, and that an aide-de-camp was now on his way to Berlin with the formal declaration of war. The Chasseurs d'Afrique were under orders to proceed immediately to France, and other regiments were to follow as soon as transports could be got ready to embark them. The Governor-General himself was to take command of an army corps, and would probably leave in the course of a few days. It was said that the Emperor would assume the command-in-chief in person. M. de Trémonville communicated all this intelligence soberly, almost dolorously, for the turn that affairs had taken inspired him with some anxiety. He was not a specially far-sighted man, but he had a keen eye to his own interests, and he perceived that, whatever brilliant prospects an appeal to arms might hold out to military men, it could offer none whatever to bureaucrats. To the latter class victory would bring no advancement, whereas a disaster, which would undoubtedly hurl the Emperor Napoleon from his throne, would only too certainly sweep away a large proportion of his civilian employés with him. "*C'est fâcheux*," murmured M. de Trémonville in conclusion, as he rubbed his spectacles.

But nobody paid any attention to him—least of all his wife. That patriotic lady had seated herself before the piano, and now, after striking a few stirring chords, broke forth into the first words of the Marseillaise. Her shrill voice rang through the house—

"Allons enfants de la patrie,
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!"

"Join, all of you, at the end of the verse," she cried; and her enthusiasm gained the company. They ranged themselves in a group behind her, and presently the ears of the passers-by on the high road caught the first sound of a chorus which was soon to become very familiar to them—

"Aux armes, citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons."

Léon, to whom this revolutionary song was anathema—M. de Monceaux, who was past the age for enthusiasm—Madame de Trémonville, who in her heart cared for neither dynasty, nor country, nor any person or thing except herself, all forgot themselves in a sudden access of exaltation, and sang at the highest pitch of their voices, concluding with a tremendous shout of "*Vive la France!*"

Meanwhile, M. de Trémonville, unmoved in the midst of all this excitement, continued to rub his spectacles in the corner where he was seated apart, murmuring, "*C'est fâcheux.*"

Influence of the Mind on the Body.

A FEW months ago we considered in these pages the influence of bodily illness as a mental stimulant, or rather (as perhaps we might have named the article but for the undue length of such a title) the abnormal activity sometimes evinced by the mind at seasons of great bodily prostration or disturbance. We propose now to consider the somewhat more familiar, but not less instructive phenomenon,—the strange influence of the mind on the body. There are few circumstances in mental physiology more surprising when rightly understood, few perhaps more suggestive, than this, that ideas conceived in the mind,—that is, as we are in the habit of supposing, the results of processes taking place in the grey matter of the brain,—should influence not only voluntary but involuntary bodily processes, nay, not only respiration, circulation, and so forth, but the various processes of secretion on which the nutrition of different parts of the body depends. There is no novelty, of course, in the recognition of this circumstance, though we venture to express the belief that quite a large proportion of those who may read this article will find considerable novelty in some of the evidence we shall adduce. But the fact that the relations here considered have long been recognised by physicians and students of mental physiology, does not detract from the interest of the problem presented by these relations. It may truly be said that as yet they have not been in the least degree explained. Yet the problem is not one which appears at a first view so hopelessly beyond all our attempts at solution, as some which are connected with mental and corporeal matters. We can understand, for instance, that the student of mental physiology should at present turn hopelessly from the attempt to explain how thought should in any way depend on changes in the substance of the brain, or again, from the task of attempting to determine how, by any process of evolution, the phenomena of consciousness should have been developed from cerebral changes which in their simpler form appear to result in automatic movements. But we have no such seemingly hopeless problem in the subject now to be considered. For in reality it amounts simply to the question how or why certain changes in one part of the body lead to changes in other parts of the body. The distinctions between mind and matter, between thought and cerebral activity, are not here involved. A problem apparently physical, and physical only, is submitted to our investigation. Yet hitherto the solution of this problem has not been attained; nor indeed does there seem at present to be good reason for regarding it as attainable.

Let us turn, however, to the consideration of certain remarkable illustrations of the influence of the mind on bodily functions. The subject is specially suited for the use of the inductive method. Indeed, the chief difficulty we are likely to find in the application of this method resides in the probability that our space will be too limited to afford room even for a single instance of each class of illustrative cases.

By a coincidence it so chances that the great modern advocate of the inductive method of research—Francis Bacon—supplies a very effective piece of evidence as to the influence of the imagination on external growths which seem to have their origin in deficient vitality of certain parts of the external surface of the body—as warts, wens, and the like. Bacon did not, however, treat the evidence afforded in his own case with the acumen which might have been expected from the inductive philosopher. "I had from my childhood," he says, "a wart upon one of my fingers; afterwards, when I was about sixteen years old, being then at Paris, there grew upon both my hands a number of warts, at the least an hundred in a month's space. The English ambassador's lady, who was a woman far from superstition" (a statement which must be taken *cum grano*), "told me one day she would help me away with my warts; whereupon she got a piece of lard with the skin on, and rubbed the warts all over with the fat side; and amongst the rest that wart which I had from my childhood; then she nailed the piece of lard, with the fat towards the sun, upon a post of her chamber window, which was to the south. The success was that within five weeks' space all the warts were quite away, and that wart which I had so long endured for company. But at the rest I did little marvel, because they came in a short time, and might go away in a short time again; but the going away of that which had stayed so long doth yet stick with me."

Bacon considered the result of the experiment to have been due to some sympathy which he supposed to exist between the lard and the warts after they had once been in contact. It is difficult for us to understand how so absurd an explanation could even for a moment have been entertained by Bacon,—not when, as a mere boy, the experiment was successfully tried upon him, but in after years, when he had learned to study the relations of cause and effect. The servant who places a poker across the top bar of the grate, under the impression that in some occult way the fire will be made to burn more actively through this arrangement, adducing this or that case in which a fire so treated did burn up as sufficient proof that the method is infallible, does not seem to reason (if one can call such a mental process reasoning) more absurdly than Bacon did when the experiment which so "stuck with him" satisfied him that the drying of grease which had once touched his warts could cause the warts themselves to disappear, though the skin was hung up in one place while he and his warts were in other places, and no contact remained between the warts and the skin of lard.

If the idea of some occult sympathy between the fat and the warts could really arise in a mind "far from superstition," one would suppose it must have occurred to Bacon that the justice of this idea could be very readily put to the test. He had only to apply a skin of lard to some one's warts, and then submit the skin to a variety of more active processes than mere sun-drying, inquiring whether the warty person found sudden relief, sudden pain, or any effect whatever, when the nature of such experiments was kept concealed from the said patient. One can understand that those who were not far from superstition might imagine the experiment to be really rendered effective by charms, prayers, and incantations, or by some mystical ceremonies or other which were not disclosed to the patient. We know that in Bacon's time, and to a far later date, the efficiency of such magic devices was believed in by many who called themselves philosophers. To this day there are many who are foolish enough to indulge in such beliefs. But Bacon regarded the process of cure as purely natural, though, as one would suppose, the evidence against such a view should have appeared insurmountable to a man of his reasoning power. We must, however, remember that in his day it must have appeared almost, if not quite as unreasonable to assume that the imagination could affect a part of the body, as that some secret sympathy might exist between a part of the body and some substance which had touched it. Many readers will remember that Sir Kenelm Digby, in a work published as late as 1658, discusses gravely the influence produced on a badly wounded hand by bathing a garter, which had been stained with the blood, in a basin of water wherein a certain powder had been dissolved. "As soon as the bloody garter was put within the bason," the wounded man "started suddenly as if he had found some strange alteration in himself." "I asked him what he ailed?" proceeds the narrator. "'I know not what ailes me, but I find that I feele no more pain. Methinks that a pleasing kind of freshnesse, as it were a wet cold napkin, did spread over my hand, which had taken away the inflammation that tormented me before.' I replied, 'Since then that you feel already so good effect of my medicaments, I advise you to cast away all your plaisters; only keep the wound clean, and in a moderate temper betwixt heat and cold.' This was presently reported to the Duke of Buckingham, and a little after to the King, who were both very curious to know the circumstance of the businesse, which was" (the story is not so distinct here as could be wished), "that after dinner I took the garter out of the water, and put it to dry before a good fire. It was scarce dry, but Mr. Howell's servant came running, that his master felt as much burning as ever he had done, if not more, for the heat was such as if his hand were 'twixt coles of fire. I answered, although that had happened at present, yet he should find ease in a short time; for I knew the reason of this new accident, and would provide accordingly; for his master should be free from that inflammation, it may be, before he could possibly return to him; but in case he found no ease, I wished him to come presently back again; if not, he might forbear coming. Thereupon he went; and at the instant I did put again the garter into the water: thereupon he found his master without any pain at all. To be brief, there was no sense of pain afterward; but within five or six days the wounds were cicatrized, and entirely healed." Sir Walter Scott, in speaking of such stories as these, expresses the opinion that possibly the cure may have resulted from the care with which the wound was in the first place washed. It will be observed, however, that Sir Kenelm Digby's account does not countenance this explanation. Nor, if one could accept it as it stands, could one adopt the idea that the imagination of the patient produced the changes of feeling described. For it is clearly stated that the patient felt relief before he knew that the garter had been placed in the basin of water; that the pain returned when the "chirurgeon" in another house had dried the garter, and that the pain disappeared before the return of the messenger who carried back the promise of relief. If such stories as these were current in Bacon's time, and were generally believed, his explanation of the disappearance of his warts, confirmed as it seemed by what he knew of the actual circumstances, may have seemed to him as philosophical as to us it appears absurd.

So the faith, which prevailed for many years after Bacon's time, in the efficacy of the Royal Touch must be regarded as based to some degree on evidence, though the evidence was misunderstood. In days when many believed that a certain divinity doth hedge a king, it was natural that in the first place the imaginations of those folks of feeble vitality and often of deficient mental power, who were brought to kings to be touched, should be so far affected as to cause such bodily changes as we now know to be produced by a strongly excited imagination, and that in the second place the persons thus cured and those who heard of such cures should attribute the effect to the virtue of the kingly touch, not to the influence of mere mental processes. Dr. Todd, in his *Influence of the Mind on the Body*, quotes a singular passage from a book by Browne of Norwich, surgeon to King Charles II.—a book rejoicing in the title *Adenochoiradelogia; or, a Treatise of Glandules, and the Royal Gift of Healing them.* "A Nonconformist child, in Norfolk," says Browne in the passage referred to, "being troubled with scrofulous swellings, the late deceased Sir Thomas Browne, of Norwich, being consulted about the same, his Majesty being then at Breda or Bruges, he advised the parents of the child to have it carried over to the king (his own method being used ineffectually); the father seemed very strange at his advice, and utterly denied it, saying the touch of the king was of no greater efficacy than any other man's. The mother of the child, adhering to the doctor's advice, studied all imaginable means to have it over, and at last prevailed with the husband to let it change the air for three weeks or a month; this being granted, the friends of the child that went with it, unknown to the father, carried it to Breda, where the king touched it, and she returned home perfectly healed." The worthy doctor is careful that the moral of the story should not be overlooked. "The child being come to its father's house, and he finding so great an alteration, inquires how his daughter arrived at this health. The friends thereof assured him, that if he would not be angry with them they would relate the whole truth; they having his promise for the same, assured him they had the child to be touched at Breda, whereby they apparently let him see the great benefit his child received thereby. Hereupon the father became so amazed that he threw off his Nonconformity, and expressed his thanks in this manner:—'Farewell to all dissenters, and to all nonconformists; if God can put so much virtue into the king's hand as to heal my child, I'll serve that God and that king so long as I live, with all thankfulness.'" It was found later that Hanoverian kings had the same power as the Stuart, even as old Aubrey had noted of the Yorkist and Lancastrian kings. "The curing of the King's Evil," he said, "by the touch of the king, does much puzzle our philosophers, for whether our kings were of the house of York or Lancaster, it did the cure for the most part." And so no doubt it would if the patient had been touched by one of the Gentlemen of the Bedchamber, or by the valet of such a one, or, in fine, by Tom Noakes or John Styles, so only that the patient was fully persuaded he had been touched by the rightful monarch.

Another "royal personage" succeeded (by a coincidence singular enough, at the same place, Breda) in curing a number of men of a much more active disorder, though in this case the imagination was aided chiefly by the ideas suggested by medicine bottles of orthodox shape, not solely by faith in royal blood. During the siege of Breda in 1625, many soldiers of the Prince of Orange's army were prostrate with scurvy. The mortality was serious, the patients having altogether lost heart. "This," says Dr. Frederic van der Mye, who was present, "was the most terrible circumstance of all, and gave rise to a variety of misery; hence proceeded fluxes, dropsies, and every species of distress (*omne chaos morborum*), attended with a great mortality." At length the Prince of Orange sent word to the sufferers that they should soon be relieved, and provided with medicines pronounced by doctors to be wonderfully efficacious in the cure of scurvy. "Three small phials of medicine were given to each physician, not enough for the recovery of two patients. It was publicly given out that three or four drops were sufficient to impart a healing virtue to a gallon of liquor." "We now," says Van der Mye, "displayed our wonder-working balsams, nor were even the commanders let into the secret of the cheat put upon the soldiers. They flocked in crowds about us, every one soliciting that part might be reserved for their use. Cheerfulness again appears in every countenance, and a universal faith prevails in the sovereign virtue of the remedy. . . . The effect of the delusion was really astonishing: for many quickly and perfectly recovered. Such as had not moved their limbs for a month before were seen walking the streets sound, upright, and in perfect health. They boasted of their cure by the Prince's remedy. . . . Many who declared that they had been rendered worse by all former remedies, recovered in a few days, to their inexpressible joy, and the no less general surprise, by taking (almost by their having brought to them) what we affirmed to be *their gracious Prince's cure.*" We may add that on another occasion widespread scurvy was suddenly cured in a very different way: it is stated on good authority, says Dr. Todd, "that in 1744 the prospect of a naval engagement between the British and allied fleet had the effect of checking the scurvy."

Scurvy being related closely to disorders of a kind which have been known in many cases to yield to the action of the imagination, the reader may be more struck probably by cases in which the actual progress of internal organic diseases would seem to have been arrested by psychical means. Some thirty years ago Sir John Forbes mentioned some remarkable instances of this kind, which had been described in a very interesting paper communicated to the *British and Foreign Naval Review* by a naval surgeon whose high character was well known to him. Most of these cases are not such as could be advantageously described in full in these pages. The following account, one of the most striking, has been abridged and verbally modified (not at all altered in essentials) to render it more suitable for our readers. In July 1845, the company of a Government ship were attacked by an epidemic complaint, which in the severer instances led to a severe form of dysentery. Among those who suffered most was a first-class petty officer, who, though he had had but a mild attack of dysentery, had been much distressed by some of the sequels of the disorder. To remove these, very powerful medicines had been employed, and successfully, save in this respect that intense irritation of the stomach had been produced, from which the patient suffered severely. External irritants were employed until the poor fellow's skin became perfectly callous; sedatives were given until his senses were muddled; but he seemed to obtain not the least relief. "This being so," says the writer, "I determined to try the effect of mental influence. Stating to him, as I did to the other men, that as his disease was most obstinate, so was it necessary to have recourse to desperate means to relieve it; that with his sanction I would therefore put him under a medicine which it was necessary to watch with the greatest attention lest its effects should prove most prejudicial, perhaps fatal, and so forth. Having by these statements made an impression, it became necessary to keep it up. This was done by repeated visits, at all hours of the day and night, and by expressing on these occasions the most intense anxiety as to the effect of the very powerful and dangerous medicaments. This was not a case in which a sudden effect could be expected to be produced, whatever might be the means employed. Symptoms of disease existed which bore too close a resemblance to those of an organic order to admit of hope of a sudden, if even of tardy relief." (It will be seen presently that unmistakable evidence was afterwards obtained of the existence of such organic mischief as the surgeon at this time feared.) "Hence the pills (*bread*, of course) were given every sixth hour only. Within twenty-four hours the man's sufferings were decidedly less. Within four days he was almost free from pain. On the sixth day he was quite so; his pills were omitted; and at the end of a fortnight he was again at duty with a clear eye, a healthy skin, and was rapidly regaining his flesh. Here, as in most cases where this method has been tried, the diet and drink have been left unrestricted. Occasionally, however, it became necessary to taboo some article, lest its coming in contact with the remedy might prove most destructive; in other words, articles were occasionally forbidden when the mind seems to be inclined to lose sight of what must be made the all-important subject of thought by night and day. The wonderful improvement in this man's state was frequently commented on by both officers and men, who of course were, and still are, as little acquainted with the means employed as the patient himself was."

This case is so remarkable that we might well be disposed to consider that the man's cure was not in reality effected by the means to which the surgeon attributed it. Might not the illness, for instance, have been on the point of yielding to the remedies used before the mental method was tried? Or may there not have been some other cause at work? for to mention no other, a patient on board ship may have changes of climate unlike those ordinarily experienced by the patient on land. One feels disposed at a first view of the case to prefer an explanation based on the possibility of some such causes as these having acted, than one which in reality requires us to believe that a man (and one too, be it remembered, not specially trained, like some Eastern devotees, to fix his attention constantly on his interior), by thinking constantly about the good effects of a supposed medicine upon his stomach and intestines, could actually cause organic changes to take place in these *viscera*. The case would then be a singular introversion of the state of things described by Macbeth. He says, "Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?" But here the physician throws his physic on one side, not because he cannot minister to a mind diseased, but because he believes a healthy mind has the power of ministering to a diseased body when physic has altogether failed. The memory (of bread pills and of their imagined potency) was here trusted to pluck from the intestines a rooted trouble, the brain was called upon to raze out the written troubles of the stomach. For it appeared afterwards that these troubles *were* written (at least in the poetic sense in which Shakspeare uses the word). They had, at any rate, made their mark. Let the rest of the story be carefully noted. "It may be said," proceeds the narrator, "that this case, as above given, goes for nothing, in so far as it does not show that the pains were anything but casual; in which case any other mode of treatment, or very likely no mode at all" (doubtless the reader has already thought of the possibility that the medicines made most of the mischief) "would have been equally successful; or it may be again, as it has before been said, that it" [the disease, presumably] "was altogether feigned, and that the commanding officer would have made a better and quicker cure. I think not; and for the following reasons: the man's flesh had wasted; his eye became sunken; his skin sickly in hue, as well as in feeling: his sleep, when he had any, was of the most disturbed character. But more than all, the pain after some weeks returned, and the other bad symptoms followed in its wake; *yet both it and they were both relieved a second time by the same means.* While suffering from a third attack he was sent to the Royal Naval Hospital at Malta, and there, after much suffering, he brought up by vomiting a portion of the mucous membrane of one of the small intestines" . . . clearly recognisable by a well-trained medical eye. "I am distinctly assured," says our author, "by one of the officers of the establishment, that he most carefully examined the ejected matter, and that its characters were so marked that there could be no room for a doubt as to what it was. This being so, we have pretty clear proof that disease existed long before this slough was thrown off; and that even this organic disease was suspended, on two occasions, by mental influence only."

The question how far it is a legitimate medical practice to deceive a patient in such a case as the above has been raised by Dr. Todd, and is answered by him in a way which seems open to objection. "Nothing," he says, "can justify our asserting what is not true in order to gain the patient's confidence." And elsewhere, "in regard to misleading patients generally, even *causâ scientiæ*, one of the practical difficulties the investigation into the influence of the imagination presents, is certainly the unseemliness of making experiments of this nature, and the danger of sullying that strict honour which by no profession is more prized or maintained than by the professors of the medical art." If the cause were that of science alone, this emphatic opposition to the misleading of a patient may be regarded as justified. But there certainly seems an excess of strictness in objecting to the deception of a patient for his own good. If a doctor is perfectly satisfied that a patient will not recover without a strong mental effort, and that this effort will certainly not be made unless the patient is misled with regard to the nature of the treatment, the doctor might fairly consider it his duty to "assert what is not true to gain the patient's confidence." An adherence to veracity so scrupulous as to outweigh the life of a fellow-creature may appear deserving of admiration when dealt with in a treatise on morals, but in actual life would be altogether objectionable. If it be urged that liberty to deviate in some such cases from strict truth might be open to abuse, it may at once be answered that so also would liberty to select the strictly veracious course (under any circumstances) be open to abuse. Consider, for instance, the following case, which is by no means an imaginary one. A man is lying prostrate under a very dangerous illness, and it is known to all who attend on him that any severe mental shock must inevitably prove fatal to him, but that if for a few days he can be kept free from mental disturbance he will recover. He sends a messenger to inquire about the health of a beloved relative whom he knows to be in a critical condition, or exposed perhaps to some special form of danger distinct from illness. The messenger, when he reaches that relative's house, is informed that death has been there before him. Shall he return and tell the patient the truth, thereby certainly killing him? Let it be assumed that he must at any rate take some message back; protracted anxiety being, let us assume, as dangerous for the patient as the sudden shock of illness. He can do only one of two things:—tell the truth and kill, or assert what is not true and spare the patient's life. Few will question what he ought to do. But the question may be raised, is he to be regarded even as free to choose? He holds for the time being the patient's life in his hands; he can kill or spare; if he kills, how should he escape reprobation? And might he not be so situated that liberty to choose one or other course might be abused if he told the truth? His fatal veracity might not be the offspring of a tender conscience, but of greed or some other evil passion. The doctor in the cases considered by Todd is somewhat similarly circumstanced. He is satisfied that there is a chance, at any rate, of saving life, if his patient is assured that certain substances are medicines potent to cure. Is he justified in refusing to his patient this chance of life? Doctors might unquestionably use for a wrong purpose the right of misleading a patient for his good; but they might use for a worse purpose the right (if they possessed it) of killing him with the blunt truth.

A singular case, bearing in some degree on the right to mislead a patient, was described a few months ago in a public address by a well-known American doctor. A young lady in one of the Western States was convinced that a bristle of her tooth-brush had become imbedded in her throat, and was causing mischief there, which would terminate fatally if the foreign body were not removed. The family doctor, and after him several physicians of repute, examined her throat, and all agreed in assuring her (which really was the case) that there was no bristle there at all. She continued to grow worse, the imaginary bristle causing all the effects which a real bristle might perhaps have caused—at any rate, all the effects which she imagined that a real bristle would cause. At last a young surgeon was consulted, who followed a different line of treatment. Looking long and carefully at her throat, and examining the afflicted part with several instruments, he at last gravely assured her that she was quite right; a bristle was there, and the inflammation she experienced was undoubtedly due to it. He could not, he said, remove the bristle at once, as the only instrument which would effectually reach it was at home. He went home for it, as he said, but really to enclose in an instrument of suitable form a bristle from a tooth-brush. Returning, he carefully nipped the skin of the throat where the young lady felt the pricking of the non-existent bristle, and after causing her enough discomfort to satisfy her that this time the operation of extracting the bristle was certainly in progress, he withdrew the instrument in triumph, and along with it the bristle, which had indeed first entered her mouth in that instrument's company. From that time she recovered rapidly. For it will be understood that though there was no real cause for her fears, a real irritation had been excited by them, and organic mischief had resulted. The story ends here so far as our present subject is concerned, though as a tale it may seem to many incomplete without a few words more. The young surgeon, we are told, was highly in favour thenceforth. He had not only saved her life, as she supposed, but had shown her to have been right, and all her friends, as well as the other doctors, wrong. She would have accepted his hand but for the circumstance that, having already a wife, he omitted to offer it. She blazoned abroad his fame, however, until he had become famous "throughout the whole State." All would have ended pleasantly had he not in a moment of weakness confided the true explanation of the young lady's cure to his wife—of course, under promise of strict secresy—which, however, did not prevent the story from reaching the young lady's ears in a few hours. It is hardly necessary to say that thenceforth her feelings towards the doctor were the reverse of those she had entertained before. True, she owed her cure to him, but the cure was worse than the illness.

In the case last considered, which, be it remembered, actually occurred, though probably some of the surroundings were a little altered by the narrator, the truth, supported though it was by the weight of authority, not of one doctor only but of several, was found ineffective to arouse the will of the patient even against a disease which had had its origin in her imagination only. We may well doubt then whether, if the influence of the mind on bodily processes were thoroughly recognised and admitted, it would be found possible to produce the same effect by a direct and truthful appeal to the will, as by misleading the patient. That some few persons of strong will could by a resolute effort check the process of actual disease in their internal organs, or excite processes of organic change resulting in cure, may be admitted,[*] but it must at the same time be admitted that in the large majority of cases this would not happen, even if the patient could be persuaded to make the attempt. It is only when unconscious of control that the ordinary mind is capable of directing the attention fixedly in the way required. And of course, in the great majority of cases the doctor has to deal with men of ordinary mind, not with those possessing strong power of fixing the attention, and resolute will to exert that power.

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[*] The writer offers the following experience with some diffidence, because the effects supposed to have resulted from an effort of the mind may be otherwise explained—possibly were due to mere coincidence. Still, such effects have been noticed, in so many cases, that he is disposed to explain them in the way suggested. It has frequently happened to him that during a busy week, fortnight, or month of lecturing, he has noticed signs of an incipient cold—such signs as under ordinary conditions have been nearly always followed by a severe cold with loss of voice. Now, he has observed that in the majority of instances of this kind, no such sequel has followed, although no greater care has been taken to check the progress of the cold than at other times. It is as though the strong feeling that he must not take cold prevented him from doing so.

What might be hoped from minds of such exceptional power we may learn from several instances which have been recorded in the history of medicine. Among the most remarkable is the case of Andrew Crosse, the electrician—a case so remarkable, indeed, that were it open to doubt, one might be disposed to reject it as incredible, or at any rate as explicable in any other way than as an instance of the power of the mind over the body.

Crosse had been bitten severely by a cat, which on the same day died from hydrophobia. He seems resolutely to have dismissed from his mind the fears which must naturally have been suggested by these circumstances. Had he yielded to them, as most men would, he might not improbably have succumbed within a few days or weeks to an attack of mind-created hydrophobia—so to describe the fatal ailment which ere now has been known to kill persons who had been bitten by animals perfectly free from rabies. Three months passed, during which Crosse enjoyed his usual health. At the end of that time, however, he felt one morning a severe pain in his arm, accompanied by severe thirst. He called for water, but "at the instant," he says, "that I was about to raise the tumbler to my lips, a strong spasm shot across my throat; immediately the terrible conviction came to my mind that I was about to fall a victim to hydrophobia, the consequence of the bite that I had received from the cat. The agony of mind I endured for one hour is indescribable; the contemplation of such a horrible death—death from hydrophobia—was almost insupportable; the torments of hell itself could not have surpassed what I suffered. The pain, which had first commenced in my hand, passed up to the elbow, and from thence to the shoulder, threatening to extend. I felt all human aid was useless, and I believed that I must die. At length I began to reflect upon my condition. I said to myself, 'Either I shall die or I shall not; if I do, it will only be a similar fate which many have suffered, and many more must suffer, and I must bear it like a man; if, on the other hand, there is any hope of my life, my only chance is in summoning my utmost resolution, defying the attack, and exerting every effort of my mind. Accordingly, feeling that physical as well as mental exertion was necessary, I took my gun, shouldered it, and went out for the purpose of shooting, my arm aching the while intolerably. I met with no sport, but *I walked the whole afternoon, exerting at every step I went a strong mental effort against the disease.* When I returned to the house I was decidedly better; I was able to eat some dinner, and drank water as usual. The next morning the aching pain had gone down to my elbow, the following it went down to the wrist, and the third day left me altogether. I mentioned the circumstance to Dr. Kinglake, and he said he certainly considered I had

had an attack of hydrophobia, which would possibly have proved fatal had I not struggled against it by a strong effort of mind."

It seems to us not unlikely that this case, besides illustrating the power of the mind in arresting disease, might serve, if carefully studied, to throw light on the nature of hydrophobia. We must assume, it should seem, that the mind can only act on the body by means of the nerves, which indeed may be regarded as simply outlying branches from the grand nerve-trunk—the brain. By strong mental effort the nervous system, either as a whole, or in some special region, is thrown into some condition which is not its normal condition, and in this abnormal state influences in some special manner the other tissues, either of the body as a whole, or of the part of the body in which the nerves are thus thrown into an abnormal state. Now it seems by no means impossible to ascertain experimentally what is the change of condition thus brought about by mental efforts to direct attention to special parts of the body. The recognition of the possibility that the progress of the hydrophobic disease in the body may be arrested by interposing in its way, as it were, a barrier of nervous system in this abnormal condition, might conceivably suggest some specific remedy for the disease, some process or medicament by which this abnormal condition might be brought about in cases where the mind and will were not sufficiently powerful to produce such an effect without aid from without.

Remembering the resemblance between some of the phenomena of hydrophobia and of lock-jaw, the following case, in which the cure of lock-jaw was attributed to the use of metallic tractors, further illustrates this particular point, for it was subsequently sufficiently demonstrated that all the results of metallic tractorism could be equally well produced with wooden or bone tractors painted to resemble metallic ones—in other words, that they were simply effects of imagination, strongly excited by the belief that metallic tractors have powerful curative effects. The account is given by the late Mr. John Vine Hall, of whom Dr. Todd remarks that his veracity was unimpeachable:—"Mrs. P., a poor woman in Wharf Lane, Maidstone, was seized with a lock-jaw four days ago, and continued in a most deplorable state, attended by a physician and a surgeon, till this morning, when she was completely cured in fifty minutes by the application of the tractors. The medical gentlemen had been exerting themselves to the utmost, in the kindest manner, and one of them said he would give a hundred guineas if he could save her life. This gentleman came into the room while I was in the act of using the tractors, which he had never seen before, but kindly said they should certainly have a fair chance, and he directed me where to apply them with the greatest advantage. I continued the operation for forty minutes without any apparent benefit, and then giving the tractors into the hands of the surgeon, returned to my own house, awaiting the issue of their further application. In about twelve minutes the surgeon (Mr. S.) came breathless with haste and delight to inform me that he had himself continued the use of the tractors only ten minutes when the poor creature opened her mouth. Mr. S. was so fully persuaded of the efficacy of the tractors that he immediately purchased a pair for his own use. Mr. S. writes: 'The case is yours, the suggestion was yours; I merely continued the employment of the measure from the apparent helplessness of medical means in relieving the distressing complaint. Although previously to the employment of the tractors I had utterly given up the idea of saving my poor patient; although I feared medicine would prove wholly inefficacious, yet I am not prepared to say that certain death would have been the result; but I do not for a moment mean to impeach the effect of the tractors in this case. I feel conviction that they produced the cure.'"

In passing we may note, with Dr. Todd, our surprise that after it had been conclusively proved by the experiments made by Dr. Haygarth and others with wooden tractors, that such cures as the above were really due to the effect of imagination, they should therefore have ceased to pay further attention to the matter. The result of their experiments was more interesting than would have been any demonstration of the potency of metallic tractors. They had established, in fact, the existence of a curative power in nature far more wonderful, and promising to be of far greater, because of far wider, utility than those mystical instruments. Yet having effected this great discovery, they treated it as if it were of no value whatever. Are we to suppose that if, when death was gradually approaching nearer and nearer to Mrs. P. of Maidstone, S. the surgeon, and Vine Hall the tractorian, had known what was afterwards established by Haygarth and others, they would have declined to use the means by which (through the influence on her imagination) the poor woman was actually cured? The conduct of Haygarth and the rest, after the efficiency of metallic tractors had been disproved, suggests that this would have been the course of medical men acquainted with Haygarth's results. In other words, having proved that a certain very potent method of cure derives its power from a source other than had been supposed, doctors seem to have agreed that therefore this remedy should no longer be employed, though the very researches by which they had detected the true nature of the remedy had at the same time indicated its wonderful efficacy. It is as though a physician called in by a family doctor to counsel him about a patient should suppose that a certain medicine which had proved of great service before his arrival contained quinine, but finding on analysis or otherwise that it contained other ingredients, and no quinine at all (satisfying himself, also, in the meanwhile, from observation, that it was of great service to the patient), should incontinently throw the bottle out of window. This, as Dr. Todd well remarks, "is at least as astonishing as that the public should believe in, and allow themselves to be cured by, the metallic tractors of Perkins, and be content to refer the influence to galvanism."

The case of Irving preaching under an attack of cholera, and actually overmastering that terrible disease in the struggle, is perhaps familiar to many of our readers. But it so remarkably illustrates our subject that we can ill afford to omit it. During the cholera season of 1832, he was seized with "what was in all appearance, and to the conviction of medical men when described to them, that disease which had proved fatal to so many of our fellow-creatures." He had risen in perfect health. But by breakfast-time he had become very cold, and was in great agony. The usual symptoms of cholera presently supervened. A medical man informed Dr. Todd that to his knowledge Irving was in a state of dangerous collapse during one part of the morning. "With sunken eyes, pallid cheeks, and an altogether ghastly appearance, he tottered to the church, a quarter of a mile distant, and found another minister officiating for him." He was tempted, he tells us, to turn back, but summoned resolution to send a message to his brother minister that he would shortly take his place. In the meantime he stretched himself on three chairs in the vestry before the fire. "Even as I shifted my position," he says, "I endured much suffering, and was almost involuntarily impelled to draw up my limbs in order to keep the pain under. Nevertheless, when I stood up to attire myself for the pulpit, and went forward to ascend the pulpit-stairs, the pains seemed to leave me." With dimmed sight, his head swimming, and his breathing laboured, he grasped the sides of the pulpit and looked wistfully around, wondering what was to follow. Be it remembered that in his eyes disease was sin; faith only was needed to overcome all other bodily ills save those due to accident or old age; and that disease seemed now likely to master him was evidence, as he thought, that he had sinfully lost hold of faith. It was a moral struggle (at least it seemed so to him), not a bodily contest in which he was engaged. As he thus stood contending against the evil spirit in imagination, but in reality bringing by strong effort of the will his natural energies to meet the progress of physical disease, the crisis came. In an instant "a cold sweat," he tells us, "chill as the hand of death, broke out all over my body, and stood in large drops upon my forehead and hands. From that moment I seemed to be strengthened." For more than an hour he preached with a fervour unknown to him—fervid preacher as he ever was before. He walked home, eating little. In the evening he preached in a crowded school-room, and next morning rose before the sun, strong and hearty as before the attack.

An agency competent, as these and many similar cases which might be cited seem to show, to check the progress of such maladies as hydrophobia, lock-jaw, and cholera, is one which deserves to be dealt with, not as an interesting illustration of psychological and physical relations, but as a potent remedial force worthy to take its place beside, if not above, any of the medicaments which doctors are at present in the habit of employing. But apart from this, the circumstance that powers so remarkable exist in the cerebral faculties suggests other purposes to which they might be applied. In the phenomena of hypnotism, or artificial somnambulism, we have some very striking evidence on this point; but it would lead us too far from our present subject to consider these, except in so far as they illustrate the influence of the mind on bodily disease. In this respect they supply some of the most remarkable evidence we have to consider.

Let it be premised before considering the phenomena of hypnotism, mesmerism, or whatever we choose to call them, that the theory of their being due to animal or any other sort of magnetism has been abundantly disproved. Of course, if it were otherwise, they would fall entirely outside the range of this essay. Nor, again, can they be in any way attributed to the influence of one mind on another, except in the way of suggestion. The cure of the naval officer considered above might be attributed in *this* sense to the action of the surgeon's mind on the patient's body, for it was the ideas advanced by the surgeon which excited the necessary action in the mind of the patient whereby the progress of disease in his body was checked. But as in that case the immediate remedial agent was (if the case is interpreted as above) the mental action of the sufferer, so all the phenomena of hypnotism are due to cerebral processes in the subject, these processes being simply initiated by the suggestions, more or less obvious, of the operator. We have said that the magnetic interpretation has been disproved, and equally we can assert that the supposed influence of the operator's mind on the subject's body has no real existence. We have not space here to consider the evidence; but full evidence has been obtained that precisely as all the results of metallic tractorism (a special case of animal magnetism, as was supposed) can be obtained with wooden ones, so all the phenomena attributed to animal magnetism generally can be obtained without any magnetic influences, while the phenomena which had seemed to be excited by the active will of an operator are obtained in equal degree when he purposely diverts his thoughts to other matters. The only circumstance remaining unexplained in the phenomena of hypnotism is the strange power which the subject often possesses or seems to possess of reading the thoughts of the operator. But this may probably be regarded as simply illustrating the abnormal powers which the mind of the hypnotised possesses for the time being; and indeed it is certain that the power of mind-reading acquired at such times (probably merely the power of recognising minute changes of expression, attitude, gesture, and so forth) is by no means limited to the operator; in some of the most remarkable and the best attested instances the hypnotised person has been able to read the thoughts of any person to whom his attention has been directed.*

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* It would seem, indeed, probable that the special cerebral condition excited in the hypnotised may be excited at will by some persons; without the assistance of any operator they become subjects of their own mental control thus specifically exercised. Some remarkable cases of mind-reading (amongst others may be mentioned two described by Dickens—see Forster's *Life*—as exhibited by a French conjuror at the time of the Anglo-French alliance) seem explicable in no other way, and in this way explicable without any mysterious or preternatural agencies (which are, of course, *ex necessitate*, excluded from the scientific discussion of such matters).

Setting aside, however, all explanations based on hypotheses inconsistent with the known laws of physics, or on impressions supposed to be produced by one person's mind on another person's body—in fact, all such explanations as science is bound to reject—we find in the phenomena of hypnotism the most wonderful illustrations of the powers which the mind has over the body. We might consider here a number of cases illustrating the cure of paralysis and affections more or less obviously depending on the state of the nervous system; but it will be better to limit our attention at present to the far more striking cases in which a definite change has been produced in the condition of parts of the body which might be supposed altogether beyond the mental influence, that is so far as their organic structure was concerned. In relation to one remarkable case of the former kind described by Dr. Procter, of York (see the *Zoist* for 1851), in which the patient was averse to the trial and expected no result, whereas the cure was as complete in his case as if he had been full of faith in the magnetic passes, it is necessary to make some remarks. The case is not one which need be described here, but the inference that because of the patient's unbelief we must reject the theory that imagination had aught to do with the matter is one to be carefully considered. Dr. Todd has well pointed out that the essential point in these cases is not the encouragement of the expectation of cure, but the direction of the attention to the part of the body which is affected by disease. The unbelieving patient who at the same time is indifferent to the experiment would doubtless be an unpromising subject for the mental method; but a patient who took sufficient interest in the passes and other outward signs of mesmerism to be opposed to them, would probably be quite as favourable a subject for the method as one who took the same degree of interest in them because he believed in their efficacy.

The most striking illustrations of the effect of imagination excited, as when hypnotism or Braidism is produced, are those in which partial blindness has been cured, actual opacity of the cornea being removed. Where very weak sight has been quickly cured, we may assume that the weakness was in the optic nerve, or otherwise depended on the state of the nerves, but it will presently be seen that in other cases the structure of the eye has undergone a definite organic change.

To the former and less remarkable class of cases belongs the cure of Mrs. Stowe by Braid. She was forty-four years old, and had used spectacles for twenty-two years, not being able without them to distinguish even the capital letters of advertisements in a newspaper, nor the large heading of the paper. After being hypnotised by Braid for eight minutes she was able "to read both the large and small heading, and day, month, and date of the paper. Her sight continued to improve—she could thread her needle, No. 8, without spectacles," and Mr. Braid states that this remarkable increase of visual power has been retained. The case of Miss R. was equally remarkable. She had not only suffered from ophthalmia, but as a result of the partial blindness thus occasioned had met with several accidents, some of which had further injured her eyes, insomuch that in January 1854 she was totally blind. She was placed under the care of a physician at Dublin during six weeks, and improved to some degree, "for the iris had become somewhat sensitive to light, and she was able to discern large objects, but could neither see to read nor write." She returned home, but her eyesight remained without further improvement, and at length her medical attendant recommended that she should be placed under Mr. Braid's care. He found no apparent physical imperfection to account for her impaired vision, nor at this time did she suffer from any pain about the head or eyes. She could not discern a single letter of the title-page of a book placed close to her, though some of the letters were a quarter of an inch long. Having placed the patient in the condition of artificial somnambulism, Mr. Braid "directed the nervous force to the eyes by wafting over them, and gently touching them occasionally, so as to keep up a sustained act of attention of the patient's mind to her eyes and the function of vision." (Some objection must be taken in passing to the statement that the nervous force was directed to the eyes, because it involves an assumption. The attention was directed to the eyes; what intervened between this act and the observed change in the patient's condition is a matter to be inferred, not stated.) In about ten minutes she was aroused from the hypnotic trance. "I now presented before her the title-page of the same book, when she instantly exclaimed with delight and surprise, 'I see the word commerce!' pointing to it. I told her she would see more than that presently, and in a little while she exclaimed, 'I see commercial,' then 'I see dictionary,' and shortly after, 'I see McCulloch;' but she could see nothing more. I told her that after a little rest I felt assured she would see still smaller print; and after a few minutes she was able to read 'London: Longman, Green, and Longmans.' Such was the result of my first process. After a second hypnotic operation the next day the patient could read, when first aroused, the whole of a title-page of a pamphlet, and in about five minutes after, she read two lines of the text. After another operation the same day she could read the small close print in the Appendix; and was able the same evening to write a letter home reporting progress for the first time for twelve months. She only required two more hypnotic operations, when she was found able to read the smallest-sized print in a newspaper, after which she left me quite cured, and, as I have heard, she continued well ever since."

The explanation in such cases would seem to be unmistakably that indicated by Braid in the expression to which we have taken exception above. By the actions which directed the attention to the act of vision, the nervous force would seem to have been directed along the channels from which some cause or causes had before unfortunately diverted it—the optic nerve and the various ramifications extending from it. These channels of communication between the brain and the eyes having been thus again opened, remained thenceforth as they had been before they had been obstructed. Be it noticed that the words here used—nervous force, channel of communication, obstructed, opened, and so forth—must not be understood in their literal sense; they are simply convenient forms of expression for qualities, processes, &c., about which we know in reality very little.

But as we have said, cases like the last two throw far less light on the powers which the mind possesses over the body than those in which actual organic change results from the mental act, continued long enough. The following case, in which blindness (of one eye) was certainly not dependent on defective nerve-force, is in this sense particularly interesting. Mrs. S. had had severe rheumatic fever in 1839, during the course of which the left eye was affected, in such sort that both its internal and its external structure suffered injury. In 1842, when Mrs. S. first consulted Mr. Braid, this eye was free from pain, but was useless. More than half the cornea was covered by an opaque film, any object placed opposite the outer or left half of the eye (the temporal half, doctors prefer to call it), being seen through a dense haze; and objects placed towards the opposite side were seen very imperfectly, owing to the injury which the choroid and retina had sustained in the points on which the images of such objects were reflected. The opacity was not only an obstacle to distinct vision, but was also a source of annoyance from its disfigurement, being obvious even at a considerable distance. "Mrs. S. was a relation," Dr. Todd mentions, "of Mr. Braid, and was in his house three months before he operated upon her, during which time no change took place. Violent pain in the arm and shoulder induced her to submit to the hypnotic treatment, which proved successful; but what was more surprising, and quite unlooked for by Mr. Braid, her *sight* was so much improved that she was able to see everything in the room, and to name different flowers, and distinguish their colours, whilst the right eye was shut, which she had not been able to do for more than three and a half years previously. The operation was continued daily, and in a very short time *the cornea became so transparent that it required close inspection to observe any remains of the opacity*. After the first operation there was considerable smarting in the eye, which continued all night, and in a less degree after future operations, which no doubt" (be it remembered, it is not Mr. Braid, but Dr. Todd who expresses this opinion) "roused the absorbents, and effected the removal of the opacity. Stimulating the optic nerve to greater activity, however, must have been the chief cause of the very rapid improvement which enabled her to see objects after the second operation. Mr. Braid adds to the foregoing, that objects were seen from the temporal side of the eye much more distinctly than from the nasal side, owing to the irreparable damage the retina and choroid had sustained."

Instances of the cure of deafness must in the great majority of cases be ascribed to the increase in the flow of nervous force along the aural nerves, and, therefore, are not quite so surprising as the case just cited and others of a like nature. Still some of them have been very remarkable. Take, for instance, Mr. Braid's account of the cure of Nodan, a deaf mute, aged 24, who, according to the opinion of Mr. Vaughan, head master of the Deaf and Dumb Institute where Nodan was a pupil, had never had the power of hearing, properly so called. "After the first operation," says Mr. Braid, "(inducing hypnotism, then extending the limbs and fanning the ears), I satisfied myself he had no sense of hearing; but after the second, which I carried still further, he could hear, and was so annoyed by the noise of the carts and carriages when going home that he could not be induced to call on me again for some time. He has been operated on only a few times, and has been so much improved, that although he lives in a back street, he can now hear a band of music coming along the front street, and will go out to meet it. I lately tested him, and found he could hear in his room on the second floor a gentle knock on the bottom stair. His improvement, therefore, has been decided and permanent, and is entirely attributable to hypnotism, as no other means were adopted in his case." In other words, the cure was entirely attributable to that special form of mental activity which is excited, or, at any rate, becomes available, in the case of hypnotised patients.

We have seen how, through the influence of the mind upon the body, the blind have been made to see, the deaf to hear; we may next consider cases in which the lame have been made to walk—nay, even to dance—by no other influence. Among the experiments by which it was shown that wooden tractors are as effective, *if only they are properly painted*, as iron ones, Dr. Alderson mentions the following:—"Robert Wood, aged 67, on June 4 was operated upon with wooden tractors for a rheumatic affection of the hip, which he had had for eight months. During the application of the tractors, which was continued for about seven minutes, no effects were produced, except a profuse perspiration and a general tremor. On ceasing the application of the tractors, to his inexpressible joy and our satisfaction, the good effects of our labour were now produced and acknowledged; for he voluntarily assured me that he could walk with perfect ease, that he had the entire motion of the joint, and that he was free from pain—to use his own words: 'As to the pain I have now, I do not care if I have it all my life; that will matter nothing. You may take your medicines—I'll have no more of them!' And prior to his leaving the infirmary, he remarked how very warm those parts were where the tractors had been applied; and then walked from the infirmary to his own house, assuring his companion that he could very well walk to Beverley." In another case no tractors were used, or any other mysterious form of apparatus employed to excite attention; the attraction used was not magnetic nor electrical, but an attraction of a very different kind, not as yet considered among medical remedies—except, by the way, in one case which occurs to us at the moment, and will be found fully recorded, prescription and all, in the pages of *Hard Cash*, though the remedy is there prescribed to cure an ailment for which it seems in some degree more appropriate. A young lady of sixteen (we are describing a real case, not the case of Julia Dodd) had for many months been suffering from an inversion of the left foot, which was twisted at right angles with the other, and was treated by orthopædic surgeons with an elaborate apparatus of splints. Neither they, nor Mr. Skey (though he recognised the nature of the affection), succeeded in curing it. Psychical agents, however, effected a cure in a few minutes. She willed to use her foot like other people, and she did. "She accompanied her family to a ball," says Mr. Skey, in the *Medical Times and Gazette* for October 13, 1866; "her foot, as she entered the ball-room, being not yet restored to its normal position. She was invited to dance, and, under this novel excitement, she stood up, and to the astonishment of her family she danced the whole evening, having almost suddenly recovered the healthy muscular action of the limb. She came to see me two days afterwards. She walked perfectly well into my room, and paced the room backwards and forwards with great delight. The actions of the limb were thoroughly restored, and all trace of the previous malady had disappeared."

After reading such accounts as these, accounts given by soberly-minded medical men, who would naturally be inclined rather to limit unduly than unduly to exaggerate the power which the mind of the patient may possess over the diseased body, it becomes easy to explain the accounts of seemingly miraculous cures which are published from time to time in various religious (and also in some scarcely religious) journals. Amongst such cases we may cite as particularly credible, when once the influence of the imagination is recognised, the so-called miracles performed by Prince Hohenlohe, for he combined with the princely title,[*] and the imagined efficacy of royal blood, the attributes of the priest, and personal qualities admirably suited to influence the minds of the weaker sort of men. In one case certainly, in which he cured a man of deafness, his princely position can hardly have helped him much, for the man was also a prince of the blood,—Louis, ex-King of Bavaria. Louis's letter describing his own cure, and other wonders, is very curious. It is addressed to Count von Sinsheim. "My dear Count," he says, "there are still miracles. The ten last days of the last month, the people of Würzburg might believe themselves in the times of the Apostles. The deaf heard, the blind saw, the lame freely walked, not by the aid of art, but by a few short prayers. . . . . On the evening of the 28th, the number of persons cured of both sexes, and of every age, amounted to more than twenty. These were of all classes of the people, from the humblest to a prince of the blood; who, without any exterior means, recovered, on the 27th, at noon, the hearing which he had lost from his infancy. This cure was effected by a prayer made for him, during some minutes, by a priest, who is scarcely more than twenty-seven years of age—the Prince Hohenlohe. Although I do not hear so well as the majority of the persons who are about me, there is no comparison between my actual state and that which existed before. Besides, I perceive daily that I hear more clearly. . . . . My hearing at present is very sensitive. Last Friday, the music of the troop which defiled in the square in front of the palace struck my tympanum so strongly, that for the first time I was obliged to close the window of my cabinet. The inhabitants of Würzburg have 'testified, by the most lively and sincere acclamations, the pleasure which my cure has given them.'" Many in like manner were cured through their faith in Father Matthew (not in teetotalism, be it understood); and even after his death many who went lame to his tomb left their crutches there. It was not necessary that the patient should be of the worthy father's persuasion in religion. Many staunch Protestants were cured by him, as they supposed; but in reality by processes taking place within their own minds, and initiated by their own lively imaginations. Whether after cure such persons remained as staunchly Protestant as they had been before, we do not know.*

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[*] Dr. Todd remarks, with sly humour, that Hohenlohe's "name and titles had probably much to do with his influence. They were Alexander Leopold Franz Emmerich, Prince of Hohenlohe-Waldenburg-Schillingsfürst, Archbishop and Grand Provost of Grosswardein, Hungary, and Abbot of St. Michael's at Gaborjan." How should such a name fail! Hohenlohe was born in 1794, in Waldenburg, and educated in several universities. He officiated as priest at Olmütz, Munich, &c. "When twenty-six," Dr. Todd adds, "he met with a peasant who had performed several astonishing cures, and from him caught the enthusiasm which he subsequently manifested in curing the sick. He constantly appealed to their faith in his power."

In a similar way may be explained (or rather must be explained, when due account is taken of the weight of evidence) many cases in which maledictions seem to have taken effect, as by a miracle. Paralysis, which has been often cured by faith, has been produced, though less often, by terror. In the *Medical Gazette* for May 23, 1868, there is a report of a singular case which occurred at the Limerick Sessions. Two men had been charged with having assaulted a relative. "The prosecutor summoned his own father as a witness. The mother of the prisoners, exasperated at the prospect of her sons being sent to prison on the evidence of her own relative, gave expression to her feeling in a malediction, praying that when the old man left the witness-box he might be paralysed, and paralysed he was accordingly, and had to be taken to the hospital. Such miraculous illness not yielding readily to ordinary modes of treatment, the old lady has been requested to remove her curse by spitting on the patient, but this she sternly refuses to do, and the man remains in the hospital." Unfortunately, the end of the story was not given. It would have been pleasing to learn that in the long-run the old dame relented, and by spitting on the invalid restored him to health, for then the evidence of the influence of imagination would be complete.

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* We were told a few months ago by a worthy, simple-hearted Irish priest, that he was sent for on one occasion to administer the sacrament of extreme unction to a Protestant lady, who (not knowing that Catholicity was an essential preliminary) hoped to find in the sacrament a cure for an attack of inflammation of the bowels, which the doctors had in vain attempted to assuage. They hourly expected her death. Finding no other course open to her, she "made submission," was received into the Church, and the sacrament of extreme unction was administered. When next the family doctor called the lady was well, save for the state of weakness to which many hours of extreme pain had reduced her.

Many will recall here the story of "Goody Blake and Harry Gill." Although Wordsworth calls this "a true story," yet most persons probably imagine that, as related by the poet, it is in a large degree a work of fiction. That Wordsworth himself regarded the punishment of the hard farmer as wrought by supernatural means is well known, and comes out clearly on a comparison between his poetic version of the event and the terse prosaic narrative by Dr. Erasmus Darwin in his *Zoonomia.* Yet the story was true enough in all essential points as told by Wordsworth. The elder Darwin's account of the case runs simply thus :—"A young farmer in Warwickshire, finding his hedges broken and the sticks carried away, during a frosty season, determined to watch for the thief. He lay many cold hours under a haystack, and at length an old woman, like a witch in a play, approached and began to pull up the hedge; he waited till she had tied up her bottle of sticks, and was carrying them off, that he might convict her of the theft, and then springing from his concealment he seized his prey with violent threats. After some altercation, in which her load was left upon the ground, she kneeled upon the bottle" (*sic*, it is the old-fashioned word for a "bundle") "of sticks, and raising her arms to heaven beneath the bright moon, then at the full, spoke to the farmer, already shivering with cold, '*Heaven grant that thou mayest never know again the blessing to be warm.*' He complained of cold all the next day, and wore an upper coat, and in a few days another, and in a fortnight took to his bed, always saying nothing made him warm; he covered himself with very many blankets, and had a sieve over his face as he lay" (the benefit expected from this arrangement is not altogether obvious); "and from this one insane idea he kept his bed above twenty years, for fear of the cold air, till at length he died." It was unfortunate for him, by the way, that Turkish baths had not been introduced into England in his time! For probably if he had tried the radiating room of a Turkish *hammam*, he would have found that even the old woman's curse did not prevent him from knowing what it was to feel warm; and once recognising this, he would have been able, perhaps, to rise above the superstitious fears to which in reality the sensation of cold was due. The commonplace curse of an old woman whom even the least censorious can hardly regard as altogether worthy of absolute veneration, and who had probably exchanged some rather coarse abuse with Gill in the preceding "altercation," is rather amusingly changed by Wordsworth into a solemn appeal to heaven by a much injured victim (after all it must be remembered that Gill had not hurt the old woman, and that a farmer has some right to complain when his hedges are broken and the sticks removed) :—

> Then Goody, who had nothing said,

(having, it should seem, very little to say—)

> Her bundle from her lap let fall;
> And kneeling on the sticks, she prayed

To God, who is the judge of all,
She prayed, her withered hand uprearing,
While Harry held her by the arm—
"God! that art never out of hearing,
Oh may he never more be warm!"
The cold cold moon above her head,
Thus on her knees did Goody pray;
Young Harry heard what she had said,
And icy cold he turned away.

Probably we may refer the effect of her malediction rather to her appearance—as described by Dr. Darwin, "an old woman like a witch in a play"—than to the solemnity of her prayer. He believed, in his sudden fear, that she was a witch, his imagination attributed to the witch's curse the cold which naturally enough resulted from his long watch on a bitter cold night, and his fears thus seemingly confirmed so influenced his imagination thereafter, that he experienced the constant sensation of cold described by Darwin. That the actual temperature of his body was also affected may well be believed. For it is well known that persons whose minds are affected undergo a loss of temperature. "In *mélancolie avec stupeur*," says Dr. Ertzbischoff, "the temperature is always below the normal amount." But it is certain the actual loss of heat cannot have been even nearly so great as the apparent, for, if it had, Gill would certainly not have lived twenty years.

We could cite many other illustrations of the influence of the mind, whether stimulated by emotion or by expectation, on the body and its functions. But we have already exceeded the space which we had intended to occupy. Let it suffice now to call attention to the extreme importance, both in a physiological and in a psychological aspect, of the recognition of this influence, and the necessity for more careful and systematic study of its nature and limits than has yet been made. It was said sneeringly by Dr. Elliotson, who was a believer in the mesmeric or præternatural interpretation of effects now demonstrated to be due to imagination only, that if Mr. Braid, Dr. Carpenter, and Dr. Holland, could ascribe the actual extirpation of certain bodily matter to dominant ideas, suggestion, and expectant attention, they "ought to petition for the introduction of these into the next 'Pharmacopœia' of the Royal College of Physicians." "We do make this petition; or at least," says Dr. Tuke with excellent judgment, "let these psychical agents be included in the *armamenta medica* of every medical man." But not alone with reference to the cure of disease have these experiences interest and value. Rightly apprehended, even now when they are incomplete, they throw much light on the qualities and functions of the brain; but if the study of such cases were carefully and sedulously pursued, observations and experiments being multiplied, as they well might be, we believe that some of the most difficult problems of mental physiology would before long be interpreted, and that mental powers as yet unsuspected would before long be revealed.

The Countess's Ruby.

IN TWO PARTS.

PART I.

I.

ONE hot August forenoon, some years ago, two men met at a certain point of the coast of Normandy, and shooks hands with mutual good-will.

The elder of these men had lived in the world about five-and-thirty years; he had had losses, and successes as well; but the latter, happening to have arrived a year or so after he had got tired of waiting for them, found him grown a trifle soured and cynical, and apt to carp at the sunshine which had withheld its warmth from his bones until they had contracted an ineradicable chill. His bitterness was perhaps more of the head than of the heart, but was none the less observable on that account. He was an Englishman by birth, and a born painter also—at least in his own opinion. He had begun his career with the firm persuasion that his genius entitled him not only to hang on the line at the Academy, but to be one of the hangmen. The Royal Academicians did not immediately fall in with his views on either point; and when, after many years, they relented, and gave his picture the place of honour, and intimated their purpose of filling with his name the first vacancy on their august roll, this lofty and unforgiving gentleman made a bow and begged to be excused. He had made his name known without the Academy's help; he had won pecuniary independence in a land where the word of the Academy was not law; and he would now, therefore, with all due respect to the members of that body, see every mother's son of them at the deuce before he would have anything to do with them. Such an ultimatum necessarily finished the episode; the Academy preserved a dignified silence, and the lofty and unforgiving gentleman continued to spend the best part of his time in Paris, exhibiting every year in the Salon, and telling the story of his quarrel with the English potentates to whomsoever cared to hear an amusing anecdote caustically related. He was a lengthy, meagre, harsh-featured personage, this same cynical artist, but he prided himself on the Parisian polish of his manners and his French accent, and he was, in fact, a good deal of a favourite in society.

The man who shook hands with the person above described was in most respects as unlike him as could be imagined. To begin with, he was an American; and, sentimental twaddle to the contrary notwithstanding, there is no nationality so irreconcilable with the English, and so incapable of sympathy with them, as that which styles itself American. But this man, in addition to his Americanism, was full ten years the junior of the other, and nearly the same number of inches shorter. His face was smooth and almost boyish, handsome even to an unusual degree, yet open to one criticism—that of being perfectly in harmony with the figure of its owner. The world has seen many great men under six feet high; but in them the countenance possessed the power or the nobility that more than compensates for defective stature; and, in looking upon it, the beholder quite forgot to be critical as to the greater or less degree of its elevation above the earth's surface. In a word, the face of this young American was the face of a short American —a recommendation, doubtless, from the purely æsthetic standpoint, but otherwise unfortunate. The lively blue eyes lacked depth and sternness; the fine straight nose might well have been a thought longer or higher; the mouth was too little and too academic in its curves; the forehead, though capacious, lacked the fine and expressive modelling which announces a master intellect. For the rest, this young American had a clear, deep colour in his cheeks, such as any woman might have envied, and the only fault of which was that no emotion had power either to diminish or to heighten its intensity; soft dark hair, a small silky moustache, and broad white teeth. The best feature in his face was probably the chin, which betokened a vigorous and persistent will. In figure he was square-shouldered, and rather plump than lean; his hands and feet were small and well shaped. If the enumeration of these merely physical details seems out of proportion with what was specified on that score in the portrait of the Englishman, it should be remembered that the younger man had as yet achieved little in the world beyond this attractive personal appearance. His moral and social history were yet to make. He was the son of a Boston millionaire; he had been educated at Harvard College; he was courted and caressed in Beacon Street drawing-rooms; and he had written quite a number of poems, odes, lyrics, and sonnets, philosophical, commemorational, imaginative, and erotic, which, reversing the natural sequence of states, first led a brilliant butterfly life in newspapers and magazines, and afterwards shut themselves up in the chrysalid of a gilt-edged, cloth-embossed volume, whence they afterwards showed no symptom of emerging.

These two men, such as they are here shadowed forth, found themselves face to face by the water's edge on that sultry August morning, and greeted each other with hearty enough cordiality.

As if to compensate for their physical dissimilarity, they were dressed almost precisely alike. Both had on shoes made of a flat sole of plaited hemp, with stout linen uppers curiously embroidered with red and blue braid, and laced round the ankle after the manner of the ancient sandal. Both wore a kind of straw bonnet, high-crowned and wide-brimmed, clewed down on either side the face by a broad ribbon tied under the chin. Neither possessed any other essential article of clothing except a close-fitting tunic or set of tights, with the legs and arms cut off close to the body. Over this was lightly thrown a long mantle of Turkish-towel stuff. The tights were striped horizontally, alternate white and blue for the Englishman, and red and white for the American; and herein lay the sole distinction between their respective costumes. It is true that the American's fitted much the more closely and smoothly of the two; but that is neither here nor there.

In front of these simply-attired friends, and breaking in baby ripples at their feet, stretched in slumbrous calm a pale and turquoise ocean, destitute of any visible horizon. A tender haze which brooded in that region so intermingled sea and air that distant ships seemed to sail in the clouds, and clouds to voyage upon the water.

Behind them rose a mounded beach of purple shingle, uncomfortable to tread upon, but invaluable as a bulwark against the incursion of high tides into the low-lying village beyond. This village snuggled in the valley formed between the two hills which abutted at either extremity of the beach in precipitous cliffs, reflecting their pallid faces in the molten surface of the summer sea.

Between the village and the beach, and surmounting the latter like a fort, extended the casino parade, an embankment of masonry lying parallel with the shore, and backed by the casino itself, long, low, and flat-roofed, all windows and awnings. It contained a card room, billiard room, restaurant and theatre, the last transmutable into a ball room by the simple process of removing the pit seats.

The persons of whom I write were not alone by the water's edge; on the contrary, they had scarcely more than elbow room. On either side of them stood, chattered, and gesticulated a hundred human beings of both sexes and all ages, arrayed more or less on the same general principle already detailed. A hundred others paddled, plunged, and bobbed in the pellucid element in front. Twice as many lounged, fluttered, and ogled in serried groups in the rear—these last resplendent in the latest Parisian fashions for the month of August. Down upon this gay scene of colour, sparkle, and sound glowered the hot, lazy sun, longing for the still nine-hours-distant time when he might cool his own sweltering sides in the luxury of a sea bath.

Beyond the average range of the swimmers sped hither and thither a score of light skiffs or canoes, whose occupants prudently wore their bathing dresses and sat heedfully amidships as they plied their long paddles. Finally, I may mention the diving-board, an infernal machine of a thirty-foot plank supported at a third of its length on the axle of a tall pair of wheels, and so rolled into the water, to be rushed up and jumped off of by dashing divers. That diving-board was a daily thorn in the side of the English artist, who was not a dashing diver and who would have greatly preferred to take to the water like a duck—that is, quietly and smoothly—but whom a false pride constrained to mount that penitential plank morning after morning, and upset himself off the end of it with an agonised effort—seldom or never successful—to strike the water vertically. What fools sensible people will make of themselves for the sake of being like the fools who are ready-made!

It may as well be mentioned here, since the truth is sure to crop out sooner or later, that the name of the cynical and Frenchified English artist was Mr. Claude Campbell, and that he was, consequently, no less a personage than myself, who write concerning him. Let this confession put the reader on his guard against whatever exaggerative or prejudicial statements he may fancy he detects in what I have told or have yet to tell. I do not pretend to be an absolutely impartial historian of events in which myself have been an actor. I promise only to set down things as they appeared to me at the time, and leave the reader to draw his own conclusions. Did I make the world, or even organise human society? No; nor am I responsible for the logic of events, which, on the other hand, has often struck me as being a shocking bad system of logic.

As for the red-cheeked American, he was Jefferson Montgomery, Esquire, of Boston, as aforesaid, and he shall speak for himself.

II.

"Hullo, Jeff! Just a year since we parted on Beacon Hill."

"My *dear* Campbell," said Jeff, giving my hand a strong pressure, while his blue eyes beamed and his white teeth flashed, "this is *really very nice*. Have you been here long?"

"Maybe a week."

"A *week? Really!* how *very strange!*"

As I do not intend to underline all Mr. Jeff's speeches, I will explain here that he was one of those persons who choose their words with care, and then bestow upon them a certain emphasis—an emphasis of breath—a soft cough, so to say, intended merely to call your attention to the word in question as an unexceptionable word. At first you wondered at the speaker's earnestness; afterwards you begot a nervous oppression of the breathing apparatus, referable to the obscure phenomena of sympathetic affections. For my own part, the kind of conscientious self-complacency of which I considered this idiosyncrasy of my friend to be a symptom tended to arouse in me all my caustic and combative instincts; and, inasmuch as the young poet was fertile in "notions" and resolute in upholding the same, our conversations were apt to become discussions, and our discussions disputes. Our disputes had never deepened into quarrels—we were too dissimilar for that—though a listener might sometimes have found it difficult to make the distinction. But to resume.

"Why strange?" was my inquiry.

"Why, that we shouldn't have encountered previously."

"On the contrary, the strangeness is in our meeting at all. I came here to make studies, and you, I suppose, to make conquests. How many so far?"

"Oh, you old cynic! I don't know a soul in the place. It was an accident my being here at all, and I've been doing nothing but admire these lovely cliffs and the poetic scenery."

"Poetic? That reminds me. Pardon my thoughtlessness, Jeff. You have been wooing the muse, of course?"

"Well, I confess I have been attempting something; it's unfinished as yet, but I hope it is fresh and strong; and I believe it to be original in treatment as well as in idea. It will be my most ambitious effort so far. A pagan maid falls in love with the Spirit of the Ocean, and a poet is in love with her, and between these two loves——"

"She comes to the ground, or into the water. Which is it?"

"You are always so ready to mock, Campbell. But of course it doesn't come from the heart; it's only your badinage. And really, don't you think the conception fine? I should like to read you my description of the pagan maid."

"Portrait of anybody in particular?"

"Well, between you and me, Campbell, there *is* a young lady here—I don't know who she is, but she really does seem to be almost the type I need—for my poem, I mean. A noble creature—the true grand pagan style. You would like her; she would charm the artist equally with the poet."

"So you have been trotting up hill and down dale after a pagan, and call it writing a poem on metaphysical abstractions! Do you never mean to give up this sort of thing, my dear boy?"

"Really, what do you mean?"

"Dangling after women the way you do."

"What an expression! Every cultivated man feels it his duty to love woman and to frequent her society."

"But why not choose out a representative woman and frequent the whole sex in her person?"

"Do you advocate marriage, then?" asked the poet, his blue eyes pensively interrogating the horizon.

"I say that, if you must make an ass of yourself at all, you should confine yourself within the narrowest possible limits."

"Have you ever contemplated matrimony, Campbell?"

"It is the last thing I should contemplate for myself."

"You have never yearned for a counter-soul?"

"I don't know what you mean, but I venture to say I never have," I replied. "But what would be folly in me would be philanthropy in you."

Jeff heaved a long sigh. "Let me whisper you a secret. You know my papa made a fortune in the Crimean war. We had a contract to furnish the Russians with briar-wood pipes. Well, Russia is now on the eve of another conflict, and papa has sent me over to arrange the terms of another contract."

"But what has this to do with your getting married?"

"Why, the person who manages the business on the Russian side is our old friend—the same who concluded the arrangements with papa twenty-five years ago. Our relations have always remained intimate and cordial. And immediately subsequent to the Russian war this commissioner married, and—had—oh!"

The poet's voice died away; his eyes were fixed upon something a little farther along the beach.

"There! there!" he murmured. "Oh! is she not—divine?"

"Ha! that is your pagan, is it?"

"Going out in a canoe," continued Jeff.

This young and strikingly handsome girl, of proportions almost statuesque, was not seen by me now for the first time. I had, in fact, noticed her shortly after my arrival in town, and had taken that pleasure in observing her which an artist feels for whatever is thoroughly picturesque. Who she was I knew no more than Jeff, and it was not to be expected that another man's admiration of her should be disagreeable to me; but some men are not any man, and I must admit that the revelation of her identity with the subject of Jeff's rhapsodies affected me unpleasantly. The girl's beauty, patent to me, was not of a type to reveal itself to every careless and uneducated eye. But I will not attempt to defend my feeling. I simply state it.

The young lady took her seat in the canoe and grasped the paddle, and an elderly moustachioed gentleman pushed her off from shore. She was dressed in a rather remarkable bathing suit of black, slashed with scarlet; her round, firm arms were bare from the shoulder, and her legs from the knee; her hair was gathered up in the customary oilskin cap. With two or three vigorous strokes she sent her skiff well out beyond the crowd of bathers.

When I turned again towards Jeff I found he was no longer at my side; he was walking up the diving-board, on the end of which he balanced himself a moment and then launched himself head foremost into the water, which closed over him with scarce a ripple. Presently his head appeared some distance beyond the spot at which he had entered, and he began swimming seaward with vigorous strokes. He was directly in the wake of the fair pagan, who, unaware of his pursuit, was paddling leisurely towards the thickening haze on the horizon, herself and her canoe mirrored distinctly on the glassy surface.

"Does he propose to overtake her and make her hear his poetry *tête-à-tête* in twelve fathoms of water?" I asked myself. "At any rate, he resembles Byron in his swimming powers. And how neatly the fellow took the water! Let me see if I can't acquit myself as well as a Boston republican."

With a sudden access of valour I snatched off my peignoir and cast it behind me, and, without stopping to see where it fell, I mounted the fatal plank with deliberate steps, saw the treacherous element smile for a moment beneath me, shut my eyes, and let myself go.

III.

I foresaw, in that instant of time which intervened between my last foot leaving the plank and my head reaching the water, that I was going to make a failure more than usually ignominious. A sounding thwack, taking effect along the entire length of my frame, and a painfully tingling sensation, only partly the result of shame, immediately apprised me that my prophetic instinct had not been at fault. I sank, however, and I was glad to sink; for though I dislike having my head under water, my wounded self-esteem made me dread putting it out again. Much as I have seen and suffered, and callous though I have become to most of the attacks of destiny, upon some points I am still sensitive. In a decent suit of clothes and a dignified attitude I can sustain almost any misfortune; but if my personal appearance be laughable, or my position a false one, my soul has much ado to maintain her constancy.

Need was, however, that I should emerge at last, and up I bobbed accordingly. I swam about moodily and unsociably during my customary fifteen minutes; and such was the dejection of my spirits that the water seemed colder than usual, and as I waded my way up a steep incline of the shingle on my way out there was a tendency to convulsive shudderings in the muscles of my lower jaw. Chilled, humiliated, and conscious that I cut a ridiculous figure before a fashionable and merciless world, I only wished to seize my peignoir, wrap it round me, and vanish from the view and memory of mankind. Some men are cowed by one thing, some by another; and, once cowed, a man is no better than a whipped schoolboy, and feels far less respectable.

I hastened, then, to hide my discomfiture in my peignoir; but at that moment the certainty flashed upon me that I knew not where my peignoir was. I had omitted to note the place where I had laid it down: all places on a shingle beach are alike, especially when that beach is crowded to the water's edge.

I was standing face to face with the crowd, dressed in the curtailment of costume already described, which, hanging in dripping folds about my meagre form, rendered grotesque that which by nature was ungainly merely. For the first time in my life I regretted my six feet of stature; at five feet I should have felt less defenceless as well as appeared less conspicuous. There I stood before the world, shivering, lost, and helpless.

What was I to do? It was a pressing question, for every moment rendered the situation not only physically but morally more intolerable.

Should I return to the water, whence I came?

Too late! Not only would I catch my death—a minor evil—but the world by this time knew that I had started to come out, and by detecting the cowardice of my retreat would render it cowardice thrown away.

Should I steal the first peignoir that came to hand and fly? Hundreds were scattered about. It was but reaching forth my hand.

No, I could not steal: not because I was too honest—far from it; a cowed man is beyond the reach of scruples—but because I lacked the courage to be a thief. I feared detection, and knew I lacked the effrontery to brazen out the robbery.

Should I pretend that I never had a peignoir, and stalk insouciantly through the crowd and up to the beach as I was?

Impossible. I had not the spirits for such a *tour de force* in the first place, and in the second I had not the figure for it. Moreover, the *mairie* had issued edicts against bathers promenading without peignoirs, and the thought of being arrested by a squad of gendarmes and marched in my present condition to a lock-up was not to be contemplated.

I must, therefore, either stand where I was until my peignoir came to me or institute a deliberate search after my peignoir. To search, perhaps for hours, amidst a wilderness of spotless hostile skirts and immaculate shrinking pantaloons for a peignoir scarcely distinguishable from any other peignoir, and which, too, might have already been appropriated by some person more heedless (or more self-possessed) than myself! Decidedly there are times in a man's life when he is forced to avow that Providence has omitted to endow human beings with the only boon really worth their having—the power, namely, of instant and unobtrusive self-annihilation.

My search began. I went to a peignoir and examined it; it was not mine. With shaking limbs I blundered towards another a few yards off; it was not mine. At this juncture I heard, and affected not to hear, a titter of laughter. With my heart full of murder and suicide I pounced upon a peignoir quite near at hand. It was the same I had examined first. My brain began to reel.

"Monsieur!" said a gentle voice near me. "Pardon, monsieur!"

Could such words be addressed to me? As I tottered on the shifting pebbles, throwing dazed glances here and there, I became aware that a lady, middle-aged and of noble demeanour, was standing beside me with a folded peignoir in her hands.

"Pardon, but did monsieur chance to be searching for anything?" she asked in French.

"My peignoir——"

"I have perceived that Monsieur dropped this upon entering the water: it shall be his perhaps?" and with a smile too truly polite even to seem compassionate this angel of mature years placed my own identical peignoir in my arms.

I clutched it as Macbeth clutched at the phantom dagger; only, more fortunate than the thane, I felt it in my grasp. Some part of my senses returned to me.

"Madame," I stuttered as well as my chattering teeth would let me, "you come from doing me the greatest favour woman can confer upon man. I shall never forget it. I thank you, madame, from the depths of my soul, and I salute you with the most distinguished gratitude and respect.

The doer of this noble action bowed and smiled graciously, and I, with my peignoir about me, stalked boldly through the crowd to my toilet cabin. The distance was not great, but such was the glow of gratitude in my heart that by the time I arrived there I was not only warm but almost dry. Nor did the effect of this kindness stop at my skin; my immortal part, as Jeff might have called it, was sweetened and exalted; never, that I could remember, had I been succoured so opportunely or in such poignant need. Be that lady who she might, she was worthy of all homage, and if it would have done her any good I believe that, confirmed bachelor though I was, I would have offered her my hand and heart as soon as I had finished my toilet.

But I trusted to my good genius to find me some better way of requiting her favour. It is sad to reflect how few ways there are of obliging our fellow-creatures. People would do more for one another but for the difficulty of finding something at once practical and practicable to do.

The first thing that attracted my notice, when I issued from my cabin and returned to the beach, was that the haze, which all the morning had lain along the horizon, had now thickened greatly and advanced upon the shore. Nothing was visible at twenty paces, and the fog, shone through by the sun, drifted softly over the bustling crowd, which was already beginning to stream homewards.

It was a pretty spectacle, but one likely to be regarded with different feelings by an Englishman safe on dry land and an American lost in twelve fathoms of water. Jeff had not come back to shore, and being out of sight of land, it necessarily followed that he was lost. The danger was graver than might at first sight have appeared, for the swimmer had had time to get fully a mile out to sea, and at that distance there were strong currents which might sweep him away altogether. I scanned the white blank before me with anxious eyes, but it revealed nothing. Poor Jeff!

I began to experience that uncomfortable sensation occasioned by knowing a friend to be in peril, and feeling the necessity of doing something to rescue him. More grievous but more convenient is it when the inevitable occurs at once, and saves us the annoyance of suspense. I could have sorrowed heartily and sincerely over the poor poet's drowned body laid out upon the shingle, but there was no satisfaction in taking measures to ascertain whether or not the corpse were an accomplished fact—to postpone, in other words, the luxury of grief for the anguish of action.

A group of sailors were collected round a boat at the water's edge, which they seemed to be on the point of launching. A lady was haranguing them earnestly. As I approached I recognised her as the heroine of my late adventure with the peignoir. She was saying—

"It was in that direction that I last saw her. She is already, perhaps, a kilomètre distant. There is no time to lose, mind you. Behold me distracted."

Here was my opportunity; I could kill both my birds with one stone. I stepped forward with raised hat, and placed myself at the disposal of feminine distress. Having respectfully recalled myself to her recollection, I begged to be honoured with the distinction of being permitted to promote the alleviation of the anxiety under which she appeared to be labouring.

She thanked me with ardour, but to inconvenience me would desolate her.

Having received at her hands a favour beyond estimation, I should expire of chagrin in the case of being refused the privilege of testifying in some degree the depth and liveliness of my recognition.

Madame hereupon vouchsafed to inform me that mademoiselle her daughter had paddled away with herself into the fog, and there was fear that she be lost in unknown oceans.

I had divined as much as this, but I was careful not to say so; nor did I open my mouth on the subject of Jeff. It was sufficient for me to perceive that Jeff and the young lady in the case were probably not far apart, and that to find one would be to find both. Meanwhile I would not deprive Madame of the gratification of believing that I was acting in her interests only. So, entreating her to be tranquil and to expect my return with her daughter in less than a quarter of an hour, I clambered into the boat with all possible dignity and despatch and bade my men shove off. Madame observed my departure with eyes that were genuinely moist.

It was a tolerably mild piece of heroism. Had I been ten years younger I might have wished that the waves had been running mountains high, but at thirty-five—the age of sense and of feeling combined—I was better pleased with the conditions as they were. I was not in love with anybody, and wished only to combine courtesy and good breeding with the fulfilment of a private duty. It had gratified me to observe, in my brief conversation with madame, her appreciation of the altered aspect of one whom she had first known as an idiot and a scarecrow, not to mention his fluency in speaking the language of the most polished people in the world. I admired, too, the kindly ingenuity with which Fate had brought me acquainted with the mamma of the beautiful pagan, and under circumstances so promising.

But it is unsafe to call Fate good-humoured: it spoils her temper. Our boat was barely afloat when an event occurred which rendered our proposed voyage unnecessary. Somehow or other, without noise and without premonition, the fog rolled swiftly back to the horizon whence it came; and there was mademoiselle not more than a hundred yards from shore. She was paddling in with admirable coolness and indifference; and close behind her I was happy to see the black head and rosy visage of the poet, who was swimming on his back with every appearance of ease and comfort.

IV.

I hastened to get on shore again and offer to Madame my congratulations. She replied that her obligations to Monsieur were none the less. His courtesy, his chivalry, had been such as one never sees paralleled.

Monsieur, covered with confusion at consideration so undeserved, changes the subject by calling the attention of Madame to the charming picture made by Mademoiselle in approaching the beach. Had he had his sketch book with him, he would have been tempted to make a little drawing of Mademoiselle.

Ah! Monsieur was, then, an artist? Madame, and Mademoiselle likewise, were all given to artists. They had made purchase of several pictures during their residence in Paris.

Monsieur will venture to call himself an artist, and will, furthermore, have the assurance to make Madame acquainted with his name—M. Claude Campbell, at the service of Madame.

But truly! and did Monsieur Campbell happen to know this Campbell—he, the great Campbell, he who painted this picture divine which exhibited itself at the last Salon, and was entitled the "Ruined Rampart"?

Monsieur, even in blushing and being overwhelmed, assures Madame that he is that same fortunate Campbell whose unworthy effort Madame comes from qualifying with such generosity.

Great God! Monsieur is he, then, indeed that sublime, that adored man of genius? What happy chance! What charming *rencontre!* But in this case Madame hopes that the name of the Countess Semaroff will be to Monsieur not altogether unfamiliar?

Oh! Heaven! Is it possible that Monsieur is so happy as to kiss the hand of the noble lady who deigned to constitute herself the purchaser of the above-mentioned "Ruined Rampart"? Monsieur is of a verity transported.

The Countess Semaroff observes that Mademoiselle—the Countess Almara in effect—will partake of her mamma's enchantment in meeting Monsieur Campbell, of whose genius she is an ardent admirer.

Our rude and artless talk was suspended at this point by the disembarkation of the Countess Almara. Apprehending that the simplicity of her costume might render my immediate presentation undesirable, I exchanged a cordial *au revoir* with the Countess Semaroff and discreetly withdrew. The beautiful pagan, after exchanging a few sentences with her mother, the latter speaking earnestly and the former laughingly, proceeded to take her turn upon the diving-board, and acquitted herself in a manner truly admirable. She dove like a plummet, and her white feet flashed beneath the surface as succinctly as a mermaid's tail. Up she came again, fresh and dripping, within a few yards of my returned prodigal, the Boston poet; but no signal of recognition that I could detect passed between them. To suppose that the ardent and romantic

Jefferson had failed to improve the occasion of being isolated from the world under such peculiar circumstances with the subject of his late rhapsodies seemed to me, however, highly improbable. But the young countess had doubtless played discretion under the watchful maternal eye; and Jeff, perhaps, intended to conceal his escapade from my friendly inquisition. I was resolved, nevertheless, to penetrate his reticence, and promised myself the pleasure of listening to an entertaining story over our *déjeuner*. As to my own accidental introduction to the countess mother, and the unexpected tie between us, I judged it advisable to forbear mentioning it just at present.

The poet reached his depth and waded ashore. I stepped forward to meet him, raising my cap.

"Captain Webb, I presume?"

"Oh—but, Campbell!" exclaimed he with an ineffable look, "was she not heavenly?"

"Postpone your ecstasies; you'll be a rheumatic cripple for life as it is. Do you know you've been in an hour?"

"It doesn't seem ten minutes—and yet I have lived a lifetime too!"

"You have water on the brain. Do you know where your peignoir is?"

Somewhat to my mortification, he did know, and, as he threw it over his shoulders, remarked placidly, "But really I'm not in the least cold. Men of my age have hearts, Campbell, and a heart on fire keeps the blood warm under all circumstances."

"It takes a Bostonian to have a heart warranted to burn under water for an hour."

"And then," he continued without heeding me, "did not a goddess keep the flame alive with her ambrosial breath?"

"Decidedly he must have had an adventure," thought I. "But despatch your toilet, young man, and then you shall *déjeuner* with me, and we'll have chablis and cigarettes."

"I shall be most happy, indeed. I won't be a moment dressing," said the poet beamingly; and he dodged into his cabin.

"Pathetic little youth!" thought I as I paced the parade to and fro. "Good fellow at bottom, but so soft!—the sort of creature that men trample on and women make game of. He has that most offensive of qualities—inoffensiveness. But, luckily for his peace of mind, he idolises himself, and is too slow-witted to comprehend the contempt of other people. After all, his self-conceit has as much justification as anybody's. He sees a pretty face when he looks in the glass, writes pretty verses with conscientious rhymes, utters pretty sentiments, and uses pretty phrases. How is he to know that the world reads all this prettiness without the *r*? But Providence, in emptying his skull, has mercifully filled his pockets. With ten thousand pounds a year he can buy something. What he can't buy is the ability to win for a wife such a woman as this young countess. Is he in love with her? He thinks so, no doubt, and means to make himself poetically miserable about her.

His type of men are for ever losing their hearts miles above the reach of their heads. He has been getting off some inane nambypambyism to her this morning, disgusting or amusing her as the case may be, and has come off serene in the conviction of having made a delightful impression. And now—confound him!—he will be for prosecuting the acquaintance and expecting me to back him up. What shall I do? It would be friendly to dissuade him from having anything more to say to them; but he's obstinate and won't be dissuaded. Well, the spectacle of such a wooing can't fail to be entertaining, and, since I can't prevent it, why shouldn't I enjoy it? To augment excitement I might give Mademoiselle Almara a quiet hint to tip him an occasional dose of encouragement. Poor Jeff! Ah! here he comes! Now let us watch him expand under the influence of chablis."

The unsuspecting poet took my arm, and we set out for my lodgings.

"How charming the Old World is," he remarked presently.

"You are an American, and everything here delights you by contrast."

"But I'm patriotic—very. I'm a descendant of the Puritans, and my forefathers fought on Bunker Hill."

"Yes, you Yankees are always bringing up the men of '76, whom, were you to meet them on Beacon Street to-day, you would cut dead. Since you have really contrived to civilise yourselves a little in the last century, why do you insist upon falling back on the reputations of a parcel of tagrag farmers who were shot ages before you were born? If I were a Yankee I'd keep mum about them."

"Ah, you may talk, but at least you know America is the greatest country on earth," rejoined my friend with unruffled good-humour. "I'm sure you were delighted with your visit last year."

"I confess to some scenery; beyond that one sees in the States only things which he thanks Heaven he hasn't got at home. America makes Europeans grateful and contented."

"I defy you to put your finger on one feature of civilisation here that does not exist in a superior form in the States. There now!"

"To begin with, then, why did you take the trouble to come over here to get a wife, if there are more desirable wives to be had in Boston?"

"How did you know that?"

"How? Have I heard anything from you this morning except about pagan goddesses?"

"Oh, you mean her? Yes; oh, yes!"

"Good heavens! does the man mean to insinuate that he has any other woman in this hemisphere in his eye?"

"Why, to tell you the truth, my father sent me over here just for that very purpose—that and the pipes."

"What and the pipes?"

"To meet the young lady I am going to marry."

"And is your beautiful pagan the young lady you are to marry, pray?"

"Ah! I just wish she was!" said Jeff very ruefully.

"This is becoming interesting, my young friend. But here's my house: we'll have our breakfast, and then a consultation over our wine. Come in."

V.

I repressed my curiosity during the meal, but when we had settled down to our second bottle and the cigarettes I fixed my eyes on my companion and said—

"Well?"

"Did you see that dive?" asked he.

"Hers?"

"Hers of course Everything I say or do means her, now and for ever, one and inseparable!" cried Jeff, upon whom the wine was evidently beginning to work.

"But what about the other young lady——?"

"Sink the other young lady, sir! I never have seen her, and I never want to."

"Well, then, about the pagan. Did the fog reveal your souls to one another?"

"Now, Campbell, I wish you would please not chaff," said Jeff seriously. "I don't like a man to be always cynical. Is there really nothing sacred to you anywhere? We Bostonians are not brought up so; and this is a sacred subject to me."

"Not more so than to me, my dear fellow. You sha'n't have cause to complain of me again."

"I accept your apology," said Jeff with dignity. "Your health."

We emptied our glasses.

"Who was that handsome middle-aged lady you were talking with?" Jeff asked.

The question rather took me aback. "You are more the traditional Yankee than I had imagined; you pretend to tell a story and only ask a question. As for that lady, I never saw her before in my life. I should fancy her a Pole or an Austrian. But do get on with your story."

"There is no real story with a beginning, middle, and end. Real life doesn't arrange itself in that way."

"There is always a middle, at any rate."

"I will plunge *in medias res*, then. Did you observe her paddling out?"

"To be sure I did."

"And did you divine her object?"

"Well, as to that——"

"My dear Campbell, don't you see that it was a case of *fugit inter salices?* She paddled out in order that I might pursue her."

"Oh! How did you find out that?"

"By intuition," cried the poet enthusiastically. "We are in such complete sympathy, she and I, that I feel what she feels. A motion of the shoulder, a turn of the neck, a flirt of the paddle, all bear a secret meaning to my eye. Why, for a quarter of an hour after starting out this morning, I could see nothing but her back; and you know there isn't ordinarily much—conversation in a person's back."

"I believe you are right, Jeff."

"But in this case," he continued warmly, "I saw through her back all that was going on in her mind."

"Poetic insight. I have heard of it before, but never knew it to act so powerfully as it does with you."

"Yes; and, in proof that I'm not mistaken, she did just what I knew she would do beforehand."

"And what was that?"

"How good this chablis is! The first thing she did was to paddle straight out to sea. She did that to try my faith."

"Did she succeed?"

"A poet's faith can move mountains," said Jeff, a little inconsequently. "Had I been as others—had I been less terribly in earnest—I should have got discouraged or offended and given up the chase. But that is not the Puritan style. I kept right on, and at last I forced her to alter her tactics."

"And all this through the back of her head? Wonderful!"

"Well, so she altered her tactics, and—what do you think?"

"I haven't a glimmering."

"She stopped—short," said Jeff, leaning across the table with his blue eyes wide open and speaking in an impressive under-tone; "and there she sat perfectly still, with her back still turned towards me."

"So that you might continue to read her thoughts?"

"Campbell, I trust you are not scoffing?"

"My dear fellow——"

"You are my friend, but there are some things——"

"Nothing injures friendship so much as unjust suspicions, Jeff," I said, with a solemnity almost equalling his own. He softened at once.

"Forgive me, old fellow; I was hasty. The blood of Bunker Hill, you know. Well, and so I gained upon her—and here's her health, Campbell."

"Bumpers!" said I; and again we set down our glasses empty. I began to feel a little warmed up myself.

"At last I was within ten yards of her. Just then I ran into one of those horrid blue jelly-fish, and it startled me so that I made a splash, and she——"

"Turned round?" I suggested, for he had paused agitatedly.

"Any other woman would have turned round: she did not. She started perceptibly, dipped her paddle on the right side of the canoe, and shot diagonally towards the left. For a moment I saw her in profile."

"Well, didn't she tip you a wink? I beg your pardon, Jeff, upon my word. I mean, did she not, at the moment of the profile, bend upon you a smile or a glance of encouragement?"

"What encouragement did I need? Besides, the time for encouragement had not yet come; I was still at the period of probation."

"Her tacking, then, was a fresh trial of your constancy?"

"Not of my constancy—that was already confirmed—but of another quality, my self-respect. Respect, Campbell, is ever the basis of true love. This was a most critical juncture in our acquaintance. Had I slavishly followed her tack I should have lost more ground morally than I gained materially. No, I did not tack; I kept straight on, and, as she had paused again, I was soon beyond her. It was at that supreme moment that we found ourselves enveloped in the fog—alone together, between sea and heaven!"

"Jeff, this is becoming exciting."

"I kept on. By-and-by, however, I stopped. I could now barely detect the outlines of her canoe through the pallid film of mist; but anon the outlines grew distincter—she was approaching! Right on she came with graceful strength, and paused within a paddle's length.

A moment eye to eye they stayed,
The poet and the pagan maid."

"Jeff, this is poetry."

"A verse I composed at the time. Do you like it?"

"Can you ask? But this suspense is wearing me out. Do, pray, come to the point."

"What point, dear Campbell?"

"Hang it! the point of contact."

"Sir, I fail to understand you," said the majestic Jeff.

"Gammon! Who understands better than a poet the dramatic necessity of a point of contact? Here are your characters lost—I mean, here are your poet and your pagan maid lost in your fog, and staying eye to eye. Beyond reach of outside help, you are all in all to each other. 'Bonjour, countess.' 'Bonjour, monsieur.' 'We appear to be lost.' 'I fear you are fatigued,' she says. 'The delight of conversing with the Countess Almara would suffice to restore me, were that the case.' 'Perhaps, if you were to rest your hand on the gunwale,' she continues. 'You overwhelm me,' murmur you. 'Nay, I would keep you from being overwhelmed,' she smiles. 'You are my guiding star!' you exclaim. 'If I only knew whither to guide you. And mamma will be so anxious,' she sighs. 'Knows the Countess Semaroff that we are together?' you inquire. Just at this instant another of those horrid blue jelly-fish comes along, causing you to give another splash and sink. She screams, stretches out her hand to save you; you catch it, press it impulsively to your lips. . . . Well, there's your point of contact. Now go ahead."

The close and serious attention which Jeff had given to this sally of mine had stimulated me to make it as absurd as possible, and may be that last glass of chablis had something to do with my sprightliness. But in proportion as I warmed Jeff seemed to cool; he leaned his cheek upon his hand, and directed a profound gaze into the bottom of his empty wine-glass. At length he muttered these singular words—

"How curiously things come out."

"But what happened after you kissed her hand?"

"I didn't kiss it," sighed the poet.

"Not after accepting the support of her canoe?"

"I didn't accept it; she didn't offer it."

"Nor speak about it at all?"

"She said nothing; I said nothing: neither of us said anything."

"Then why, in the name of stupefaction, did you take the trouble to get lost in the fog with her? Better have stayed on shore."

"Had I known the Countess Semaroff was there, perhaps I should," said Jeff, looking up.

I coloured in spite of myself. I, a man of five-and-thirty, had been carried away to reveal to this boy the secret of my acquaintance with these ladies. I should now have no excuse to offer for not introducing him. Verily that chablis cut both ways. I hastened to revert to our original topic.

"So there was no point of contact after all?"

"Not what you would call such, O you English materialist," said the poet eloquently. "But our points of view are so incompatible. Is not the soul more than the body? and, if so, is not a look of the eyes more than a touch of the hand? Our spirits met, Campbell, though our earthly frames held aloof."

"But would your spirits have met any less had your earthly frames behaved in a more materialistic and intelligible way?"

Jeff shook his head dreamily.

"You are of those who know not how to enjoy the rose upon its stalk. You must needs cull it and insert it in your *boutonnière*. You are not sensitive enough to apprehend the rarest delight of the *grande passion*—that of regarding the beloved object in her intact state ere the pure sphere of her personality has been invaded by materialistic approach."

"Well, Jeff, it's evident you know more about women than I do. But, admitting what you say, I still maintain (provided your intentions with the Countess are really serious) that you are not taking the nearest way to a matrimonial issue. The flesh is sluggish, but it has its compensations."

The inspired Bostonian took his cigarette between two fingers and waved it in an illustrative manner as he said—

"Suppose, dear Campbell, you were starting on a journey through a delicious tract of country—a winding valley, say—and suppose, before setting out, you climbed a hill commanding this valley, and took a bird's-eye view of your proposed route. Would you enjoy that journey more or less for having anticipated it spiritually by that glance?"

"Ha! methinks I conceive you. Your psychological business is merely a sort of barmecide feast, designed to whet the palate for solid viands to follow. Having brought the transcendental part of your love-making to a happy issue, you now propose to pursue the game upon a practical basis?"

Jeff blew a serene cloud and regarded me with a complacent smile.

"Yes, I mean to marry her now," said he.

"And leave the other without even a bird's-eye view?"

"By-the-by, I must tell you about that. You know I was saying this morning that the Russian commissioner, our friend, had married. Well, he had a daughter, and this daughter and I were by our respective papas destined for each other."

"I see—a union of policy, like those of the royal families of Europe."

"To me the idea of utilising the sacred covenant of marriage in the interest of mere business always seemed horrible and revolting. I told my father so."

"And he, I'll venture to say, told you you were a sentimental young idiot."

"If that had been all——" said Jeff, wagging his head significantly.

"Well, what was there more?"

"Only this. After I had protested one day, with all the eloquence I could muster, against the cold-blooded inhumanity of binding down two fresh young souls, who had never seen each other, to such a contract, he replied (you remember his dogmatic, high-handed way), 'Either you marry her or you live on three hundred pounds per annum.'"

"In that case," said I, not without a secret feeling of relief, "you certainly won't marry the pagan maid?"

"Why not?"

"Because, to go no further, you won't get her to take you at three hundred pounds per annum. You don't know what living on such an income means. I do; and I can tell you that, even without a wife and children, it's no joke."

"But, dear Campbell, you seem to forget that I love her."

"Take the advice of a man who has seen more of the world than you have, and forget it yourself. I am talking seriously now, Jeff, and for your good. You do not love this Countess Almara, and, to be frank with you, it is not possible that she ever should care for you. You have a strong will; use it on the side of common sense and—filial piety. Where were you to meet your intended?"

"Paris was the rendezvous appointed, but——"

"Pack up your traps and be off to Paris this very afternoon."

"But it wasn't for a week yet that——"

"Never mind. Get away from here; that's the main point. Don't remain within reach of temptation."

"Campbell, this is not temptation; it's a foregone conclusion. I am going to marry the Countess Almara. Our meeting here was fated. I shall not go to Paris."

"But I tell you the Countess Almara won't have you."

Jeff was silent awhile. Presently he looked up and said—

"How do you know she won't?"

"Well—never mind," I thought it prudent to reply.

There was another silence. Suddenly Jeff said, "Campbell, if I went to Paris would you go with me?"

This turn embarrassed me again. It would not exactly suit my convenience to go to Paris that afternoon. There were some things I wanted to—attend to. I wondered whether my young friend was becoming suspicious.

"Could I be of any service to you there?" I inquired.

"After all I don't know that you could," said he after a moment's reflection. "Besides, thanking you all the same for your advice, dear Campbell, I've made up my mind to stay here. I can never love, much less marry, any other woman than the Countess Almara."

There was a certain element of nobility in the placid obstinacy of the young fellow, who was committing the amazing folly of resigning ten thousand a year for the sake of a girl to whom he had never spoken, and until the last two or three days never seen, that touched me a little and made me resolve not to let him ruin himself without another effort to save him.

"Jeff, you are an ass," I said bluntly. "Your brain has been addled with the pursuit of what you are pleased to imagine poetry, until you have grown to believe that a man can live on love and lyrics instead of on beefsteak and bullion. You say you can never love any but the Countess Almara; I say it is, at all events, your duty to try. Go to Paris, and at least make the acquaintance of the young lady your father has selected for you. If you find her unlovable, at all events that will be some satisfaction."

"Thank you very much, Campbell, but I can't, really."

"You persist in running your head against a wall?"

Jeff smiled mildly and said nothing.

"All right; *liberavi animam meam.* I wash my hands of you. One thing: I can't take the responsibility of giving you an introduction."

"You know them both, then?"

"Well, I have not been presented to the young lady yet, but——"

"I shall be happy to present you when I know her myself," said Jeff forgivingly; "and when we are married I trust you and I will be better friends than ever."

"Oh! fathomless self-conceit and fatuity of Bostonian youth!" I muttered to myself as I lit a final cigarette and preceded the poet to the door. "Poor Jeff! upon my soul I'm sorry for him!"

And when we parted outside I shook his hand with a feeling not far removed from respect mingling with my impatience, and I watched him walk away with a kindly hope that the Providence which presides over children and fools might keep a beneficent eye upon the poor little poet.

Leaves from the Laurels of Molière.

In the time of Louis le Grand there stood on the banks of the Seine, on the site now known as the Place Napoléon III., the famous Hôtel Rambouillet. Its noble owner married, somewhere about 1630, a woman of high birth, amiable disposition, and of cultivated tastes, named Catherine de Vivonne. Everything which refinement, luxury, and wealth could suggest was to be found in the *salons* of Madame de Rambouillet, who took especial pains to attract thither all the celebrities of her time. Among her votaries were La Rochefoucauld, Jean Chapelain, the Abbé Cotin, the oracle of *politesse* Voiture, Jean Louis de Balzac, the poet Segrais, Madame de Sévigné, her correspondent Bussy Rabutin, the mother of the great Condé, his sister Madame de Longueville, and others whose claims to remembrance have long since been surrendered. Such were the *dilettanti* who assembled ostensibly to criticise literature and art, men and manners, but really to take their places in the history of Jean Baptiste Poquelin. The fame of these social gatherings spread through France, and an invitation to the Hôtel Rambouillet became an object of ambition. But the difficulty of obtaining an *entrée* must have been considerable, for we have it on the authority of one of its members that it was absolutely necessary to be acquainted with that nadir of research, "*le fin des choses, le grand fin, le fin du fin,*" and also to be introduced by one of its members, known by the title of "*le grand introducteur des ruelles.*" But in spite of the rigour of these ordinances a vast concourse assembled daily within the Hôtel Rambouillet, where they talked a great deal of dialectical nonsense. They gravely debated, like John of Salisbury, on the most frivolous subjects. Deep research was employed in order to guess the most inane riddle. Interminable speeches were delivered relative to the metaphysical attributes of love; and every variety of sentiment, human and divine, was discussed with a ludicrous refinement of expression, and a pompous parade of learning. In the words of La Bruyère, the members of this hermaphrodite areopagus "left to the vulgar the art of intelligible speech." Abstruse subjects led to others even more obscure, over which this precious society cast the mantle of enigma; each sally of wit being greeted with rounds of applause. It was not necessary to be gifted with either good sense, a good memory, or, indeed, the humblest capacity, in order to shine at these *réunions*; it only needed a certain amount of wit, and that of no high order. The customs which prevailed in this Valhalla of folly were not less extraordinary than the discourse of its members. The women affected an exaggeration of romantic sentiment. It was their custom to address one another in terms of endearment, such as "*ma chère*," "*précieuse*," designations by which the whole *coterie* became gradually known throughout France. These "*précieuses*" do not appear to have reserved their buffooneries exclusively for the Hôtel Rambouillet where they were understood, for we learn from a contemporaneous author that they kept up their "customs" even in their own homes. They slept during the best hours of the day, and paid ceremonious, not to say inconvenient, visits at nightfall. They lisped in conversation; and, to the scandal of their godfathers and godmothers, exchanged their Christian names for those of pagan divinities. During the *séances* each goddess sat enthroned in a gorgeous alcove, within whose mystic depths she was wont to ponder on things esthetic, or worldly. To heighten the absurdity of her situation, she was constantly attended by one of the sterner sex who, in his capacity of *alcoviste*, bore the inspirations of her genius to the surrounding alcoves. "Les précieuses," says the Abbé Cotin, himself a member of this *coterie*, "les précieuses s'envoyaient visiter par un rondeau ou un énigme, et c'est par là que commençaient toutes les conversations."

One night during the summer of 1659—a memorable year in the annals of genius—while the "*précieuses*" were in conclave assembled, and rounds of applause hailed the explosion of an impromptu, the door of this temple of Reason suddenly opened to admit a young man of middle height, dark complexion, and grave deportment, clad in the picturesque bourgeoise costume of the period. Madame de Rambouillet, who was seated on her throne at the far end of the room, rose to receive her visitor, and, by way of making him feel more at his ease in a strange company, overpowered him with the volubility of her flattery. He who stood momentarily abashed in the midst of this throng of tuft-hunters and dolts, who formed the "cynosure of neighbouring eyes," was none other than the comedian Molière—he who afterwards dealt the death-blow to the dunces of his epoch. At this time Molière was but known as the manager of an itinerant troupe, and as a man who in addition to considerable histrionic power had also evinced a talent for composition. He was welcomed by Madame de Rambouillet as the author of *L'Etourdi* and *Le Dépit Amoureux*, and as such took his place among the celebrities of his time. It is well for both England and France, I had almost said for the common sense of the civilised world, that two such men as Gifford and Molière had the courage and the genius to crush, each in his own time, that hydra of bathos who periodically threatens to devour reason. That which William Gifford effected, in the early part of this century, by the publication of his merciless *Baviad and Mæviad*, Molière achieved more than two centuries before him, with the *Précieuses Ridicules*." But the venture of Molière was of a far more courageous nature than that of Gifford. The latter was an author of renown, and a man of good position in the republic of letters. The former, on the other hand, was but a poor comedian from the provinces, who had come to Paris in search of the fortune he had failed to find elsewhere, and who depended for his success very much upon the patronage of the very *coterie* whose extravagances he, on public grounds, so bitterly resented. A few months after his reception by Madame de Rambouillet, Molière made his triumphant assault upon the false taste and follies of his time. The title of his play excited general curiosity; there was a great demand for places. Ménage, himself a member of the society so severely handled by Molière, was present at the first representation of *Les Précieuses Ridicules.* He tells us* that Mademoiselle de Rambouillet, her sister Madame de Grignan, and the whole of the Rambouillet *coterie* attended. Its opening scenes were received with silence. None knew whether to be offended or not—whether to ignore the taunt or to repel it. At length an old man rose slowly from his seat, and in a voice trembling with enthusiasm cried: "Courage, Molière! Voilà la véritable comédie!"† The truth of these words has indeed been echoed by posterity. Ménage was so satisfied with the success of the piece as to be certain of its effect on the public. On leaving the theatre he seized Chapelain's arm, and exclaimed, "We are both guilty of the follies which have been satirised with so much power and good sense; henceforward we must burn what we have adored, and adore what we have burnt." These words were amply verified. Molière's *chef-d'œuvre* dealt a fatal blow at the Hôtel Rambouillet—people began to see the absurdity of the situation, and the "précieuses" were laughed into obscurity. The success of this piece was so great, and so urgent were the demands for admission, that on the second representation the company doubled its prices. To the applause of society that of the Court was soon joined, and the fame of Molière spread to the Pyrenees. Molière was astounded at this unexpected triumph. He is said to have exclaimed: "I need no longer study Plato or Terence, nor pore over the fragments of Menander—henceforth I will study the world."

Although *Les Précieuses Ridicules* did not entirely extirpate all the pedantic nonsense which characterized the literary clique at which it was levelled, it greatly diminished the buffoonery which prevailed at the Hôtel Rambouillet. A few blue-stockings survived all the ridicule their conduct had provoked, and gave Molière an excuse for that second assault so successfully made in his charming comedy *Les Femmes Savantes.*

Towards the close of 1660, Molière's theatre, the Petit Bourbon, which had grown so popular under his guidance, was pulled down in order to make room for the colonnade of the Louvre. This would have been a serious blow to its proprietor, had not Louis XIV. graciously placed at his disposal the Salle of the Palais Royal, constructed by

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* *Menagiana,* edit. 1715, vol. ii. p. 65.

† Grimarest, p. 36. *Mémoires sur la Vie et les Ouvrages de Molière,* p. 24.

Cardinal Richelieu for the representation of his doleful tragedy *Mirame* —a play which not only cost its author a fabulous sum of money, but fatally affected his reputation as a man of wit.* Here, also, after Molière's death, were given the first of those lyric tragedies now known as operas. Alas! alas! this memorable theatre, associated with the fame of both Racine and Molière, has since those palmy days been twice rebuilt and as often destroyed by fire. Here Molière produced no less than thirty of his comedies, and here he struck the first sparks of that Promethean fire which burns for him eternally. Within this little theatre, also, in times when England was drunk with joy at the restoration of the Stuarts, the unhappy consort of Charles the First witnessed the first representation of *L'Ecole des Maris*.

In the autumn of 1661 Molière produced *Les Fâcheux*, whose conception furnishes an example of the fertility of his genius and its rapidity of execution. After the first performance of this play, while the King and Molière conversed apart, the latter doubtless receiving his august master's compliments, a certain Monsieur de Soyecourt, his Majesty's *grand veneur*, happened to pass. "Look!" whispered the monarch; "there is a character whom you have not yet drawn." The hint was not lost on Molière, who, without making any reply, in less than twenty-four hours introduced a new scene into his play at the expense of the gentleman above named. The King, who appears to have been somewhat vain of his wit, was highly gratified at the thought that he himself had furnished the suggestion, and at last began almost to regard the piece as peculiarly his own. Madame de Sévigné has immortalised Soyecourt by an anecdote which gives us a notion of the great original. "On one occasion," says this talented authoress, "while Monsieur de Soyecourt was passing the night in an apartment with several other courtiers, this personage persisted in talking platitudes with one of his companions until the small hours of morning. This would not have been so objectionable, but that he would shout all he had to say at the very top of his voice. Another gentleman, who seems to have been more inclined to sleep than to listen, at last exclaimed reproachfully: 'Eh! morbleu tais-toi; tu m'empêches de dormir.' 'Est-ce que je te parle à toi?' naïvely retorted Monsieur de Soyecourt."

But the *grand veneur* had his deserts—his victim was avenged, and the world laughed merrily when this "grand original" figured as the chasseur in *Les Fâcheux*. This piece appears to have been composed, got up, and performed within a fortnight—a performance which fully justified the couplet of Boileau:—

Rare et sublime esprit, dont la fertile veine
Ignore, en écrivant, le travail et la peine.

We now come to an incident in Molière's career to which brief allusion must be made. Though fortunate in his success as a comedian, as an author, and in the possession of patrons, he was correspondingly unfortunate in his domestic affairs. When forty years of age he married a girl of seventeen, named Armande Béjart, a member of his troupe. Disparity in age, and the temptations to which this young and handsome actress was exposed, rendered this marriage unhappy. Taschereau doubts whether they enjoyed so much as an hour's contentment; but this at least is certain—Molière's impudent and heartless neglect of his bride fostered the coldness, and strengthened the dislike, which subsequently paved the way to mutual infidelity. Though historians have condemned the conduct of Madame Molière, they touch with gentleness the errors of her husband, for whom they are pleased to advance the hackneyed plea of genius,—a title which only his personal enemies have ventured to deny him. Moore has told us that genius has its prerogative—an assertion which it is not in my power to question. But this at least is certain—that genius, by reason of its lustre, should be doubly circumspect in its conduct. It should remember with what eagerness the world watches for every divergence from the paths of virtue, and how loud are the condemnations of the envious. It may be asked, What constitutes genius? Despite the brilliant examples which adorn our literature and that of other lands, we are told that the faculty pertains not less to the quiescent than to the active power. Byron, in the *Prophecy of Dante*, says:—

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* Taschereau, vol. i. p. 51. 1825.

> Many are poets who have never penn'd
> Their inspiration, and perchance the best:
> They felt, and loved, and died, but would not lend
> Their thoughts to meaner things; they compress'd
> The god within them, and rejoined the stars
> Unlaurell'd upon earth . . .

It may then be presumed that genius belongs to that undefinable and often uncreative humanity, which lives before its time. To rise, like Molière, above the fashions, the prejudices, and the follies of our contemporaries, constitutes a prophetic nature; and *prophecy* is as near an approach to what men call "genius" as it is possible for humanity to attain.

In the summer of 1662 Molière, in his capacity as "valet de chambre du roi," followed Louis le Grand to Lorraine. He was at this time pondering over a comedy which was to assail hypocrisy, and the following anecdote may not be out of place:—The King was in the habit of restricting himself, during his campaigns, to one repast a day. On a certain evening—albeit one of the days set apart by the Church for fasting—the King felt so hungry that he resolved to break his rule. Being sociably inclined, Louis invited his old friend Bishop Péréfixe to keep him company. The Bishop, however, put on a sanctimonious air, and drawing himself up to his full height, not only coldly declined the King's invitation, but took occasion to inform his Majesty that it was not his custom to regale on fast days. This reply excited the risible muscles of a courtier, who, in spite of every endeavour to suppress his laughter, attracted the King's notice. When the Bishop retired Louis was fain to know the cause of his courtier's merriment. "Sire," replied the culprit, "your Majesty need not be anxious on the score of the Bishop's appetite;" whereupon he proceeded to give minute details of a sumptuous repast which the prelate had that day enjoyed, and at which he, the offender, had been present. At the mention of each *plat* the good-humoured Louis exclaimed, "Le pauvre homme!" varying the tone of his voice in a manner irresistibly comic.

This incident was not lost on Molière, who happened to be present, and eighteen months afterwards Louis XIV. beheld himself reflected in the amusing scene between Orgon and Dorine. This trifling circumstance, which made the prince in some measure instrumental to Molière's glory, materially assisted in removing the proscription which a nation of hypocrites had contrived against *Tartufe*.[*]

When Molière returned to Paris, he was waited on by a youth, manuscript in hand, who begged the favour of an audience. The generous comedian, with outstretched hand, received the ominous roll, and scanned it narrowly. It was poor stuff, we are told—a tragedy founded on a fable—heavy, spiritless, motionless; but Molière read it through, and highly praised its author.

"You are young," said he, "and you have a future; be patient, labour will reward you with success. But stay—one cannot live on flattery; I see you are not rich: accept this little sum, and *au revoir*." The little sum was one hundred louis-d'or—the young man Racine.

The condition of comedians in the seventeenth century has been characterised as infamous. Even the acknowledged genius of Molière was insufficient to override the popular prejudice against his profession. He had to submit to endless annoyances at the hands of his associates at court, who never failed to make him feel his position acutely. It was one day brought to the notice of Louis that some of his attendants had gone so far as to refuse to sit at the same board with Molière. His Majesty resolved forthwith to instruct them in politeness. He caused the great comedian to be summoned, and, much to every one's surprise, invited him to dine at his own table. Immediately in front of the King was a chicken, a wing of which he politely handed to Molière, reserving its fellow for himself. The courtiers were dumfounded at this unusual condescension.

"You see me," said the King to those present; "you see me occupied in giving Molière something to eat, for I understand that he is not deemed fit company for my attendants." This lesson had the required effect, and Molière was ever after welcome to dine when and where he pleased. The King's evident partiality for Molière earned him the respect of the whole Court, where his popularity rose to a height only equalled by his fame abroad. Louis commissioned him to write a comedy for the amusement of the Royal household. The result of this command was *Le Mariage Forcé*—a play founded on an incident in the career of De Grammont—in the performance of which not only the Court, but the King himself joined. Louis XIV. figured in the ballet, a proceeding which provoked the satire of Racine, who in *Britannicus* addressed the King as follows :—

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[*] *Œuvres de Molière, avec les remarques de Bret*, 1773.

> Ignorez-vous tout ce qu'ils osent dire ?
> Néron, s'ils en sont crus, n'est point né pour l'empire.

During the Versailles fêtes of May 1664, Molière presented for the first time his inimitable comedy *Tartufe*. The vein of hypocrisy runs deeper, perhaps, at Court than in any other section of society, and the mirror which Molière now held up to nature gave dire offence to his audience. The author of *Don Juan* has well said : "In these days the profession of hypocrite possesses marvellous advantages. Hypocrisy is an art wherein imposture commands respect ; for though it may be discovered, none dare say a word against it. All other vices are exposed to censure, every one is free to attack them ; but hypocrisy is a privileged vice, which shuts the world's mouth with its hand, and revels in sovereign impunity."

Molière was held up to the vengeance of both God and man as an atheist. The popular clamour against *Tartufe* was irresistible, and its author was compelled to withdraw it after the first performance. In justice to Louis XIV., it must be stated that this persecution against Molière entirely failed to command his sympathy. Though compelled by public opinion to prohibit the performance of *Tartufe*, the King made amends by promoting Molière's troupe to the envied position of "comedians to the King," and attached Molière to his person, with an annual salary of seven thousand francs.

It is interesting to note that up to the middle of the seventeenth century, soldiers were admitted to theatres without payment. This privilege was obviously unjust to the people, who, owing to the scant accommodation at command, were frequently unable to find seats. Molière, on behalf of his players, appealed to the King for reform in this particular, and his request was granted.

But the soldiers rebelled. They came in large bodies to the door, and demanded admission. The door-keeper at the Palais Royal, of course, protested ; but being at length compelled to yield, he threw down his sword and cried, "Miséricorde !" It availed him not. The soldiers, infuriated by his previous resistance, drew their sabres and cut him to pieces. Over his body they entered the theatre, and went in quest of the actors. It was resolved to subject men and women to similar treatment. The first person they met was a youth named Béjart, who was disguised as an old man for the piece about to be played. With great presence of mind Béjart exclaimed : "Gentlemen ! at least spare an old man of seventy-five, who can at best have but a short time to live." They were not deceived, but his wit calmed them; and at this moment Molière came upon the scene. In a few words, and without the slightest sign of fear, he pointed out the danger of disobeying the lawful commands of the King, and by his manner so impressed the rioters that order ensued. But the excitement was not so easily allayed. The actors fled through every hole and alley. One prodigious personage, Hubert by name, contrived to pierce a hole, through which he promptly forced his head and shoulders, leaving the rest to chance; "but," says Grimarest, "jamais le reste ne put suivre," so the wretched man was reluctantly drawn back into the theatre by his comrades.

Molière, who levelled his satire against humbug in every form, did not spare the doctors. Indeed, from all accounts, the medical profession gave ample cause for sarcasm. Though pathology was, in the seventeenth century, but little understood, its deficiency was veiled by the vilest affectation of wisdom. The "medicine man," mounted on a mule, paced up and down the streets, gabbling Latin and Greek to those foolish enough to consult him. Whenever he deigned to use his native language, he managed so to interlard his speech with scholastic bombast and scientific expressions as to render himself unintelligible. The following verse conveys a just notion of the class to which Molière so successfully devoted his attention :—

Affecter un air pédantesque,
Cracher du grec et du latin,
Longue perruque, habit grotesque,
De la fourrure et du satin,
Tout cela réuni fait presque
Ce qu'on appelle un médecin!

Molière followed the example of De Montagne, and wounded the susceptibilies of the "faculty" not only in *L'Amour Médecin* and *Le Malade Imaginaire*, but in several other comedies. All Paris laughed with Molière, and the quacks had a bad time of it. In order to give some idea of the insults to which these unfortunate wretches were subjected, I will repeat an anecdote which has been pronounced authentic, and the truth of which there is no reason to doubt. One day while Guénaut, physician in ordinary to Louis XIV., was driving in his coach through the streets of Paris, he happened to be detained by a block of carriages. The driver of a public vehicle, who knew Guénaut by sight, bawled out to his fellows: "*Laissons passer monsieur le docteux; c'est li qui nous a fait la grâce de tuer le cardinal.*" A remark which reminds us of the words inscribed by some Roman wag over the door of Adrian's physician—"Here dwells the liberator of his country."

In the last year of a life passed in combating hypocrisy, Molière, broken in health and spirits, expressed himself thus:—"Un médecin est un homme que l'on paie pour conter des fariboles dans la chambre d'un malade jusqu'à ce que la nature l'ait guéri ou que les remèdes l'aient tué" *—words which show with what tenacity he clung to the convictions he had so often expressed in his comedies.

Close to the little Gothic church at Auteuil, which soon, alas! will be levelled with the ground, there stands a villa. This house, though "new vamped," as our fathers would have said, is as interesting as the church itself. Here, on sultry summer nights, came Molière, Boileau, Lafontaine, Chapelle, Racine, and others whose names have been inscribed on the tablets of Fame. Chapelle appears to have been the leading spirit at these gatherings; his rollicking humour and unflagging wit cast a charm over a society whose conversation might otherwise have been a trifle too learned. Chapelle had a great fault, however, and one which, to a certain extent, annoyed his companions. He was too fond of his bottle—a weakness for which he was once taken seriously to task by Boileau. They met in the street. Chapelle appeared convinced of the truth and justice of Boileau's admonition. He promised to give his friend's warning serious attention, but in order, as he said, to talk more at their ease, he invited Boileau to enter a house close at hand, which chanced to be a cabaret. Chapelle, according to custom, ordered a bottle of wine—then another—which was in due course followed by a third. While thus employed he kept on replenishing Boileau's glass, which the good man, wholly absorbed by his own homily, as promptly drained. The result might have been foreseen. When every invective against "inflaming wine—pernicious to mankind," had been exhausted, neither the moralist nor his auditor could stand! Such was Chapelle, the gayest dog in that giddy company. Such was Molière's most intimate friend; one who loved him truly, and who stood by him through every blast of affliction, every curse of prejudice, to the very last. Of the revelry which ran riot in that little villa at Auteuil I have not the space to speak. Let the reader turn to the glowing pages of Voltaire, Grimarest, and Saint-Marc, pages which will amply reward him for the trouble.

I have already briefly alluded to Molière's generous conduct towards young Racine—generosity which has been rarely equalled and never surpassed in the history of letters. It was that sympathy of kindred genius which courts rather than fears rivalry. We have seen Racine admitted by Molière to the intimacy of Boileau, Lafontaine, and the great spirits of that great age, favours for which Molière had a right to expect something like gratitude. But I regret to say that the only return made by Racine consisted in the record, after Molière's death, of a scandal, the truth of which impartial history has abundantly disproved. I should not have mentioned this baseness, but that it forms a particle of that mosaic of human existence, whose completeness would be marred by the absence of a single stone. It may be a worthless pebble in itself, and yet its presence is required in order to form a sombre contrast to the glory of

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* Grimarest, p. 74.

Molière. Generosity is the child of genius. Molière's benevolence was not confined to any particular object, it was the outcome of a nature easily susceptible to compassion. On one occasion, having been importuned by a poor comedian named Mondorge for means to rejoin his troupe, Molière gave him twenty-four pistoles and several splendid theatrical costumes. On another, while driving with Charpentier, a poor man at the roadside implored his charity. Molière unhesitatingly threw him a piece of money and drove off. The carriage had gone some distance when Charpentier observed the mendicant running after them, making violent gestures. They ordered the coachman to pull up. When the poor man arrived, breathless, he exclaimed, "Sir, you are probably not aware that you gave me a louis-d'or—I am come to return it." "Stay, my friend,"—replied Molière—"*en voilà un autre.*" As they drove off he whispered to Charpentier, "*Où la vertu va-t-elle se nicher?*"

On August 5, 1667, *Tartufe*, which had for so long been proscribed, was for the first time publicly performed, under its new title, *L'Imposteur*. It received enthusiastic approval, a circumstance which so disconcerted all the *tartufes* in Paris, that they once more prevailed upon Parliament to interdict its performance. This satire was all the more pungent on account of Molière selecting the Abbé de Roquet for delineation in its principal rôle. This individual, afterwards elevated to the Bishopric of Autun, was one of Madame de Longueville's admirers, and famous for his profligacy. Fielding has well said: "Let a man abuse a physician, he makes another physician his friend; let him rail at a lawyer, another will plead his cause gratis; but let him once attack a *hornet*, or a priest, both nests are instantly sure to be upon him." This was a case in point. Without an instant's hesitation the entire priesthood of France rose like a mighty wave against Molière, and swept his obnoxious satire from the stage. The clamour raised against its immorality was as incessant as causeless. Its sole offence consisted in a too merciless exposure of the cant and hypocrisy rampant at the time. In after years Molière had his revenge. *Tartufe* revived, never more to die, but to form an eternal monument of genius. *L'Avare* and *Les Femmes Savantes* followed close upon the footprints of *Tartufe.* Avarice, that "fine old gentlemanly vice," and the pedantry to which I have elsewhere alluded, gave the indefatigable satirist ample scope for derision. The upper and middle classes, ever at variance, were never more estranged from each other than at this time. Not only did they view the fitness of life from opposite standpoints, but the natural jealousy which exists between them was heightened by a want of that sympathy which only a community of interests can awaken. The gallants who infested court and society dissipated without hesitation the heritage of their fathers. They sought fortune at gaming-tables, and wasted what was left of their leisure in the pursuit of amorous intrigues. The middle class, on the other hand, were for the most part content to pass their days in seclusion. They learnt to read and write, not for mental culture, but for the purpose of promoting mercantile ventures, and passed their lives storing up riches, wherein they saw the only chance of happiness. It was essentially an age of avarice, and the ridicule hurled at Harpagon was but an appeal to reason. The miser's grief at the loss of his money-chest has afforded, and will continue to afford, merriment to posterity. This play, in 1733, was imported into England by Fielding, who infused much genuine wit into his adaptation. The *Avare* pleased instantly, and had a long run on the English stage.

Les Femmes Savantes forms a sequel to *Les Précieuses Ridicules*, to which it is in every respect superior. The characters "Trissotin" and "Vadius," drawn from life—the former Abbé Cotin, the latter Ménage—might, with but little change of dress and scene, figure among the poetasters of to-day.

Savez-vous en quoi Cotin
Diffère de Trissotin ?
Cotin a fini ses jours,
Trissotin vivra toujours.

The success of this piece was so palpable, and the state of Molière's health so precarious, that his friends urged him to give up the stage and devote himself exclusively to composition.

The Académie Française offered to make him a member, and commissioned Boileau to ascertain his views. "Votre santé," said Boileau, "dépérit, parce que le métier du comédien vous épuise; que n'y renoncez-vous?" "Hélas!" replied Molière, with a sigh, "c'est le point d'honneur." The point of honour consisted in not abandoning those poor actors who relied solely on him for their daily bread.* It was this point of honour to which Molière clung to the last, that he so frequently urged as an excuse for wasting his abilities on compositions which were sometimes unworthy of his genius. "If I worked for honour and glory," he said one day, "my works would have a different tendency. But it behoves me to address the groundlings in suitable language, and to keep them amused in order to support my troupe. Lofty sentiments and purity of style would be a mere waste of time—my poor comedians would starve."

Molière's last work, *Le Malade Imaginaire*, appeared in the early part of 1673. Its success was not for one moment doubtful. At its fourth representation Molière, who so admirably sustained the chief character, "Argan," burst a blood-vessel. The audience noticed the change in his demeanour, but the courage of Molière carried him through the piece. When the curtain fell on the last scene of this inimitable comedy its author sank exhausted to the ground. Four porters bore him gently to his house in the Rue de Richelieu, where he remained for some hours insensible. With returning consciousness sprang a desire to make his peace with God, and Molière bade his attendants summon the pastor of St. Eustache. This divine not only refused his services, but sternly forbade his assistants to visit the dying comedian. After considerable delay a priest was found, but the good man only reached his post to find Molière speechless. Those precious moments which precede death had been wantonly wasted. That priceless consolation which lightens the heart of its burthens was denied to the man who had scourged the hypocrites and empirics of his time. Molière, left to struggle against Death and Doubt on the very threshold of the grave, at length quitted the confines of passion and prejudice on February 17, 1673. He was not alone. At his side stood two Sisters of Charity, whose gentleness in this supreme hour amply requited the generosity which, we are told, they never failed to awaken in the author of *Tartufe*.

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* *Mémoires sur la Vie de Racine*, 1747, p. 121.

One would have supposed the Church to have reached the limits of persecution when it denied its consolations. Not so. The Archbishop of Paris—Harlay de Champvalon—whose debaucheries were the common talk of the town, and the tenour of whose life was a scandal to his order, absolutely refused to sanction the last rites of the Church. He decreed that Molière be buried like a dog. History says: "Le comédien vertueux ne put trouver grâce auprès de ce comédien hypocrite." Chapelle's indignation knew no bounds. He hurled the weight of his genius at the altar of prejudice, and flooded the town with a torrent of reproach. The following verse was written at the time:—

Puisqu'à Paris on dénie
La terre, après le trépas,
A ceux qui, pendant leur vie,
Ont joué la comédie,
Pourquoi ne jette-t-on pas
Les bigots à la voirie?
Ils sont dans le même cas.*

By the King's order this decree was in some measure set aside, and the Archbishop consented to Molière's burial on condition that his body be taken direct to the cemetery without resting at the church. This seemed like a concession, but the wily prelate had his little plot already hatched. He gave strict orders to the pastor of St. Eustache to refuse his ministry, and at the same time caused a rabble to assemble at Molière's door, so as to prevent the coffin passing down the street. Molière's widow, whose despair may well be imagined, appealed to the rabble in vain. She was at length advised to throw a few "broad pieces" to the crowd. She did so, and showers of *sous* to boot. The effect was miraculous! not only was the coffin permitted to pass unmolested, but the mob—which a moment before had vowed to obstruct—now turned its head towards Montmartre, and solemnly followed the body to its haven. In addition to these mercenaries, one hundred persons, mostly his friends, each bearing a lighted torch, reverently escorted the mortal remains of Molière in silence to the grave.

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* *Récréations Littéraires.* Cizeron-Rival, p. 72.

Justice to William.

A few months since I gave the readers of the Cornhill Magazine a short discourse on the Adventures of an English Christian Name, in which I traced the varying fortunes of the word John from the period of its first introduction amongst us to the present day. The number of letters with which I was inundated upon the subject immediately afterwards, convinced me that the history of Christian Names was not without interest to a wide circle of readers; and I must take this opportunity of apologising to such of my correspondents as my engagements prevented me from answering at the time. But I was much struck by one coincidence in all these letters; each of my unknown friends was anxious that I should devote a similar article to the elucidation of his or her own cognomen. Unfortunately, the number of pages in this periodical being strictly limited, I am unable to comply with a variety of requests which would compel the editor to swell the present number to the dimensions of a volume in the "Encyclopædia Britannica." There is one name, however, in favour of which I must really make an exception, if only in self-defence. Since the publication of that harmless paper, life has been made a burden to me by every William of my acquaintance. There are more Williams than Johns in England at this moment, and they feel aggrieved at the implied slight I have cast upon their clan. I have been so often asked when I was going to do justice to William that I dread the very appearance of an initial W upon a card, until I have learnt that it merely stands for Walter Jones, or Wilkins Micawber. Accordingly, I propose to-day to wipe out my obligations to every bearer of the name in England or elsewhere, and to offer my sincerest apologies for previous neglect. I will make the *amende honorable* to William with all possible expedition.

Before I begin, however, I may perhaps be pardoned if I mention what was the first circumstance which directed my attention to the subject of personal names; because it will serve to show what valuable aid they often give in settling ethnological or linguistic questions, and may thus arouse a rational interest in nomenclature even amongst those hard-headed persons who consider the study of such trifles as unscientific and somewhat childish. I once had a friend whose name was Ready. Happening to talk with him one day about the origin of the word in question, I suggested, with the glibness born of ignorance, that some one of his ancestors must have derived the nickname from his habitual punctuality; and I instanced what I thought the analogous case of "Ethelred the Unready." Unfortunately for me—or, perhaps, I should rather say fortunately—my friend knew a great deal more about the matter than I did, and quashed my simple theory by a statement of facts. First of all, he explained to me that Æthelred was called *Unredy* because he was lacking in *rede* or counsel; so that the epithet might better be modernised into "the Ill-advised," or "the Incapable." Next, he showed me, by the aid of a few family documents in his possession, that the original name of his ancestors had been Meredith, or, to write it Welsh fashion, Maredydd. Now in Wales, the accent is always thrown on the last syllable but one,—the penultimate as we say in Latin prosody. So Merédith is pronounced much as though it rhymed with "weddeth." A couple of hundred years ago, one of these Welsh Merédiths settled in Staffordshire; but as he kept close, apparently, to the original pronunciation of his name, it was anglicised by his neighbours, not into the usual Méredith (which is formed on the regular English rule of throwing the accent backward), but into Meready. Careless utterance soon corrupted that sound to M'ready, and finally to Ready. The four stages—Maredydd, Meredith, Meready, and Ready—were all to be found consecutively in my friend's documents. I may add that such changes have seldom taken place amongst educated families at so late a date; but in the days before the Renaissance they are very clearly traceable by similar evidence. Thus many modern Chumleys have gone through all the variations of Cholmondely, Cholmdely, Cholmley, and Chumley.

This instance set me thinking upon the origin of surnames, and I soon found that I could not get back any distance in the search without a previous investigation of their predecessors, our Christian Names. The more deeply I went into the subject the more convinced did I become of its great value as an elucidator of historical or ethnical problems; and when I began to read the early form of our language which we foolishly call Anglo-Saxon—it is really English in its purest shape, unadulterated by French or Latin elements—I found that a correct comprehension of nomenclature was indispensable to the right understanding of our early history. Therefore I shall make no apology for a few more preliminary remarks upon the general method involved.

You will see at once, from the case of my friend Ready, that we cannot safely proceed by guess-work, but must seek the evidence of written documents for the original forms of every name. Let us take an extreme instance of the opposite mode of procedure. One of my correspondents, on the occasion of my last paper, gravely objected to the derivation of Wilkinson there given from Wilkin, the diminutive of William, and asserted that it really meant "a son of one of the kin of Will." Furthermore, he was of opinion that the word "William" itself arose from the chance answer of a certain Will, who, on being asked his name, answered, "Will I am."* Of course, I need hardly tell you that history shows us Williams before it shows us Wills; that the latter word means nothing intelligible by itself, and so could not possibly have been the original form; and that William is only a corruption of the High German Wilhelm, concerning which, as the melodramatists say, more anon.

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* Lest I should be suspected of romancing, I must say that this derivation was seriously proposed, in writing, by an educated man, who had evidently given a good deal of attention to surnames, without the aid of scientific method.

But how, it will be asked, can you get sufficient materials for comparing and observing the early shape of various names? Upon this subject a great deal of misconception generally prevails. Few people have any notion of the immense number of legal or other documents—charters, grants of land, deeds of sale or exchange, records of facts, and wills or testaments—which still exist of the period before the Norman Conquest. They think that the only names we possess of that epoch are the few mentioned in the English Chronicle, and ridiculously travestied in our school histories. But the fact is, every "Anglo-Saxon" deed, of which hundreds remain, has the signatures of from ten to a hundred witnesses appended to its text; and from these alone we can get a vast number of different names, and watch the growth of nomenclature from age to age. I attempted to count up, for your benefit, the whole list of such signatures in one of the great printed collections—Thorpe's *Diplomatarium Ævi Saxonici*—but when I had reached three thousand my statistical ardour began to cool, and I thought it would be better to present you with the translation of a single early specimen, which illustrates both the type of nomenclature and the bombastic style of the period. It is a charter of Beorhtuulf, King of the Mercians, a contemporary of Æthelwulf of Wessex, father of King Alfred the Great. It bears date A.D. 840; it is written entirely in Latin; and it contains a grant of land to the church of St. Mary at Evesham.

"When Nemroth the giant built Babilon and the tower of confusion, Scripture declares that language was widely scattered, and that thenceforward arms and war began through hatred. But when the tyranny of Babilon passed away, it is certain that Rome raised high her head, who through the diverse languages and nations instituted law and justice, and compelled them by force to pay tribute. But the Divine Grace refused not, to whom honour and taxes were due, thither to render them, saying: Render what things are Cæsar's to Cæsar, and what things are God's to God. This, therefore, being heard and premised, I, Beorhtuulf, King of Mercians, for the cure of my soul and the hope of eternal reward, willingly grant in perpetuity to the church of Saint Mary, the blessed mother of God, and ever virgin, which is situated in Eoueshame, seventeen manses, *videlicet*, x in Cwentune, ii in Pebeuurth, and v in Mapelesbaruue. And let this aforesaid land be free from all burdens or secular demands, except these three, the building of bridges, and of fortifications, and the military service. But whoso shall be willing to observe this our munificent grant, for him may an eternal reward be laid up: and whoso shall be unwilling, and shall endeavour to break it, may Almighty God break his rule and power, both here and in the life to come, and place his part with the devil, in the pit of nether darkness, unless he shall worthily make amends for his fault. Now this charter" ("singrapha" [*sic*] in the original) "was engrossed in the year of our Lord's incarnation DCCCXL., indiction iii., in the second year of the reign of the said king Beorhtuulf. These are the witnesses :—

"I, Beorhtuulf the King, in the name of the holy and undivided Trinity, granted and gave this grant. I, Saethrith the Queen, granted it. I, Tunberht the Bishop, granted it. I, Alhhun the Bishop, granted it. I, Ceolred the Bishop, granted it. I, Beorhtred the Bishop, granted it. I, Æthelhard the ealdorman, granted it. I, Hunberht the ealdorman, granted it. I, Mucel the ealdorman, granted it. I, Ælfstan the ealdorman, gave my assent." *

But some people will object that charters, by their very nature, can only contain the signatures of kings, bishops, earls, and other high functionaries. How can we know, they will ask, what were the usual names of ordinary farm-labourers and serfs at that early period? Even for these we have abundant documentary evidence in wills, manumissions, guild rules, and other remains of private life. Here, for example, is the pedigree of a labouring family at Hatfield, which will show how carefully their connexions were recorded, in order to secure the rights of their lord. I have altered the "Anglo-Saxon" into modern English as little as possible, but I trust it will be intelligible to most of my readers.

Dudda was a boor in Hæthfelda [Hatfield]. And he had three daughters. One hight Deorwyn; the other, Deorswyth; the third, Golde. And Wullaf at Hæthfelda hath Deorwyn to wife. And Ælfstan at Tæccingawyrthe [Tatchingworth] hath Deorswithe to wife. And Ealhstan, Ælfstan's brother, hath Golde to wife. One hight Hwite was bee-keeper in Hæthfelda. And his daughter, who hight Tate, was mother of Wulfsige the archer. And Hehstan at Wealadene [Walden] hath Sulle, Wulfsige's sister, to wife. Wifus, and Dunne, and Seoloce, were inborn at Hæthfelda. Wifus' son, hight Duding, is settled at Wealadene. And Dunne's son, hight Ceolmund, is eke settled at Wealadene. And Seoloce's son, hight Ætheleah, is eke settled at Wealadene. And Mæg at Weligun [Welwyn] hath Cenwald's sister, hight Tate, to wife. And Ealdelm, Herethryth's son, hath Tate's daughter to wife. Wærstan's father, hight Wælaf, was a right [or lawful] serf at Hæthfelda. He held [or kept] the grey swine.†

One other short document, from the fly-leaf of the Abbey Missal at Bath, has a singular interest to Englishmen of the present day, when slaves cannot touch British soil without becoming free.

Here is made known, in this Christ's book, that Ægelsige, Byttig's son, hath bought out Hildesige his son from Aelfsige, Abbot of Bath, and from all the minster, for sixty pence, to everlasting freedom.

Dozens of like documents inform us how "Godwig, the Buck, bought Leofgifu, the Bakester;" how "Hallwyn Hoce, in Execestre [Exeter], has freed Hægelflæd, her woman;" or how "Ediwu, Sæfugl's widow, bought Gladu from Colewine, for half a pound, as price and toll; and Alword, the Port-reeve, took the toll." From a vast collection of such entries, we can get a clear notion of the names most current amongst the mass of the people in every part of England during the first period of our national life.

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* Kemble, *Codex Diplomaticus Ævi Saxonici*, ii. 6, No. ccxliv.

† Thorpe, *Diplomatarium Ævi Saxonici*, 649.

If the materials for a history of nomenclature before the Norman Conquest are so abundant, I need hardly say that they are still more abundant after that great central era. *Domesday Book* alone contains such a directory of all England in the time of King William as it would be hard to find for the England of our own day. Add to this the charters, wills, muniments, local records, tombs, and other public documents and private monuments, in all the guildhalls, chapter-houses, churches, castles, and abbeys of Great Britain, and you have a mass of matter far more copious than the most industrious investigator could ever attack single-handed. Even after all the good work performed by Mr. Lower, Mr. Bardsley, and Miss Yonge, the study of English nomenclature is still in its infancy.

But all this time, how about William? Have I offered him justice merely that I may add insult to injury, and keep him waiting in the vestibule while I am considering the claims of Godric and Æthelthryth? I must put him off no longer, but make him the tardy amends which he claims with his fifty thousand separate mouths.

William is one of those numerous names which belong to the tertiary stratum of English nomenclature. First of all in our history come the pure English cognomens, which our fathers brought with them from their old home in Sleswig Holstein. These, which are exemplified in King Beorhtuulf's charter, we may regard as forming the primary series. Next ranks the secondary deposit of Danish names, thickly scattered over the north-east of England by the colonists who turned that region into the Denalagu. Thirdly, we get the tertiary stratum of Norman-French Roberts, Henrys, and Richards. This stratum, as I have already pointed out while dealing with the case of John, consists of original High German words, transplanted to Lâon and Paris by the Frankish conquerors of Gaul, adopted in turn by the Romanised Keltic people from their Teutonic aristocracy, handed on to the Scandinavian settlers in Normandy, carried once more by the Norman barons to England, and there finally accepted by the Saxon, Anglian, and Danish population. What a queer, round-about circuit, from Franconia to Edinburgh, viâ Paris and Rouen;—from High German to Low German, through Latinised Kelt and Gallicised Northman! This is one of those strange facts of history which we could never have guessed for ourselves, if we had not the certainty of documentary evidence to guide us on our way.

The earliest form of the name William with which I am acquainted is that of Wilhelm. It so happens that this form might equally well be High or Low Dutch, because the sounds which make it up are none of them those liable to change in passing from the one group to the other. Its two component elements, Will and Helm, are good English and good German alike. This is not the case with such a name as Thiodric, or Theodoric, the Ruler of the People, which, by Grimm's Law—that bugbear of young philologists—becomes Dietrich in High German. I must congratulate my readers upon such a happy chance, for almost the only consonants free from like interchange are exactly those which occur in Wilhelm; and thus we are spared the reciprocal annoyance of giving and receiving a lecture on that driest of all dry Teutonic discoveries. Rest in peace, O well-named Grimm; thou and thy Law shall not be rudely handled by my profane pen.

It is a little tautological to say that Will means Will, but not quite so much so to say that Helm means Helmet. Of course, we all know the old and shorter form, of which helmet is a diminutive; if nowhere else, at least in Gray's "Helm nor hauberk's twisted mail." Originally, then, Wilhelm meant something very like "stout warrior"; for in early times men think of abstract qualities mostly by their corresponding concrete. The "resolute crest" that was always seen in the thick and forefront of the savage fight, that is the underlying notion of the modern William. One may, perhaps, compare it with the stock Homeric epithet, Hector of the glancing casque.

There are many other Helms in Germany besides Wilhelm, such as Helmbold, Helmerich, and Helmhart, the helmeted chief, and king, and the firm helmet, respectively; while the Norse Hjalmar, the crested warrior, gives us the same idea in a Scandinavian dress.* But I will not linger on this part of my subject, since I know English readers have a certain impatience of Old High German, for which I cannot truly blame them, considering the pains taken by the philologists of the Fatherland to make that language supremely uninteresting.

When the Franks moved eastward from their Teutonic home into the country to which they have given the name Frankreich or France, they naturally took with them all their German names. Whether Wilhelm was one of these, or whether it came in later with the dynasty of Karl the Great—our Charlemagne—I cannot tell you; though perhaps some more learned person may have met with the name in the pages of Gregory of Tours or his successors. At any rate, it speedily passed into general use in Normandy, as soon as the Scandinavian settlers had called the rich province of Neustria after their own race. The first generation of Northmen in Gaul naturally bore such Norwegian names as Hrolf, Grim, Biörn, Harold, Thor, and Haco. But the younger crop of Christianised and Gallicised Normans copied the baptismal designations of their Frankish over-lords; and thus Hrolf himself, the Rollo of our mutilated histories, first Duke of the new principality, gave his son and successor the Frankish name of Wilhelm. This Wilhelm was followed by a continuous line of Richards, Roberts, and other Wilhelms, till at last the dynasty culminated in the great Conqueror of England, who introduced the Norman titles into his new kingdom.

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* I owe my acknowledgments for many particulars to Miss Yonge's interesting work on Christian Names.

William the Conqueror himself spelt his name Willelm, though, for a reason to be mentioned hereafter, the form Pillelm occurs most often on his coins. Even before the Conquest, Williams were by no means unknown in England; for the Normanising tendency had already begun at the court of Eadward the Confessor. "Willelm Biscop," as the Chronicle calls him, was a well-known personage under the saintly king: and English families even then had taken a fancy for calling their sons after the intrusive foreigners who flocked to the hospitality of Westminster and Winchester. In fact, Norman names were getting fashionable. But after the Conquest, the fashion became an irresistible tide. In a few years all our native names had disappeared, and every Dudda and Tate in England was christening his or her children "Rodbert," "Heanrig," and "Gesfrei," the Robert, Henry, and Geoffrey of later days.

Of course the royal cognomen Willelm was the greatest favourite among all these new importations. Mr. Bardsley finds no less than sixty-eight persons so called in *Domesday Book*, so that it had spread widely even during the lifetime of the victor of Hastings. "This name," says Camden, "hath been most common in England since William the Conqueror, insomuch that on a festival day in the court of King Henry II., when Sir William St. John, and Sir William Fitz-hamon, especial officers, had commanded that none but the name of William should dine in the great chamber with them, they were accompanied with one hundred and twenty Williams, all knights, as Robert Montensis recordeth, *anno* 1173." Next, it passed into the lowlands of Scotland, with William the Lion. Through the Middle Ages, however, it began to decline again, as John and Henry came into fashion. I must ask leave to quote once more Mr. Bardsley's interesting account of its subsequent history, after its failing popularity during the Plantagenet period: for although I have once before extracted it, àpropos of John, we cannot well omit it here, where its bearing upon our present subject must chiefly be considered. "It is interesting," says that painstaking author, "to trace the way in which William has again recovered itself in later days. Throughout the Middle Ages it occupied a sturdy second place, fearless of any rival beyond the one that had supplanted it. Its dark hour was the Puritan commonwealth. As a Pagan name, it was rejected with horror and disdain. From the day of the Protestant settlement and William's accession, however, it again looked up from the cold shade into which it had fallen, and now once more stands easily, as eight centuries ago, at the head of our baptismal registers. John, on the other hand, though it had the advantage of being in no way hateful to the Puritan conscience, had, from one reason or another, gone down in the world, and now has again resumed its early place as second."

Meanwhile, the form of the word had been undergoing a steady change. It appears as Willelm throughout the English Chronicle, till the abrupt conclusion of that great work in the troublous reign of Stephen (A.D. 1154). In Robert of Gloucester (A.D. 1298) it has been worn down to Willam; and at least as early as Piers the Plowman (A.D. 1362) it had assumed its modern dress of William. Thus we have clear documentary evidence, were any needed, that our existing name is in very fact the genuine and undoubted descendant of the old High German Wilhelm.

The modern French equivalent of William is of course Guillaume. This form, again, descends from Wilhelm through the intermediate stages of Willelme and Willeaulme. All Keltic nations have a fancy for inserting a guttural before words which begin with a *W*. Thus William in Welsh changes to Gwilym. Similarly our Teutonic *war* becomes *guerre* in French, while to *wager* reappears as *gager*, so that *wages* and *gages* are really the same word. *Gâter* is to *waste*, *gâteau* is the old English *wastel*, and *gaufres* are our *waffles*. In like manner the Teutonic Walter becomes Gaultier and finally Gautier. Sometimes modern English has preserved both the alternative forms from the mother tongue and the Norman French. For example, to *ward* survives by the side of to *guard*; *warden* lives together with *guardian*; a *warranty* is equivalent to a *guarantee*; and we do things either in a certain *wise* or in some other *guise*. These analogies show us easily enough the manner in which Wilhelm passed into Guillaume.

The next step was naturally to Latinise it. Our old chroniclers were quite content with Willelmus, even if they did not, like the Bayeux tapestry, occasionally indulge in the barbaric simplicity of "Hic est Willelm Dux." The Conqueror's coins generally bear the legend "Pillem Rex," or "Pillelm Rex," where the *P* stands as the old English form of *W*; but his great seal reads "Willelmus." His son, the Red King, also varies between "Pillem" and "Pillelm," while one of his coins has the very modern-looking form "Piliem." The great seal, too, gives us the Latinised "Wilielmus." If we put these variants side by side with "Willielmus" and "Wilgelmus," from the Bayeux tapestry, it is clear that the liquid sound of the double *l* must have begun to be felt very early, thus accounting for the latter softening into William. More cultivated ages of course objected to the Teutonic *w* as anything but Ciceronian; and after the Renaissance, the French form was transliterated as Guillelmus. Archbishop Sancroft thus appears on the "Seven Bishops' Medal" under James II., as does also his right reverend brother, Lloyd of St. Asaph. Even on a medal of William III., we find the inscription "Invictissimus Guillelmus Magnus." But the Protestant champion figures on the regular coinage as Gulielmus, a variation formed by more ardent purists upon the correct analogy of the Italian Guglielmo. This is the shape now currently accepted as the classical Latin form throughout all Europe, though the intermediate stage of Guilielmus still lingers on in remote quarters. So difficult a task is it even to trace the modifications of a single Christian name.

I cannot honestly say that the diminutive forms from William are quite so interesting as those from John. The earliest is Willè, which occurs in Gower's "Vox Clamantis." As the final vowel was sounded, this abbreviation cannot have differed much in pronunciation from the modern Willie. Like others of its class, it soon degenerated into simple Will; and in that guise it became the familiar designation in Elizabethan times, being the most frequent title of Shakespeare himself. Another mediæval pet form was Wilkin, occasionally shortened to Wilkie or Wilk, just as Jankin was abbreviated into Jacky and Jack. Rarer diminutives are Wilcock and Wilmot, beside a score of others, which it would be tedious to enumerate in full.

As for Bill, his origin seems to be quite modern, and he is rightly restricted for the most part to the rougher classes of our population. Nevertheless, he has given rise to a secondary form, Billy, and has even stood as godfather to the billy-cock hat. Some authorities, indeed, trace to him the patronymic Bilson; but as the word itself never occurs in our early literature, I feel convinced that the last-named form is a mere corruption of the local surname Bilston.

The favourite diminutive in our own time is undoubtedly Willie; and here it is worth notice that the endearment of family ties in modern life seems to have made a distinct difference in the character of our pet names. The curt mediæval Jack and Kate are replaced by the softer sounds of Johnnie and Katey; while such harsh monosyllables as Bob and Moll have been banished from the fireside to the street or the public-house. Almost all our present short names have a decidedly affectionate ring. Just compare Ernie or Edie with Dick or Joan, and you will see at once how much more redolent of home and happiness are our later diminutives. Yet this change is really no more than a return to the original form of the pet names, which were first provided with two syllables, as in Willè, Jackè, Bobbè, then shortened to Will, Jack, Bob, and finally lengthened again to Willie, Johnnie, Bobbie. Thus does history repeat itself even in so small a particular as the fashion of our nicknames. Nay, is not the Queen Anne revival actually bringing back the once obsolete Patty and Dolly and Kitty before our very eyes?

William has given rise in turn to many and various surnames of diverse orders. First of all, it occurs in the simple form as a patronymic. Next, with the sign of the possessive, it gives origin to the family of Williams. The addition of the word *son* supplies a name to the Williamsons. The common diminutive is answerable in like manner for Will, Wills, and Wilson. So the alternative form affords the parallel series, Wilkin, Wilkins, and Wilkinson; while the well-known Scotch name of Jack finds its analogue in Wilks, or in the more aristocratic shape associated in all our minds with "Wilkes and Liberty." The name of our *genre* painter Wilkie may be compared with Hankey, and Wilkison with

Simpkisson. Our third diminutive, Wilcock, accounts for Wilcox and Wilcockson. Mr. Bardsley cites the more recondite forms, Willis, Willmott, Wilmot, Willot, Willet, and Willert. Even these are but a mere gleaning from the whole sheaf. The progeny of William spread everywhere over the land, and almost rival those of John in their ubiquitousness.

Nor is this all. Besides the true English William, his Welsh synonym has given us a large tribe of Gwilliams, and of Gwilyms. From Guillaume, through its diminutive Guillot, come Gillot and Gillett, which should therefore be sounded with the initial hard, and not as if written Jillot. Possibly the rare surnames Gillam and Gillard are derived from the same source. The Scotch supplement the list with their Mac Williams; but I do not know of any Irish equivalent. The reputation of Herr Willelmj in England has made another Low Dutch form familiar to our ears. Altogether, without travelling outside the British Isles, some forty-five separate patronymics may be traced to the original Wilhelm.

The *nom de plume* of the American humourist, Mr. Josh Billings—a feeble shadow of the inimitable Artemus—shows us in a truly lamentable manner "to what base uses we may come at last." Though not directly derived from William, the name Billings is so closely analogous to that of Williamson that it deserves a passing mention in the present history. The syllable *ing* was the patronymic termination in Early English, or rather in the Teutonic languages generally. Whenever the English Chronicle wishes to sum up a genealogy it does so in the following fashion:—"Aethelwulf was Ecgbrihting; Ecgbriht was Ealhmunding; Ealhmund was Eafing; Eafa was Eopping; Eoppa was Ingilding; Ingild was Ine's brother, the West-Saxon king's." Regular tribes, bearing such patronymic names, formed the component elements of the early English people, just like the *gentes* of Rome, or the clans and septs of Scotland and Ireland.

A few modern surnames, such as Freeling, Anning, Collings, Hemmings, Harding, Hastings, and Willing, still preserve the memory of this ancient tribal organisation.

When the English colonised Britain, they came over in such clans, composed of members each bearing one of these common titles. Wherever they settled, they called the *ham* or *tun* after their clan name. Thus the Bocings had their home at Buckingham, and the Wealings their town at Wellington. An immense number of these clan settlements are scattered over the whole of Saxon or Anglian Britain, and they enable us to judge roughly the proportion which the different tribes bore in the colonisation. Paddington, Kensington, Islington, Uppingham, Birmingham, Chillingham, and Whippingham, are familiar instances which everybody knows; but a glance at a county map will disclose hundreds of others, and will show the universality of these family homesteads.

Now the Billings were the royal race of the Varini, just as the Merwings or Merovingians were the royal race of the early Franks, superseded in later days by the Karlings or Carlovingians, the descendants of Karl the Great. These Billings derived their origin from some real or mythical ancestor Will, no doubt the brother of Woden, the divine Will or resolution. Without attaching too much importance to the influence of national character upon national mythology, we may recognise a genuine touch of the Teutonic nature in this deification of steadfast purpose. Well, some of the Billings, the sons of the deified Will, came to Britain with their brother Anglians, and settled first at Billing in Northumberland. Thence the younger members of the clan migrated to Billingham and Billingside in Durham, and to Billingley in Yorkshire; for as Mr. Isaac Taylor (to whom here and elsewhere I owe my deepest acknowledgments) has clearly proved, the original colony always bears the clan name alone, while the junior branches add some such distinctive affix as *stead*, *field*, *worth*, or *ham*. But alas for the fate of royal families! The only Plantagenet I ever heard of as a living personage was a mulatto coal-heaver in Kingston, Jamaica. Not otherwise the princely name of the Billings has come to be so ridiculous that it serves as the cheap advertisement of a third-rate American wit; while its only other commemoration is to be found in the doubtful eloquence of our London Billingsgate.

Finally, we may glance for a moment at the various great personages who have made the name of William illustrious or infamous, each after his kind. Besides our four English kings, with their Scotch and German namesakes, William presents us with a goodly roll of miscellaneous celebrities not inferior to that of John. First on the list comes Shakespeare, who is usually described in the style peculiar to newspaper leaders as "the divine Williams." Of lesser poets, one might mention Drummond of Hawthornden, Davenant, Collins, Falconer, Wycherley, Shenstone, Somerville, and Wordsworth. Sir William Hamilton vouches for its philosophic reputation; while William Pitt places it in the first rank of statesmanship. Wilberforce guarantees its philanthropy, Herschel its science; John Wycliff is balanced by William Tindal; and John Baliol grows pale before the fame of William Wallace. John Hampden suggests William Laud; and even Jack o' Lantern cancels out with Will o' the Wisp. As for William of Malmesbury and William of Wykeham, their baptismal designations stand alone, without the adventitious support of a surname. Descending to our own day, it might involve us in political discussion if we instanced the case of William Ewart Gladstone; but all parties and classes alike will do homage to the memory of William Makepeace Thackeray. I trust, therefore, that the living representatives of so favoured a name, will now feel satisfied with the justice which I have endeavoured to deal out to William.

G. A.

England and Ava.

The history of Burma yet remains to be written, and the materials are so scanty and conflicting that the task would not be easily achieved. Various chronicles are still in existence; but these are merely monastery or palace records, dealing exclusively with the origin, growth, and decline of some especial dynasty or dagoba. The earliest annals describe how the first Burmese kingdom was founded by Indian emigrants from the west. The valley of the Upper Irawadi was then inhabited by a number of petty tribes with scarcely a shred of order, civilisation, or authority among them. The advent of an Indian prince with his little band of refugees may have been the sole condition required for coherence and organisation. The separate tribes become a nation, the separate states a kingdom, a dynasty is established, and history commences forthwith. The rulers would introduce, as far as possible, their own language, usages, and religion. Their sons and cities would have sonorous Indian titles; they would import astrologers, sages, and as many representatives of their native pantheon as their subjects cared to entertain. A hundred years or so and these would remain, as is at present the case in Burma, the sole testimony to the foreign extraction of the early Irawadi monarchs who gradually combined the wild tribes of its upper reaches into one homogeneous people, with a territory extending from Xathá to Prome, from Yô to Yemétheng. North and east of these boundaries lay the Shan states, then powerful and independent, and along the delta and sea-coast were the "Three Places" of the Talaings. Beyond occasional relations with China and Manipúr, with Siam and its highland tributaries, the whole subsequent peninsular history presents a confused chronicle of incessant strife between these three chief races, who struggled for supremacy as Siam, Kambosa, and Annam contended in the southern region. Each had its period of triumph and disaster, but the Shans were the first to succumb. The struggle between the Burmese and the Talaings was only ended by the latter passing within our peaceful rule.

Just a century before this event, the founder of the present Avan* dynasty commenced his remarkable career. The country had for ten years been subject to Pegu, the ancient line of monarchs was extinct, and southern predominance seemed finally assured. But the higher Irawadi tracts, which had never been completely subdued, were the home of thousands who lived by rapine and disorder, and the success of an obscure villager in one of these northern districts soon attracted a numerous following. His capture of the river fortress at Singú was the signal for universal rebellion; the Talaings were driven across the border, and Aung Zaya, the successful bandit, became Alaung phayá, an embryo Buddh. Four years later he conquered Pegu, annexed the Tenasserim provinces, and led an expedition into the heart of Siam. In 1755, while in the full tide of triumph, he received his first impression of our countrymen which has never been thoroughly effaced from the minds of his successors. A mission arrived from the Company's factory at Negrais, which had been established a year or two before, offering their humble congratulations to the conqueror and assistance against his enemies. Alaung phayá laughed at the idea of their help being wanted, but granted them the island of Negrais in return for the promise of an annual tribute consisting of ordnance and military stores. Two years later, having strong grounds for suspecting his new subjects of complicity with a Talaing insurrection, he caused the whole settlement, including nearly thirty Englishmen, to be ruthlessly massacred and despoiled, and imprisoned all Europeans living elsewhere within his dominions.

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* Ava is the name of a recent capital; but it may be conveniently employed, as it is by the Shans and others, to denote Independent Burma as distinguished from our own province.

This outrage could hardly be overlooked; and in 1760 an envoy, with the usual prayers and presents, was despatched jointly by the governments of Calcutta and Madras. During three whole months he was treated with the greatest indignity, his effects were plundered, and his humble representations derided. However, the surviving prisoners were contemptuously released, with a warning never to reappear in the country. The Company appear to have regarded this result as satisfactory, and no further negotiations were attempted. Within the next thirty years, the descendants of Alaung phayá had repelled a formidable Chinese invasion, had subdued Arakan and the Shan states, and consolidated their rule throughout the country. From their western outposts they were threatening Bengal; and, during our own inaction, French influence was fast becoming formidable. Shortly after their conquest of Arakan, a Burmese army, without any notice, crossed our frontier in pursuit of fugitives, whilst a force of 20,000 men assembled in the rear to support the invasion. No effective opposition was attempted, the refugees were quietly surrendered, and the governor-general thought this occasion a suitable one for a fresh embassy to Ava, which was of course regarded as an act of apology and submission. The envoy, Colonel Symes, allowed himself to be designated and treated as the representative of a tributary power. He thus obtained an order from the king specifying and regulating commercial imposts and sanctioning the establishment of an English consul at Rangoon. On an officer being appointed, however, he was at once summoned to the capital, and there, according to Colonel Yule's account, which is based on official records, "he remained during nine weary months bearing with singular patience every kind of contumely and imposition, the history of which it is quite painful to read." The Calcutta government were of opinion that the conduct of the Avan court must have indicated personal dissatisfaction with their nominee. They recalled him accordingly, and mildly offered to appoint another. No attention was paid to this overture.

In 1802 and 1803 two further missions were despatched from Calcutta. Both were total failures, and the leaders were, as usual, neglected and insulted. A further envoy was sent in 1811 to offer an explanation on the subject of the raids on Burmese territory, made by Arakanese fugitives within our frontier. During his stay at Rangoon he ventured to protest against a gross violation of our own territory, which had just been committed by Burmese troops, and narrowly escaped with his life in consequence.

During the next decade the power and pretensions of the Avan government had reached a climax. They had conquered Assam and Manipúr, had laid formal claims to Chittagong, Murshidábád, and Dakka, and were menacing our eastern frontier at either extremity. All contemporary accounts describe the Burmese as eager for war. For sixty years they had been ever victorious, and were confident of success against the white "barbarians" they had so long insulted and defied. Finally they forced a rupture by attacking a British outpost, and threatening that, if this act were not quietly submitted to, it would be followed up by the seizure of Dakka and Murshidábád. One last overture was even then made by the Indian government, but without effect, and the war of 1824 was declared.

The design, the conduct, and the results of the first campaign were equally feeble and ineffective. Commissariat and sanitary arrangements were scandalously inadequate, and the mortality was something terrible. Our troops arrived in Rangoon on May 9, at the commencement of the rains, and no advance was made towards Ava till February 15, just the commencement of the next hot weather. After the capture of Donaphyú and the death of Bandúla on April 1, there could be no effective opposition to our progress. Yet the beginning of November, 1825, found the British force still not half way to the capital. Notwithstanding the open sympathy and assistance of the inhabitants, we had taken more than a year to obtain possession of a territory which the Burmese had completely subdued in three months. Naturally this inactivity on our part was ascribed to incapacity or fear, our frequent and foolish overtures for peace were steadfastly rejected, and fresh levies continually enrolled. It was only a revolt at the capital which led to negotiations being commenced, and a treaty was finally concluded by which we abandoned the Talaings to their merciless tyrants, and obtained Arakan and the Tenasserim provinces. Both of these were recent conquests of the Burmese, and the Indian government found them so devastated and unproductive that they would gladly have restored them had there been sufficient excuse. The Burmese thus lost nothing by the war but two troublesome and useless dependencies. Their own territory remained intact, their prestige very slightly impaired, and there is no gross inaccuracy in the following description of the campaign given in the national chronicle:—

> In the year 1187 (Burmese era) the inhabitants of the "Three Places" of the Talaings, and the white "barbarians" residing in Rangoon, being pressed by hunger and disease, ascended the river to petition the Lord of the Golden Palace. On their arrival at Yandabo money was graciously sent to relieve their distress, and they were dismissed with permission to dwell and trade at the extremity of the royal dominions.

The seventh article of the treaty provided that a commercial engagement should be entered into between the two countries, and that a British resident should be permanently located at the court of Ava. Seven months after the end of the war an envoy arrived, and found the old official arrogance very little abated. He failed to negotiate any serviceable treaty, and in accordance with his advice no attempt was made till 1830 to station any permanent agent. Colonel Burney, who was then appointed, resided in Ava till 1837, when the insults and barbarous excesses of Tharawadi constrained his departure. The new king spoke habitually in public with contempt of the British Government, and disclaimed all obligation to observe the treaties made by the brother he bad deposed. A new envoy, who was sent in 1838, endured for a whole year persistent discourtesy and neglect, and then had to leave the capital from illness occasioned by insufficiency of food and accommodation. No fresh appointment was made, yet the mad king got more violent and menacing. It was in the reign of his successor, the Pugán prince—the most brutal, incapable, and debauched of all the Alaung phayá stock, who had waded to the throne through a holocaust of slaughter—that our patience again got exhausted and another war commenced. The immediate cause of strife was the refusal of all reparation to the master of a British ship, who had been plundered, insulted, and imprisoned by the governor of Rangoon. With much blundering and delay our troops, after a campaign of twelve months, found themselves in re-possession of the country we had abandoned in 1826, besides the valley of the Sittaung. The feeling at home against the war was so strong, that, had any overtures been made in time, Government was fully prepared again to evacuate their conquests, retaining only Martaban and the Negrais and Diamond Islands. But the Burmese refused to treat, or in any way acknowledge their defeat, and Lord Dalhousie's great proclamation of 1852 freed the Talaings for ever from their tyrants.

The Pugán prince was the son of Tharawadi by his chief queen. In 1853 he was deposed by a half brother, the Mengdon prince, born to Tharawadi's eighth consort. His sister was married to the usurper, and his own wretched life spared at her entreaties. He is alive to this day, having always shown far more interest in a cock-fight than a kingdom. I should remark that in Burma all dignitaries and officials of rank have territorial titles derived from the town or district the revenues of which they enjoy. A monarch, after his accession, is only spoken of as "the great king of justice" or "glory," and all predecessors are referred to as his relations. The eldest son of Alaung phayá was the Tabayeng prince. He was succeeded by his two younger brothers in turn, and to this day he is known as Naungdôgyí pháyah, "the royal elder brother." The Badaung prince, who died in 1819, was succeeded by his two grandsons, and appears in Burmese history as Bhodôgyí phayá, the "grandfather" king. The elder of his two successors, the Sagaing prince, has been known during the last two reigns as the "uncle king," both the Pugán and Mengdon princes being his nephews.

The late king was past middle age when he gained the throne; he had been a lad of thirteen when the first war was concluded in the reign of his uncle, had witnessed the successful revolt of his father, and had acted for six years as regent to his brother whom in turn he had himself deposed. Such experiences had made him prudent, and there can be no doubt that he more or less recognised his true position. Cut off from the sea, his country was no longer formidable as a political power; deprived of the fisheries and rice plains of the delta, it was practically dependent for its food on its powerful neighbour. Centuries of strife and tyranny had turned a fertile and populous land into wilderness and ruins. Successful warfare was the only thing that could have reconciled the Burmese to the terrible cruelty and oppression of their kings, and the line of Alaung phayá had hitherto never failed in gratifying the national pride with continuous triumph and plunder. In the English for the first time in history they had been forced to recognise a master; they were cowed and weary, and the last war had simply ceased because no fresh levies had been obtainable. The past was irretrievable, as the king was quite aware; his sole care, accordingly, should be to provide for the immediate future. There was enough of tinsel and tradition to support the tottering monarchy during his own time, and he never affected to look beyond. He has been described as clement and enlightened. He was not a rabid butcher, like his father, his uncle, his brother, and his son, killing from the simple lust of blood; yet his vengeance was none the less implacable and sure. His enlightenment was the merest lacquer. He identified civilisation with machinery and money, and was, if not adverse, at least indifferent to its less concrete accompaniments. During the latter part of his reign he encouraged needy foreigners at his court, and, if they cringed and cajoled enough, his purse-strings were never tied. They supplied him with mills, and steamers, and foundries which he paid for lavishly, but scorned to utilise. He kept Europeans idle in his pay and machinery idle on his premises, and he showed in that way his contempt for both. The one aim of his life—the one essential of his selfish and ignoble policy—was the maintenance of his own prestige. He dreaded our presence and influence, and attempted a system of exclusion to prevent the one, of disparagement to neutralise the other. For nine whole years after his accession he succeeded in keeping us aloof. Even when a commercial treaty was negotiated in 1862 it proved of no practical use, and the latest one, concluded in 1867, has been habitually contravened. Beyond the region adjoining a few main routes we have as little scientific knowledge of the interior of Burma as of Central Africa.

He was too shrewd to show any overt opposition to the Western China expeditions of 1867 and 1875, but he took effectual precautions that neither should be successful. In the alternative expedient he was more venturesome, and his triumphs were more prominent and imposing. Any slight or affront to the English obviously served two ends: it gratified the king's own resentment and suspicion, while it effectually proved to his subjects that he was not hampered or afraid. In 1864 two English officers, despatched by our Government to explore the Salwen river, were arrested a few miles across the frontier, and compelled to journey up to Mandalay without guides or assistance. The only reason given for this outrage was that they were conveying from the commissioner of Tenasserim letters of introduction to various Shan chiefs, tributaries of Ava, through whose territories they would have to pass. The letters were no doubt foolishly expressed, but scarcely justified such aggression. However, no apology or reparation has ever been made. Similarly the king steadily refused to modify by one iota in favour of our ambassadors the humiliating court ceremonial which his *parvenu* ancestors had elaborated. Even at this moment the British representative, if he enters the palace, would be forced to remove his boots and squat on the floor undistinguishable from the meanest supplicant. The untrained "politicals" who were first accredited by our Government suffered themselves to be habitually derided and overreached, and the king always addressed them in a style he would not have used to the lowest among his own officials. In 1867 an officer and V.C. attached to Colonel Tytche's mission, while in attendance in full uniform the day of its reception at the palace, was struck by a lictor with a bamboo for not moving out of the way of an inferior prince whom he had not even noticed. By way of redress a casual peasant, who declared he was not the real offender, was sent for punishment, which, of course, was not inflicted. Any further remonstrance might have interfered with the notable treaty which was then on the *tapis*, so the affair was allowed quietly to drop. British subjects are even now expected to go on their knees in the street before all high officials, and not a few instances have occurred of Europeans and Eurasians being beaten and otherwise insulted for having refused compliance. The king's embassies to France, Italy, and other Western States were partly a defiance and partly an absurd attempt to gain a footing in Western politics. Official ignorance in Upper Burma is so dense, so bigoted, and so self-complacent that even a course of foreign travel fails to make any permanent impression. The envoys discard their European conceptions as easily as they do the costume, and, after visiting London, Paris, and Rome, return to Mandalay to asseverate that the king is the most powerful, his palace the most beautiful, and his country the largest and most populous in the world. This is no mere question between Peebles and Paris, between unconstraint and conventionalism, between a monarchy and municipalities. It is rather the blind preference of decay to progress, of savagery to civilisation, of anarchy to authority. The late monarch was so assured of the success of all his schemes, his mock treaties, and diplomatic triumphs that he seriously proposed sending one of his ministers to arbitrate between Russia and Turkey in the late war. Like most Orientals he regarded statecraft as a mixture of bluster, insult, and chicane, and his method, though superlatively coarse and clumsy, was at least effectual so far as we were concerned. The latest case in point is a thoroughly typical one. Towards the close of April, 1878, Mr. J. J. Cooper, the British agent at Bamô, was murdered, with two attendants, by one of the native guard. The criminal was arrested and made over to the Burmese authorities. He attempted neither denial nor justification, and in that wild and lawless region it was especially needful that the murder of an Englishman and an official should meet on the spot with swift and signal punishment. Notwithstanding our remonstrances and solicitations, the man was kept for two whole months in Bamô without anything being done to him. He was then brought down to Mandalay, when the ministers announced with splendid mendacity that it was contrary to the custom of their ruler to allow human life to be taken within his dominions. At that very time the banks of the Irawadi were studded with the corpses of crucified dacoits, and a week had scarcely elapsed when a wretch, for some trivial offence, was beaten to death within the city. Nevertheless this pretext was accepted, and the murderer had to be conveyed across the frontier before he could receive his deserts, 600 miles from the scene of his crime and five months after its occurrence.

The policy of our Government throughout was paltry, but no doubt intelligible. The foolish outcry which had greeted our annexation of Pegu and the reaction which followed Lord Dalhousie's strenuous *régime*, induced a system of caution which was partly ignorance, partly indifference, and partly timidity. The new province was distinct from the rest of India in language, race, and social economy; it had been left for the most part in the hands of the military officers who had helped to win it; it was thriving and contented, and, provided Upper Burmah gave no bother, the Foreign Office was quite willing that the Rangoon government should make its own frontier arrangements. The latter naturally regarded Avan affairs from a purely local standpoint. Any disturbance up there would be followed by an increase of crime, a decrease of revenue and trade, and general statistical deterioration below. The king was barely able even at present to control his straggling, impoverished, and disaffected country. He had narrowly escaped in the rebellion of 1866 when his brother and nephews were butchered before his eyes; the Shans were unruly and defiant, the Scachyens openly hostile, and his own children a source of constant alarm. Why impair the strength and influence which were being so sorely tried? why precipitate the evil time so swiftly and surely approaching? Complaint and self-assertion should be reserved till the end of the reign, when some action on our part was inevitable. Meantime masterly inactivity undoubtedly consisted in our resident remaining a cipher and a jest. To a cautious Government such arguments appeared unanswerable. It was true that the death of the king, already old and decrepit, would in all probability be followed by an outbreak in the capital, when the lives and property of "barbarians" would be in considerable peril. It was true that our representative had not a guard to protect him, and not a chance of escape if assailed. If the worst came to the worst we should have an unanswerable *casus belli*, provided always that troops were available and the occasion in other respects convenient. Simultaneous trouble in Africa and Afghanistan could not of course be presurmised. So matters drifted on, the king's cynical egotism being conspicuous to the end. He commenced his reign with the wanton freak of building a new capital on an unhealthy and incommodious site, about four miles north of the old city, and forcibly transferring all the inhabitants. He closed it with the foundation of a pagoda destined to be the largest in the world. When he died, it had been for nearly two years in construction at an incredible pecuniary cost, notwithstanding the immense amount of forced labour employed. Governors and tributary chiefs were called in from distant stations to assist, the national revenues mortgaged, and the whole administration of the country interrupted for the furtherance of this insane design. Spite of all this, scarcely the basement has been completed, and for years this unsightly fragment will crumble into ruin, fit emblem of the selfish arrogance and incompetence of its founder and his line. After the murder of the regent, his brother, in 1866, the king had obstinately refused to select or encourage any of the numerous aspirants to the succession. Such a step would probably secure the tranquil continuance of the kingdom; but the jealousy it provoked might cause him personal discomfort and annoyance, which he was determined at all hazards to avoid. His chief queen, a daughter of the "royal uncle," encouraged him in this resolve. She had no son; but the hand of her eldest daughter might determine the future king, and her own great rank and power gave her more or less command of the situation. Immediate precautions were assuredly needful; but she stipulated with the ministers that, if an heir apparent were nominated, she should herself, after the death of the king, be appointed queen regent. Meantime, the old monarch's health was daily becoming more feeble, and it became manifest it was time to act. The princes were all summoned to the palace in the king's name, a lad of nineteen was selected and proclaimed heir apparent, and the rest imprisoned with all their dependents. Two of them, however, contrived to escape to British protection which our resident had the unheard-of temerity to afford them during three months of intrigue and intimidation. Mandalay for the first time got some glimmering of "barbarian" might.

The decease of Mengdon Meng was announced on October 1, about a fortnight after these events. The ministers had never any intention of abiding by their covenant with the queen. The prince they had chosen had no party; he was young, docile, and inexperienced; and, so long as they kept him under control, they need be afraid of no opposition. His accession to the throne was notified at once, and they commenced a large project of reform. The Burmese government under the present dynasty has been a remarkable instance of direct personal dominancy, absolute, aggressive, and intense. In the earlier Avan and Talaing chronicles, there is frequent mention of nobles and grandees with hereditary charges and distinctions, and rights and privileges more or less prescriptive. Practically, each was supreme in the town or province he controlled, subject to the duty of supplying his suzerain with troops or treasure for the never-ending war. When the Burmese revolted against Talaing oppression in 1751, the titular aristocracy was almost quite extinct. A venturesome peasant led them on to victory, and was able to impose an absolutism on their level masses which a century of the foulest misgovernment has failed to shake. He was careful to restore all the form and fabric of the ancient monarchy, the "golden" palace and metropolis, the elaborate pageantry and ceremonial, the traditional officers of the royal household, and of state. But, as a fact, none of these dignitaries had any specialised duty or command. They were liable at any moment to be murdered or degraded in a fit of passion or mere caprice. Everything but the central power was casual, shifting, and precarious. There was no nobility but the king's nominees; no magistracy or authority but the king's retainers. In all but the smaller appointments no right is recognised either hereditary or prescriptive, and the sale and instabilility of office are among the most crying evils of this evil rule.

The ministers sought to limit the power of the despot by defining and confirming their own. A cabinet was formed embracing all the chief civil functionaries of the kingdom, each being in charge of a separate department. All questions of state were to be decided by a majority of votes, and the king's functions were to be those of a purely constitutional monarch, with no power of initiative or executive interference. The scheme was fairly well contrived, but it had never a chance of success. The majority of the cabinet were selfish, half-hearted, and distrustful; the public neutral and unintelligent. The household troops had not been conciliated, and their commanders were dissatisfied with the new order of things. The king was a constitutional monarch only so long as he was a captive; and he was a captive only so long as he thought there was force or menace to restrain him, which there never had been in any adequate degree. In four months' time he realised this, and proved cogently his freedom from control by seizing and confining the two most influential men in the cabinet. The constitution at once fell to pieces like a pack of cards.

This *coup d'état* was facile and effective enough, but it necessitated a step beyond. Thîbô's position was at present most insecure. Beyond actual possession of the palace, which he owed to the strategy of the council he had just subverted, he had no better title to the throne than the majority of his brothers and cousins who had been so opportunely arrested. Three of them had nearly succeeded in escaping while the cabinet was still supreme, and while its members had everything to lose by a change. The danger was now increased a hundredfold. The young king's wife, the second daughter of the late chief queen, had won over the palace soldiery for the time by distributing among them with a lavish hand the gold and jewellery of which she had robbed her father's household at his decease. But their loyalty should be utilised at once, and the peril removed promptly and for ever. It would be a mistake to suppose that the recent massacres at the capital resulted in any sense from a transient impulse of fury or fear. The wholesale clearance of political rivals is an integral and invariable part of a royal installation in Ava. It is difficult, indeed, to see what alternative could be adopted. The late king found no opportunity on his own accession, as his brother had been most complete in his precautions a few years before. But he had been regent himself at the time, and must at least have sanctioned all the slaughter which then occurred. The horrors of the last transaction were unusual, and to a certain degree unavoidable. On former occasions the Ottoman method of drowning in sacks had been adopted; but the present capital is built more than a mile inland, and a journey to the river would have been too dangerous. The branded felons who had been employed in the butchery were frenzied with liquor when they commenced, and bloodshed gave a fresh intoxication. They were maniacs rather than murderers.

The part we played throughout was, of course, insignificant. In spite of all prognostic the old king had died, and a new one had succeeded without our interference being in any way solicited or our position in any way improved. The protection afforded by the British resident to the Nyaung-yan and Nyaung-ok princes had made, no doubt, a large impression, but a single resolute act could hardly erase the convictions of a century. The fugitives regarded the step as a desperate venture, but at least preferable to the certain fate which would overwhelm their relations. They foretold from the first that one would be made a king and the rest corpses, and the prediction has turned out true to the letter. The game was too perilous for the elder prince to play, though it is well known that he had a better chance than any other competitor. "I would rather be a merchant among the English," he exclaimed, "than a monarch in Upper Burma." His views have probably been modified since then, but he assuredly will never err on the side of over-daring. Looking back to the events of the last few months their escape appears astounding. A massacre to be effectual must be comprehensive, and had the king thrown off his trammels sooner he would probably have hazarded a breach with our Government to get rid at one sweep of all his rivals. As it was, the ministry tided him over this danger, and the two refugees were safe in Calcutta when all their hapless kindred were made to perish. There was one event which tended as much as anything to render all remonstrance on our part unavailing. The Cabul war, with its exaggerated peril, was exciting the greatest interest at Mandalay, and telegrams from Africa and Afghanistan were being eagerly perused. News of the Isandula disaster seems to have convinced the court of our present incompetency for action; otherwise the sudden and open slaughter which immediately followed the receipt of this intelligence would, perhaps, have been more gradual and concealed. When authentic tidings arrived, and the resident threatened to retire if the murders were continued, the ministers were quite prepared with a reply. Their country was independent, and their ruler had an indefeasible right to take whatever precautions its safety might require. The presence of a British agent was, no doubt, in some degree a security and a sanction; but his withdrawal would leave them more at liberty, and they had done nothing which could justify hostilities.

Such, then, is the position at present, and it may be prolonged for months. The worst has been imminent so long that any change or certainty would bring relief, but there is no room for suspense and disquietude to increase. In one point all officials have been in thorough accord throughout—namely, to give no pretext for our interference. Thîbô's immediate cut-throats may induce him to precipitate a rupture, but it would be quite inconsistent with the court policy up till now. It is no portion of my task to speculate on the future. All Oriental governments have a tendency to decline. Is it the better plan to stand coldly aloof till the decline has become disease and decay, and the fester and ferment of the state has grown too foul and wide to suffer in any form its continuance, or to arrest the disorder in time by kindly warning and control? In this part of the world at least England has no cause for self-reproach. She came as the protector of the slave, the captive, and the oppressed against the conqueror and the tyrant. She has transformed waste, and strife, and squalor into plenty and content. To which state party at home might this conduct be expected to appeal, and is it Whig or Tory who have always hampered and abused? The true Indian policy with native states can never be abstention, which sooner or later leads to annexation. It is rather a position of present influence and potential control, with due care that the one does not interfere with friendship, the other with healthy independence. The viceroy himself has now a representative (at Mandalay), who is quite independent of the Rangoon authorities, and can use a broader, freer, and firmer grasp. Any new departure must at least be an improvement on the old ignoble and indifferent policy which I have briefly described above. There is no other court in the world where a British representative is practically refused admission, where he is treated at the same time as a prisoner and a spy, and prevented from all communication with the people around him. There is no other country in the world where British subjects are exposed to such insult and obstruction, where agreements and obligations are so systematically ignored. The dynasty of Alaung phayá flourished for just a century (1753–1853), a savage despotism, tempered by deposition. Five out of its ten heirs have been dethroned, and three of these murdered by brother or son. From the founder downwards there is not one of this vile line who has not been guilty of the vilest excesses of a Caligula or Cetewayo, who has not repressed every sign of progress, political, industrial, and intellectual, and encouraged his subjects to truculence and crime. The Burmese, in spite of their genial intelligence, their equal institutions, and admirable creed, remain wholly impervious to those modern influences which educate the sense and refine and amplify needs. Under our own rule a step has been made towards such receptivity, for the people are fairly prosperous and are allowed to accumulate wealth. Taxation is not the rapine, government the oppression, and protection the farce which they appear in an Avan district. Yet annexation would not be welcomed. Our *régime* is well enough adapted for people whose lives are purely mechanic, without political sentiment or political ambition. But the Burmese have an excess of both qualities, and would prefer an indifferent monarch and magistrate of their own to the most impeccable stranger. The Avan problem is not altogether a new one, but we have never had a fairer chance of perfect solution. A few years of quiet and liberal rule would effect almost as vast an improvement as they have within our own prosperous domain. Trade, now cruelly stifled, would revive; the Chyendwen, Myit gnè, and Irawadi be once again the crowded thoroughfares of village traffic; the fields and hamlets now deserted spring up afresh as the haunt and home of men; the Shan and Scachyen highlanders become helpful allies instead of malcontents and foes. The great high roads to China would then at last be fully open, and our merchants find a new and illimitable market. The Irawadi and the *terra incognita* around its sources would then at last be explored, and vast regions opened out to civilisation and light. With an intelligent friend instead of an ignorant foe in the country between China and Assam, between the Shan states and the Irawadi, Indian finance may no longer seem a hopeless enigma, and English commerce may make such an advance as even to compensate for recent depression and constraint.

Art and Democracy.

MANY advantages necessarily accrue to the public from the existence of a corporation like the Royal Academy. One clear benefit conferred by it is that of enabling us to obtain year by year a comprehensive view of the condition of the most popular of the Fine Arts, and to estimate, after a convenient survey, the prevailing temper, style, and tendency of contemporaneous painting. The student of literature is offered no such facilities for forming a parallel judgment. Unless his industry be stupendous, and his patience inexhaustible, he can feel no certainty that a number of books published during the twelvemonth, important either by reason of their intrinsic merit, or because their very defects are indicative of the spirit of the time, have not escaped his attention. Even should he be fortunate enough to have read every truly representative work of the year, it is not easy to recall and collate the impressions made by them successively, and hence he is subject to the experience described by the familiar saying, that one nail drives out another. A kindred difficulty exists in the case of music and architecture. Thanks, however, to Burlington House and the Grosvenor Gallery, the materials for defining the existing idiosyncrasies of pictorial art are brought together in ample abundance, and they who run may read the themes that inspire and the ideals that engross the energy of living artists.

Of the facilities to critical investigation these annual Exhibitions afford, artists themselves have no reason to complain. It is improbable —we think we might almost say it is impossible—that a picture of signal merit should now be painted without obtaining admission to one or other of the galleries we have named. Publicity for merit is thus readily secured, and an artist who is anxious to take the opinion of an absolutely dispassionate public upon his work has not long to wait for a verdict. Meritorious dramas may conceivably be mildewing in private cupboards; and when we remember that none of Shelley's poems went into a second edition in his lifetime, and that of one of the most admirable of them only seventeen copies were sold, it would be presumptuous to assert that a real child of the Muses may not even now be wasting his sweetness on the desert air. But a good picture can command an immediate scrutiny by thousands of persons, all of whom are interested in good pictures. Neither can it be alleged that the public are difficult to please. Severity is not the foible of modern criticism. Indeed, it is oftentimes so indulgent as to recall the reply of Alceste in Molière's *Misanthrope*, when Arsinoë told him that she had the day previously heard him praised by persons whose opinion carried much weight.

> Eh! madame, l'on loue aujourd'hui tout le monde,
> Et le siècle par là n'a rien qu'on ne confonde.
> Tout est d'un grand mérite également doué.
> Ce n'est plus un honneur que de se voir loué;
> D'éloges on regorge, à la tête on les jette,
> Et mon valet de chambre est mis dans la gazette.

Of praise applicable to no one in particular, but to modern Art in general, the Royal Academy makes certain every year, by the agreeable hospitality it extends to affable Ministers, to ambassadors trained in the art of timely compliment, and to men of letters or science whose own success renders them generous to others whether already successful or yet struggling. Even Pope would have experienced some difficulty in saying what he thought of the verse-makers on whom, as he describes in the Prologue to the Satires, he finally "clapped the door," if, instead of their flying to Twickenham to solicit his opinion, they had asked him to dinner, and had read him their "virgin tragedy" after the second bottle. If guests drop anything into the wine of their host, it must needs be pearls; and on one day in the year the Royal Academy ensures to contemporary Art an ample supply of courtly admiration.

We are far from implying that these eulogiums are not as sincere as eulogy under such circumstances can well be, or from suggesting that competent and unfettered critics would not bestow warm commendation upon modern Art. We cannot conceive their doing otherwise. But mixed even with the little touches of adulation to be expected from guests of whom it could hardly be said "*In vino veritas*," there almost invariably occurs some qualifying observation, advanced as it were tentatively, and testifying to the embarrassment felt by these distinguished critics while attempting to combine consideration for their hosts with some regard to their own reputation for taste and judgment. None of the illustrious guests of the Royal Academy have been more courageous in eulogy than the present Prime Minister. Last year he astonished the town by expressions of admiration for the works to be seen on the walls of Burlington House, which could hardly have been more lavish had the banqueting-hall been the Tribune of the Uffizi Palace, or the theme of his panegyric the canvasses contained in that famous chamber. Conscious that his language had provoked surprise, not unmixed with scepticism, he this year returned to the charge, and without recanting the hymn of praise chanted twelve months previously, he discreetly qualified it by an additional note. Art, he said, in effect, is well and variously represented on your walls. Much that one sees, one admires, but there is something one misses. Art there is; but there is no High Art. The subjects are too humble, too domestic, and smack overmuch of commonplace experience. Cannot English Art attempt a higher flight, and give to the nation pictures to compare with those which Raphael has bequeathed to Rome, and Tintoretto to Venice? Subjects abound. Look at the

Wars of the Roses! Where are we to look for the Shakespeare of English painting?

In venturing upon this flattering expostulation, the Prime Minister was not drawing solely upon his own artistic inner consciousness. He spoke aloud the thoughts of many. No man whose mental experience has ranged through the ages, whose sympathies have been enlarged by travel, been developed by education, and been elevated by history, can fail to walk through the rooms full of dazzling colour in Burlington House, without feeling that he has been moving in a somewhat narrow world. He will have seen much to please, no little to move him. The current features of domestic life, the curiosities of contemporary civilisation, the faces of his more celebrated acquaintances, reproductions of national scenery or picturesque architecture, these and much more of the same sort will have been offered to his gaze; but he will not, he cannot, feel that he has been admitted to very high regions of Art, or that he has been lifted beyond the petty range of his own round of experiences. He will not have encountered anything equivalent to what met the eye or melted the soul of the pious Æneas and his faithful Achates, while scanning the rising temples of Carthage:

> . . . Iliacas ex ordine pugnas,
> Bellaque jam famâ totum vulgata per orbem;
> Atridas, Priamumque, et sævum ambobus Achillen.

Yet England has produced warriors equal to these; and, as Lord Beaconsfield says, in the Wars of the Roses we have our Siege of Troy, and in Shakespeare a greater poet than Homer! How is that the subjects which offered themselves are so great, and the subjects selected are, comparatively speaking, so small?

We do not think the answer is difficult to find. Sir Joshua Reynolds, writing in the last century, acknowledged that the practical expulsion of saints, virgins, and martyrs, from the Protestant creed, had injuriously affected English Art. It will, perhaps, be thought that, apart from all considerations of creed, of saints, virgins, and martyrs, Art has by this time had enough. Even, however, if in Roman Catholic countries, artists still sought inspiration in legends of the Madonna and the Vatican Calendar, we can well understand why in England these should fail to dictate the artist's choice. They are altogether outside of our life, and alien to our thoughts. They afford us no comfort, and illustrate nothing that touches us. But do the Wars of the Roses come much nearer to us? What is the Battle of Bosworth to a Belgravian dinner-table? Do the inhabitants of Clapham feel a profound retrospective interest in the fortunes of Henry VI.? And is the country cousin deeply versed in the genealogy of the Houses of York and Lancaster?

The critics who recommend English artists to select their themes either from the kingly or from the aristocratic period of English History, forget that we no longer live in kingly or aristocratic times.

We still preserve certain Monarchical forms; and, there still are people among us who bequeath sounding titles. But to take the trouble to prove that we live in an age of Democracy, would be as much waste time as to labour to prove that we live in the light of the sun. To some people Democracy is a fetish—to some a stumbling-block. For our purpose it is sufficient to recognise its existence; nor need we exaggerate either its advantages or its drawbacks. To the politician of one camp it may represent only the voice of the "vile multitude;" to the politician of another camp, the "great heart of humanity." We mean by Democracy only the influence of the many as opposed to the will of one, or to the authority of the few.

It is evident that under such a dispensation the greatest number of people of one way of thinking will dictate prevailing conduct, and that the greatest number of people of one way of feeling will dictate prevailing sentiment. This is but another way of saying that the many will necessarily give the direction to existing Art. And what is it the many want in pictures? Is it the glorification of kings and warriors? Is it the representation of the gallantry of knights—of the brutality or treachery of nobles? Do they crave to understand the action of defunct political parties? What is Hecuba to them, or they to Hecuba? They are interested, not in Naseby, but in Epsom; not in Flodden Field, but in the Derby Day. Their own offspring concern them much more than the young princes in the Tower; and the Judgment of Paris has poor attractions for these compared with the face, or, for that matter, the gown of the reigning beauty. Artists and art-critics, no doubt, periodically struggle to stem this stream of taste, but they end either by being carried along by it, or by being left high and dry on the shores it has abandoned.

For the many have at last acquired a considerable sense of their own importance, and they are not at all disposed to transfer fealty from their own homes, their own occupations, their own diversions, their own feelings, to the doings of dead kings, to the bones of burnt martyrs, or to the casques and spurs of the ancestors of rich gentlemen who are now uncommonly like themselves. No doubt what some would call the faculty of wonder and others the ineradicable instinct of British snobbism, still exists amongst us; and any picture professing to render either the public or the private life of Royalty will secure a certain amount of attention. But then the sovereign represented must be a living sovereign, that is to say, it must be *our* Sovereign, the Sovereign we know; that lives in our time, drives in our streets, goes to our theatres, opens our Parliaments, and holds drawing-rooms for us. A picture of the Marriage of the Prince of Wales, provided it be the Prince of Wales who is still alive, whom we all know by sight, and of whom some of us are never weary of talking, will, if exhibited, be for a time at least so popular that we can quite understand that a detachment of the Metropolitan Police force should be required to prevent loyal British art-students from rubbing the paint off it against their noses. But let the same artist paint the marriage of Philip and Mary, or even the nuptials of George III., and the very same people will either pass the picture by without comment, or will ask what on earth made the artist choose such a subject as that? It is not merely because a man is a king that people in these days are interested in him; otherwise the interest felt in the pictured representation of the marriage of a deceased monarch would bear some proportion at least to the interest manifested in the marriage of a living one. But the proportion is in this case the proportion of zero to infinity. It has been said that a live donkey is better than a dead lion; but in these days the qualification has to be added, that the live donkey must be our own.

It may, perhaps, strike some people as wonderful that even if we confine our interest in princes to princes that are alive, artists should select for treatment such an incident in their career as their marriage. It may be that in a democratic age interest in dead kings no longer exists; but surely living kings have more interesting moments than their appearance at the matrimonial altar. The answer must be, that in an age whose sentiment, and therefore whose Art, is regulated by the feelings of the many, they have no more interesting moment than that, for we all get married, or might get married; and the people who refuse to concern themselves about Princes who are no longer walking about in their clothes, concern themselves in the warmest manner about living Princes, when those Princes are in situations in which they themselves have been, or will possibly be before very long. A picture representing a living Royal Family at the opera would be sure to attract great attention; because numbers of those who are attracted by it either were themselves at the opera on the occasion in question, or would have vastly liked to be there.

We may be thought to have selected a rather trite instance to illustrate our meaning. But it will perhaps not be deemed trite, if the conclusion it helps to establish be considered. That conclusion is, that in an age of Democracy, such as that in which we live, the main, if not the sole, interest of the many is themselves; and any interest they may exhibit in some one not themselves arises out of the property they have in him. Of course every artist is free to please himself, and may paint what he chooses. But then he will please himself at his own peril, or at the peril of pleasing nobody else. He may paint volcanoes in the moon, and he may do it in a manner to satisfy the scientific imagination of astronomers. But the man who paints Primrose Hill, even if indifferently, will interest a far greater number of people. If our leading artists were to follow Lord Beaconsfield's advice, and to paint scenes taken from the Wars of the Roses, and if younger men were to imitate their example and illustrate the dramas of Shakespeare, the quadrangle of Burlington House would soon present a very different appearance in the months of May, June, and July from what it does now. The fussy anxiety manifested by tens of thousands to crowd the Royal Academy at the earliest possible opportunity would soon dwindle down to indifference; and the handsome rooms built at so much cost would shortly be as deserted as the corridors in the British Museum that contain the Elgin Marbles. A picture of Warwick the King-Maker would not excite a hundredth part of the interest awakened by a picture of a living Lord Mayor if the two works were painted by the same hand. Men ate and drank in Rome as they eat and drink now-a-days; but could the same artist hope to please as much by painting a supper of Sallust as by painting an undergraduate's breakfast at Oxford?

We fancy we hear some one objecting that people were always more interested in their own concerns than in the concerns of others, and that it is no novelty for an age to be more attracted by what is contemporaneous than by what is past and gone. That is, no doubt, true; but the objection enables us to indicate the distinction, as far as Art is concerned, between the present age and all previous ages, between an age governed by Monarchical ideas or subject to aristocratic influence, and an age frankly Democratic. In the one case an artist imposes his ideals, his sentiments, his subjects, his preferences, on the public. In the other, the public impose their taste, their preferences, their subjects, upon the artist. It will perhaps be urged that princes or great nobles, and not the artist's own choice, were wont to decide what themes he should handle. But this was by no means invariably the case; and even where it may seem to have been so, the choice of the patron and of the artist was substantially identical. There can be no question that great artists prefer, and are by instinct inclined, to select great subjects rather than small ones; and it may shrewdly be expected that the recognised superiority of such artists as Raphael, Tintoretto, and Lionardo, is due in no small measure to the superiority of the subjects upon which they worked. We entertain no doubt that had the sixteenth century been a century as truly democratic as our own—that is to say, a century in which the many were as influential as they are now—they would not have encouraged the artists we have named to select for treatment the subjects they, as a fact, did select. They would have compelled them to paint something that came home more directly and more strongly to their sympathies. They were not consulted, and the artist was left either to his own inspiration solely, or to his own inspiration seconded by suggestions of some Pope, Doge, Emperor, or Podestà, whose tastes and wishes were pretty similar to his own. The many were not taken into consultation as to what should be painted; they were only told to admire something which had already been painted. It never occurred to them, for a moment, that the artist should paint the incidents of their own daily life. Such an idea would have savoured of intolerable presumption. Pictures, and such like luxuries, were not for common folk, but for holy Fathers, crowned heads, municipalities, churches, monasteries, and the great ones of the earth. Hence the people who painted the pictures painted such as glorified Royalty, extolled Heaven, flattered opulent cities, or drew devout crowds to the foot of celebrated altars. The Virgin was being lifted up to the Throne of her Son on the feet of clouds or on the wings of angels. Jehovah was hurling the blasphemer and the riotous into the eternal abysses of hell. Constantine was triumphing over Maxentius and driving his heretical legions into the Tiber. Paul was proclaiming the Gospel of the carpenter's Son to the self-satisfied philosophers of Athens. Saint Francis, Saint Dominic, Saint Benedict, each had his crowd of attendant artists, because at Assisi, at Subiaco, at Monte Cassino, lived powerful patrons in cowl and tonsure. To Perugino it mattered not whether his patron was the head of the Augustinian friars, or the spirited Corporation which commissioned him to cover the walls of the Sala del Cambio with idealised representations of Justice, Temperance, and Prudence, personified by Trajan, Leonidas, and Numa Pompilius. He knew the more he allowed his imagination to soar, the better he should satisfy his reverend good masters. If he stuck the portrait of a patron into the corner of an enormous canvas covered with saints and martyrs, and represented him as a subordinate and insignificant personage, kneeling afar off, and as if praying excuse for being there at all, the patron was satisfied. Now, if the patron of an artist—some master of hounds, or professor of omniscience, of the period—is painted, it is not as an accessory, but as a principal. "Paint *me*!" is the order; "and paint me as like me as you possibly can. My family do not want a work of imagination. They want me in my best clothes, and with my favourite smirk, or in my most commanding attitude."

Happily, portraits do not exhaust the list of subjects in which the multitude of Art-worshippers and picture-buyers now-a-days delight. But the same principle, the same motive, is at work in the preference shown by the modern many for the pictures which they do prefer. There is no difference between the modern many and the ancient many, save that the ancient many had nothing whatever to say to what sort of pictures should be painted, and the modern many have everything to say to it. Stockbrokers and cotton-spinners, with money in their pocket, are the magnificent Lorenzos of the period. The true successor of Julius II. or Charles V., in the character of Art-patron, is a navvy grown rich. A navvy grown rich is a person greatly to be respected, in so far as he is the embodiment of practical ability, character, and courage. Morally, he is far more admirable than Leo X. But it may be doubted if his commission to artists to paint him pictures will be equally satisfactory. The one was a cultivated sensualist; the other is probably a strenuous boor. The second is probably far more useful in the present age than a reproduction of the former would be; but his usefulness ends where Art begins. *Nil ex omni parte beatum.* And an age which is in the hands of a clever, pushing, semi-educated middle-class, though it will have many things which are worth having, will not have a dominant sense of Art satisfactory to those who mean by Art something more enduring than wall-furniture, and something more elevated than soothing syrup for puling mediocrity.

For it is better to be candid, and confess that the average person—in other words, the type of the many—prefers small themes to large themes, little subjects to big ones, matters of private interest to matters of public interest—the pictures in the Royal Academy to the pictures in the National Gallery. The turn of the average person has come, and he is using his rights as freely and unreservedly as people usually do use their rights. Every dog has his day; and the day of High Art is over. It would be unfair to call the Art that has replaced it low art, for it is not that, though it may conceivably sink to that in time. The many, left to themselves, have a wonderful aptitude for the art of sinking. So far their art is, like themselves, middle-class art. It is not elevated, and it is not base; it is common, ordinary—what the French call *banale*. Democracy wills it should be so, for democracy cannot will otherwise. It has its ideals, as every age, and every person, necessarily must have; and its ideals are comprised within the limits of its own experience. It does not want to be taken up to a high place; it asks for no transfigurations. True, it is constantly saying, "It is good for us to be here;" but the "here" is the bottom of the mountain, not the top.

It is just possible that we may be told that the two periods in the world's history most famous for Art, and for Art of an elevated character, were democratic periods. The periods referred to would, of course, be those known for convenience' sake as the age of Pericles and the age of the Medici. The answer must be that they were in no true sense democratic ages, and in no sense democratic ages as far as Art is concerned. Republicanism and Democracy are far from being convertible terms; and the persons who imagine that, even in the sphere of politics, the many exercised as much influence in the Athenian and Florentine republics as they exercise in the modern monarchy of England, would do well to study afresh their Grote and their Guicciardini. When we turn from politics to Art, we find a condition of things the very opposite of that which prevails in England at this moment. The many neither ordered statues nor bought pictures; they were content to admire the statues and pictures executed or ordered by those whom it never occurred to them to challenge as their "betters." As for the artist himself, he worked for his own glory, or for the glory of his country, his city, his State, his religion, not for the glorification of some individual Crœsus, or the gratification of some happy family. It is true he took to doing this in the declining days of Rome, and the period was synchronous with the decline of Art. The artist lent himself to the taste of the many; and the taste of the many killed his art.

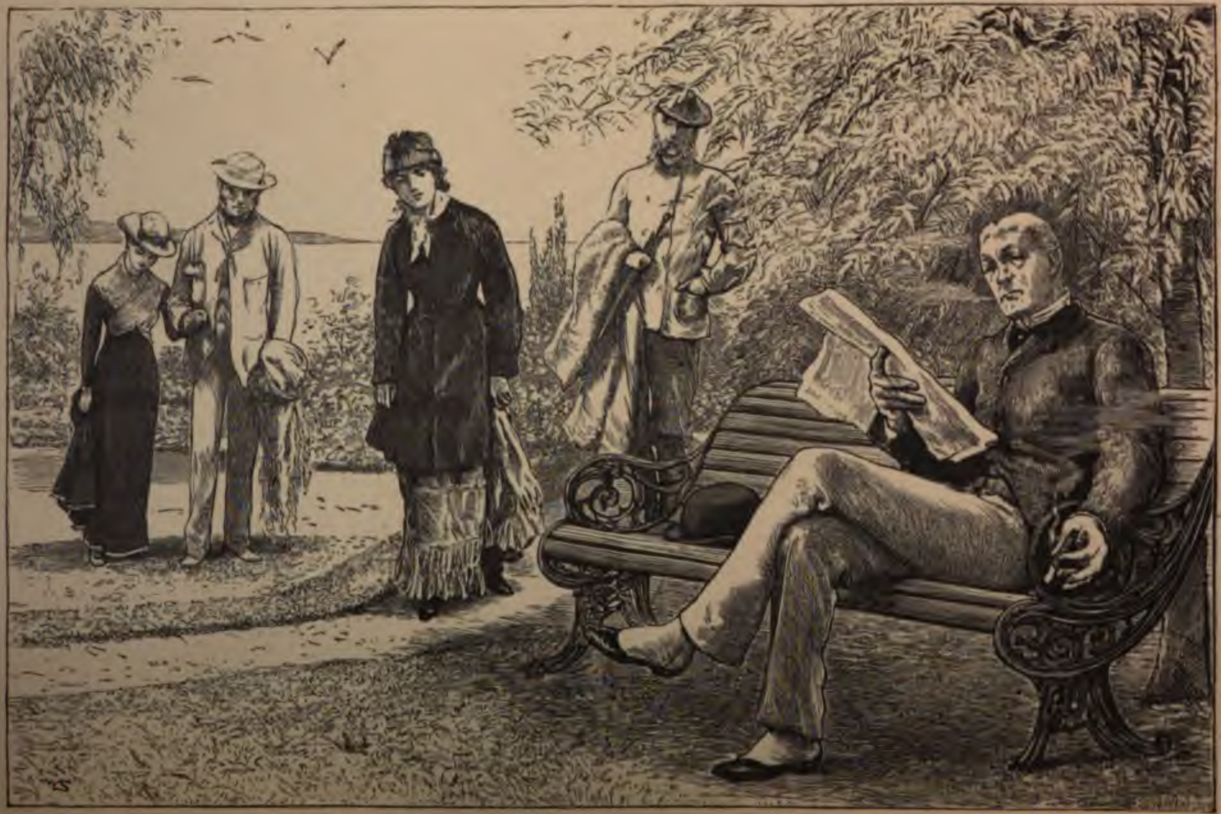
For the many are very worthy people—highly respectable, and in many ways deserving of consideration; but it would be ridiculous insincerity to pretend that they cherish lofty ideals in any direction, and, most of all, that they cherish lofty ideals in the direction of Art. It is idle to address to them the exhortation, *Sursum corda!* They cannot lift up their hearts. Their lives, their interests, their very day-dreams, are of the earth, earthy. Home, business, diversion—behold the limit of their lives! They always were like that; in all probability they always will be like that. *Odi profanum vulgus et arceo* expresses the enduring attitude of the true artist towards the multitude, who amply repay the compliment. In these days, at least, the true artist need be at no pains to try to keep the "vulgus" at arm's length. If he invites them in, it is ten to one they take no notice; if they do, it is to go away wondering at his perversity in selecting such strange themes. Of the "*heaven* of invention" they know nothing; the imitation of earth is quite enough for them. That they prefer; for that they will pay. They are commonplace folk, liking commonplace things. How should it be otherwise? It would be idle to reproach or vilify them; but it is equally idle to ignore or dissemble the fact. Even in modern artists themselves, it is curious to note the limited admiration they usually extend to the great artists of departed times. They can appreciate the technical merits of Tuscan or Venetian painters; but it is clear that it is the technical merits alone in which they recognise superiority. They fail to perceive superiority of theme and superiority of treatment. They themselves, for the most part, belong in taste and feeling to the many with whom they live, breathe, and have their being; and they find the subjects and the style of the Old Masters almost as strange and as uninteresting as do the people who find *their* pictures familiar and interesting.

If further confirmation be sought of the lowering influence of Democracy upon Art, we have only to turn from painting to literature to find the evidence of which we are in search. In the days when the many were of little or no consequence, and a monarch, or powerful nobles, were everything, the man of letters was absolutely unfettered in the employment of his genius. He might, like the artist, have a patron; but, while patrons occasionally did pretend to dictate the subject upon which the painter should exercise his talents, the patrons of the poet, the philosopher, or the historian, left it to them to select, unrestrained, the theme of their song, their speculation, or their narrative. No Pope bade Dante write his *Divina Commedia*, or paid him for writing it; no Prince or Republic set Milton to work on *Paradise Lost*, or took any notice of him when he had accomplished his task. Queen Elizabeth no more suggested to Shakespeare the *Midsummer Night's Dream*, or *Othello*, than did the groundlings. Even though writing for the stage, where the wish to please a large audience must always be more or less present to the writer, Shakespeare was able to feel that what he chose to write court and city alike would accept. The audience was easily pleased, and not very easily bored; and, not being offered domestic dramas, it was compelled to make an effort to enter in some degree into the subtleties of *Hamlet* and the exalted sorrows of *Lear*.

Democracy has changed all that. That same middle-class of which we spoke, which has acquired a sense of its own consequence, and not only a sense of its own consequence but a sense of the insignificance of individuals that do not choose to humour it, is quite as exacting in literature as in painting. A man of letters shall write what it wants to read, or he shall go unread. If he likes to let his imagination dwell upon great themes, he is free to please himself. He will not be burnt; he will only be left out in the cold. "Write to amuse *me*!" says Democracy; just as it said to the artist, "Paint *me*." In order to amuse Democracy, or even to secure its attention, the writer must abjure all subjects which are *caviare* to the multitude, and must deal with themes to which the many condescend to vouchsafe their interest. Men of letters, of the higher sort, have always been more stubborn than artists; and we are far from saying that some of them do not still treat this summons of Democracy to amuse it with sovereign contempt. But the result unquestionably is that they write for a small circle, which is ever getting smaller. We have purposely abstained from introducing the names of living persons, or it would be easy to mention men of genius in the world of letters, whose works are either practically unknown to the public, or who are known to the public only by some subordinate work which happens not to have been outside and beyond the public taste. Poetry is supposed to be the highest form of literature, and much poetry is still written. But there is only one living English poet who can be said, even by a stretch of language, to be known to the many. He has done exquisite work; but can any of it well be assigned a place in literature analogous to the place held by what in painting is called High Art? He has not failed in High Art, because he has not attempted it; unless, indeed, exception has to be made of a couple of dramas, markedly inferior to his other labours. Certainly, if they were adduced as objections to our theory, we should be able to plead the indifference with which the many have received them, without inquiring whether the indifference was well founded. For the rest, the beautiful work of this great artist, as far as theme and treatment are concerned, has been a striking concession, though doubtless an unconscious concession, to Democracy, or to the tastes and interests of the many. His chief poems have been described as cabinet pictures: cabinet pictures of the highest merit, as certain cabinet pictures on the walls of the Royal Academy are of the highest merit. But neither one nor the other can be said to be of the first order, so far as subject and treatment are concerned. Other poets have been more daring and less popular. When they have handled comparatively small themes, they, too, have attracted some attention. The moment they enlarged their canvas, their audience rapidly dwindled. The last ten years have provided ample material for an ambitious poet. The rise of Italy, the fall of the Second French Empire, the Paris Commune—history has provided for the imagination no loftier nor more inspiring material. It may be that the subjects have been treated, and it may be that they have been treated inadequately. But it is quite certain that if they have been treated, whether adequately or otherwise, the many have taken no heed; and this we may assert with the utmost confidence, that if a poet competent to deal with these lofty subjects were to deal with them, and likewise to write a pretty or passionate little poem about a man and a woman, the many—in other words Democracy—would read the second performance with interest and possibly with enthusiasm, if the man and woman at all resembled themselves, and would turn from the imaginative treatment of Mentana, Sedan, and the siege of the French Capital by Frenchmen with utter indifference, not wholly unmixed with that of conceited scorn. Of the Italian Wars, of the Franco-German Campaign, of the Defence of Montmartre by revolutionary desperadoes, the many have had quite enough. Did they not read all about these occurrences in the daily papers? The smart special correspondent and the lively leader-writer have exhausted these themes. It was all very well for Shakespeare to dramatise Henry VIII. We have changed all that; and we prefer to read about contemporaneous events in the columns of the *Daily Startler*.

But if we wish to see what can be done by the influence of the many towards lowering Art, it is neither to pictures nor to poems that we must restrict our attention. Poets may go on for ever ignoring the multitude, and painters only by degrees experience the full effect of the conditions to which, as exhibitors trying to sell their pictures, they are exposed. But dramatists, whose dramas are not acted, are not dramatists at all; and it is to the English stage we must turn for a full flood of enlightenment as to prevailing ideals in a democratic age. A poem may be published, though it pleases and is read by no one save its author. A picture may be exhibited, though it attracts the notice of only a few peculiar critics. But plays are either not acted or are quickly withdrawn, unless they please the average play-goer. It would be impossible to give an adequate idea of the condition of the English theatre without deviating from our desire to abstain from personal instances. Fortunately no proof is required; for the British drama has reached depths of degradation, than which there cannot possibly be any lower deep. The cause is to be sought in the degraded ideals of the audience. We have some clever actors and actresses, who, if the taste of the public were higher, would develop yet more ability by playing in loftier *rôles*. If it be asked why they do not seek to educate both themselves and the public, the answer is that the public will not be educated; and if actors and actresses were to attempt the operation, they would soon be beggared. People that will have the pictures they want, and the books they want, and no others, are not likely to accept any plays but those they want. A manager has no choice, but to please his "patrons." The longest purse would succumb, if he sought to teach them to be pleased with something else. They like buffoonery, rows of legs, and now and then a touch of forced or maudlin sentiment; and these accordingly are what is provided for them. A certain number of so-called comedies are put upon the stage; but the very best of these are broad farces—just as much farces as "Box and Cox," or "Lend me Five Shillings"—with here and there an explosion of pathos, just to justify their title. There can be few men of letters, at least in the department of imagination, who have not felt an inclination to write dramatically. There is not a living Englishman, as far as we can recollect, deserving the name of a man of letters, or even pretending to the title, who writes for the stage or who has even once done so. We may be reminded of "Queen Mary;" but, though it was put upon the stage in consequence of its author's reputation, it is hardly credible that it was written for the stage. The first thing an English manager or English actor would say to a dramatic aspirant would be that literary qualities have nothing to do with the practical goodness of a play, and rather stand in the way of its success than otherwise. What is wanted on the stage is extravagance, quaintness, surprise, sensation, and tumbling. The object of the theatre is the greatest happiness of the greatest number, and the greatest number find their happiness in these things. Over the walls of every theatre in London might be written, "You who enter here, leave Literature and Art behind." Modern comedy, in its very highest phases, apparently consists in carrying about a kettle of hot water and dirtying the tablecloth by putting it down in the wrong place, in making young guardsmen who cannot speak consort with young women who cannot spell, in providing them both with abundance of exaggerated characteristics, and in somebody shrieking, dying, or coming to life again at the right moment. The histrionic ability exhibited in these performances is considerable. The plays themselves are clever, but certainly not of a high order; and the audiences that fancy they are, are past writing for by any one who would humbly imitate Plautus or copy Molière. It is a suggestive fact that on the first evening after the Gaiety Theatre was opened after the departure of the Comédie Française, the play given was "Pretty Esmeralda."

It is in no spirit of animosity to Democracy that we make these observations. The many are our masters; and their supremacy has brought with it some good things and abolished many evil ones. But it has its drawbacks, and we have indicated some of them. It tries to make poetry narrow in its scope and peddling in its treatment. It bans High Art, and asks for pictures of no wider range and no higher elevation than its own blameless but selfish sentiment. And, finally, it has banished from the stage almost everything, save what provokes laughter or suggests lust. It is a mighty tyrant, and it will not be baulked. It has got upon horseback.—Whither will it ride?

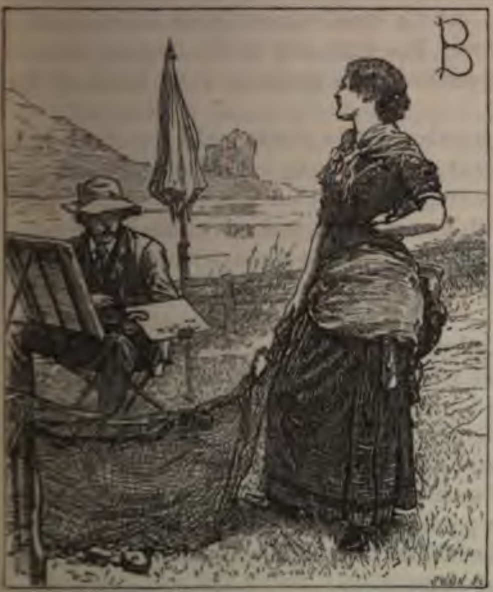


WE FOUND HIM SEATED UNDER A DROOPING ASH, SMOKING.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER V.

A BRAVE CAREER.



BUT when we went on deck the next morning we forgot all about the detestable person who was about to break in upon our peace (there was small chance that our faithful Angus Sutherland might encounter the snake in this summer paradise, and trample on him, and pitch him out; for this easy way of getting rid of disagreeable folk is not permitted in the Highlands now-a-days) as we looked on the beautiful bay shining all around us.

"Dear me!" said Denny-mains, "if Tom Galbraith could only see that now! It is a great peety he has never been to this place. I'm thinking I must write to him."

The Laird did not remember that we had an artist on board—one who, if she was not so great an artist as Mr. Galbraith, had at least exhibited one or two small landscapes in oil at the Royal Academy. But then the Academicians, though they might dread the contrast between their own work and that of Tom Galbraith, could have no fear of Mary Avon.

And even Mr. Galbraith himself might have been puzzled to find among his pigments any equivalent for the rare and clear colours of this morning scene as now we sailed away from Bunessan with a light topsail breeze. How blue the day was—blue skies, blue seas, a faint transparent blue along the cliffs of Bourg and Gribun, a darker blue where the far Ru-Tresbanish ran out into the sea, a shadow of blue to mark where the caves of Staffa retreated from the surface of the sun-brown rocks! And here, nearer at hand, the warmer colours of the shore—the soft, velvety olive-greens of the moss and breckan; the splashes of lilac where the rocks were bare of herbage; the tender sunny reds where the granite promontories ran out to the sea; the beautiful cream whites of the sandy bays! Here, too, are the islands again as we get out into the open—Gometra, with its one white house at the point; and Inch Kenneth, where the seals show their shining black heads among the shallows; and Erisgeir and Colonsay, where the skarts alight to dry their wings on the rocks; and Staffa, and Lunga, and the Dutchman, lying peaceful enough now on the calm blue seas. We have time to look at them, for the wind is slight, and the broad-beamed *White Dove* is not a quick sailer in a light breeze. The best part of the forenoon is over before we find ourselves opposite to the gleaming white sands of the northern bays of Iona.

"But surely both of us together will be able to make him stay longer than ten days," says the elder of the two women to the younger—and you may be sure she was not speaking of East Wind.

Mary Avon looks up with a start; then looks down again—perhaps with the least touch of colour in her face—as she says hurriedly—

'Oh, I think you will. He is your friend. As for me—you see—I—I scarcely know him."

"Oh, Mary!" says the other reproachfully. "You have been meeting him constantly all these two months; you must know him better than any of us. I am sure I wish he was on board now—he could tell us all about the geology of the islands, and what not. It will be delightful to have somebody on board who knows something."

Such is the gratitude of women!—and the Laird had just been describing to her some further points of the famous heresy case.

"And then he knows Gaelic!" says the elder woman. "He will tell us what all the names of the islands mean."

"Oh, yes," says the younger one, "he understands Gaelic very well, though he cannot speak much of it."

"And I think he is very fond of boats," remarks our hostess.

"Oh, exceedingly—exceedingly!" says the other, who, if she does not know Angus Sutherland, seems to have picked up some information about him somehow. "You cannot imagine how he has been looking forward to sailing with you; he has scarcely had any holiday for years."

"Then he must stay longer than ten days," says the elder woman; adding with a smile, "you know, Mary, it is not the number of his patients that will hurry him back to London."

"Oh, but I assure you," says Miss Avon seriously, "that he is not at all anxious to have many patients—as yet! Oh, no!—I never knew any one who was so indifferent about money. I know he would live on bread and water—if that were necessary—to go on with his researches. He told me himself that all the time he was at Leipsic his expenses were never more than 1*l.* a week."

She seemed to know a good deal about the circumstances of this young F.R.S.

"Look at what he has done with those anæsthetics," continues Miss Avon. "Isn't it better to find out something that does good to the whole world than give yourself up to making money by wheedling a lot of old women?"

This estimate of the physician's art was not flattering.

"But," she says warmly, "if the Government had any sense, that is just the sort of man they would put in a position to go on with his invaluable work. And Oxford and Cambridge, with all their wealth, they scarcely even recognise the noblest profession that a man can devote himself to—when even the poor Scotch Universities and the Universities all over Europe have always had their medical and scientific chairs. I think it is perfectly disgraceful!"

Since when had she become so strenuous an advocate of the endowment of research?

"Why, look at Dr. Sutherland—when he is burning to get on with his own proper work—when his name is beginning to be known all over Europe—he has to fritter away his time in editing a scientific magazine and in those hospital lectures. And that, I suppose, is barely enough to live on. But I know," she says, with decision, "that in spite of everything—I know that before he is five-and-thirty, he will be President of the British Association."

Here, indeed, is a brave career for the Scotch student: cannot one complete the sketch as it roughly exists in the minds of those two women?

At twenty-one, B.M. of Edinburgh.

At twenty-six, F.R.S.

At thirty, Professor of Biology at Oxford: the chair founded through the intercession of the women of Great Britain.

At thirty-five, President of the British Association.

At forty, a baronetcy, for further discoveries in the region of anæsthetics.

At forty-five, consulting physician to half the gouty gentlemen of England, and amassing an immense fortune.

At fifty——

Well, at fifty, is it not time that "the poor Scotch student," now become great and famous and wealthy, should look around for some beautiful princess to share his high estate with him? He has not had time before to think of such matters. But what is this now? Is it that microscopes and test-tubes have dimmed his eyes? Is it that honours and responsibilities have silvered his hair? Or, is the drinking deep of the Pactolus stream a deadly poison? There is no beautiful princess awaiting him anywhere. He is alone among his honours. There was once a beautiful princess—beautiful-souled and tender-eyed, if not otherwise too lovely—awaiting him among the Western Seas; but that time is over and gone many a year ago. The opportunity has passed. Ambition called him away, and he left her; and the last he saw of her was when he bade good-bye to the *White Dove.*

What have we to do with these idle dreams? We are getting within sight of Iona village now; and the sun is shining on the green shores, and on the ruins of the old cathedral, and on that white house just above the corn-field? And as there is no good anchorage about the island, we have to make in for a little creek on the Mull side of the Sound, called Polterriv, or the Bull-hole; and this creek is narrow, tortuous, and shallow; and a yacht drawing eight feet of water has to be guided with some circumspection—especially if you go up to the inner harbour above the rock called the Little Bull. And so we make inquiries of John of Skye, who has not been with us here before. It is even hinted that if he is not quite sure of the channel, we might send the gig over to Iona for John Macdonald, who is an excellent pilot.

"John Macdonald!" exclaims John of Skye, whose professional pride has been wounded. "Will John Macdonald be doing anything more than I wass do myself in the Bull-hole—ay, last year—last year I will tek my own smack out of the Bull-hole at the norse end, and ferry near low water, too; and her deep-loaded? Oh, yes, I will be knowing the Bull-hole this many a year."

And John of Skye is as good as his word. Favoured by a flood-tide, we steal gently into the unfrequented creek, behind the great rocks of red granite; and so extraordinarily clear is the water that, standing upright on the deck, we can see the white sand of the bottom with shoals of young saithe darting this way and that. And then just as we get opposite an opening in the rocks, through which we can descry the northern shores of Iona, and above those the blue peak of the Dutchman, away goes the anchor with a short, quick rush; her head swings round to meet the tide; the *White Dove* is safe from all the winds that blow. Now lower away the gig, boys, and bear us over the blue waters of the Sound!

"I am really afraid to begin," Mary Avon says, as we remonstrate with her for not having touched a colour-tube since she started. "Besides, you know, I scarcely look on it that we have really set out yet. This is only a sort of shaking ourselves into our places; I am only getting accustomed to the ways of our cabin now. I shall scarcely consider that we have started on our real voyaging until——"

Oh, yes we know very well. Until we have got Angus Sutherland on board. But what she really said was, after slight hesitation:

"——until we set out for the Northern Hebrides."

"Ay it's a good thing to feel nervous about beginning," says the Laird, as the long sweep of the four oars brings us nearer and nearer to the Iona shores. "I have often heard Tom Galbraith say that to the younger men. He says if a young man is over-confident, he'll come to nothing. But there was a good one I once heard Galbraith tell about a young man that was pentin at Tarbert—that's Tarbert on Loch Fyne, Miss Avon. Ay, well, he was pentin away, and he was putting in the young lass of the house as a fisher-lass; and he asked her if she could not get a creel to strap on her back, as a background for her head, ye know. Well, says she——"

Here the fierce humour of the story began to bubble up in the Laird's blue-grey eyes. We were all half laughing already. It was impossible to resist the glow of delight on the Laird's face.

"Says she—just as pat as ninepence—says she, 'it's your ain head that wants a creel!'"

The explosion was inevitable. The roar of laughter at this good one was so infectious that a subdued smile played over the rugged features of John of Skye. "*It's your ain head that wants a creel*:" the Laird laughed, and laughed again, until the last desperately suppressed sounds were something like *kee! kee! kee!* Even Mary Avon pretended to understand.

"There was a real good one," says he, obviously overjoyed to have so appreciative an audience, "that I mind of reading in the Dean's *Reminiscences*. It was about an old leddy in Edinburgh who met in a shop a young officer she had seen before. He was a tall young man, and she eyed him from head to heel, and says she—ha! ha!—says she, '*Od, ye're a lang lad: God gie ye grace.*' Dry—very dry—wasn't it? There was real humour in that—a pawky humour that people in the South cannot understand at all. '*Od,*' says she, '*ye're a lang lad: God grant ye grace.*' There was a great dale of character in that."

We were sure of it; but still we preferred the Laird's stories about Homesh. We invariably liked best the stories at which the Laird laughed most—whether we quite understood their pawky humour or not.

"Dr. Sutherland has a great many stories about the Highlanders," says Miss Avon timidly; "they are very amusing."

"As far as I have observed," remarked the Laird—for how could he relish the notion of having a rival anecdote-monger on board?—"as far as I have observed, the Highland character is entirely without humour. Ay, I have heard Tom Galbraith say that very often, and he has been everywhere in the Highlands."

"Well, then," says Mary Avon, with a quick warmth of indignation in her face—how rapidly those soft dark eyes could change their expression!—"I hope Mr. Galbraith knows more about painting than he knows about the Highlanders! I thought that anybody who knows anything knows that the Celtic nature is full of imagination, and humour, and pathos, and poetry; and the Saxon—the Saxon!—it is his business to plod over ploughed fields, and be as dull and commonplace as the other animals he sees there!"

Gracious goodness!—here was a tempest! The Laird was speechless; for, indeed, at this moment we bumped against the sacred shores—that is to say, the landing-slip of Iona; and had to scramble on to the big stones. Then we walked up and past the cottages, and through the potato-field, and past the white inn, and so to the hallowed shrine and its graves of the kings. We spent the whole of the afternoon there.

When we got back to the yacht and to dinner we discovered that a friend had visited us in our absence, and had left of his largesse behind him—nasturtiums and yellow-and-white pansies, and what not—to say nothing of fresh milk and crisp, delightful lettuce. We drank his health.

Was it the fear of some one breaking in on our domestic peace that made that last evening among the western islands so lovely to us? We went out in the gig after dinner; the Laird put forth his engines of destruction to encompass the innocent lythe; we heard him humming the "Haughs o' Cromdale" in the silence. The wonderful glory of that evening!—Iona become an intense olive-green against the gold and crimson of the sunset; the warm light shining along the red granite of western Mull. Then the yellow moon rose in the south—into the calm violet-hued vault of the heavens; and there was a golden fire on the ripples and on the wet blades of the oars as we rowed back with laughter and singing.

Sing tàntara! sing tàntara!
Sing tàntara! sing tàntara!
  Said he, the Highland army rues
  That ere they came to Cromdale!

And then, next morning, we were up at five o'clock. If we were going to have a tooth pulled, why not have the little interview over at once? East Wind would be waiting for us at Castle Osprey.

Blow, soft westerly breeze, then, and bear us down by Fion-phort, and round the granite Ross—shining all a pale red in the early dawn. And here is Ardalanish Point; and there, as the morning goes by, are the Carsaig arches, and then Loch Buy, and finally the blue Firth of Lorn. Northward, now, and still northward—until, far away, the white house shining amidst the firs, and the flag fluttering in the summer air. Have they descried us, then? Or is the bunting hoisted in honour of guests? The pale cheek of Mary Avon tells a tale as she descries that far signal; but that is no business of ours. Perhaps it is only of her uncle that she is thinking.

CHAPTER VI.

OUR NEW GUESTS.

BEHOLD, now!—this beautiful garden of Castle Osprey all ablaze in the sun—the roses, pansies, poppies, and what not bewildering our eyes after the long looking at the blue water; and, in the midst of the brilliant paradise—just as we had feared—the snake! He did not scurry away at our approach, as snakes are wont to do; or raise his horrent head, and hiss. The fact is, we found him comfortably seated under a drooping ash, smoking. He rose and explained that he had strolled up from the shore to await our coming. He did not seem to notice that Mary Avon, as she came along, had to walk slowly, and was leaning on the arm of the Laird.

Certainly nature had not been bountiful to this tall, spare person who had now come among us. At first sight he looked almost like an albino—his yellow-white, closely-cropped head; a certain raw appearance of the face, as if perpetual east winds had chafed the skin; and weak grey eyes that seemed to fear the light. But the albino look had nothing to do with the pugilist's jaw, and the broken nose, and the general hang-dog scowl about the mouth. For the rest Mr. Smethurst seemed desirous of making up for those unpleasant features which nature had bestowed upon him by a studied air of self-possession, and by an extreme precision of dress. Alack and well-a-day! these laudable efforts were of little avail. Nature was too strong for him. The assumption of a languid and indifferent air was not quite in consonance with the ferrety grey eyes and the bull-dog mouth; the precision of his costume only gave him the look of a well-dressed groom, or a butler gone on the turf. There was not much grateful to the sight about Mr. Frederick Smethurst.

But were we to hate the man for being ugly? Despite his raw face, he might have the white soul of an angel. And in fact we knew absolutely nothing against his private character or private reputation, except that he had been blackballed at a London club in bygone days; and even of that little circumstance our women-folk were not aware. However, there was no doubt at all that a certain coldness—apparent to us who knew her well—characterised the manner of this small lady who now went up and shook hands with him, and declared—unblushingly—that she was so glad he had run up to the Highlands.

"And you know," said she, with that charming politeness which she would show to the arch-fiend himself if he were properly introduced to her, "you know, Mr. Smethurst, that yachting is such an uncertain thing, one never knows when one may get back; but if you could spare a few days to take a run with us, you would see what a capital mariner Mary has become, and I am sure it would be a great pleasure to us."

These were actually her words. She uttered them without the least tremor of hesitation. She looked him straight in the face with those clear, innocent, confiding eyes of hers. How could the man tell that she was wishing him at Jericho?

And it was in silence that we waited to hear our doom pronounced. A yachting trip with this intolerable Jonah on board! The sunlight went out of the day; the blue went out of the sky and the seas; the world was filled with gloom, and chaos, and East Wind!

Imagine, then, the sudden joy with which we heard of our deliverance! Surely it was not the raucous voice of Frederick Smethurst, but a sound of summer bells.

"Oh, thank you," he said, in his affectedly indifferent way; "but the fact is, I have run up to see Mary only on a little matter of business, and I must get back at once. Indeed, I purpose leaving by the Dalmally coach in the afternoon. Thank you very much, though; perhaps some other time I may be more fortunate."

How we had wronged this poor man! We hated him no longer. On the contrary, great grief was expressed over his departure; and he was begged at least to stay that one evening. No doubt he had heard of Dr. Angus Sutherland, who had made such discoveries in the use of anæsthetics? Dr. Sutherland was coming by the afternoon steamer. Would not he stay and meet him at dinner?

Our tears broke out afresh—metaphorically—when East Wind persisted in his intention of departure; but of course compulsion was out of the question. And so we allowed him to go into the house, to have that business interview with his niece.

"A poor crayture!" remarked the Laird confidently, forgetting that he was talking of a friend of ours. "Why does he not speak out like a man, instead of drawling and dawdling? His accent is jist insufferable."

"And what business can he have with Mary?" says our sovereign lady sharply—just as if a man with a raw skin and yellow-white hair must necessarily be a pickpocket. "He was the trustee of that little fortune of hers, I know; but that is all over. She got the money when she came of age. What can he want to see her about now?"

We concerned ourselves not with that. It was enough for us that the snake was about to retreat from our summer paradise of his own free will and pleasure. And Angus Sutherland was coming; and the provisioning of the yacht had to be seen to; for to-morrow—to-morrow we spread our white wings again and take flight to the far north!

Never was parting guest so warmly speeded. We concealed our tears as the coach rolled away. We waved a hand to him. And then, when it was suggested that the waggonette that had brought Mary Avon down from Castle Osprey might just as well go along to the quay—for the steamer bringing Dr. Sutherland would be in shortly—and when we actually did set out in that direction, there was so little grief on our faces that you could not have told we had been bidding farewell to a valued friend and relative.

Now if our good-hearted Laird had had a grain of jealousy in his nature, he might well have resented the manner in which these two women spoke of the approaching guest. In their talk the word "he" meant only one person. "He" was sure to come by this steamer. "He" was so punctual in his engagements. Would he bring a gun or a rod; or would the sailing be enough amusement for him? What a capital thing it was for him to be able to take an interest in some such out-of-door exercise, as a distraction to the mind! And so forth, and so forth. The Laird heard all this, and his expectations were no doubt rising and rising. Forgetful of his disappointment on first seeing Mary Avon, he was in all likelihood creating an imaginary figure of Angus Sutherland—and, of course, this marvel of erudition and intellectual power must be a tall, wan, pale person, with the travail of thinking written in lines across the spacious brow. The Laird was not aware that for many a day after we first made the acquaintance of the young Scotch student he was generally referred to in our private conversation as "Brose."

And, indeed, the Laird did stare considerably when he saw—elbowing his way through the crowd and making for us with a laugh of welcome on the fresh-coloured face—a stout-set, muscular, blue-eyed, sandy-haired, good-humoured-looking, youngish man; who, instead of having anything Celtic about his appearance, might have been taken for the son of a south-country farmer. Our young Doctor was carrying his own portmanteau, and sturdily shoving his way through the porters who would fain have seized it.

"I am glad to see you, Angus," said our queen regent, holding out her hand; and there was no ceremonial politeness in that reception—but you should have seen the look in her eyes.

Then he went on to the waggonette.

"How do you do, Miss Avon?" said he, quite timidly, like a schoolboy. He scarcely glanced up at her face, which was regarding him with a very pleasant welcome; he seemed relieved when he had to turn and seize his portmanteau again. Knowing that he was rather fond of driving, our mistress and admiral-in-chief offered him the reins, but he declined the honour; Mary Avon was sitting in front. "Oh, no, thank you," said he quite hastily, and with something uncommonly like a blush. The Laird, if he had been entertaining any feeling of jealousy, must have been reassured. This Doctor-fellow was no formidable rival. He spoke very little—he only listened—as we drove away to Castle Osprey. Mary Avon was chatting briskly and cheerfully, and it was to the Laird that she addressed that running fire of nonsense and merry laughter.

But the young Doctor was greatly concerned when, on our arrival at Castle Osprey, he saw Mary Avon helped down with much care, and heard the story of the sprain.

"Who bandages your ankle?" said he at once, and without any shyness now.

"I do it myself," said she cheerfully. "I can do it well enough."

"Oh, no, you cannot!" said he abruptly; "a person stooping cannot. The bandage should be as tight, and as smooth, as the skin of a drum. You must let some one else do that for you."

And he was disposed to resent this walking about in the garden before dinner. What business had she to trifle with such a serious matter as a sprain? And a sprain which was the recall of an older sprain. "Did she wish to be lame for life?" he asked sharply.

Mary Avon laughed, and said that worse things than that had befallen people. He asked her whether she found any pleasure in voluntary martyrdom; she blushed a little, and turned to the Laird.

The Laird was at this moment laying before us the details of a most gigantic scheme. It appeared that the inhabitants of Strathgovan, not content with a steam fire-engine, were talking about having a public park—actually proposing to have a public park, with beds of flowers, and iron seats; and, to crown all, a gymnasium, where the youths of the neighbourhood might twirl themselves on the gay trapèze to their hearts' content. And where the subscriptions were to come from; and what were the hardiest plants for borders; and whether the gymnasium should be furnished with ropes or with chains—these matters were weighing heavily on the mind of our good friend of Denny-mains. Angus Sutherland relapsed into silence, and gazed absently at a tree-fuchsia that stood by.

"It is a beautiful tree, is it not?" said a voice beside him—that of our midge-like empress.

He started.

"Oh, yes," he said cheerfully. "I was thinking I should like to live the life of a tree like that, dying in the winter, you know, and being quite impervious to frost, and snow, and hard weather; and then, as soon as the fine warm spring and summer came round, coming to life again and spreading yourself out to feel all the sunlight and the warm winds. That must be a capital life."

"But do you really think they can feel that? Why, you must believe that those trees and flowers are alive!"

"Does anybody doubt it?" said he quite simply. "They are certainly alive. Why——"

And here he bethought himself for a moment.

"If I only had a good microscope now," said he eagerly, "I would show you the life of a plant directly—in every cell of it: did you never see the constant life in each cell—the motion of the clorophyll granules circling and circling night and day? Did no one ever show you that?"

Well, no one had ever shown us that. We may now and again have entertained angels unawares; but we were not always stumbling against Fellows of the Royal Society.

"Then I must borrow one somewhere," said he decisively, "and show you the secret life of even the humblest plant that exists. And then look what a long life it is, in the case of the perennial plants. Did you ever think of that? Those great trees in the Yosemite valley—they were alive and feeling the warm sunlight and the winds about them when Alfred was hiding in the marshes; and they were living the same undisturbed life when Charles the First had his head chopped off; and they were living—in peace and quietness—when all Europe had to wake up to stamp out the Napoleonic pest; and they are alive now and quite careless of the little creatures that come to span out their circumference, and ticket them, and give them ridiculous names. Had any of the patriarchs a life as long as that?"

The Laird eyed this young man askance. There was something uncanny about him. What might not he say when—in the northern solitudes to which we were going—the great Semple heresy-case was brought on for discussion?

But at dinner the Laird got on very well with our new guest; for the latter listened most respectfully when Denny-mains was demonstrating the exceeding purity, and strength, and fitness of the speech used in the south of Scotland. And indeed the Laird was generous. He admitted that there were blemishes. He deprecated the introduction of French words; and gave us a much longer list of those aliens than usually appears in books. What about *conjee*, and *que-vee*, and *fracaw* as used by Scotch children and old wives?

Then after dinner—at nine o'clock the wonderful glow of the summer evening was still filling the drawing-room—the Laird must needs have Mary Avon sing to him. It was not a custom of hers. She rarely would sing a song of set purpose. The linnet sings all day—when you do not watch her; but she will not sing if you go and ask.

However, on this occasion, her hostess went to the piano, and sat down to play the accompaniment; and Mary Avon stood beside her, and sang, in rather a low voice—but it was tender enough—some modern version of the old ballad of the Queen's Maries. What were the words? These were of them, anyway:—

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries;
This night she'll hae but three:
There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.

But indeed, if you had seen that graceful slim figure—clad all in black velvet, with the broad band of gold fringe round the neck—and the small, shapely, smoothly-brushed head above the soft swathes of white muslin—and if you had caught a glimpse of the black eyelashes drooping outward from the curve of the pale cheek—and if you had heard the tender, low voice of Mary Avon, you might have forgotten about the Queen's Maries altogether.

And then Dr. Sutherland: the Laird was determined—in true Scotch fashion—that everybody who could not sing should be goaded to sing.

"Oh, well," said the young man, with a laugh, "you know a student in Germany must sing whether he can or not. And I learned there to smash out something like an accompaniment also."

And he went to the piano without more ado, and did smash out an accompaniment. And if his voice was rather harsh?—well, we should have called it raucous in the case of East Wind, but we only called it manly and strenuous when it was Angus Sutherland who sang. And it was a manly song, too—a fitting song for our last night on shore, the words hailing from the green woods of Fuinary, the air an air that had many a time been heard among the western seas. It was the song of the Biorlinn * that he sang to us; we could hear the brave chorus and the splash of the long oars :—

Send the biorlinn on careering!
Cheerily and all together—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Give her way and show her wake
'Mid showering spray and curling eddies—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Do we not hear now the measured stroke in the darkness of the morning? The water springs from her bows; one by one the headlands are passed. But lo! the day is breaking; the dawn will surely bring a breeze with it; and then the sail of the gallant craft will bear her over the seas :—

Another cheer, our Isle appears!
Our biorlinn bears her on the faster—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Ahead she goes! the land she knows!
Behold! the snowy shores of Canna—
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together—
Ho, ro, clansmen!

A long, strong pull together indeed: who could resist joining in the thunder of the chorus? And we were bound for Canna, too: this was our last night on shore.

Our last night on shore. In such circumstances one naturally has a glance round at the people with whom one is to be brought into such close contact for many and many a day. But in this particular case, what was the use of speculating, or grumbling, or remonstrating? There is a certain household that is ruled with a rod of iron. And if the mistress of that household chose to select as her summer companions a "shilpit bit thing," and a hard-headed, ambitious Scotch student, and a parochial magnate haunted by a heresy-case, how dared one object? There is such a thing as peace and quietness.

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* *Biorlinn*—that is, a rowing-boat. The word is pronounced *byurlen*. The song, which in a measure imitates the rhythm peculiar to Highland poetry—consisting in a certain repetition of the same vowel sounds—is the production of Dr. Macleod, of

But however unpromising the outlook might be, do we not know the remark that is usually made by that hard-worked officer, the chief mate, when, on the eve of a voyage, he finds himself confronted by an unusually mongrel crew? He regards those loafers and outcasts—from the Bowery, and Ratcliffe Highway, and the Broomielaw—Greeks, niggers, and Mexicans—with a critical and perhaps scornful air, and forthwith proceeds to address them in the following highly polished manner:—

"By etcetera-etcetera, you are an etceteraed rum-looking lot; but etcetera-etcetera me *if I don't lick you into shape before we get to Rio.*"

And so—good-night!—and let all good people pray for fair skies and a favouring breeze! And if there is any song to be heard in our dreams, let it be the song of the Queen's Maries—in the low, tender voice of Mary Avon:—

There was Mary Beaton, and Mary Seaton,
And Mary Carmichael, and me.

CHAPTER VII.

NORTHWARD.

WE have bidden good-bye to the land; the woods and the green hills have become pale in the haze of the summer light; we are out here, alone, on the shining blue plain. And if our young Doctor betrays a tendency to keep forward—conversing with John of Skye about blocks,

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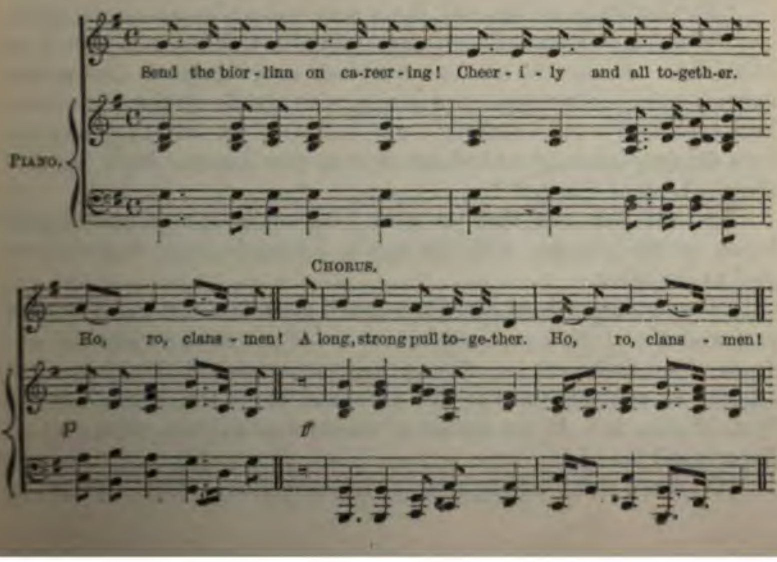
Morven. And here, for the benefit of any one who minds such things, is a rough draft of the air, arranged by a most charming young lady, who, however, says she would much rather die than have her name mentioned:—


Send the bior-linn on ca-reer-ing! Cheer-i-ly and all to-geth-er.
PIANO.
CHORUS.
Ho, ro, clans-men! A long, strong pull to-ge-ther. Ho, ro, clans-men!
p
ff

and tackle, and winches; and if the Laird—whose parental care and regard for Mary Avon is becoming beautiful to see—should have quite a monopoly of the young lady, and be more bent than ever on amusing her with his "good ones;" and if our queen and governor should spend a large portion of her time below, in decorating cabins with flowers, in overhauling napery, and in earnest consultation with Master Fred about certain culinary mysteries; notwithstanding all these divergences of place and occupation, our little kingdom afloat is compact enough. There is, always, for example, a reassembling at meals. There is an instant community of interest when a sudden cry calls all hands on deck to regard some new thing—the spouting of a whale or the silvery splashing of a shoal of mackerel. But now—but now—if only some cloud-compelling Jove would break this insufferably fine weather, and give us a tearing good gale!

It is a strange little kingdom. It has no postal service. Shilling telegrams are unknown in it; there is no newspaper at breakfast. There are no barrel-organs; nor rattling hansoms raising the dust in windy streets; there is no afternoon scandal; overheated rooms at midnight are a thing of the past. Serene, independent, self-centred, it minds its own affairs; if the whole of Europe were roaring for war, not even an echo of the cry would reach us. We only hear the soft calling of the sea-birds as we sit and read, or talk, or smoke; from time to time watching the shadows move on the blistering hot decks, or guessing at the names of the blue mountains that rise above Loch Etive and Lochaber. But oh! for the swift gale to tear this calm to pieces! Is there no one of you giants secretly brewing a storm for us, far up there among the lonely chasms, to spring down on these glassy seas?

"They prayed for rain in the churches last Sunday—so Captain John says," Mary Avon remarks, when we assemble together at lunch.

"The distilleries are stopped: that's very serious," continues the Laird.

"Well," says Queen T., "people talk about the rain in the West Highlands. It must be true, as everybody says it is true. But now—excepting the year we went to America with Sylvia Balfour—we have been here for five years running; and each year we made up our mind for a deluge—thinking we had deserved it, you know. Well, it never came. Look at this now."

And the fact was that we were lying motionless on the smooth bosom of the Atlantic, with the sun so hot on the decks that we were glad to get below.

"Very strange—very strange, indeed," remarked the Laird, with a profound air. "Now what value are we to put on any historical evidence if we find such a conflict of testimony about what is at our own doors? How should there be two opeenions about the weather in the West Highlands? It is a matter of common experience—dear me! I never heard the like."

"Oh, but I think we might try to reconcile those diverse opinions!"

said Angus Sutherland, with an absolute gravity. "You hear mostly the complaints of London people, who make much of a passing shower. Then the tourist and holiday folk, especially from the South, come in the autumn, when the fine summer weather has broken. And then," he added, addressing himself with a frank smile to the small creature who had been expressing her wonder over the fine weather, "perhaps, if you are pleased with your holiday on the whole, you are not anxious to remember the wet days; and then you are not afraid of a shower, I know; and besides that, when one is yachting, one is more anxious for wind than for fine weather."

"Oh, I am sure that is it!" called out Mary Avon quite eagerly. She did not care how she destroyed the Laird's convictions about the value of historical evidence. "That is an explanation of the whole thing."

At this, our young Doctor—who had been professing to treat this matter seriously merely as a joke—quickly lowered his eyes. He scarcely ever looked Mary Avon in the face when she spoke to him, or when he had to speak to her. And a little bit of shy embarrassment in his manner towards her—perceivable only at times—was all the more singular in a man who was shrewd and hard-headed enough, who had knocked about the world and seen many persons and things, and who had a fair amount of unassuming self-confidence, mingled with a vein of sly and reticent humour. He talked freely enough when he was addressing our admiral-in-chief. He was not afraid to meet *her* eyes. Indeed, they were so familiar friends that she called him by his Christian name—a practice which in general she detested. But she would as soon have thought of applying "Mr." to one of her own boys at Epsom College as to Angus Sutherland.

"Well, you know, Angus," says she pleasantly, "you have definitely promised to go up to the Outer Hebrides with us, and back. The longer the calms last, the longer we shall have you. So we shall gladly put up with the fine weather."

"It is very kind of you to say so; but I have already had such a long holiday——"

"Oh!" said Mary Avon, with her eyes full of wonder and indignation. She was too surprised to say any more. She only stared at him. She knew he had been working night and day in Edinburgh.

"I mean," said he hastily, and looking down, "I have been away so long from London. Indeed, I was getting rather anxious about my next month's number; but luckily, just before I left Edinburgh, a kind friend sent me a most valuable paper, so I am quite at ease again. Would you like to read it, sir? It is set up in type."

He took the sheets from his pocket, and handed them to the Laird. Denny-mains looked at the title. It was *On the Radiolarians of the Coal Measures*, and it was the production of a well-known professor. The Laird handed back the paper without opening it.

"No, thank you," said he, with some dignity. "If I wished to be instructed, I would like a safer guide than that man."

We looked with dismay on this dangerous thing that had been brought on board: might it not explode and blow up the ship?

"Why," said our Doctor, in unaffected wonder, and entirely mistaking the Laird's exclamation, "he is a perfect master of his subject."

"There is a great deal too much speculation now-a-days on these matters, and parteecularly among the younger men," remarked the Laird severely. And he looked at Angus Sutherland. "I suppose now ye are well acquainted with the *Vestiges of Creation*?"

"I have heard of the book," said Brose—regretfully confessing his ignorance, "but I never happened to see it."

The Laird's countenance lightened.

"So much the better—so much the better. A most mischievous and unsettling book. But all the harm it can do is counteracted by a noble work—a conclusive work that leaves nothing to be said. Ye have read the *Testimony of the Rocks*, no doubt?"

"Oh, yes, certainly," our Doctor was glad to be able to say; "but—but it was a long time ago—when I was a boy, in fact."

"Boy, or man, you'll get no better book on the history of the earth. I tell ye, sir, I never read a book that placed such firm conviction in my mind. Will ye get any of the new men they are talking about as keen an observer and as skilful in arguing as Hugh Miller? No, no; not one of them dares to try to upset the *Testimony of the Rocks*."

Angus Sutherland appealed against this sentence of finality only in a very humble way.

"Of course, sir," said he meekly, "you know that science is still moving forward——"

"Science?" repeated the Laird. "Science may be moving forward or moving backward; but can it upset the facts of the earth? Science may say what it likes; but the facts remain the same."

Now this point was so conclusive that we unanimously hailed the Laird as victor. Our young Doctor submitted with an excellent good humour. He even promised to post that paper on the Radiolarians at the very first office we might reach: we did not want any such explosive compounds on board.

That night we only got as far as Fishnish Bay—a solitary little harbour probably down on but few maps; and that we had to reach by getting out the gig for a tow. There was a strange bronze-red in the northern skies, long after the sun had set; but in here the shadow of the great mountains was on the water. We could scarcely see the gig; but Angus Sutherland had joined the men and was pulling stroke; and along with the measured splash of the oars, we heard something about "*Ho, ro, clansmen!*" Then, in the cool night air, there was a slight fragrance of peat-smoke; we knew we were getting near the shore.

"He's a fine fellow, that," says the Laird, generously, of his defeated antagonist. "A fine fellow. His knowledge of different things is just remarkable; and he's as modest as a girl. Ay, and he can row, too; a while ago, when it was lighter, I could see him put his shoulders into it. Ay, he's a fine, good-natured fellow, and I am glad he has not been led astray by that mischievous book, the *Vestiges of Creation*."

Come on board, now, boys, and swing up the gig to the davits Twelve fathoms of chain?—away with her then!—and there is a roar in the silence of the lonely little bay. And thereafter silence; and the sweet fragrance of the peat in the night air, and the appearance, above the black hills, of a clear, shining, golden planet that sends a quivering line of light across the water to us. And, once more, good-night and pleasant dreams!

But what is this in the morning? There have been no pleasant dreams for John of Skye and his merry men during the last night; for here we are already between Mingary Bay and Ru-na-Gaul Lighthouse; and before us is the open Atlantic, blue under the fair skies of the morning. And here is Dr. Sutherland, at the tiller, with a suspiciously negligent look about his hair and shirt-collar.

"I have been up since four," says he, with a laugh. "I heard them getting under weigh, and did not wish to miss anything. You know these places are not so familiar to me as they are to you."

"Is there going to be any wind to-day, John?"

"No mich," says John of Skye, looking at the cloudless blue vault above and the glassy sweeps of the sea.

Nevertheless, as the morning goes by, we get as much of a breeze as enables us to draw away from the mainland—round Ardnamurchan ("the headland of the great sea") and out into the open—with Muick Island, and the sharp Scuir of Eigg, and the peaks of Rum lying over there on the still Atlantic, and far away in the north the vast and spectral mountains of Skye.

And now the work of the day begins. Mary Avon, for mere shame's sake, is at last compelled to produce one of her blank canvases and open her box of tubes. And now it would appear that Angus Sutherland—though deprived of the authority of the sick room—is beginning to lose his fear of the English young lady. He makes himself useful—not with the elaborate and patronising courtesy of the Laird, but in a sort of submissive, matter-of-fact shifty fashion. He sheathes the spikes of her easel with cork so that they shall not mark the deck. He rigs up, to counterbalance that lack of stability, a piece of cord with a heavy weight Then, with the easel fixed, he fetches her a deck-chair to sit in, and a deck-stool for her colours, and these and her he places under the lee of the foresail, to be out of the glare of the sun. Thus our artist is started; she is going to make a sketch of the after-part of the yacht with Hector of Moidart at the tiller: beyond, the calm blue seas, and a faint promontory of land.

Then the Laird—having confidentially remarked to Miss Avon that

Tom Galbraith, than whom there is no greater authority living, invariably moistens the fresh canvas with megilp before beginning work—has turned to the last report of the Semple case.

"No, no," says he to our sovereign lady, who is engaged in some myssterious work in wool, "it does not look well for the Presbytery to go over every one of the charges in the major proposeetion—supported by the averments in the minor—only to find them irrelevant; and then bring home to him the part of the libel that deals with tendency. No, no; that shows a lamentable want of purpose. In view of the great danger to be apprehended from these secret assaults on the inspiration of the Scriptures, they should have stuck to each charge with tenahcity. Now, I will just show ye where Dr. Carnegie, in defending *Secundo*—illustrated as it was with the extracts and averments in the minor—let the whole thing slip through his fingers."

But if any one were disposed to be absolutely idle on this calm, shining, beautiful day—far away from the cares and labours of the land? Out on the taffrail, under shadow of the mizen, there is a seat that is gratefully cool. The glare of the sea no longer bewilders the eyes; one can watch with a lazy enjoyment the teeming life of the open Atlantic. The great skarts go whizzing by, long-necked, rapid of flight. The gannets poise in the air, and then there is a sudden dart downwards, and a spout of water flashes up where the bird has dived. The guillemots fill the silence with their soft kurrooing—and here they are on all sides of us—*Kurroo! Kurroo!*—dipping their bills in the water, hastening away from the vessel, and then rising on the surface to flap their wings. But this is a strange thing: they are all in pairs—obviously mother and child—and the mother calls *Kurroo! Kurroo!*—and the young one, unable as yet to dive or swim, answers *Pe-yoo-it! Pe-yoo-it!* and flutters and paddles after her. But where is the father? And has the guillemot only one of a family? Over that one, at all events, she exercises a valiant protection. Even though the stem of the yacht seems likely to run both of them down, she will neither dive nor fly until she has piloted the young one out of danger.

Then a sudden cry startles the Laird from his heresy-case and Mary Avon from her canvas. A sound far away has turned all eyes to the north; though there is nothing visible there, over the shining calm of the sea, but a small cloud of white spray that slowly sinks. In a second or two, however, we see another jet of white water arise; and then a great brown mass heave slowly over; and then we hear the spouting of the whale.

"What a huge animal!" cries one. "A hundred feet!"

"Eighty, any way!"

The whale is sheering off to the north: there is less and less chance of our forming any correct estimate.

"Oh, I am sure it was a hundred! Don't you think so, Angus?" says our admiral.

"Well," says the Doctor, slowly—pretending to be very anxious about keeping the sails full (when there was no wind)—"you know there is a great difference between 'yacht measurement' and 'registered tonnage.' A vessel of fifty registered tons may become eighty or ninety by yacht measurement. And I have often noticed," continues this graceless young man, who takes no thought how he is bringing contempt on his elders, "that objects seen from the deck of a yacht are naturally subject to 'yacht measurement.' I don't know what the size of that whale may be. Its registered tonnage, I suppose, would be the number of Jonahs it could carry. But I should think that if the apparent 'yacht measurement' was a hundred feet, the whale was probably about twenty feet long."

It was thus he tried to diminish the marvels of the deep! But, however he might crush us otherwise, we were his masters on one point. The Semple heresy-case was too deep even for him. What could he make of "*the first alternative of the general major*"?

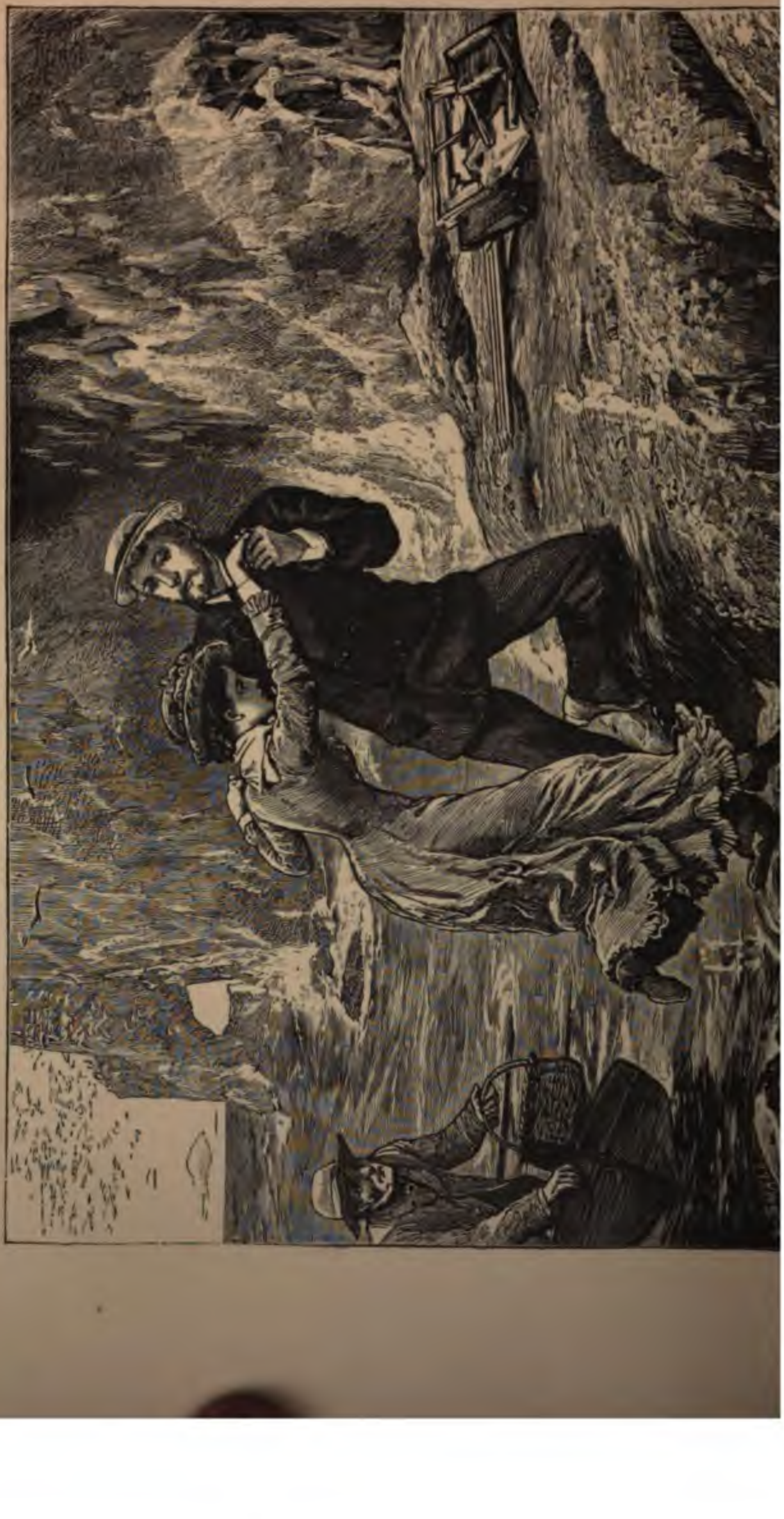
And see now, on this calm summer evening, we pass between Muick and Eigg; and the sea is like a plain of gold. As we draw near the sombre mass of Rum, the sunset deepens, and a strange lurid mist hangs around this remote and mountainous island rising sheer from the Atlantic. Gloomy and mysterious are the vast peaks of Haleval and Haskeval; we creep under them—favoured by a flood-tide—and the silence of the desolate shores seems to spread out from them and to encompass us.

Mary Avon has long ago put away her canvas; she sits and watches; and her soft black eyes are full of dreaming as she gazes up at those thunder-dark mountains against the rosy haze of the west.

"Haleval and Haskeval?" Angus Sutherland repeats, in reply to his hostess; but he starts all the same, for he has been covertly regarding the dark and wistful eyes of the girl sitting there. "Oh, these are Norse names. Scuir na Gillean, on the other hand, is Gaelic—it is *the peak of the young men*. Perhaps, the Norsemen had the north of the island, and the Celts the south."

Whether they were named by Scandinavian or by Celt, Haleval and Haskeval seemed to overshadow us with their sultry gloom as we slowly glided into the lonely loch lying at their base. We were the only vessel there; and we could make out no sign of life on shore, until the glass revealed to us one or two half-ruined cottages. The northern twilight shone in the sky far into the night; but neither that clear metallic glow, nor any radiance from moon, or planet, or star, seemed to affect the thunder-darkness of Haskeval and Haleval's silent peaks.

There was another tale to tell below—the big saloon aglow with candles; the white table-cover with its centre-piece of roses, nasturtiums, and ferns; the delayed dinner, or supper, or whatever it might be called, all artistically arranged; our young Doctor most humbly solicitous that Mary Avon should be comfortably seated, and, in fact, quite usurping the office of the Laird in that respect; and then a sudden sound in the galley, a hissing as of a thousand squibs, telling us that Master Fred had once more and ineffectually tried to suppress the released genie of the bottle by jamming down the cork. Forthwith the Laird, with his old-fashioned ways, must needs propose a health, which is that of our most sovereign and midge-like mistress; and this he does with an elaborate and gracious and sonorous courtesy. And surely there is no reason why Mary Avon should not for once break her habit and join in that simple ceremony; especially when it is a real live Doctor—and not only a Doctor, but an encyclopædia of scientific and all other knowledge—who would fain fill her glass? Angus Sutherland timidly but seriously pleads; and he does not plead in vain; and you would think from his look that she had conferred an extraordinary favour on him. Then we—we propose a health too—the health of the FOUR WINDS! and we do not care which of them it is who is coming to-morrow, so long as he or she comes in force. Blow, breezes, blow!—from the Coolins of Skye, or the shores of Coll, or the glens of Arisaig and Moidart—for to-morrow morning we shake out once more the white wings of the *White Dove*, and set forth for the loneliness of the northern seas.



THE

CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

SEPTEMBER, 1879.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER [illegible]

[illegible]

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[illegible] he says, confidently, [illegible]

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CHAPTER VIII.

Plots and Counter-plots.

NOW the Laird has a habit—laudable or not—of lingering over an additional half-cup at breakfast, as an excuse for desultory talk; and thus it is, on this particular morning, the young people having gone on deck to see the yacht get under way, that Denny-mains has a chance of revealing to us certain secret schemes of his over which he has apparently been brooding. How could we have imagined that all this plotting and planning had been going on beneath the sedate exterior of the Commissioner for the Burgh of Strathgovan?

"She's just a wonderful bit lass!" he says, confidently, to his hostess;

"as happy and contented as the day is long; and when she's not singing to herself, her way of speech has a sort of—a sort of music in it that is quite new to me. Yes, I must admit that; I did not know that the southern English tongue was so accurate and pleasant to the ear. Ay, but what will become of her?"

What, indeed! The lady whom he was addressing had often spoken to him of Mary Avon's isolated position in the world.

"It fairly distresses me," continues the good-hearted Laird, "when I think of her condeetion—not at present, when she has, if I may be allowed to say so, *several* friends near her who would be glad to do what they could for her; but by-and-by, when she is becoming older——"

The Laird hesitated. Was it possible, after all, that he was about to hint at the chance of Mary Avon becoming the mistress of the mansion and estate of Denny-mains? Then he made a plunge.

"A young woman in her position should have a husband to protect her, that is what I am sure of. Have ye never thought of it, ma'am?"

"I should like very well to see Mary married," says the other, demurely. "And I know she would make an excellent wife."

"An excellent wife!" exclaims the Laird; and then he adds, with a tone approaching to severity, "I tell ye he will be a fortunate man that gets her. Oh, ay; I have watched her. I can keep my eyes open when there is need. Did you hear her asking the captain about his wife and children? I tell you there's *human nature* in that lass."

There was no need for the Laird to be so pugnacious; we were not contesting the point. However, he resumed—

"I have been thinking," said he, with a little more shyness, "about my nephew. He's a good lad. Well, ye know, ma'am, that I do not approve of young men being brought up in idleness, whatever their prospects must be; and I have no doubt whatever that my nephew Howard is working hard enough—what with the reading of law-books, and attending the courts, and all that—though as yet he has not had much business. But then there is no necessity. I do not think he is a lad of any great ambeetion, like your friend Mr. Sutherland, who has to fight his way in the world in any case. But Howard—I have been thinking now that if he was to get married and settled, he might give up the law business altogether; and, if they were content to live in Scotland, he might look after Denny-mains. It will be his in any case, ye know; he would have the interest of a man looking after his own property. Now, I will tell ye plainly, ma'am, what I have been thinking about this day or two back; if Howard would marry your young lady friend, that would be agreeable to me."

The calm manner in which the Laird announced his scheme showed that it had been well matured. It was a natural, simple, feasible arrangement, by which two persons in whom he took a warm interest would be benefited at once.

"But then, sir," says his hostess, with a smile which she cannot wholly repress, "you know people never do marry to please a third person—at least, very seldom."

"Oh, there can be no forcing," said the Laird with decision. "But I have done a great deal for Howard; may I not expect that he will do something for me?"

"Oh, doubtless, doubtless," says this amiable lady, who has had some experience in match-making herself; "but I have generally found that marriages that would be in every way suitable and pleasing to friends, and obviously desirable, are precisely the marriages that never come off. Young people, when they are flung at each other's heads, to use the common phrase, never will be sensible and please their relatives. Now if you were to bring your nephew here, do you think Mary would fall in love with him because she ought? More likely you would find that, out of pure contrariety, she would fall in love with Angus Sutherland, who cannot afford to marry, and whose head is filled with other things."

"I am not sure, I am not sure," said the Laird, musingly. "Howard is a good-looking young fellow, and a capital lad, too. I am not so sure."

"And then, you know," said the other shyly, for she will not plainly say anything to Mary's disparagement; "young men have different tastes in their choice of a wife. He might not have the high opinion of her that you have."

At this the Laird gave a look of surprise, even of resentment.

"Then I'll tell ye what it is, ma'am," said he, almost angrily; "if my nephew had the chance of marrying such a girl, and did not do so, I should consider him—I should consider him *a fool*, and say so."

And then he added, sharply—

"And do ye think I would let Denny-mains pass into the hands of *a fool?*"

Now this kind lady had had no intention of rousing the wrath of the Laird in this manner; and she instantly set about pacifying him. And the Laird was easily pacified. In a minute or two he was laughing good-naturedly at himself for getting into a passion; he said it would not do for one at his time of life to try to play the part of the stern father as they played that in theatre pieces—there was to be no forcing.

"But he's a good lad, ma'am, a good lad," said he, rising as his hostess rose; and he added, significantly, "he is no fool, I assure ye, ma'am; he has plenty of common sense."

When we get up on deck again, we find that the *White Dove* is gently gliding out of the lonely Loch Scresorst, with its solitary house among the trees, and its crofters' huts at the base of the sombre hills. And as the light cool breeze—gratefully cool after the blazing heat of the last day or two—carries us away northward, we see more and more of the awful solitudes of Haleval and Haskeval, that are still thunderous and dark under the hazy sky. Above the great shoulders, and under the purple peaks, we see the far-reaching corries opening up, with here and there a white waterfall just visible in the hollows. There is a sense of escape as we draw away from that overshadowing gloom.

Then we discover that we have a new skipper to-day, *vice* John of Skye, deposed. The fresh hand is Mary Avon, who is at the tiller, and looking exceedingly business-like. She has been promoted to this post by Dr. Sutherland, who stands by; she receives explanations about the procedure of Hector of Moidart, who is up aloft, lacing the smaller topsail to the mast; she watches the operations of John of Skye and Sandy, who are at the sheets below; and, like a wise and considerate captain, she pretends not to notice Master Fred, who is having a quiet smoke by the windlass. And so, past those lonely shores sails the brave vessel—the yawl *White Dove*, Captain Mary Avon, bound for anywhere.

But you must not imagine that the new skipper is allowed to stand by the tiller. Captain though she may be, she has to submit civilly to dictation, in so far as her foot is concerned. Our young Doctor has compelled her to be seated, and he has passed a rope round the tiller that so she can steer from her chair, and from time to time he gives suggestions, which she receives as orders.

"I wish I had been with you when you first sprained your foot," he says.

"Yes?" she answers, with humble inquiry in her eyes.

"I would have put it in plaster of Paris," he says, in a matter-of-fact way, "and locked you up in the house for a fortnight; at the end of that time you would not know which ankle was the sprained one."

There was neither "with your leave" nor "by your leave" in this young man's manner when he spoke of that accident. He would have taken possession of her. He would have discarded your bandages and hartshorn, and what not; when it was Mary Avon's foot that was concerned—it was intimated to us—he would have had his own way in spite of all comers.

"I wish I had known," she says, timidly, meaning that it was the treatment she wished she had known.

"There is a more heroic remedy," said he, with a smile; "and that is walking the sprain off. I believe that can be done, but most people would shrink from the pain. Of course, if it were done at all, it would be done by a woman; women can bear pain infinitely better than men."

"Oh, do you think so!" she says, in mild protest. "Oh, I am sure not. Men are so much braver than women, so much stronger ——"

But this gentle quarrel is suddenly stopped, for someone calls attention to a deer that is calmly browsing on one of the high slopes above that rocky shore, and instantly all glasses are in request. It is a hind, with a beautifully shaped head and slender legs; she takes no notice of the passing craft, but continues her feeding, walking a few steps onward from time to time. In this way she reaches the edge of a gully in the rugged cliffs where there is some brushwood, and probably a stream; into this she sedately descends, and we see her no more.

Then there is another cry; what is this cloud ahead, or waterspout resting on the calm bosom of the sea? Glasses again in request, amid many exclamations, reveal to us that this is a dense cloud of birds; a flock so vast that towards the water it seems black; can it be the dead body of a whale that has collected this world of wings from all the Northern seas? Hurry on, *White Dove;* for the floating cloud with the black base is moving and seething—in fantastic white fumes, as it were—in the loveliness of this summer day. And now, as we draw nearer, we can descry that there is no dead body of a whale causing that blackness; but only the density of the mass of seafowl. And nearer and nearer as we draw, behold! the great gannets swooping down in such numbers that the sea is covered with a mist of waterspouts; and the air is filled with innumerable cries; and we do not know what to make of this bewildering, fluttering, swimming, screaming mass of terns, guillemots, skarts, kittiwakes, razorbills, puffins, and gulls. But they draw away again. The herring-shoal is moving northward. The murmur of cries becomes more remote, and the seething cloud of the sea-birds is slowly dispersing. When the *White Dove* sails up to the spot at which this phenomenon was first seen, there is nothing visible but a scattered assemblage of guillemots—*kurroo! kurroo!* answered by *pe-yoo-it! pe-yoo-it!*—and great gannets—"as big as a sheep," says John of Skye—apparently so gorged that they lie on the water within stone's-throw of the yacht, before spreading out their long, snow-white, black-tipped wings to bear them away over the sea.

And now, as we are altering our course to the west—far away to our right stand the vast Coolins of Skye—we sail along the northern shores of Rum. There is no trace of any habitation visible; nothing but the precipitous cliffs, and the sandy bays, and the outstanding rocks dotted with rows of shining black skarts. When Mary Avon asks why those sandy bays should be so red, and why a certain ruddy warmth of colour should shine through even the patches of grass, our F.R.S. begins to speak of powdered basalt rubbed down from the rocks above. He would have her begin another sketch, but she is too proud of her newly acquired knowledge to forsake the tiller.

The wind is now almost dead aft, and we have a good deal of gybing. Other people might think that all this gybing was an evidence of bad steering on the part of our new skipper; but Angus Sutherland—and we cannot contradict an F.R.S.—assures Miss Avon that she is doing remarkably well; and, as he stands by to lay hold of the main sheet when the boom swings over, we are not in much danger of carrying away either port or starboard davits.

"Do you know," says he lightly, "I sometimes think I ought to apply for the post of surgeon on board a man-of-war? That would just suit me——"

"Oh, I hope you will not," she blurts out, quite inadvertently; and thereafter there is a deep blush on her face.

"I should enjoy it immensely, I know," says he, wholly ignorant of her embarrassment, because he is keeping an eye on the sails. "I believe I should have more pleasure in life that way than any other——"

"But you do not live for your own pleasure," says she hastily, perhaps to cover her confusion.

"I have no one else to live for, anyway," says he, with a laugh; and then he corrected himself. "Oh, yes, I have. My father is a sad heretic. He has fallen away from the standards of his faith; he has set up idols—the diplomas and medals I have got from time to time. He has them all arranged in his study, and I have heard that he positively sits down before them and worships them. When I sent him the medal from Vienna—it was only bronze—he returned to me his Greek Testament, that he had interleaved and annotated when he was a student; I believe it was his greatest possession."

"And you would give up all that he expects from you to go away and be a doctor on board a ship!" says Mary Avon, with some proud emphasis. "That would not be my ambition if I were a man, and—and—if I had—if——"

Well, she could not quite say to Brose's face what she thought of his powers and prospects; so she suddenly broke away and said—

"Yes; you would go and do that for your own amusement? And what would the amusement be? Do you think they would let the doctor interfere with the sailing of the ship?"

"Well," said he, laughing, "that is a practical objection. I don't suppose the captain of a man-of-war or even of a merchant vessel would be as accommodating as your John of Skye. Captain John has his compensation when he is relieved; he can go forward, and light his pipe."

"Well, I think for *your father's sake*," says Miss Avon, with decision, "you had better put that idea out of your head, once and for all."

Now blow, breezes, blow! What is the great headland that appears, striking out into the wide Atlantic?

Ahead she goes! the land she knows!
Behold! the snowy shores of Canna!
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together,
Ho, ro, clansmen!

"Tom Galbraith," the Laird is saying solemnly, to his hostess, "has assured me that Rum is the most picturesque island on the whole of the western coast of Scotland. That is his deleeberate opinion. And indeed I would not go so far as to say he was wrong. Arran! They talk about Arran! Just look at those splendid mountains coming sheer down to the sea; and the light of the sun on them! Eh, me, what a sunset there will be this night!"

"Canna?" says Dr. Sutherland, to his interlocutor, who seems very anxious to be instructed. "Oh, I don't know. *Canna* in Gaelic is simply a can; but then *Cana* is a whale; and the island in the distance looks long and flat on the water. Or it may be from *canach*—that is the moss-cotton; or from *cannach*—that is the sweet-gale. You see, Miss Avon, ignorant people have an ample choice."

Blow! breezes blow! as the yellow light of the afternoon shines over the broad Atlantic. Here are the eastern shores of Canna, high and rugged, and dark with caves; and there the western shores of Rum, the mighty mountains aglow in the evening light. And this remote and solitary little bay, with its green headlands, and its awkward rocks at the mouth, and the one house[*] presiding over it amongst that shining wilderness of shrubs and flowers? Here is fair shelter for the night.

After dinner, in the lambent twilight, we set out with the gig; and there was much preparation of elaborate contrivances for the entrapping of fish. But the Laird's occult and intricate tackle—the spinning minnows, and spoons, and india-rubber sand-eels—proved no competitor for the couple of big white flies that Angus Sutherland had busked. And of course Mary Avon had that rod; and when some huge lithe dragged the end of the rod fairly under water, and when she cried aloud, "Oh! oh! I can't hold it; he'll break the rod!" then arose Brose's word of command:—

"Haul him in! Shove out the butt! No scientific playing with a lithe! Well done!—well done!—a five-pounder I'll bet ten farthings!"

It was not scientific fishing; but we got big fish—which is of more importance in the eyes of Master Fred. And then, as the night fell, we set out again for the yacht; and the Doctor pulled stroke; and he sang some more verses of the *biorlinn* song as the blades dashed fire into the rushing sea:—

Proudly o'er the waves we'll bound her,
As the staghound bounds the heather!
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together,
Ho, ro, clansmen!
Through the eddying tide we'll guide her,
Round each isle and breezy headland,
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together,
Ho, ro, clansmen!

The yellow lamp at the bow of the yacht grew larger and larger; the hull of the boat looked black between us and the starlit heavens; as we clambered on board there was a golden glow from the saloon skylight. And then, during the long and happy evening, amid all the whist-playing and other amusements going forward, what about certain timid courtesies and an occasional shy glance between those two young people? Some of us began to think that if the Laird's scheme was to come to anything, it was high time that Mr. Howard Smith put in an appearance.

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[*] Sir, our gratitude to you! Better milk, and more welcome, never came from any dairy.

CHAPTER IX.

A WILD STUDIO.

THERE is a fine bustle of preparation next morning—for the gig is waiting by the side of the yacht; and Dr. Sutherland is carefully getting our artist's materials into the stern; and the Laird is busy with shawls and waterproofs; and Master Fred brings along the luncheon-basket. Our Admiral-in-chief prefers to stay on board; she has letters to write; there are enough of us to go and be tossed on the Atlantic swell off the great caves of Canna.

And as the men strike their oars in the water and we wave a last adieu, the Laird catches a glimpse of our larder at the stern of the yacht. Alas! there is but one remaining piece of fresh meat hanging there, under the white canvas.

"It reminds me," says he, beginning to laugh already, "of a good one that Tom Galbraith told me—a real good one that was. Tom had a little bit yacht that his man and himself sailed when he was painting, ye know; and one day they got into a bay where Duncan—that was the man's name—had some friends ashore. Tom left him in charge of the yacht; and—and—ha! ha! ha!—there was a leg of mutton hanging at the stern. Well, Tom was rowed ashore; and painted all day; and came back to the yacht in the afternoon. *There was no leg of mutton!* 'Duncan,' says he, 'where is the leg of mutton?' Duncan pretended to be vastly surprised. 'Iss it away?' says he. 'Away?' says Tom. 'Don't you see it is away? I want to know who took it!' Duncan looked all round him—at the sea and the sky—and then says he—then says he, 'Maybe it wass a dog!'—ha! ha! hee! hee! hee!—'maybe it wass a dog,' says he; and they were half a mile from the shore! I never see the canvas at the stern of a yacht without thinking o' Tom Galbraith and the leg of mutton;" and here the Laird laughed long and loud again.

"I have heard you speak once or twice about Tom Galbraith," remarked our young Doctor, without meaning the least sarcasm; "he is an artist, I suppose?"

The Laird stopped laughing. There was a look of indignant wonder—approaching to horror—on his face. But when he proceeded, with some dignity and even resentment, to explain to this ignorant person the immense importance of the school that Tom Galbraith had been chiefly instrumental in forming; and the high qualities of that artist's personal work; and how the members of the Royal Academy shook in their shoes at the mere mention of Tom Galbraith's name, he became more pacified; for Angus Sutherland listened with great respect, and even promised to look out for Mr. Galbraith's work if he passed through Edinburgh on his way to the south.

The long, swinging stroke of the men soon took us round the successive headlands until we were once more in the open, with the mountains of Skye in the north, and, far away at the horizon, a pale line which we knew to be North Uist. And now the green shores of Canna were becoming more precipitous; and there was a roaring of the sea along the spurs of black rock; and the long Atlantic swell, breaking on the bows of the gig, was sending a little more spray over us than was at all desirable. Certainly no one who could have seen the Doctor at this moment—with his fresh-coloured face dripping with the salt water and shining in the sunlight—would have taken him for a hard-worked and anxious student. His hard work was pulling stroke-oar, and he certainly put his shoulders into it, as the Laird had remarked; and his sole anxiety was about Mary Avon's art-materials. That young lady shook the water from the two blank canvases, and declared it did not matter a bit.

These lonely cliffs!—becoming more grim and awful every moment, as this mite of a boat still wrestles with the great waves, and makes its way along the coast. And yet there are tender greens where the pasturage appears on the high plateaus; and there is a soft ruddy hue where the basalt shines. The gloom of the picture appears below —in the caves washed out of the conglomerate by the heavy seas; in the spurs and fantastic pillars and arches of the black rock; and in this leaden-hued Atlantic springing high over every obstacle to go roaring and booming into the caverns. And these innumerable white specks on the sparse green plateaus and on this high promontory: can they be mushrooms in millions? Suddenly one of the men lifts his oar from the rowlock, and rattles it on the rail of the gig. At this sound a cloud rises from the black rocks; it spreads; the next moment the air is darkened over our heads; and almost before we know what has happened, this vast multitude of puffins has wheeled by us, and wheeled again further out to sea—a smoke of birds! And as we watch them, behold! stragglers come back—in thousands upon thousands—the air is filled with them—some of them swooping so near us that we can see the red parrot-like beak and the orange-hued web-feet, and then again the green shelves of grass and the pinnacles of rock become dotted with those white specks. The myriads of birds; the black caverns; the arches and spurs of rock; the leaden-hued Atlantic bounding and springing in white foam: what says Mary Avon to that? Has she the courage?

"If you can put me ashore?" says she.

"Oh, we will get you ashore, somehow," Dr. Sutherland answers.

But, indeed, the nearer we approach that ugly coast the less we like the look of it. Again and again we make for what should be a sheltered bit; but long before we can get to land we can see through the plunging sea great masses of yellow, which we know to be the barnacled rock; and then ahead we find a shore that, in this heavy surf, would make matchwood of the gig in three seconds. Brose, however, will not give in. If he cannot get the gig on to any beach or into any creek, he will land our artist somehow. And at last—and in spite of the remonstrances of John of Skye—he insists on having the boat backed in to a projecting mass of conglomerate, all yellowed over with small shell-fish, against which the sea is beating heavily. It is an ugly landing-place; we can see the yellow rock go sheer down in the clear green sea; and the surf is spouting up the side in white jets. But if she can watch a high wave, and put her foot there—and there—will she not find herself directly on a plateau of rock at least twelve feet square?

"Back her, John!—back her!—" and therewith the Doctor, watching his chance, scrambles out and up to demonstrate the feasibility of the thing. And the easel is handed out to him; and the palette and canvases; and finally Mary Avon herself. Nay, even the Laird will adventure, sending on before him the luncheon-basket.

It is a strange studio—this projecting shell-crusted rock, surrounded on three sides by the sea, and on the fourth by an impassable cliff. And the sounds beneath our feet—there must be some subterranean passage or cave into which the sea roars and booms. But Angus Sutherland rigs up the easel rapidly; and arranges the artist's camp-stool; and sets her fairly agoing; then he proposes to leave the Laird in charge of her. He and the humble chronicler of the adventures of these people mean to have some further exploration of this wild coast.

But we had hardly gone a quarter of a mile or so—it was hard work pulling in this heavy sea—when the experienced eye of Sandy from Islay saw that something was wrong.

"What's that?" he said, staring.

We turned instantly, and strove to look through the mists of spray. Where we had left the Laird and Mary Avon there were now visible only two mites, apparently not bigger than puffins. But is not one of the puffins gesticulating wildly?

"Round with her, John!" the Doctor calls out. "They want us—I'm sure."

And away the gig goes again—plunging into the great troughs and then swinging up to the giddy crests. And as we get nearer and nearer, what is the meaning of the Laird's frantic gestures? We cannot understand him; and it is impossible to hear, for the booming of the sea into the caves drowns his voice.

"He has lost his hat," says Angus Sutherland; and then, the next second, "Where's the easel?"

Then we understand those wild gestures. Pull away, merry men! for has not a squall swept the studio of its moveables? And there, sure enough, tossing high and low on the waves, we descry a variety of things—an easel, two canvases, a hat, a veil, and what not. Up with the boat-hook to the bow; and gently with those plunges, most accurate Hector of Moidart!

"I am so sorry," she says (or rather shrieks), when her dripping property is restored to her.

"It was my fault," our Doctor yells; "but I will undertake to fasten your easel properly this time"—and therewith he fetches a lump of rock that might have moored a man-of-war.

We stay and have luncheon in this gusty and thunderous studio—though Mary Avon will scarcely turn from her canvas. And there is no painting of pink geraniums about this young woman's work. We see already that she has got a thorough grip of this cold, hard coast (the sun is obscured now, and the various hues are more sombre than ever); and, though she has not had time as yet to try to catch the motion of the rolling sea, she has got the colour of it—a leaden-grey, with glints of blue and white, and with here and there a sudden splash of deep, rich, glassy, bottle green, where some wave for a moment catches, just as it gets to the shore, a reflection from the grass plateaus above. Very good, Miss Avon; very good—but we pretend that we are not looking.

Then away we go again, to leave the artist to her work; and we go as near as possible—the high sea will not allow us to enter—the vast black caverns; and we watch through the clear water for those masses of yellow rock. And then the multitudes of white-breasted, red-billed birds perched up there—close to the small burrows in the scant grass; they jerk their heads about in a watchful way just like the prairie-dogs at the mouth of their sandy habitations on the Colorado plains. And then again a hundred or two of them come swooping down from the rocky pinnacles and sail over our heads—twinkling bits of colour between the grey-green sea and the blue-and-white of the sky. They resent the presence of strangers in this far-home of the sea-birds.

It is a terrible business getting that young lady and her paraphernalia back into the gig again; for the sea is still heavy, and, of course, additional care has now to be taken of the precious canvas. But at last she, and the Laird, and the luncheon-basket, and everything else have been got on board; and away we go for the yacht again, in the now clearing afternoon. As we draw further away from the roar of the caves, it is more feasible to talk; and naturally we are all very complimentary about Mary Avon's sketch in oils.

"Ay," says the Laird, "and it wants but one thing; and I am sure I could get Tom Galbraith to put that in for you. A bit of a yacht, ye know, or other sailing vessel, put below the cliffs, would give people a notion of the height of the cliffs, do ye see? I am sure I could get Tom Galbraith to put that in for ye."

"I hope Miss Avon won't let Tom Galbraith or anybody else meddle with the picture," says Angus Sutherland, with some emphasis. "Why, a yacht! Do you think anybody would let a yacht come close to rocks like these? As soon as you introduce any making-up like that, the picture is a sham. It is the real thing now, as it stands. Twenty years hence you could take up that piece of canvas, and there before you would be the very day that you spent here—it would be like finding your old life of twenty years before opened up to you with a lightning-flash. The picture is—why I should say it is invaluable, as it stands."

At this somewhat fierce praise, Mary Avon colours a little. And then she says with a gentle hypocrisy—

"Oh, do you really think there is—there is—some likeness to the place?"

"It is the place itself!" says he, warmly.

"Because," she says, timidly, and yet with a smile, "one likes to have one's work appreciated, however stupid it may be. And—and—if you think that—would you like to have it? Because I should be so proud if you would take it—only I am ashamed to offer my sketches to anybody——"

"That!" said he, staring at the canvas as if the mines of Golconda were suddenly opened to him. But then he drew back. "Oh, no," he said; "you are very kind—but—but, you know, I cannot. You would think I had been asking for it."

"Well," says Miss Avon, still looking down, "I never was treated like this before. You won't take it? You don't think it is worth putting in your portmanteau."

At this the young Doctor's face grew very red; but he said boldly—

"Very well, now, if you have been playing fast and loose, you shall be punished. I *will* take the picture, whether you grudge it me or not. And I don't mean to give it up now."

"Oh," said she, very gently, "if it reminds you of the place, I shall be very pleased—and—and it may remind you too that I am not likely to forget your kindness to poor Mrs. Thompson."

And so this little matter was amicably settled—though the Laird looked with a covetous eye on that rough sketch of the rocks of Canna, and regretted that he was not to be allowed to ask Tom Galbraith to put in a touch or two. And so back to the yacht, and to dinner in the silver clear evening; and how beautiful looked this calm bay of Canna, with its glittering waters and green shores, after the grim rocks and the heavy Atlantic waves!

That evening we pursued the innocent lithe again—our larder was becoming terribly empty—and there was a fine take. But of more interest to some of us than the big fish was the extraordinary wonder of colour in sea and sky when the sun had gone down; and there was a wail on the part of the Laird that Mary Avon had not her colours with her to put down some jotting for further use. Or if on paper: might not she write down something of what she saw; and experiment thereafter? Well, if any artist can make head or tail of words in such a case as this, here they are for him—as near as our combined forces of observation could go.

The vast plain of water around us a blaze of salmon-red—with the waves (catching the reflection of the zenith) marked in horizontal lines of blue. The great headland of Canna, between us and the western sky, a mass of dark, intense olive-green. The sky over that a pale, clear lemon-yellow. But the great feature of this evening scene was a mass of cloud that stretched all across the heavens—a mass of flaming, thunderous, orange-red cloud that began in the far pale mists in the east, and came across the blue zenith overhead, burning with a splendid glory there, and then stretched over to the west, where it narrowed down and was lost in the calm, clear gold of the horizon. The splendour of this great cloud was bewildering to the eyes; one turned gratefully to the reflection of it in the sultry red of the sea below, broken by the blue lines of waves. Our attention was not wholly given to the fishing or the boat on this lambent evening: perhaps that was the reason we ran on a rock, and with difficulty got off again.

Then back to the yacht again about eleven o'clock. What is this terrible news from Master Fred, who was sent off with instructions to hunt up any stray crofter he might find, and use such persuasions in the shape of Gaelic friendliness and English money as would enable us to replenish our larder? What! that he had walked two miles and seen nothing eatable or purchasable but an old hen? Canna is a beautiful place; but we begin to think it is time to be off.

On this still night, with the stars coming out, we cannot go below. We sit on deck and listen to the musical whisper along the shore, and watch one golden-yellow planet rising over the dusky peaks of Rum, far in the east. And our young Doctor is talking of the pathetic notices that are common in the Scotch papers—in the advertisements of deaths. "*New Zealand papers, please copy.*" "*Canadian papers, please copy.*" When you see this prayer appended to the announcement of the death of some old woman of seventy or seventy-five, do you not know that it is a message to loved ones in distant climes, wanderers who may forget but who have not been forgotten? They are messages that tell of a scattered race—of a race that once filled the glens of these now almost deserted islands. And surely, when some birth-day or other time of recollection comes round, those far away

Where wild Altama murmurs to their woe

must surely bethink themselves of the old people left behind—living in Glasgow or Greenock now, perhaps—and must bethink themselves too of the land where last they saw the bonny red heather, and where last they heard the pipes playing the sad *Farewell, MacCruimin* as the ship stood out to sea. They cannot quite forget the scenes of their youth—the rough seas and the red heather and the islands; the wild dancing at the weddings; the secret meetings in the glen, with Ailasa, or Morag, or Mairi, come down from the sheiling, all alone, a shawl round her head to shelter her from the rain, her heart fluttering like the heart of a timid fawn. They cannot forget.

And we, too, we are going away; and it may be that we shall never see this beautiful bay or the island there again. But one of us carries away with him a talisman for the sudden revival of old memories. And twenty years hence—that was his own phrase—what will Angus Sutherland—perhaps a very great and rich person by that time—what will he think when he turns to a certain picture, and recalls the long summer day when he rowed with Mary Avon round the wild shores of Canna!

CHAPTER X.

"DUNVEGAN!—OH! DUNVEGAN!"

COMMANDER MARY AVON sends her orders below: everything to be made snug in the cabins, for there is a heavy sea running outside, and the *White Dove* is already under way. Farewell, then, you beautiful blue bay—all rippled into silver now with the breeze—and green shores and picturesque cliffs! We should have lingered here another day or two, perhaps, but for the report about that one old hen. We cannot ration passengers and crew on one old hen.

And here, as we draw away from Canna, is the vast panorama of the sea-world around us once more—the mighty mountain range of Skye shining faintly in the northern skies; Haleval and Haskeval still of a gloomy purple in the east; and away beyond these leagues of rushing Atlantic the pale blue line of North Uist. Whither are we bound, then, you small captain with the pale face and the big, soft, tender black eyes? Do you fear a shower of spray that you have strapped that tightly-fitting ulster round the graceful small figure? And are you quite sure that you know whether the wind is on the port or starboard beam?

"Look! look! look!" she calls, and our F.R.S., who has been busy over the charts, jumps to his feet.

Just at the bow of the vessel we see the great shining black thing disappear. What if there had been a collision?

"You cannot call *that* a porpoise, anyway," says she. "Why, it must have been eighty feet long!"

"Yes, yacht measurement," says he. "But it had a back fin, which is suspicious, and it did not blow. Now," he adds—for we have been looking all round for the re-appearance of the huge stranger—"if you want to see real whales at work, just look over there, close under Rum. I should say there was a whole shoal of them in the Sound."

And there, sure enough, we see from time to time the white spoutings—rising high into the air in the form of the letter V, and slowly falling again. They are too far away for us to hear the sound of their blowing, nor can we catch any glimpse, through the best of our glasses, of their appearance at the surface. Moreover, the solitary stranger that nearly ran against our bows makes no reappearance; he has had enough of the wonders of the upper world for a time.

It is a fine sailing morning, and we pay but little attention to the fact that the wind, as usual, soon gets to be dead ahead. So long as the breeze blows, and the sun shines, and the white spray flies from the bows of the *White Dove*, what care we which harbour is to shelter us for the night? And if we cannot get into any harbour, what then? We carry our own kingdom with us; and we are far from being dependent on the one old hen.

But in the midst of much laughing at one of the Laird's good ones—the inexhaustible Homesh was again to the fore—a head appears at the top of the companion-way; and there is a respectful silence. Unseemly mirth dies away before the awful dignity of this person.

"Angus," she says, with a serious remonstrance on her face, "do you believe what scientific people tell you?"

Angus Sutherland starts, and looks up; he has been deep in a chart of Loch Bracadaile.

"Don't they say that water finds its own level? Now do you call this water finding its own level?"—and as she propounds this conundrum, she clings on tightly to the side of the companion, for, in truth, the *White Dove* is curvetting a good deal among those great masses of waves.

"Another tumbler broken!" she exclaims. "Now who left that tumbler on the table?"

"I know," says Mary Avon.

"Who was it then?" says the occupant of the companion-way; and we begin to tremble for the culprit.

"Why, you yourself!"

"Mary Avon, how can you tell such a story!" says the other, with a stern face.

"Oh, but that is so," calls out our Doctor, "for I myself saw you bring the tumbler out of the ladies' cabin with water for the flowers."

The universal shout of laughter that overwhelms Madame Dignity is too much for her. A certain conscious, lurking smile begins to break through the sternness of her face.

"I don't believe a word of it," she declares, firing a shot as she retreats. "Not a word of it. You are two conspirators. To tell such a story about a tumbler——!"

But at this moment a further assault is made on the majesty of this imperious small personage. There is a thunder at the bows; a rattling as of pistol-shots on the decks forward; and at the same moment the fag-ends of the spray come flying over the after part of the yacht. What becomes of one's dignity when one gets a shower of salt water over one's head and neck? Go down below, madam!—retreat, retreat, discomfited!—go, dry your face and your bonny brown hair—and bother us no more with your broken tumbler!

And despite those plunging seas and the occasional showers of spray, Mary Avon still clings bravely to the rope that is round the tiller; and as we are bearing over for Skye on one long tack, she has no need to change her position. And if from time to time her face gets wet with the salt water, is it not quickly dried again in the warm sun and the breeze? Sun and salt water and sea-air will soon chase away the pallor from that gentle face: cannot one observe already—after only a few days' sailing—a touch of sun-brown on her cheeks?

And now we are drawing nearer and nearer to Skye, and before us lies the lonely Loch Breatal, just under the splendid Coolins. See how the vast slopes of the mountains appear to come sheer down to the lake; and there is a soft, sunny green on them—a beautiful, tender, warm colour that befits a summer day. But far above and beyond those sunny slopes a different sight appears. All the clouds of this fair day have gathered round the upper portions of the mountains; and that solitary range of black and jagged peaks is dark in shadow, dark as if with the expectation of thunder. The Coolins are not beloved of mariners. Those beautiful sunlit ravines are the secret haunts of hurricanes that suddenly come out to strike the unwary yachtsman as with the blow of a hammer. *Stand by, forward, then, lads! About ship! Down with the helm, Captain Avon!*—and behold! we are sailing away from the black Coolins, and ahead of us there is only the open sea, and the sunlight shining on the far cliffs of Canna.

"When your course is due north," remarks Angus Sutherland, who has relieved Mary Avon at the helm, "and when the wind is due north, you get a good deal of sailing for your money."

The profound truth of this remark becomes more and more apparent as the day passes in a series of long tacks which do not seem to be bringing those far headlands of Skye much nearer to us. And if we are beating in this heavy sea all day and night, is there not a chance of one or other of our women-folk collapsing? They are excellent sailors, to be sure—but—but——

Dr. Sutherland is consulted. Dr. Sutherland's advice is prompt and emphatic. His sole and only precaution against sea-sickness is simple: resolute eating and drinking. Cure for sea-sickness, after it has set in, he declares there is none: to prevent it, eat and drink, and let the drink be *brut* champagne. So our two prisoners are ordered below to undergo that punishment.

And, perhaps, it is the *brut* champagne, or perhaps it is merely the snugness of our little luncheon-party that prompts Miss Avon to remark on the exceeding selfishness of yachting and to suggest a proposal that fairly takes away our breath by its audacity.

"Now," she says, cheerfully, "I could tell you how you could occupy an idle day on board a yacht so that you would give a great deal of happiness—quite a shock of delight—to a large number of people."

Well, we are all attention.

"At what cost?" says the financier of our party.

"At no cost."

This is still more promising. Why should not we instantly set about making all those people happy?

"All that you have got to do is to get a copy of the *Field* or of the *Times* or some such paper."

Yes; and how are we to get any such thing? Rum has no post-office. No mail calls at Canna. Newspapers do not grow on the rocks of Loch Bracadaile.

"However, let us suppose that we have the paper."

"Very well. All you have to do is to sit down and take the advertisements, and write to the people, accepting all their offers on their own terms. The man who wants 500*l.* for his shooting in the autumn; the man who will sell his steam-yacht for 7,000*l.*; the curate who will take in another youth to board at 200*l.* a year; the lady who wants to let her country-house during the London season; all the people who are anxious to sell things. You offer to take them all. If a man has a yacht to let on hire, you will pay for new jerseys for the men. If a man has a house to be let, you will take all the fixtures at his own valuation. All you have to do is to write two or three hundred letters—as an anonymous person, of course—and you make two or three hundred people quite delighted for perhaps a whole week!"

The Laird stared at this young lady as if she had gone mad; but there was only a look of complacent friendliness on Mary Avon's face.

"You mean that you write sham letters?" says her hostess. "You gull those unfortunate people into believing that all their wishes are realised!"

"But you make them happy!" says Mary Avon, confidently.

"Yes—and the disappointment afterwards!" retorts her friend, almost with indignation. "Imagine their disappointment when they find they have been duped! Of course they would write letters and discover that the anonymous person had no existence."

"Oh, no!" says Mary Avon, eagerly. "There could be no such great disappointment. The happiness would be definite and real for the time. The disappointment would only be a slow and gradual thing when they found no answer coming to their letter. You would make them happy for a whole week or so by accepting their offer; whereas by not answering their letter or letters you would only puzzle them, and the matter would drop away into forgetfulness. Do you not think it would be an excellent scheme?"

Come on deck, you people; this girl has got demented. And behold! as we emerge once more into the sunlight and whirling spray and wind, we find that we are nearing Skye again on the port tack, and now it is the mouth of Loch Bracadaile that we are approaching. And these pillars of rock, outstanding from the cliffs, and worn by the northern seas?

"Why, these must be Macleod's Maidens!" says Angus Sutherland, unrolling one of the charts.

And then he discourses to us of the curious fancies of sailors—passing the lonely coasts from year to year—and recognising as old friends, not any living thing, but the strange conformations of the rocks—and giving to these the names of persons and of animals. And he thinks there is something more weird and striking about these solitary and sea-worn rocks fronting the great Atlantic than about any comparatively modern Sphinx or Pyramid; until we regard the sunlit pillars, and their fretted surface and their sharp shadows, with a sort of morbid imagination; and we discover how the sailors have fancied them to be stone women; and we see in the largest of them—her head and shoulder tilted over a bit—some resemblance to the position of the Venus discovered at Milo. All this is very fine; but suddenly the sea gets darkened over there; a squall comes roaring out of Loch Bracadaile; John of Skye orders the boat about; and presently we are running free before this puff from the north-east. Alas! alas! we have no sooner got out of the reach of the squall than the wind backs to the familiar north, and our laborious beating has to be continued as before.

But we are not discontented. Is it not enough, as the golden and glowing afternoon wears on, to listen to the innocent prattle of Denny-mains, whose mind has been fired by the sight of those pillars of rock. He tells us a great many remarkable things—about the similarity between Gaelic and Irish, and between Welsh and Armorican; and he discusses the use of the Druidical stones, as to whether the priests followed serpent-worship or devoted those circles to human sacrifice. He tells us about the Picts and Scots; about Fingal and Ossian; about the doings of Arthur in his kingdom of Strathclyde. It is a most innocent sort of prattle.

"Yes, sir," says Brose—quite gravely—though we are not quite sure that he is not making fun of our simple-hearted Laird, "there can be no doubt that the Aryan race that first swept over Europe spoke a Celtic language, more or less akin to Gaelic, and that they were pushed out, by successive waves of population, into Brittany, and Wales, and Ireland, and the Highlands. And I often wonder whether it was they themselves that modestly called themselves the foreigners or strangers, and affixed that name to the land they laid hold of, from Galicia and Gaul to Galloway and Galway? The Gaelic word *gall*, a stranger, you find everywhere. Fingal himself is only *Fionn-gall*—the Fair Stranger; *Dubh-gall*—that is, the familiar Dugald—or the Black Stranger—is what the Islay people call a Lowlander. *Ru-na-Gaul*, that we passed the other day—that is the Foreigner's Point. I think there can be no doubt that the tribes that first brought Aryan civilisation through the west of Europe spoke Gaelic or something like Gaelic."

"Ay," said the Laird, doubtfully. He was not sure of this young man. He had heard something about Gaelic being spoken in the Garden of Eden, and suspected there might be a joke lying about somewhere.

However, there was no joking about our F.R.S. when he began to tell Mary Avon how, if he had time and sufficient interest in such things, he would set to work to study the Basque people and their language—that strange remnant of the old race who inhabited the west of Europe long before Scot, or Briton, or Roman, or Teuton had made his appearance on the scene. Might they not have traditions, or customs, or verbal survivals to tell us of their pre-historic forefathers? The Laird seemed quite shocked to hear that his favourite Picts and Scots—and Fingal and Arthur and all the rest of them—were mere modern interlopers. What of the mysterious race that occupied these islands before the great Aryan tide swept over from the East?

Well, this was bad enough; but when the Doctor proceeded to declare his conviction that no one had the least foundation for the various conjectures about the purposes of those so-called Druidical stones—that it was all a matter of guess-work whether as regarded council-halls, grave-stones, altars, or serpent-worship—and that it was quite possible these stones were erected by the non-Aryan race who inhabited Europe before either Gaul or Roman or Teuton came west, the Laird interrupted him, triumphantly—

"But," says he, "the very names of those stones show they are of Celtic origin—will ye dispute that? What is the meaning of *Carnac*, that is in Brittany—eh? Ye know Gaelic?

"Well, I know that much," said Angus, laughing. "Carnac means simply the place of piled stones. But the Celts may have found the stones there, and given them that name."

"I think," says Miss Avon, profoundly, "that when you go into a question of names, you can prove anything. And I suppose Gaelic is as accommodating as any other language."

Angus Sutherland did not answer for a moment; but at last he said, rather shyly—

"Gaelic is a very complimentary language, at all events. *Bean* is 'a woman;' and *beannachd* is 'a blessing.' *An ti a bheannaich thu*—that is, 'the one who blessed you.'"

Very pretty; only we did not know how wildly the young man might not be falsifying Gaelic grammar in order to say something nice to Mary Avon.

Patience works wonders. Dinner-time finds us so far across the Minch that we can make out the lighthouse of South Uist. And all these outer Hebrides are now lying in a flood of golden-red light; and on the cliffs of Canna, far away in the south-east, and now dwarfed so that they lie like a low wall on the sea, there is a paler red, caught from the glare of the sunset. And here is the silver tinkle of Master Fred's bell.

On deck after dinner; and the night air is cooler now; and there are cigars about; and our young F. R. S. is at the tiller; and Mary Avon is singing, apparently to herself, something about a Berkshire farmer's daughter. The darkness deepens, and the stars come out; and there is one star—larger than the rest, and low down, and burning a steady red—that we know to be Ushinish lighthouse. And then from time to time the silence is broken by, "*Stand by, forrard! 'Bout ship!*" and there is a rattling of blocks and cordage and then the head-sails fill and away she goes again on the other tack. We have got up to the long headlands of Skye at last.

Clear as the night is, the wind still comes in squalls, and we have the topsail down. Into which indentation of that long, low line of dark land shall we creep in the darkness?

But John of Skye keeps away from the land. It is past midnight. There is nothing visible but the black sea and the clear sky, and the red star of the lighthouse; nothing audible but Mary Avon's humming to herself and her friend—the two women sit arm-in-arm under half a dozen of rugs—some old-world ballad to the monotonous accompaniment of the passing seas.

One o'clock: Ushinish light is smaller now, a minute point of red fire, and the black line of land on our right looms larger in the dusk. Look at the splendour of the phosphorous-stars on the rushing waves.

And at last John of Skye says in an undertone to Angus—

"Will the leddies be going below now?"

"Going below!" he says in reply. "They are waiting till we get to anchor. We must be just off Dunvegan Loch now."

Then John of Skye makes his confession.

"Oh, yes; I been into Dunvegan Loch more as two or three times; but I not like the dark to be with us in going in; and if we lie off till the daylight comes, the leddies they can go below to their peds. And if Dr. Sutherland himself would like to see the channel in going in, will I send below when the daylight comes?"

"No, no, John; thank you," is the answer. "When I turn in, I turn in for good. I will leave you to find out the channel for yourself."

And so there is a clearance of the deck, and rugs and camp-stools handed down the companion. *Deoch-an-doruis* in the candle-lit saloon! To bed—to bed!

It is about five o'clock in the morning that the swinging out of the anchor-chain causes the yacht to tremble from stem to stern; and the sleepers start in their sleep, but are vaguely aware that they are at a safe anchorage at last. And do you know where the brave *White Dove* is lying now? Surely if the new dawn brings any stirring of wind—and if there is a sound coming over to us from this far land of legend and romance—it is the wild, sad wail of Dunvegan! The mists are clearing from the hills; the day breaks wan and fair; the great grey castle, touched by the early sunlight, looks down on the murmuring sea. And is it the sea, or is it the cold wind of the morning, that sings and sings to us in our dreams—

Dunvegan—oh! Dunvegan!

Bishop Atterbury.

Francis Atterbury's high reputation in his own age was recognised by the most distinguished of his contemporaries. According to Addison he was one of the greatest geniuses of his time; Pope, who was proud to call the Bishop friend, terms him one of the greatest men in all polite learning this nation ever had; Steele praised his sermons; and Doddridge—an excellent judge—called him the glory of English orators and a model for courtly preachers. His wit was universally acknowledged, Christ Church men even esteemed him for his learning, and his splendid defence at his trial before the House of Lords made a strong impression alike on friends and foes. The high estimate of men who came under Atterbury's personal influence has been tempered by the lapse of time. He is indeed styled by a modern Church historian, "one of the greatest masters of style, wit, and invective the English Church has produced," and by Lord Stanhope as "a great and surpassing genius;" but this estimate is, we think, considerably overcharged. It may be true to the judgment formed by his contemporaries, but the less partial judgment of posterity will not justify such a eulogium. Atterbury was conspicuous as an ecclesiastic, as a politician, and as a man of letters; but in no department of intellectual activity does he stand in the foremost rank. What he did and what he gained was due to brilliant talent and indomitable energy. He had strong ambition, dauntless courage, and an imperious will, and a man with such qualities was not likely to be a laggard in the battle of life.

The volume of the Stuart Papers printed from the originals in her Majesty's possession about thirty years ago, threw so much new light upon the Bishop's character, and on his career in exile, as to make the judgments previously passed upon him comparatively worthless. We smile as we read in the preface to Atterbury's *Private Correspondence*, printed in 1768, that such a man could never have sacrificed his learned leisure to a turbulent faction, that he never would have justified what he deemed an unjust sentence by acting in the service of the Pretender, and that "least of all would he have done this with the view of promoting the interests of one whom by many voluntary and solemn oaths he had so often abjured." We now know what Bishop Hoadly, his antagonist, asserted all along, that Atterbury was plotting for the Pretender before he was sent into exile; and we know, too, that from the hour that he left England he was the most energetic assertor of the Jacobite cause. A biography of Atterbury worthy of the subject has yet to be written. The materials brought together by modern research are capable of being turned to good account by a competent biographer, who would have the advantage of digging in what is comparatively virgin soil. About ten years ago Mr. Folkestone Williams attempted to perform the task and conspicuously failed.* The author may be credited with a considerable amount of energy and reading, but the result of his labours is eminently unsatisfactory. The book is a jumble of ill-digested materials. It abounds in contradictions and repetitions, irrelevant remarks and ignorant assertions. The arrangement is confused, and the criticism passed upon Atterbury and his illustrious contemporaries, when just, is commonplace, when independent, frequently ridiculous. It would be untrue, however, to say that Mr. Williams's work is useless; for if the opinions expressed are worthless, the facts will be sometimes found of service.

The story of Francis Atterbury's life, as far as we are able to read it, is by no means without interest. With regard to certain portions of it little information is to be obtained, but there are passages in the narrative which will attract the historical and literary student, and there is one at least so exquisitely pathetic that when perused at length in the *Correspondence* it is likely to hold the reader spell-bound. He was born in 1662, and educated at Westminster under the famous Dr. Busby, who for fifty-five years wielded a power as head-master which was by no means wholly intellectual. Readers of the *Spectator* will remember that when Sir Roger de Coverley stood before Busby's tomb, he exclaimed, "Dr. Busby, a great man, whipped my grandfather—a very great man! I should have gone to him myself if I had not been a blockhead. A very great man." Matthew Prior was one of Atterbury's schoolmates, and so, if we are to credit Mr. Williams, was Nicholas Rowe, but as Atterbury, who was eleven years Rowe's senior, left Westminster for Christ Church in 1680, and Rowe was not elected as a King's Scholar until 1688, it is difficult to accept the statement that they worked together. At Oxford, Atterbury made himself conspicuous. When he had been up two years he published a Latin version of *Absalom and Achitophel*, but won greater praise by his defence of Luther, an opportune topic, since at that time James was endeavouring to force upon the country an alien and detested creed. At a later period of his Oxford life he engaged in an enterprise which displayed more audacity than wisdom. Atterbury undertook the tutorship of the Hon. C. Boyle, a young man whose lively parts enabled him to discover that there was "a great deal of very good sense" in John Locke, and whose unwise ambition tempted him to enter the lists with Bentley in a matter of scholarship. For this rash venture, which Lord Macaulay has exposed with his accustomed brilliancy and incisiveness, Atterbury must be held in chief measure responsible. It was he who under his pupil's name took the principal part in replying to Bentley's *Dissertations on the Epistles of Phalaris*. The arch-critic of Cambridge had treated Christ Church men with contempt, and Atterbury, with some slight help from others, undertook to defend his College. In doing this he managed to make a learned discussion lively and entertaining. In learning he was comparatively a pigmy and Bentley a giant, but Atterbury was a master of style, he had wit and rhetoric at his command, and "a mind inexhaustibly rich in all the resources of controversy." After a time Bentley, as might have been expected, demolished his assailant, but Atterbury's immediate success was extraordinary, and his book, according to Bentley's biographer, enjoyed an extravagant popularity. And this success is not, perhaps, surprising. The book professes to be a learned dissertation, and the subject to be discussed was one for colourless argument, but Boyle's examination of Bentley's Dissertation is replete with sarcasm and wit, and with the personalities which wicked human nature finds so attractive. The writers could not confute Bentley, but they could revile and sneer at him, and they did this in such a way as to excite the mirth of their readers. Moreover, Christ Church was put upon its defence, and Christ Church men were likely warmly to welcome a volume which defended them with such spirit. Bentley himself states that the book was at first regarded as unanswerable, even among his own friends. "Nobody," says Bishop Monk, "suspected that he would venture to reply, still less that he could ever again hold up his head in the republic of letters; the blow was thought to be fatal." One of the most brilliant portions of the volume is said to have been written by Smalridge, but Atterbury's share in the work consisted, as he himself states to Boyle, "in writing more than half the book, in reviewing a great part of the rest, and in transcribing the whole." Bentley, had he been a smaller man, would have been crushed by the wits, for Swift also took the field against him; Sir William Temple, who was popularly regarded as the finest writer of the age,[*] called him a "dull, unmannerly pedant;" and Garth, a small poet, but a respectable physician, followed in the same strain of depreciation, and said that as diamonds take a lustre from their foil, so "to a Bentley 'tis we owe a Boyle." It is pleasant to know that this controversy between two distinguished men did not result in permanent estrangement. Atterbury must have seen that he was worsted in the encounter; but in after years, when Atterbury was Dean of Christ Church, and the Cambridge scholar Master of Trinity, we find the former thanking Bentley for "that noble present of your new edition of Horace which you were pleased to make me," and adding, after a perusal of the whole work, that he regards it as "every way equal to the expectation raised of it." The young man in whose name Atterbury published this famous reply to Bentley, seems to have been dissatisfied, and well he might be, for his position as the nominal author of the book was far from enviable. Atterbury complains to Boyle that his labour has not been duly appreciated. After reminding him that the work had cost him the toil of six months, he adds: "What I promised myself from hence was that some service would be done to your reputation, and that you would think so. In the first of these I was not mistaken, in the latter I am. . . . Since you came to England no one expression that I know of, has dropped from you that could give me reason to believe you had any opinion of what I had done, or even took it kindly from me." It may be doubted whether the relations of Atterbury and Boyle as tutor and pupil had ever been satisfactory. Atterbury was restless and fretful at Oxford: his ambition needed a wider sphere. To his father, the Rector of Milton, in Buckinghamshire, he writes: "I was made, I am sure, for another scene and another sort of conversation, though it has been my bad luck to be pinned down to this. . . . The only benefit I ever proposed to myself by the place is studying, and that I am not able to compass. Mr. Boyle takes up half my time, and I grudge it him not, for he is a fine gentleman. . . . College and university business takes up a great deal more, and I am forced to be useful to the Dean in a thousand particulars, so that I have very little time." The Rector in reply reprimands his son for his unchristian spirit, and after advising him in a pious strain to serve God contentedly in his station until he is called to something better, descends from these heights to a worldly piece of counsel. "For matching," writes this devout clergyman, "there is no way for preferment like marrying into some family of interest, either bishop's or archbishop's, or some courtier's, which may be done with accomplishments and a portion too; but I may write what I will, you consider little and disquiet yourself much." The son did eventually profit by his father's advice by marrying "a portion," for the lady of his choice had 7,000*l.*, but in other respects the match was not likely to gratify the Rector of Milton, for Katherine Osborn, who is said to have been a great beauty, was illegitimate.

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* *Memoirs and Correspondence of Francis Atterbury, D.D., Bishop of Rochester, with Notices of his Distinguished Contemporaries.* Compiled chiefly from the Atterbury and Stuart Papers. By Folkestone Williams. 2 vols. Allen and Co.

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[*] Sir William Temple was indeed the originator of the controversy, for if he had not eulogised the *Epistles of Phalaris* in his essay upon *Ancient and Modern Learning*, the Dean of Christ Church would not have asked Boyle to edit the *Epistles*, and the feud between the Christ Church editor and Bentley would have had no existence. Readers who feel any curiosity with regard to this once famous "war between Bentley and Boyle," are referred to Monk's *Life of Bentley*, and to the first volume of *Bentley's Works*, edited by the Rev. Alexander Dyce.

Having taken holy orders and forsaken Oxford for London, Atterbury rose rapidly to fame as a Court preacher. He obtained the lectureship of St. Bride's; he was chosen preacher at Bridewell Hospital; he was appointed chaplain in ordinary to King William; he had the honour of being challenged for his opinions by that famous theological pugilist, Dr. Hoadly. Atterbury was now in his element. He was a man of war from his youth, and loved the sound of the trumpet and the din of arms. It was in the field of controversy he was destined to rise to fame; and though, no doubt, Pope did his friend justice when he wrote sympathetically of his "softer hour," it was not often or for long that this fiery Churchman cared to lie down in green pastures, or to wander by still waters. In 1700 he published a book entitled *The Rights, Powers, and Privileges of an English Convocation Stated and Vindicated*, which was warmly applauded by High Churchmen. Convocation had been suspended for some years, when Sir Bartholomew Shower's *Letter to a Convocation Man* formed the prelude to a vehement and protracted controversy. Shower asserted that it was the undoubted right of Convocation to confer, debate, and resolve without the King's licence, a statement highly acceptable to the Jacobite clergy. Dr. Wake, a well-known clergyman of the opposite school of thought, replied to Shower; another Convocation man entered into the controversy, and to him Wake replied also; and now Atterbury, who aspired to be the leader of the High Church party, undertook to answer Wake, and, in the judgment of Warburton, answered him successfully. He argued that there was the same inherent right in the clergy to meet in Convocation as in the laity to meet in Parliament. His argument was opposed by Burnet, Kennet, and others. Wake also supplemented their attacks in a folio volume. The weighty discussion was not wholly fruitless; the King allowed Convocation to assemble, which it did with some spirit, for the Lower House quarrelled with the Upper, and charged Bishop Burnet with heresy. The quarrels between the two Houses in those days continued for a long period, and must have been far from edifying to loyal Churchmen. According to Burnet, a great heat was spread through the whole clergy from the fire thus raised in Convocation, and no doubt Atterbury added oil to the flames, like the man who stood behind the furnace in Bunyan's allegory.

Meanwhile, ample clerical honours fell to the share of Atterbury. In 1701 he was appointed Archdeacon of Totness, and afterwards prebend of Exeter; in the same year the Lower House of Convocation thanked him "for his learned pains in asserting and vindicating their rights," and by the special request of that body Oxford conferred on him the title of D.D. He became the favourite chaplain of Queen Anne; and when Prince George died, showed his surpassing eloquence by representing "his unassuming virtues in such high relief that his widow could not help feeling her irreparable loss."

During the Queen's reign, Atterbury's career was one of unbroken prosperity. From the Deanery of Carlisle he passed to that of Christ Church, and when in 1713 he succeeded Sprat as Dean of Westminster and Bishop of Rochester, it was thought that this preferment would lead eventually to the primacy. These were years of hope and ambition, of active work and high social intercourse. It may be well therefore to linger a little over this brilliant period of a troubled life, and to note from various sources such incidents as may throw light upon his character, or on the character of his friends. When Dean of Carlisle he lived, for a portion of the year at least, in Church Lane, Chelsea; and Swift, who had lodgings opposite, refers more than once in his Journal to Stella to his "neighbour over the way." Already we learn that Atterbury was troubled with gout, but it does not seem to have hindered social enjoyments; and we read of invitations to dinner from the Dean, and of dinner parties elsewhere. Thus Swift writes, at a time when he had taken up his quarters in London: "I walked to Chelsea, and was there by nine this morning, and the Dean of Carlisle and I crossed the water to Battersea, and went in his chariot to Greenwich, where we dined at Dr. Gastrell's, and passed the afternoon at Lewisham, at the Dean of Canterbury's. . . . It is the first little rambling journey I have had this summer about London; and they are the agreeablest pastimes one can have in a friend's coach and good company." Atterbury no doubt found Swift "mighty good company," and no doubt Swift lived a life of great enjoyment with Atterbury, Prior, the Head Master of Westminster, and, to quote the curious expression of the Bishop's biographer, other "equally convivial minds." One of Atterbury's early friends and patrons was Trelawney, Bishop of Exeter; and the letters he addressed to that Bishop are very numerous, but far from entertaining. It is evident that Atterbury was not above retailing scandal to his dignified friend; and in one of his letters there is a story told of Burnet, the famous Whig Bishop of Salisbury, which is altogether incredible. Trelawney, by the way, had a grudge against Burnet for causing it to be spread abroad that he was drunk at Salisbury one 30th of January, whereas, he writes, "a very honest clergyman and the people of the inn—which was a coffee-house too—can swear I drank nothing but two dishes of coffee." Atterbury advises the Bishop to read the *Tale of a Tub*, which, "in spite of its profaneness," is a book to be valued, being an "original in its kind, full of wit, humour, good sense, and learning;" and he gives it as the opinion at Oxford that the *Tale* was written by Smith and Philips, the first a scholar, the second a commoner, of Christ Church. In another letter he returns to the same subject, seems to suspect that it was written by Swift, whom as yet he did not know personally, and observes, "Nothing can please more than that book doth here at London." Atterbury was supposed to have a fine taste for literature. His admiration of Milton is said to have been profound, and yet we find him asking Pope to "review and polish" *Samson Agonistes*; he is said also to have been a good critic of poetry, and yet we find him telling his "Twit'-nam friend" that all verses should point to some useful truth, and have instruction at the bottom of them. "Your poetry," he wrote to Pope, "is all over morality from the beginning to the end of it." He saw that Pope's strength lay in satire, and had more than once urged him not to leave his talent unemployed; but when, many years after this advice was given, the *Dunciad* appeared, he considered that the poet had engaged "in a very improper and troublesome scuffle, not worthy of his pen at all." "Remember," he writes on one occasion, "Virgil died at fifty-two, and Horace at fifty-eight, and, as bad as both their constitutions were, yours is yet more delicate and tender. Employ not your precious moments and great talents on little men and little things, but choose a subject every way worthy of you; and handle it, as you can, in a manner which nobody else can equal or imitate." In Pope's day almost all men of ability wrote what at that time was called poetry. Atterbury therefore tried his hand at verses, and won absurdly extravagant praise from friendly critics. His translations of two favourite odes of Horace (Ode ix. book iii. and Ode iii. book iv.) are indeed highly creditable productions. The charm of Horace's lyrics can never be fully transferred to a foreign idiom—is there any lyric poetry that will bear translation?—but Atterbury's version of these odes reads like a happy inspiration. His skill as a maker of original verses may be estimated from the following song:

Fair Sylvia, cease to blame my youth
  For having loved before;
So men, till they have learned the truth,
  Strange deities adore.

My heart, 't is true, has often ranged
  Like bees on gaudy flowers,
And many a thousand loves has changed
  Till it was fixed on yours.

But, Sylvia, when I saw those eyes,
  'T was soon determined there;
Stars might as well forsake the skies,
  And vanish into air.

When I from this great rule do err,
  New beauties to adore,
May I again turn wanderer,
  And never settle more.

The friendship between Atterbury and Pope did honour to both men. The Bishop, there is reason to believe, frequently found his way to Twickenham, and Pope would "lie at the Deanery" when he came to London. Thither he went on the evening before the funeral of the Duke of Marlborough, to "moralise on the vanity of human glory;" and it is probable he was also present in the Abbey three years before, when Atterbury read the last service over Addison, "with unusual energy and solemnity." Atterbury had opinions of his own on matters poetical, and did not hesitate to express them. He preferred blank verse to rhyme, believed that in his heart Pope preferred it also, and discussed the subject with the poet again and again. "Forgive me this error," he writes, "if it be one, an error of above thirty years' standing, and which therefore I shall be very loth to part with." As a Protestant Bishop, Atterbury seems to have attempted the conversion of the poet; but in reply to his solicitations Pope wrote that he had "warmed his head" with the controversy between the Churches when quite a boy, and found himself a Papist and a Protestant by turns, according to the last book he read; and he observes, in the latitudinarian tone of a man who has no deeply rooted *convictions, that* he believes there is no real difference between the Bishop and himself, that he hopes all churches are so far of God as they are rightly understood, and adds more pertinently that he detests the arrogated authority over princes and States usurped by the Papacy, and that therefore he is not a Papist, but, in the strictest sense of the word, a Catholic.

A common friend of the Bishop and the poet was the Duchess of Buckingham, Princess Buckingham as Walpole calls her, an illegitimate daughter of James II. The lady was proud of her parentage, and is said to have wept over her father's grave at St. Germain's. She showed her pride also in another way, and in her last illness made her ladies vow that if she became senseless they would not sit down in the room before she was dead. She wrote an elaborate description of her own character and person, which Pope corrected, and she is said to have quarrelled with the poet while accepting his corrections, and exhibiting her character to her friends as his composition. Whatever might have been her faults, the Duchess proved a generous friend to Atterbury, and in the time of his poverty presented him with a thousand pounds. When the Bishop was in exile she showed in many feminine ways her friendship for his daughter, Mrs. Morice.

Atterbury is said to have been one of those turbulent and overbearing men whose rash policy frightens their friends. His boldness no doubt approached sometimes to temerity, and cautious men at a highly critical period would naturally avoid a friendship that might prove dangerous; but his sincerity as a friend cannot be called in question, and from this point of view his character contains much that is estimable and attractive.* Of his personal peculiarities little is recorded. The fine portrait by Kneller in the hall of Christ Church shows that he was singularly handsome; we know both from Pope and Gray that "mitred Atterbury would nod the head," a gesture which he used when he was pleased; and while his manners are said to have been courteous, we have many indications that his temper was far from equable. He acknowledges that he was accused of wanting temper and discretion, and there were good grounds for the accusation. But we have no means of gaining such an acquaintance with Atterbury as we can gain with some of his friends or acquaintances—with Addison and Steele for example, with Pope and Swift. His books or letters tell us little of the man; the letters of his friends, while testifying high admiration and even affection, tell us even less; but occasionally we discover a depth and tenderness of feeling which is all the more winning because unlooked for. The Christian virtues of meekness and gentleness were unknown to this Christian bishop. His gifts were of another order, but they were such as would have probably made him the most conspicuous ecclesiastic of his century had Queen Anne, instead of dying at forty-nine, lived to a good old age.

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* Atterbury, indeed, could not only boast warm friends but passionate admirers, and of one of these, Dr. Wall, it is said that had the Bishop been recalled from exile he would have lighted up Whittlebury forest at his own expense. This Dr. Wall, by the way, was a humourist, whose admiration is of doubtful value; for, according to one of his parishioners, he never preached on any subject for forty years "but Noah's Ark, except when he used to open against the Baptists."

Atterbury was fifty-two years old when Anne died, and from that moment dates the downfall of his fortunes. His "implacable disaffection" to the House of Hanover was well known, and he offered to proclaim James III. in his episcopal dress at Charing Cross if Bolingbroke would sustain him in so doing. But Bolingbroke loved his head too well to risk it in so perilous an enterprise, and Atterbury is said to have deplored in very unclerical language the pusillanimity of that statesman. The Bishop was therefore forced, though much against his will, to take the oaths to the House of Hanover, and to act his part in the coronation of that distinguished potentate King George I. Bolingbroke, it is scarcely necessary to say, went into exile, but Atterbury, though no doubt sharply watched by the spies of the Government, was left in possession of his See, and became leader of the opposition in the House of Lords. That Atterbury was deeply implicated in the plots to restore the Stuart dynasty there can be no doubt, and the prospect of such a restoration was not wholly chimerical. The Pretender was partly a fool and wholly a Papist; had he been a Protestant and a man of ability, it is probable he would have regained the throne of his ancestors. Personally no Englishman cared for George I.; loyalty to him was loyalty to a principle; and if religion and liberty had been as secure under James as under George, there were many reasons for preferring the claims of the Pretender. But James could not be trusted; and the dangers arising from the accession of a new dynasty, although far from trivial, were not to be weighed against the risk of acknowledging a Stuart cursed with all the faults of his race and with many unkingly faults of his own to boot. Atterbury, however, although he never wavered in his Protestantism, ventured to incur the risk. He believed in hereditary right, and he accepted the assurances of James that the fears of his Protestant subjects were unfounded. For years the Bishop appears to have corresponded under feigned names and by the help of ciphers with the "king over the water;" but the plot which led to his imprisonment in the Tower and ultimate exile was not discovered until 1722, when in the month of August he was arrested for high treason. It has been said that Walpole had attempted to silence the Bishop of Rochester, whose attacks on the Government were alike brilliant and effective, by the promise of the reversion of the See of Winchester and 5,000*l*. a year in the meantime, provided he would withdraw his opposition. Considering Sir Robert's passion for bribery, this offer is not impossible. Atterbury, however, was not the man to accept a bribe, and so, according to the Bishop's eulogists, it was resolved to ruin him. If Walpole, who was never scrupulous, adopted, as some writers assert, a shameless plot in order to get rid of his foe, there can be no doubt that he had in the Bishop an enemy too dangerous to be despised. The part played by Atterbury was strongly suspected but not certainly known in his own day. At his trial he called God to witness his innocence, and when Pope took leave of him in the Tower he told his friend he would allow him to call his sentence a just one if he should ever find that he had dealings with the Pretender in his exile. It was a daring and gratuitous assertion of innocence. The three letters produced at the Bishop's trial may have been forgeries,* but that he had plotted in the Jacobite cause before leaving England, and that on reaching the Continent he devoted himself to the cause of the Pretender, are no longer matters of controversy.

The few facts relating to the Bishop's arrest, captivity, and trial, must be briefly told. That Atterbury was willing that foreign troops should be employed to place James upon the throne is evident from letters written as far back as 1717 and 1718; and in 1721 he seems to have favoured the project of the Duke of Ormonde to land with a force of 2,000 men from Spain; but at this time and always, the most notable of the conspirators, with the exception of the Bishop himself, displayed a vacillation and incapacity which were fatal to the success of so vast an undertaking. There was no bond of cohesion among the followers of the Pretender; there were jealousies, misunderstandings, and foolish bickerings, which must often have driven him to his wits' end. Moreover there was treachery in the camp, and men who seemed to be working heartily for James were sometimes acting as spies for George. Through these spies the Bishop's share in the conspiracy was revealed to the Government. "It was in one of the long days of August," writes Dean Stanley, "when he had somewhat reluctantly come to London for the funeral of the Duke of Marlborough, that he was sitting in the Deanery in his nightgown at the hour of 'two in the afternoon'—a very unusual hour, one must suppose, for such a dress—when the Government officers came to arrest him; and though they behaved with some respect to him they suffered the messengers to treat him in a very rough way, threatening him if he did not make haste to dress himself that they would carry him away undrest as he was." †

After undergoing a preliminary examination before a Committee of the Privy Council, Atterbury was committed to the Tower, where he remained in durance for seven months. His confinement appears to have been strict, for he complains that no prisoner in the Tower of his age, infirmities, and rank, ever underwent such indignities; his daughter, Mrs. Morice, states that for a long period she was not permitted to see him, and his person was rudely searched. Pope writes to Gay: "Tell Dr. Arbuthnot that even pigeon pies and hog's puddings are thought dangerous by our Government; for those that have been sent to the Bishop of Rochester are opened and profanely pried into at the Tower. It is the first time that dead pigeons have been suspected of carrying intelligence." In the month of April, 1723, the Bill of Pains and Penalties, which deprived Atterbury of his ecclesiastical dignities and condemned him to perpetual exile, passed its third reading in the House of Commons. On May 6, the Bishop was brought to the bar of the House of Lords, and made a defence which affords the highest proof we possess of his consummate ability and oratorical power. In the course of his speech, Atterbury asks how it was possible he could be plotting for the Pretender at the very time he was daily expecting the death of his wife; when he "was carrying on public buildings of various kinds at Westminster and Bromley;" when he was consulting the books of the Abbey from the foundation; and was also engaged in a correspondence on the date of the Four Gospels. "Is it probable," he adds, "that I should hold meetings and consultations to form and forward this conspiracy, and yet nobody know where, when, and with whom they were held? that I, who lived always at home, and never when at the Deanery stirred out of one room, where I received all company promiscuously, and denied not myself to any, should have opportunities of concerting such matters; or, if I had, yet that none of my domestics or friends with whom I most familiarly lived should ever observe any appearance of this kind?"

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* The arguments urged by the Rev. George Perry (*History of the Church of England*, vol. iii. p. 574) to prove that these letters were forged at the instance of Sir Robert Walpole are not without force, and it is certain that the proofs of guilt brought forward at the Bishop's trial would not suffice in the present day to prove a man guilty of treason.

† *Historical Memorials of Westminster Abbey*, p. 458.

"There was one answer to these questions," writes Dean Stanley, "contained in a vague tradition that behind the wall of that one room, doubtless the library, there was a secret chamber in which these consultations might have been held. But as far back as the memory of the inmates of the Deanery extended the secret chamber had never been explored, and it was only in 1864 that on the removal of a slight partition there was found a long closet behind the fireplace reached by a rude ladder, perfectly dark, and capable of holding eight or ten persons. . . . In this chamber, which may have harboured the conspiracy of Abbot Colchester against Henry IV., it is probable that Fiddes may have been concealed in preparing his life of Wolsey, and Atterbury in plotting against George I." This is possible, no doubt, but the question arises by what means conspirators could gain admission to this closet, since if the only access was through the common entrance to the library they could scarcely have reached their place of concealment without attracting attention.

Atterbury's assertions of innocence did not satisfy his peers, and the Bill against him was carried by a large majority. A bishop convicted of treason and sentenced to perpetual exile was an event to excite the public mind. Prayers had been offered for Atterbury in the churches on the plea that he was suffering from gout, and now, when the time came for him to leave England, many of his friends assembled at the Tower to bid him a last farewell. Among these friends was Pope, to whom Atterbury presented a Bible. On the following day, June 18, the "late Bishop," as he was now called, left in a man-of-war for Calais, with his son-in-law and daughter, who had obtained permission to accompany him, and five confidential servants. "The crowd that attended him before his embarkation," writes Walpole to Lord Townshend, "was not more than was expected, but great numbers of boats attended him to the ship's side." No sooner had he reached Brussels, where for some period he fixed his residence, than he engaged with all his energies in the service of the Pretender. The two men never met, but correspondence was now unrestrained, and few real kings ever had a minister more devoted to their service than Atterbury was devoted to the service of James. He was a great sufferer, as we have already said, from gout; he laboured too under another painful complaint, and the wayward conduct of his son Osborn caused him frequent trouble, but neither bodily pain nor mental anxiety could lessen his zeal for the cause to which he had devoted his life. "I do and must love my country," he said, "with all its faults and blemishes," an expression which may have suggested the familiar line of Cowper; and, mistaken though we know him to have been, it is impossible to question his sincerity. If Atterbury toiled for an unworthy object, it was assuredly with worthy aims.

The air of Brussels did not suit the Bishop's health, but he would probably have remained there had not the representations of the British Ministers forced him to exchange that city for Paris. His position was a thankless one. James was ungrateful or neglectful, the Bishop jealous of his power, while the men who professed to live for "the cause" were full of jealousies and contentions.

We cannot follow Atterbury's steps through his years of old age and exile. To do so it would be necessary to describe the plots of the Pretender, the agitations which filled his little court at Rome, and the discord that prevailed among his counsellors in Paris. There is much, no doubt, in the narrative of conspiracies betrayed and hopes unfulfilled, that is deserving of attention, but this is not the place to tell the story as it deserves to be told, and there are incidents in the Bishop's life of exile which, if they do not better merit attention, relate more closely to his personal interests.

Atterbury's son-in-law Morice was High Bailiff of Westminster. When the Bishop was banished he attended to his concerns in England with the utmost assiduity, and while retaining his lucrative office is reported to have made himself one of the most useful of the Jacobite agents. He obtained the royal sign-manual permitting him to correspond with the exile, but letters conveying any significant intelligence were forwarded privately by safe hands. The letters contain a good deal of information characteristic of the age, and the mention incidentally of familiar names adds to the interest with which we read them. In one letter Morice describes the perils and delays of a journey between Paris and Calais, and how, after a delay of some days at the French port, "the governor of the place was so civil as to order the gates to be opened an hour sooner than usual," in order that he might save the tide. In another, he writes that he has sent the Bishop *Gulliver's Travels*, and adds, "The reputed author, Dean Swift, made very kind inquiries after you through our Twickenham friend, and was pleased to hear he had been mentioned by you in some of your letters." Morice has to send also the ungrateful news that some of the wealthy Jacobites who had contributed to the Bishop's support, were induced or compelled by circumstances to withdraw their annuities. The Bishop replies with indifference about his pecuniary losses, observing that he has made perhaps nine parts in ten of the journey of life, and shall scarcely want what is requisite to maintain him on the rest of the way before he gets home. He lost, he adds, two thousand a year at once when he was deprived of his ecclesiastical emoluments, and lost it with less concern than a few halfpence at play when he was a child. A postscript of the same letter shows, however, that the Bishop was by no means so regardless of worldly gear as he professed to be, for he sends a sharp reprimand to Morice for neglecting some money that was out at interest, and expresses the fear that he may lose both interest and principal.

But the most interesting and most touching part of the Correspondence relates to the gradual decline of the Bishop's beloved and only daughter, his "dear heart" he calls her; and even now, after the lapse of a century and a half, it is scarcely possible to read the sad story of this young wife's lingering death without feeling as if we too had lost a friend. From time to time in his letters we learn that Mary Morice, whose husband, by the way, never calls her by her Christian name, is unwell, that she is suffering from cold or cough, that she has been ordered horse exercise, or sent to Kensington for country air.

The Bishop, partly for health's sake, for he was tormented with the gout, partly that he might economise, and chiefly to escape from the fretful anxieties of his thankless post in Paris, resolved in 1728 to make a long visit to the South of France, to spend the winter at Montpellier, and perhaps to go still farther south. After telling his daughter that his physician urged him to winter in a warmer climate, he adds: "I own to you I have other reasons for that journey; the chiefest and of greatest weight with me is that I may be out of the very appearance of managing anything for a certain person who so manages his own business that it is impossible to do him any service. I am resolved, therefore, to be no ways concerned in his affairs, but to live retired and free, if it be possible, from the very suspicion of it." Mrs. Morice, who was very unwell when the news arrived, did not like to hear that her father was going still further from her. "The thought of your removal so far," she writes, "goes down like a bitter pill," and she entreats the Bishop, if he must needs go, to let her join him at Montpellier.

For a while Atterbury, for some not very obvious reason, opposed his daughter's plan; and even when he heard that her health was worse, he merely advised her to get to Kensington as quickly as possible, until they could meet somewhere in the North of France. "We are about eight hundred miles off from one another," he writes, "and to show you how much I desire to spare you the trouble of travelling, six of that eight shall be my part of the journey." There were many projects of removal and of meeting, but nothing was effected. The Bishop had a severe attack of gout, from which he scarce expected to recover. Then we read of Mrs. Morice's failing health, and that she is ordered to the South of France. It was arranged that, in company with her husband and some attendants, she should sail to Bordeaux. The voyage was an unfortunate one. They left London on August 19, and were detained twelve days at Dover waiting for a change of wind; then a storm arose, and the vessel, after beating about for two days, was forced to anchor at Plymouth, and there too the anxious travellers were delayed for more than three weeks. Mrs. Morice was evidently growing weaker, and her husband writes of her with great anxiety. Her one wish was to see her father, and the Bishop waited for news of her arrival at Bordeaux with the utmost impatience. "I thought I loved you before as much as I could possibly," he wrote, "but I feel such new degrees of tenderness arising in me, upon this terrible long journey, as I was never before acquainted with." Meanwhile, he made arrangements for the land journey between Bordeaux and Montpellier, and sent a servant to await the landing of the voyagers. Atterbury was weighed down with sorrow on hearing of his daughter's state at Plymouth, and it is evident that he feared the worst. On September 27 the ship once more set sail, but on the 30th she was forced back into Falmouth, and there, with the sense that death was approaching, the troubled voyagers had to remain several days. It was not until October 20 that Morice could write a line announcing his arrival at Bordeaux, and adding that his wife was too weak to attempt the land journey for some days. She herself added a scrawl, thanking her "dear papa" for all his "kind and tender letters," and expressing her anxious desire to see him. No doubt she felt that if they did not meet soon they would never meet again in this world. Every day added perceptibly to her weakness. It was found that she could not bear the fatigue of a carriage; a large boat was therefore hired to carry them to Agen, and at the request of her husband, who wrote in great agitation, the Bishop hastened to meet them on the road. It was well he did not delay. A litter had been ordered to convey Mrs. Morice from Agen to Toulouse, but none could be obtained, and it was necessary to pursue the tedious journey in the boat that had already carried them from Bordeaux. At length they reached Toulouse. The Bishop had already arrived, and we read how, after mutual expressions of concern and tenderness, the dying girl "particularly acknowledged the great blessing that was granted her of meeting her dear papa, and exerted all the little life that was in her in grasping his hands with her utmost force." In the night she was unable to sleep, and asking for her father, expressed a wish to receive the Sacrament. After this, the Bishop having gone from the bedside, she called for him—as she had very frequently done—and again said to him, "Dear papa—what a blessing it is—that after—such a long—troublesome—journey—we have—the comfort of this meeting." Having gasped out these words, she called for her husband, spoke in broken accents of her children and servants, and then, turning on her left side, died without a struggle. "It was my business," wrote the broken-hearted father, "to have taught her to die: instead of it she has taught me. I am not ashamed, and wish I may be able to learn that lesson from her."

Atterbury returned to Paris, and Morice to England, taking with him on that sad journey the remains of his wife. The correspondence between the Bishop and his son-in-law was renewed. We read in one letter of a visit from Pope to Morice, and how the poet's veneration for the Bishop is not lessened by time or absence. "Our discourse," adds the writer, "was full of you; nor was the memory of dear Mrs. Morice forgotten, for whom he had a vast value." The Bishop receives also some pleasant news of his eldest granddaughter, who is overjoyed at the thought of visiting him in Paris, and in the mean time sends her duty and a silk purse of her own work. In 1731 Atterbury wrote his last letter to Pope, and asks, "How many books have come out of late in your parts which you think I should be glad to peruse? Name them. The catalogue, I believe, will not cost you much trouble. They must be good ones indeed to challenge any part of my time now I have so little of it left. I, who squandered whole days heretofore, now husband hours when the glass begins to run low, and care not to spend them on trifles. At the end of the lottery of life our last minutes, like tickets left in the wheel, rise in their valuation."

The end was now approaching, but before it came Atterbury defended himself from a calumny promulgated by Oldmixon—a base libeller who has been doomed to stand eternally in the pillory of the *Dunciad*—that he had helped to garble Clarendon's History, a charge for which there was absolutely no foundation. His vindication, to quote the words of Macaulay, "is a model in its kind, luminous, temperate, and dignified." He sent a copy to the Pretender, in which he pathetically compares his fate to that of Clarendon. Morice and his two daughters had been with the Bishop for some time previously, but when the supreme moment came he was alone. The night before he died he appeared in good health, and wrote several letters. In the early hours of the morning the gout, his old enemy, attacked him in the stomach, and after a brief struggle he expired, in the seventieth year of his age, 1732. The body was carried to England and privately buried by the side of his daughter in Westminster Abbey, not, however, before the coffin had been broken open and searched.

There is nothing more to be said of Atterbury, unless it may be to suggest that in judging of his conduct it will be well to view it from the stand-point of his age and not of ours. We know what we have gained by the Hanoverian succession and the extinction of the Stuart line; but the Jacobites who read contemporary history in the days of George I. may perhaps be pardoned if their prevision of distant advantages proved less strong than their regard for legitimacy. And let it be remembered that at one time the cause of the Stuarts seemed as likely to prosper as that of the Hanoverians. If James had not, as Hallam observes, "given the most undeniable evidence of his legitimacy by constantly resisting the counsels of wise men and yielding to those of priests," there would, we think, have been several chances in his favour even after the accession of George I. Had the Jacobites been prepared for action on the death of Queen Anne, had they proved, to quote the words of Thackeray, "as bold and resolute as they were clever and crafty," George, who had little to recommend him to the virtuous and pious nation he ruled over for thirteen years, might never have ruled at all.

It has been recently urged by such competent writers as Mr. Lecky, and Messrs. Abbey and Overton—the recent historians of the Church of England in the eighteenth century—that Jacobitism was not so hopeless a cause as has generally been considered. After all, the question is perhaps one of less importance than it seems. A Stuart might, perhaps, have been restored with comparative ease, but the old Stuart principles were dead. No king could have retained power after the days of Queen Anne who was not willing to submit to parliamentary government, and to refrain at least from any hostility to the Established Church. A king might have been called James, but James III. could not have been a new edition of James II.

J. D.

Dulce est Desipere.

A LATIN STUDENT'S SONG OF THE TWELFTH CENTURY.

(*Translated from the 'Carmina Burana,'* p. 137.)

Cast aside dull books and thought!
Sweet is folly, sweet is play:
Take the pleasure spring hath brought
In youth's opening holiday!
Right it is that age should ponder
On grave matters fraught with care;
Tender youth is free to wander,
Free to frolic light as air.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own,
Tender youth and ruddy.

Lo, the spring of life slips by,
Frozen winter comes apace;
Strength is minished silently,
Care writes wrinkles on our face;
Blood dries up and courage fails us,
Pleasure dwindles, joys decrease,
Till old age at last assails us
With his troop of illnesses.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own,
Tender youth and ruddy.

Live we like the gods above!
This is wisdom, this is truth:
Chase the joys of gentle love
In the leisure of our youth!

Keep the vows we swore together,
  Lads, obey that ordinance;
Seek the fields in sunny weather,
  Where the laughing maidens dance.

Like a dream our prime is flown,
  Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own,
  Tender youth and ruddy.

There the lad who lists may see
  Which among the girls is kind;
There young limbs deliciously
  Flashing through the dances wind:
While the girls their arms are raising,
  Moving, winding o'er the lea,
Still I stand and gaze, and gazing
  They have stolen the soul of me!

Like a dream our prime is flown,
  Prisoned in a study;
Sport and folly are youth's own,
  Tender youth and ruddy.

J. A. SYMONDS.

The Countess's Ruby.

PART II.

VI.

I WAS in rather an ill humour that afternoon. After a short turn about the town I returned to my *atelier* and tried to paint; but colour had lost its harmony for me, and composition its meaning. I took up Balzac's *Deux Frères*, and plunged into the details of the miseries of Agatha, the villany of Philip, and the genius of Joseph; but the appalling truth of the picture depressed and irritated me. I stretched myself on the lounge and gave way to moody reverie. I pictured to myself a man five-and-thirty years of age, who had had his romance and got cured of it a dozen summers ago, who piqued himself on his sceptical and unimpassive temperament, who had fallen into confirmed bachelorhood, who was prolific of cynical and pro-Malthusian doctrines to erotic young fellows under thirty, and whose eminence in the world of art was due to the unalloyed devotion of both heart and brain which he had hitherto lavished upon it. I asked myself what was the fitting punishment for such a man's apostasy from his principles.

"Such a man," I answered myself, "is not fit to be trusted abroad. I condemn him to pack up his traps and go home, and I give him two hours to complete his preparations for starting."

The clock—the tall Norman clock with its round face of embossed brass and its huge slow-swinging pendulum—struck half-past three. I got up and rung the bell. Presently a withered old lady appeared, in a black gown, white cap and apron, neat blue stockings, and low shoes.

"Madame Enault," I said, "I shall leave you this afternoon. That a porter be here at five o'clock to take my baggage to the diligence; and, if you please, that we make up our little accounts."

Madame Enault was crushed. She was sent to grass! Monsieur going to leave that very day even?

"Perfectly."

Monsieur had perhaps encountered something to miscontent him? Madame Enault would do anything in her power to render things more satisfactory to monsieur.

"Madame misconstrues me. It is that affairs demand my departure."

Monsieur will he pardon Madame Enault?

"But without doubt."

Monsieur will, then, recollect that, in coming here, he was so good as to engage the rooms for six weeks, whereas only one week has elapsed. . . .

"You are completely in reason, madame, and you will be paid for the whole six weeks precisely as if I had remained."

Madame drops a curtsey and will instantly apprise a porter of Monsieur's intentions.

I now proceeded to pack my trunks and painting gear, and then, it being a little after four, I sallied forth for a farewell stroll on the parade.

It was a magnificent afternoon. A fresh cool breeze had replaced the lazy calm of the morning. The horizon line and the profile of the cliffs were defined sharp and clear. Great white castellated clouds sailed across the blue, and rhythmic waves came tumbling in frothy profusion along the beach. The whole scene was like a shout of joy, and it had never spoken so feelingly to me as now that I was saying good-bye to it.

As I turned away after a long look seaward, I met the Countess Semaroff and her daughter face to face.

I bowed. Madame smiled and gave me her hand, and before withdrawing it she looked at her daughter and said—

"My very dear, this is Monsieur Campbell. Ah, monsieur, it has been a dream of my daughter to meet you."

"I trust Mademoiselle will not find in me an illustration of the proverb, 'Songe mensonge,'" I said, clumsily enough.

Mademoiselle smiled slightly, as courtesy required, but all the while her eyes rested upon me searchingly and doubtfully, as though to satisfy herself whether I were to be believed in or distrusted, whether she might expect to find in the artist the complement and justification of his works. No kind of look, perhaps, is so difficult to sustain with composure as this. The most redoubtable artist is conscious that the inspiration of his best efforts comes from a source superior to himself, in comparison with which the average level of his thoughts and motives make but a sorry show. The merciless and undisguised inquisition of an ardent and unsophisticated young woman is thus apt to become not a little trying, especially when the inquisitrix is furnished with such a pair of eyes as nature had endowed the Countess Almara withal.

Indeed, strange and striking in other respects as was the beauty of the young countess, it was her eyes that individualised her and rendered her a paragon among women. Large and perfectly black they were—so black that it was a wonder to see them so full of light. The iris was of breadth so unusual that, like a black sun between two clouds, its upper and lower rims were infringed upon by the imperial eyelids. The human eye, as every portrait painter knows, has in itself but a narrow range of expression: it is the setting that imports. Now, the Countess Almara's upper eyelid was falconlike—straight above the pupil, and falling away thence towards the cheek in a long sweeping curve—a bold, lavish eyelid, indicative of keen intelligence and a noble temper. In singular contrast with this was the lower lid, most sensitively and changefully fashioned, responsive to every shifting emotion, sad, mirthful, wistful, pleasurable, tender; this it was that betrayed the woman, as the other announced the countess. Like the shimmer of light upon water, the delicate nerves in this region were never at rest; here, as upon a photographic plate, was legible the impress of each word or unuttered thought. Thus it might be affirmed of the Countess Almara that she had two eyes where other women have but one; and certainly she was able to do four times more execution with her pair than most daughters of Eve can accomplish.

There was a fine unconventionality in the cast of her features which was in itself an element of life. The low and broad forehead terminated in far-reaching and strongly defined eyebrows. The nose, long and finely chiselled, especially about the nostrils, descended from between the eyes in a line which, towards the end, had just enough of an upward tendency to redeem it from classic tameness. Tameness, in fact, is the word most expressive of everything that the young Countess was not. Her mouth was generous; the upper lip, short and slender, lay like a coral snake upon the full and voluptuously moulded lip below; thence curved forth the chin, clean cut and mettlesome, which she habitually carried high, and to which she communicated movements of fascinating wilfulness. Her profile, as a whole, was therefore of the concave rather than the convex order, and possessed a charmingly wild, barbaric quality, by no means inconsistent with a thorough refinement.

Of her grand figure I have already spoken. Her bearing was elastic and vigorous, yet pervaded always by the subtle and inevitable dignity of a high-bred lady. A kind of scarlet barret-cap surmounted the heavy black coil of her hair; and she wore a close-fitting dress of black serge, with a scarlet bow fluttering at the throat and a scarlet belt around the waist. It was a costume simple to severity, but in which she looked diabolically handsome. Her only ornaments on this occasion were two broad hoops of gold in her ears, and, on her left hand, an antique ring with an enormous ruby in it. Such a ruby not one lady in a thousand would dare to put on; it must have come to her, I thought, from the tomb of some early royal ancestress. It harmonised well with what I took to be the essential character of the Countess Almara.

Here, however, has been more than enough of personal description, which is never so futile as when it attempts to catch the secret of a lovely woman's charm. As an artist I have dwelt upon details which to the ordinary eye would have combined for the production of a single effect more or less acutely pleasurable. I looked at her with the instinctive longing which an artist feels to interpret beauty upon canvas; and the critical admiration of my glance met and partly disconcerted the critical inquiry of her own.

"I have much happiness in speaking to Monsieur Campbell," she said after a moment, in a deep fresh voice. "To me it is not as if I were speaking to a stranger."

We walked on slowly, the young countess between her mother and me. I felt a childish desire to utter something brilliant and profound; and, knowing by experience that such a wish is always fatal to the deed, I took refuge in the intensity of commonplace.

"Mademoiselle finds this place enjoyable?"

"After the city, truly, yes."

"Paris is indeed hot in this month."

"It is from St. Petersburg that we come here."

"Mademoiselle the Countess is, then, a Russian?"

Here the elder lady interposed with a smile, "Not altogether Russian, monsieur. For my part, I am a Circassian. My father was attached to the Court of the Czar after the conquest of our poor country. I was married among our conquerors—what will you? For Almara, she may be called the Reconciliation, is it not?"

"If all quarrels could find such reconciliation——" I began.

The Countess Semaroff laughed goodnaturedly. "There, you are *spirituel*; one sees you have lived much in Paris," she was kind enough to say.

"But it is not in the *salons* of Paris that you have found the power to conceive your pictures. I refer not to the execution—the *technique*—all that which labour and experience may acquire; but it is the thought, look you, the life that is in your work; and this can be found not in any city, not in any society, but only in the man himself who feels, who sees."

It was the young Countess who spoke thus, and with an energy of tone and expression that caused those nerves of self-approbation which are situated somewhere in the back part of a man's throat to thrill pleasantly. I had not expected to find in so young a woman an appreciation at once so earnest and intelligent.

"You have studied art yourself?" I said to her.

"Behold, my very dear, you will permit that I sit on the bench and read my letter while you and Monsieur Campbell have your little debate. When you are fatigued you shall rejoin me. Go, then." And with this the good Countess established herself upon a seat sheltered from the breeze, but which we would pass and repass at every turn of our promenade. Our conversation continued.

"I do not name myself student; I am a lover," said the Countess Almara. "My life has not been a school; it has been a passion. I cannot talk learnedly, as do many; I know not the names of things; but I know what reaches my heart: that I understand and never forget."

"It is, then, that your heart has taught you more than the heads of many students teach them."

"I should like to believe that," she exclaimed with animation. "I like not to be told, 'You must believe this; you must say that.' I would believe and say because I cannot help it. Figure to yourself that my life has not been altogether after the convenances. A child, I lived in a grand château beside a lake; beyond the lake was a mountain, and on all sides a forest. I had a gun, I hunted, and I swam and rowed upon the lake, and I had my horses and my dogs. To sew, to play with dolls, look you, I cared not for it. I am not as the French, not even as the Russians; like my mother, I am Circassian; yes, I am more Circassian than she, instead of less."

"I believe it well. But later you left this château—you travelled?"

"I have been to many places and seen much society, and I have learned to behave *comme il faut* and to speak the French. But it is only a little comedy that I act; I feel that within me remains always the little girl of the lake and forest, but dressed differently, and with a face that does not tell the truth, as then. I can look happy when I am sad, and grave when I wish to laugh."

"But you are happier than you were before?"

"Oh, for example, behold a question of difficulty," said the Countess, shrugging her shoulders. "One is never happy as in childhood; but, in fine, one finds a way to be happy. To love what is beautiful is happiness, but then it is a happiness full of all that is most sad."

"It is not often that one has discovered that truth at your age, mademoiselle."

"But it is true, is it not? For beauty dies; or if not beauty, then the eye, the soul, that has enjoyed it. Why was it ever shown to us? It only makes us long for what never comes, for what can never be."

This gloomy philosophy, uttered by one who should have seen as yet only the sunshine of life, roused me to attempt what, for me, was the anomaly of vindicating the more hopeful view. Some platitude I brought forth about the soul finding in another world the fulfilment of unsatisfied aspirations, and I asked her whether she doubted immortality.

We were leaning on the broad wooden railing of the promenade, looking seaward. The Countess was turning her ring absently on her forefinger.

"There ought to be immortality," said she, "to recompense us not for what we have suffered in the world, but for what we have enjoyed!"

"Yes, you could not have hit upon a stronger argument," returned I after a moment's thought.

"Is it strong enough?"

"Strong enough certainly to justify hope."

"Ah, my God, one hopes without any justification at all. You conceive, monsieur, I am not of those who believe all we are told of the holy Greek Church. To believe, and after all to be deceived! I could not bear it. I have not found anyone so wise as to make all doubts seem foolish. But I have found many things that tell me, 'Destiny mocks you.' Yes," she added, turning towards me with a kind of fierceness in her look, "yes, destiny mocks me."

"This girl has sustained some terrible injustice in her life," I thought to myself. "It glows in her words like the fire in her ruby."

After a pause she spoke again.

"Figure to yourself, monsieur, a life that feels itself strong and capable of all enjoyments and aspirations; and this life, in the midst of its joy and freedom, one day meets its destiny, which says, 'You are a slave: your aspirations are ashes; your joy shall make you weep; you shall become all that you despise. If you struggle to be free, you shall but dig your dungeon deeper. So it shall be to the end; but I do not forbid you to hope.' Well, is not that mockery?"

"Destiny has not that power over us. I who speak to you have suffered, mademoiselle, but I have not found that suffering degrades. It chills, perhaps."

"Ah, you speak of men. I am a woman; it is another thing that! But behold me who discourse thus to you, who see me for the first time—who think me mad."

"Oh, Countess! . . ."

"Do you know why I say to you these things, which I have said before to no one—to no one, Monsieur Campbell? It is because they grew in my mind as I looked at your picture—your picture, that is now mine as well. Many hours have I looked at it, and I said, 'The man who has conceived that he has known what are the secrets of life. If I meet him I will tell him these secrets of mine; he is worthy to hear them. He can interpret mysteries.' But your interpretation is profound, monsieur; not everyone can read it."

"If I could always paint for such as you, Countess, I might some day realise my ideal."

She stood meditatively, her hands hanging folded and her eyes dreaming.

"When I saw that picture," she said at length, "I felt that it was the picture of my soul. There she sits within her rampart, which was once whole and sound. But now there is a breach, and that breach will never be built up again—never, never. Once the enemy has entered; and though for years and years she may watch and guard, yet at some hour, some moment even, her eyes will droop and her hand waver. . . . Then he springs and clutches her, and it is ended. See him where he lurks there outside among the bushes. He waits; he is sure. And she—regard that terror in her eyes. Monsieur, it is a sublime thing to be a great painter."

She held out her hand to me impulsively; there were tears in her eyes, but she smiled them away with a wilful defiance. Our hands just touched; then she withdrew hers. "You see I have not had your picture for nothing; I have looked at it," she said.

I was deeply touched. "You have seen through it into the heart that conceived it."

"Let us talk of other things," she exclaimed abruptly in a lighter tone. "Come, let us walk, else madame my mother will think again that I am lost."

We resumed our promenade accordingly, but for awhile in silence.

"You look at my ruby. Do you find it handsome?" She had been turning and twisting the ring upon her finger, and my eyes had more than once been drawn to it. Almost as soon as she had spoken she slipped the ring off and laid it in my hand.

"It is a real antique," I said, concealing the surprise this sudden act inspired in me. "It is an heirloom in your family, perhaps?"

"It is a magic ring; there is a spell connected with it," said the Countess, laughing.

"Let me not be the breaker of the spell," I rejoined, holding it towards her. But, instead of taking it from me, she extended her long taper finger, and I put the ring on it.

"There, you have put it on, and now it will never again come off," she said with a strange smile. "It is the ring of my destiny."

"Yours should be a rich destiny, then."

"Yes, I shall be rich; I shall make a figure in the world," she replied, still smiling. "Nevertheless the spell is a curse; for so long as I wear the ring I must be miserable, and if I lose it I shall be—wicked."

"Is there no third alternative?"

"There was, but now the moment is passed. That is your fault, monsieur."

"My fault?"

"If, when I gave you the ring just now, and it was in your power, you had flung it far, far away into the sea, then the curse would have left me, and I should have been free always."

"If that be all I'll soon set you at liberty. Give me the ring."

She shook her head. "It is now too late. Such a chance can come only once. Have I not told you destiny mocks always? Behold my mother who beckons us."

We approached Madame, who took her daughter's hand affectionately in hers. "My very dear, we dine to-day at half-past four; we must make our toilette early. But, my God! how your hand is cold, my child. You have been chilled by that fog this morning."

The Countess Almara laughed. "It was not I; it was that poor young man with the black hair and the blue eyes who was swimming so far out; that he should have been chilled I could believe it. In effect it was droll," she continued, turning to me. "Figure to yourself this little man—he was very little—little like that," and she held her palm about four feet from the ground. "Well, he swims out a fine distance, even as far as I go in the canoe. When the fog comes I hear a splash;

I look round; I perceive this unfortunate infant. I think he shall be drowned, and I go towards him to preserve him. Then I see that this infant it is a man; and this man he seems to fear me more than to be drowned, for he swims away when I approach. So I return towards the shore, but slowly, so that he may see me and follow me; and, in fine, when we are nearly arrived the fog dissolves itself, and behold us."

"Do you by hazard know this gentleman?" inquired the Countess Semaroff of me. "He has the air of an Englishman."

"No; he is an American," I answered with a touch of prevarication.

"Ah, these Americans, how I hate them!" murmured the Countess Almara.

Madame rose with a shrug of her shoulders. "We shall have the pleasure of seeing Monsieur Campbell at the dance this evening?"

"Without doubt—that is—no. I am to depart by the diligence even at the present hour."

"Depart to-day? Impossible! After having met Monsieur to lose him so soon!"

"Madame, I am desolated, but—affairs."

"You will not go to-day," said the Countess Almara, in a voice so low that it could have been audible only to myself.

"Perhaps, indeed, I could manage to postpone for a few days——" I resumed, still addressing myself to Madame.

"Good. We remain here but a few days longer ourselves; and when we go you shall accompany us. That will be charming. Is it agreed?"

"Madame, a thousand acknowledgments."

"Till this evening, then."

I bowed low. The Countess Almara laid her hand in mine, our eyes met, her lips seemed to form the word "Merci," but she did not utter it aloud; then she turned brusquely and followed her mother, and they were soon out of sight.

VII.

I drew a long breath, stroked my beard thoughtfully, looked at my watch, and set out at a brisk pace for my lodgings. Before I had gone far I heard my name called, and, turning, saw Mr. Jefferson Montgomery, who signalled to me with one gloved hand while with the other he lifted his hat in adieu to an elderly gentleman with a tremendous sweep of moustachios. My friend now hastened towards me, his white teeth flashing, his blue eyes beaming, and with a general air of prosperity and benevolence.

"I am so glad to see you, dear Campbell. But they told me you were going to leave us. Surely you're not?"

"What an idea! I shall be here at least a week."

Jeff took my arm with perfect cordiality and good faith. I did want him, but there was nothing for it but to let the poor little man come. Arrived at my house, I sent him upstairs while I stopped to have a word with my landlady.

"Madame Enault, I shall be able to remain another week."

Madame Enault was delighted, but would Monsieur pardon her?

"Freely and completely. What then?"

Only that, since Monsieur's notice to leave, another monsieur had engaged the rooms, and Madame Enault had agreed with him for a month.

"Then let him know that you misunderstood me and that he must go elsewhere."

To a marvel; only, alas! this gentleman had deposited the hire of the rooms in advance.

"You will return his deposit to him."

Perfectly, but that, having had a heavy bill to meet, Madame Enault had been constrained to pay the money away.

"Ah! and Madame requires me to supply her with the cash in question?"

Monsieur had exactly divined the necessity that unfortunately existed.

Providence had treated me too well for me to be severe with so thrifty and unimpeachable a landlady; accordingly a financial transaction took place, the porter was remanded, and I went upstairs.

"And so you have been introduced," said Jeff. He was reclining Adonis-like upon the lounge, exquisitely dressed.

"To whom do you refer?"

"Now don't be English and reticent. Whom should I mean but my countess? I do so want to hear your opinion of her."

I could not help laughing a little, for to be seriously angry with the bard of Beacon Street was not easy.

"Unless you wish to write yourself down irrevocably an ass, my dear boy, you will not again apply the possessive pronoun to the Countess Almara. It sounds much as if a horse fly should speak of his proprietorship of a four-in-hand."

"My dear Campbell, you are really impolite."

"I know it, and I hold you responsible for forcing me to address you with such brutality. I'm not accustomed to it."

"How you do go on!" sighed Jeff, wiping his eyebrows with his cambric handkerchief. "One never knows when you're in earnest. But really don't you think we shall make a first-rate match?"

"Gracious Powers! Do you know that there are probably not two men living for whom the Countess Almara would not be more than a match?"

"Exactly. In fact, there is only one who could mate with her on equal terms, and—well, I happen to be he." Jeff uttered this with perfect modesty and conviction.

"My young friend, your chances with that young lady are not hopeless; they are ridiculous. She actually cannot maintain gravity at the thought of you. Must I reveal that she speaks of the 'pauvre enfante,' that she is convinced you are only four feet high, and that she declares she frightened you terribly in the fog this morning? Eloquent looks and sympathy of souls indeed!" and I laughed rudely.

"I don't believe a word you say," replied Jeff, laughing also. "But there is one thing that I do begin to believe."

"What is that?"

"That I've got a rival, eh? ha, ha, ha!"

"You have an entirely too lively imagination," was my cold reply.

"Ah, Campbell, you are very deep—very. If I were less sure of my countess than I am I declare I should feel uneasy."

"Merely for curiosity's sake, where do you find encouragement?"

"You were in earnest, then, when you said this morning that you knew less than I about women? Your difficulty is, probably, that you regard woman as a species of man, when in fact no woman who amounts to anything has a particle of masculinity about her. They may pretend to it sometimes, just to bamboozle fellows who are inexperienced; but they drop it in the presence of a man who sees through them."

"Through their backs. I understand."

"Exactly. Well, then, my countess, when I have my eye upon her, is her simple womanly self, because she knows my insight is unerring; but with you I'll wager she talks literature and art, and morals, and things of that kind, eh?"

"I will not deny it, Jeff."

"Of course she did, and why? Because she knew she could make you believe she really cared for such things; and, womanlike, she couldn't resist humbugging you."

"And her laughing at you, her contemptuous allusions to your stature and so forth, were also impositions upon my naïve ignorance of the sex?"

"Indeed, my dear Campbell, they were."

"It is me, then, and not you, that she considers ridiculous?"

"At all events you can see that it's not me," said Jeff leniently. "Why, just consider the points in me which she professed to consider laughable. My height! Now, the last thing a woman bothers herself about in a man is his height. When there is a question of physical attractions, she looks first at his shoulders, then at his eyes, then at his feet and hands, then at his chin. If these please her his height may take care of itself; and, if you won't mind my saying it, the less it has to take care of the better. Look at Napoleon Bonaparte, Martin Luther, Frederick the Great, Benjamin Franklin, Plato, General Grant. Why, pretty nearly everybody who has stood a head and shoulders above his generation has been under five feet eight."

"Bravo, Jeff! You are both eloquent and sagacious. Beacon Street should be proud of you."

"Knowledge of this kind is a matter of temperament and intuition. Experience can but confirm what the soul has already divined; and if the previous divination do not exist, age and experience are just so much to the bad, if you won't mind my saying so. And so she ridiculed the fog incident?"

"She alluded to it with an apparent spice of humour," I said diffidently.

"Dear girl," murmured the poet tenderly. "That seeming ridicule was almost as direct an avowal of affection as a modest woman could have made. That mutual voiceless self-revelation of ours, which my dear Campbell professes to discredit, has evidently stirred my Countess to her depths. It has aroused the potent germs of the master passion of her life. She trembles to confess herself to herself; how, then, could she do otherwise than veil herself from a stranger? and what better veil than a simulated mirth and mockery? But really now you don't need me to tell you this; it's the A, B, C of the feminine nature."

"Jeff, you puzzle me; you are either more or less than human. At all events you are an incarnate solution of the old problem how to make the best of it. Well, what are your proximate intentions?"

"To dance the 'Boston' with her this evening."

"You will be at the ball, then?"

"Indeed, yes. Shall not you?"

"I shall; for, since you are definitely resolved upon playing the donkey, I want to be in a position to hear your opening bray."

"At ten o'clock, then; but it will be a variation upon *A Midsummer Night's Dream*," answered the poet with imperturbable geniality, and so we parted.

VIII.

The ball—or rather the *soirée dansante*—was announced for nine o'clock, and at thirty minutes after that hour I passed through the doorway.

An oblong hall, the floor space framed in on three sides by an embankment of benches, with the orchestra on the fourth. This orchestra comprised a piano, two violins, and a trombone, all in evening dress. The assembly to whom this unexceptionable quartette discoursed was by no means so rigorously attired. There were coats and trousers of all hues, and skirts and waists of all fashions and degrees of lowness. The scene was a motley one, but all incongruities were harmonised by the universal element of uncompromising enjoyment, pervading black and grey, high and low alike, and animating the heels and heads of the spectators upon the benches as well as the actual performers upon the floor. The orchestra sawed and thrummed with hearty goodwill, and the lamps on their brackets and the windows in their frames jarred and rattled to the rhythmic fall of feet. In the pauses of the dance and clatter the roar of the surf came in through the open door upon the wings of the cool salt breeze.

The most polished people in the world dance, if not ideally, at least really. There is no languishing, no shilly-shallying, but downright roundabout, vigorous hard work. A Frenchman who has danced overnight must needs feel the effects of it on getting up in the morning; and as for his partner, who has danced for herself and for him on two separate counts, it is a wonder she ever gets up at all. Their scheme of a waltz is simple and telling, being based upon the primitive principle of planetary motion—revolution round their own axis and revolution round their orbit. This double motion is kept up with mechanical regularity until nature—or more frequently the orchestra—gives way. The orbit of one couple being the orbit of all, the general effect of a lively waltz is of a voluntary human whirlpool composed of self-centred *tête-à-tête* eddies. By centrifugal law the centre of the whirlpool remains a vacuum.

A moment's inspection of this whirlpool satisfied me that it did not contain the Countess Almara. As I was proceeding to a scrutiny of the benches the *frou-frou* of a crisp skirt along the aisle caused me to turn and find my face within eighteen inches of the clear, firm cheek of the beautiful pagan. She and her mother passed without appearing to see me; and they were followed by a military-looking personage of some fifty years of age, bald-headed, broad-shouldered, and bulky, whom I fancied I had noticed once or twice before. After seeing the ladies into their seats he returned past me up the aisle and went out.

Presently I came down, exchanged greetings with my friends, and sat in a vacant seat near the Countess Almara. Her manner was distraught and preoccupied; her smile came only from her lips, and though she looked me in the face occasionally with a certain intentness, she seemed scarcely to see me or to comprehend my words.

Her personal appearance was more diabolically handsome than ever. As usual, her colours were black and red, but, being in silk, they were exceptionally effective. There was a glimpse of warm white neck and smooth rounded arms; her hair, coiled on the top of her head, revealed the graceful bend of the nape. Her bracelet and necklace matched the earrings of the morning, and beneath the delicate film of her glove was discernible the form of the great ruby.

"Might I have the honour of this dance?"

"Not yet, not yet. In this moment I feel myself unable. Let us rather talk. I am not myself; you see it. Listen to the sea. My God! how it roars! I wish I were out on it in my canoe with the great waves."

I laughed to disguise the concern which her manifest agitation caused me.

"In that case, mademoiselle, you would be without the advantage of my society; and I doubt whether my little friend Montgomery even would venture to swim after you on such a night as this."

"Oh, he is your friend, then, this Monsieur Mont—Mont-go-merie? And I have spoken of him to you slightingly. I did not know, and I am foolish; I speak without forethought. You will forget it? Yes."

"If anyone should apologise it is I, for not having warned you beforehand of our tender relations. But be reassured; Monsieur Montgomery is a poet, and intends making you the heroine of an epic. If you are gracious to him this evening he will forgive you anything."

"It is not of him that I shall demand pardon," said the Countess with the slightest imaginable intonation of scorn. "But he is your friend, and you shall see how I will be polite." She breathed and moved nervously, her thoughts being evidently absorbed in some subject foreign enough to anything I could guess. Her eyes were restless, and she fanned her flushed cheeks in vain.

"What day is this?" she demanded suddenly.

"The fifteenth of August."

"I shall remember it always—always."

The hand that held the fan drooped, and, seemingly by accident, touched my own. The momentary glance that swept my face showed an inward trouble and appeal, and, if I read it aright, a something deeper and more passionate beyond. With the unexpectedness that was one of her characteristics she rose to her feet.

"Come, I feel better at present: let us dance; come."

In her preoccupation she had not perceived that the music had ceased some minutes, and the dancers all left the floor.

"What hast thou, then, dear one?" enquired the Countess Semaroff, looking up indolently through her eye-glasses.

Almara perceived her blunder, and I could mark a pulsation of anger pass through her body while she muttered behind her teeth, "That I am imbecile!"

"Don't you find it very warm here? Suppose we take a turn to the door," I suggested. She thanked me with a look, exchanged a glance and a word with her mother, and taking my arm, we began to move down the aisle.

Presentiments, though commonly deceptive, do nevertheless exist. Just at this time I had a presentiment that some crisis was impending. If I could secure a few minutes' privacy with the young Countess I was resolved to tell her a secret which already burned within me, though I myself had not known it until this very evening. But I felt conviction, I felt confidence, and I felt that there was no time like the present.

Events the most insignificant upset purposes the most momentous. There were two doors to the hall, and in order to reach the one at which we were aiming it was necessary to cross the floor. As we stepped on the floor at one side a couple of gentlemen appeared on the other; we met in the very centre of the hall, but it was not until I felt the

Countess press my arm that I thought to notice who either of the gentlemen was. To my ineffable annoyance I then recognised the infatuated Jeff leaning on the arm of the bulky gentleman with the moustachios, who was positively in the act of introducing him to my partner.

The Countess seemed as much taken by surprise as myself. She returned Jeff's elaborate obeisance with a grand curtsey, and then stood erect and silent, her hand still resting within my arm. The music struck up another waltz.

"May I have the honour of this dance?" enquired Jeff with his sweetest emphasis.

I waited to hear the Countess say she was engaged and to pass on with her; but after an instant's pause she slowly relinquished my arm, and uttering the conventional words, "Je veux bien," she resigned herself to the triumphant Bostonian.

Then, when it was too late, I realised that our engagement had been for the previous dance, and not for this one, if indeed there had been any definite engagement at all, and that, as I had heard Jeff's request in silence, the Countess had been forced to suppose that I desired we should part. It was one of those absurd misapprehensions which occur in ball rooms as well as in other places, but which I had never found so vexatious as in the present instance.

Meantime Jeff and she had eddied away from me; another couple, revolving up from behind, came into collision with me. I felt myself in a false position, and beat a retreat to the Countess Semaroff, beside whom I seated myself with the gloomy grin of a baffled man.

But the Countess made herself particularly gracious and entertaining, and I was perforce obliged to give her a good deal of attention, though my real interest was monopolised by the proceedings of Jeff and his partner. Jeff was undoubtedly the best dancer in the room, and the "Boston" step which he danced was not only more graceful and easy than the ordinary whirligig, but, by the device of "reversing," enabled him to perform his evolutions undisturbed in that vacant centre of the merry-go-round which has been already described. This proficiency of his contributed to the sum of my misfortunes for that evening. I am not myself a good dancer, and I therefore shrank from affording the Countess Almara an opportunity of comparing Jeff's performance with my own. I resolved not to dance at all, and to trust to luck for an opportunity of getting a few minutes' private conversation with her.

But the stars in their courses fought against me on this night of the 15th of August. Madame introduced me to the military gentleman, who turned out to be her husband, and he and I presently fell into an animated political discussion. When Jeff and his partner returned they took seats on the further side of the Countess, and it was almost impossible for me to appropriate so much as a glance from those eyes which now held so large a portion of my world's light. I could mark her forced attention to the poet's vapourings; I could divine her secret disgust, and I understood that she endured this petty martyrdom from a mistaken idea of making me reparation for her slight upon him. But I was practically incapacitated for either explanation or consolation. The intangible trammels of society and etiquette are as strong as the thread that bound Fenrir, and I finally made up my mind that I might as well go home.

"Before you go, dear Monsieur Campbell," said the Countess Sermaroff with a glance at the Count, "we will venture to entreat of you a great favour."

"I despair of expressing to you the extent of the obligation which your condescension would impose upon us," added the Count with his bland, impassive politeness.

"Am I really, then, so fortunate as to be able to contribute in any way to the pleasure of the Count and Countess? What happiness!"

"Behold how it becomes ravishing!" exclaimed the Countess. "Almara, my very dear, Monsieur Campbell will perhaps consent."

The young Countess had been sitting with her hands folded listlessly in her lap, absorbed apparently in her own thoughts, which were who knows how far removed from the confiding chit-chat which poor Jeff was babbling at her ear. She now raised her head and turned her eyes upon me. The deep sentiment contained in that look would have drawn from me, had she required it, the sacrifice even of that happiness which was to be the substance of my life. She said not a word.

"Thou must ask Monsieur; do thou ask him, Almara," continued the Countess, smiling, "since it concerns thee."

"Is it that you would paint a portrait of me?" said Almara simply.

"Merely a sketch, dear monsieur," put in the mother persuasively. "The opportunity may not again occur for us. It is not often one has the fortune to meet Monsieur Campbell."

"And there can be but one Monsieur Campbell in the world," added the Count with a bow.

"Something, at all events—a likeness merely—a work of three days," subjoined Madame earnestly.

I had had time to suppress the first impulse of delight, and to command my face to an expression of polite affability. In this so-called favour I recognised the agency of the Countess Almara. To the father and mother it meant securing a likeness of their daughter from the hand of the first portrait-painter of the day; but to that painter and to that daughter it meant hours spent in comparatively undisturbed enjoyment of one another's society—hours of silent electric sympathies, of low-spoken words that sounded little but meant much; hours that would count for years in the progress of a mutual understanding where each sought to reveal all and withhold nothing.

"It will give me great pleasure to sketch Mademoiselle," said I. "Four or five sittings will suffice. To-morrow, after the bath, we will speak further on the subject. At present I must retire. Madame the Countess, monsieur, mademoiselle, *au revoir*."

"Good night, Campbell," spoke up Jeff as I moved away. Thank you ever so much; but you must expect to find me a severe critic. *Au revoir*."

IX.

But our drama was not to reach its conclusion without a modicum of the tragic element, and this modicum was to be introduced by no less heroic a character than the little poet of Beacon Hill.

It is yet too early to point the moral of my tale; but I may remark that we are not seldom helped along the path of life, and even have our true direction pointed out to us, by ineffective obstacles. The person or circumstance obstructing us first arouses us to appreciate the advantages of a course which we might else never have thought of, or having thought of, might have lacked energy to pursue.

In this sense it may be said that I owed my introduction to the Countess Almara, and still more the colour which that acquaintance immediately assumed, to the unintentional influence of my Boston friend. His vague rhapsodies first drew my attention to a woman whom I had till then admired without appreciating her. His transcendental love-making had shown me how truly she was lovable, and his infatuated pursuit of her had stimulated me to a decision whose gravity might else have given me pause. Left to myself, I should doubtless have fallen in love, but I should have been a great deal longer about it. At the age of five-and-thirty the passions are more enduring than in youth, but do not ordinarily kindle so readily. Jeff was the match that set me afire, and he the goad that drove me at a pace which surprised myself. But I do not care to dwell upon this phase of my romance. To have been the rival of one you contemn is unpleasant, and the superior nature cannot avoid remorse in looking back upon such a contest.

However, the sittings began and fulfilled all our anticipations—Almara's and mine. The further I penetrated into her mind and heart the richer did these appear. Our speech and bearing still observed a chivalrous sort of ceremony towards one another; we did not as yet permit ourselves to be frankly lovers. But our reserve was only an instinctive device for gaining a deeper realisation of our happiness. Strong natures often illustrate this paradox: they are repelled for a time by the intensity of their attraction to each other.

Moreover, we were never left entirely to ourselves; the customs of Continental etiquette are immovable, and so was the Countess Semaroff from my *atelier* or from the little antechamber opening out of it. But the restraint was purely formal, and even added to the zest of our enjoyment by giving it the air of being something to intrigue for. It may not be creditable to human nature, but it is a fact that the most precious gifts of love are the smuggled ones.

But why did I not declare the state of affairs at once to the Count and Countess, and thus settle a question of such vital moment to me? In the first place, I could plead the lover's excuse—the desire to keep the secret of his heart for a time veiled, even from her he loved. But, besides this, I felt uncertain how the avowal would be received, not by Almara herself—I was sure of her—but by her parents. A marriage between even an eminent artist and a woman of noble birth is not an everyday occurrence; and I felt the prudence of sounding the views of the Count and Countess on this subject before putting my fate to the touch. In case of refusal, indeed, I should not hesitate to take Almara in spite of them, feeling as I did that our love would be compensation for all losses; and it may be that I contemplated the possibility of a hostile turn of the die with something like a pleasurable thrill. A man likes to prove his power in the teeth of obstacles; and, as I looked at Almara's proud and passionate beauty, I thought how grand would be the response to the summons of her heart. It would be almost a pity to forego that spectacle.

Another source of my hesitation had to do with the mystery which still continued to invest my beautiful sitter—that mystery which seemed concentrated in her ruby. What it might be I knew not; Almara quietly but resolutely foiled all my attempts to lead the conversation up to the subject. Of course I was not able, situated as we were, to make any serious attack upon her reserve; but it was evident that her secret would probably remain a secret until all concealments were finally at an end between us. All that troubled me in the matter was a fear lest it should turn out to be a hindrance to our union; but, as time went on, this apprehension faded from my mind. Almara was gradually losing those traces of depression and anxiety which she had betrayed in our first interviews. The sunnier side of her character came out; she chatted with gaiety and abandon; the shadow of pain and revolt was passing away. She still turned and twisted the heavy ring upon her finger, but now rather caressingly than impatiently. And once, I remember, as she and I and the rest, including Jeff, were sitting after sundown round a table outside the casino, laughing, gossiping, admiring the afterglow along the western horizon, and sipping iced coffee out of tall glasses, on this evening of the last day but one of the sittings I saw her lift her hand to her lips with one of those unexpected movements of hers and bestow a quick kiss upon the ruby. No one seemed to notice this strange gesture, which indeed was so managed as to have escaped any eye less keen than a lover's. What was the meaning of it? Almara's glance met mine; for a moment she seemed disconcerted, but the next moment laughed and said saucily—

"Monsieur Campbell, do you know a cure for burnt fingers?"

The next day at noon the last sitting was over. I sat alone in the *atelier*, adding the finishing touches to the portrait. At four o'clock the whole party, not forgetting Jeff, were to be present for the "private view."

No one, not even Almara, had thus far been permitted to see the picture; and as for my Boston friend, I had not suffered him even to be present at any of the sittings. Besides that the little man had a disturbing effect upon me I wished these hours to be as far as possible sacred to my sitter and myself—oases of serene communion uninvaded by Bostonian ineptitudes. On the other hand, I must plead guilty to having used Jeff (or allowed Almara to use him) outside the studio in a manner perhaps inconsistent with the strict loyalty of friendship.

No definite words had passed between her and me on the subject, but, by a tacit agreement, the unsuspecting poet was made to do duty as a blind. Almara, in short, made show of a particular and sentimental interest in him, thus closing people's eyes to the state of feeling between ourselves. She acted her part so well, and the delighted Jeff so purred and beamed under her condescension, that I sometimes felt remorse. He deserved it, no doubt; it would teach him a lesson; and yet I disliked seeing even Jeff make such a fool of himself. The fact that he would have scouted my representations, had I sought to enlighten him, did not remove my responsibility. Almara did not seem to share my scruples; women never look at these things as men do. She fascinated Jeff without mercy; they canoed, dived, and danced together. A stronger brain than his might have failed to detect any insincerity in her manner. Perhaps, indeed, she was not for the time being any less sincere with him than she was with me. The histrionic side of a woman's nature is generally strong, and is sometimes developed to such a pitch that what they enact seems as real to them as what they are in sober earnest about.

About half an hour before the time appointed for receiving my visitors there was a knock at my door, and Jeff came in. He was as neat, complacent, and pretty as a miniature on ivory. I had just put the last touch to the canvas, and was standing back in thoughtful contemplation of the work.

"Well, how do you like it?" I asked him after the first words.

"Campbell, I am almost satisfied; and that, from me, is the highest eulogy that can be bestowed upon you."

"You never told me that you were the final umpire in art criticism."

"Oh, I only pretend to be the final umpire on the subject of Almara."

"Come, Jeff, let this farce have an end," said I, laying my hand kindly on his shoulder. "From this hour you must give up your pretensions in that quarter. To use the homely phrase, the Countess Almara is meat for—well, let us say for your elders."

"Oh, my dear fellow, not at all; we suit each other perfectly. But I knew we should; you remember my telling you so? I should think you would have noticed it this week past yourself."

"What I have noticed, my poor Jeff, has caused me more than one twinge of conscience. You must try and forgive me. The fact is, the Countess Almara and I——"

The poet interrupted me with an arch laugh.

"Twinge of conscience, did you say? Twinge of jealousy you mean. My dear old Campbell, if I have anything to forgive, I forgive it with all my heart. But my object in coming here so early was to ask you to forgive me."

"Ah, I fancy I understand you, and I admit having thought you rather reprehensible on that score. Considering that your father made that provisional arrangement regarding your income in case you thwarted his wishes——"

"Yes, but that was only in case I——"

"In case you married anyone but the lady he had selected for you. Exactly. And you decided that you preferred the Countess to the income."

"Really you are mistaken, Campbell. I have no idea of risking my income. I know the value of money."

"All I was going to say was that you have not been acting quite ingenuously towards the Count and Countess Semaroff, not to speak of their daughter. They look upon you as a young gentleman able to dispose of ten thousand pounds a year. Now, if you had proposed to them for her hand without letting them know——"

"Proposed to them for it? But, my dear Campbell, that was all settled from the beginning."

"Do you mean to say they have admitted you as a suitor?"

"Why, what else could I mean?"

"And you omitted to tell them that, in case you married her, you would have but three hundred pounds income?"

"Indeed, I told them nothing of the sort. Why should I?"

"Because an honest man in your place would have told them," I replied coldly. "You are sailing under false colours. You are giving yourself out to be a millionaire when you have only the salary of a clerk."

"But isn't a clerk with ten thousand a year a pretty decent millionaire?"

"But you will have ten thousand a year only as long as you are unmarried."

"That is so far the case that, after I'm married, I shall have twenty thousand a year—my wife's income added to my own."

"Well, Montgomery, I don't care to beat about the bush with you. If you can reconcile your conduct with your own code of honesty it's no concern of mine. But as regards the Countess Almara—I am going to marry her myself."

"You? Oh, you are joking."

"I have loved her from the first; she loves me——"

"Oh! I say! ha, ha, ha! Has she told you so?"

"We have not openly declared ourselves in so many words—you are welcome to whatever consolation that may afford you—but there are other means of coming to an understanding than by words."

"Well, that is true, at any rate: it is for that I came to ask your pardon, Campbell. But really was it not in great measure your own fault?"

"Upon my word, Montgomery, I fail to catch your drift."

"Well—the long and short of it is—she's been flirting with you."

"With me? You surprise me."

"You see she didn't want you to suspect our engagement. You remember that first conversation you had with her, when she made those allusions to my height, and said she hated Americans, and so on!"

I made a sign of assent.

"When she said those absurd things, though only in fun, she did not know that I was her intended; and when, a few hours later, we found each other out, she naturally felt annoyed at having spoken of me to a stranger in such terms. You understand?"

"Pray go on," I said, taking up my palette and brushes and standing before the canvas, so that my face was turned from the speaker.

"So she begged her mother and me not to let you suspect; and the more thoroughly to lull your suspicions (and also because the girl is a born flirt, as all feminine women are) she—just—you know what—made love to you in a mild way, I suppose."

Jeff paused. "The man is mad—raving mad!" I muttered, still making pretence of retouching my background. Jeff flowed on.

"Of course a man like you, a man of the world, a great artist, and getting on in the forties—of course I knew you'd only be amused, and would take nothing seriously; and you know you scoffed at the notion of matrimony when I asked you about it. But still she can be so attractive when she chooses that latterly I began to fear you might be the least bit fetched, after all. I told Allie I'd never forgive her if it turned out so."

"Told—*who?*"

"Allie—Almara, you know. We always called each other 'Allie' and 'Jeffie' in our letters."

"Letters? You corresponded, then?"

"Regularly—for the last five years."

"I see; and—and so it's been a settled thing—but—is this your first meeting?"

"Yes, and that is what made it so amusing. It had been arranged, you know, that I was to meet them in Paris on the 20th——"

"Meet whom? You must excuse me, but you have such an unsystematic way of imparting your information. I'm a bit confused."

"To meet the Semaroffs. The Count is the Russian commissioner with whom we are in treaty about the cigarette-holders. We were to be formally betrothed in Paris, Allie and I——"

"Would you mind calling her the Countess Almara in speaking of her to me? I—I have unpleasant associations with the other name. Go on."

"The point is that, happening to stop here on my way, I was a good deal taken with the 'beautiful pagan,' without of course knowing who she was; and I might have made myself very unhappy about her if it hadn't been for you."

"Eh?"

"Yes, a fact. The first I knew of my pagan maid being one and the same with Allie—Countess, I mean—was your mentioning her name to me that first day at breakfast. Don't you remember my remarking how strangely things came out? It was accident our both happening to be here, but it was you who made us known to each other. Wasn't it curious?"

"Very curious, very amusing, the whole thing—ha, ha! And so that story about the three hundred a year was—part of your poem, I suppose?"

"Not at all. But the Countess Almara being my papa's selection, I risked nothing in marrying her. I tried to explain it to you at the time, but you pitched into me so, and insisted upon my leaving her and marrying somebody else, that at last, just for the fun of the thing, I allowed you to believe that I was really as great a fool as you took me for."

Hereupon ensued a pause of some minutes. Jeff, I believe, lit a cigarette. What I did I have no recollection; but I must have remained standing before the easel. At length I felt that Jeff was standing behind me.

"It couldn't be better, really," he said. "They'll like it so much at home."

"Beg pardon?"

"It's to go to Boston, you know, to give papa and mamma an idea of how their daughter-in-law looks. Ah! you've put in the ring, too. I'm glad of that. Handsome ruby, isn't it?"

"An antique. Such rings are not made nowadays."

"Except by Tiffany; he manufactures them after the antique models. I got this at his store in New York six months ago, and paid fifteen hundred dollars for it. By the way, my dear Campbell, how much will this sketch be?"

"Hum, let me see. How long have I been over it?"

"Just six days."

"Well, then, I'll let it go for six thousand pounds. I don't care to make money out of friends."

The smoke of Jeff's cigarette got into his windpipe; and while he was coughing the door opened, and the two countesses, followed by the Count, came in.

After the portrait had been criticised and the compliments exchanged I drew near to Almara, who was standing apart from the others, near the easel.

"Countess, permit my congratulations."

There was a slight, involuntary quivering of the eyebrows and of the corner of her mouth, and she kept her eyes upon the portrait as she said in a low tone—

"You know it, then?"

"Your future husband has just told me."

She shifted her position a little, and began to blush slowly.

"I have included a portrait of the ruby, you observe," I went on. "Are you satisfied with it?"

"Very well—excellent," she said mechanically.

"I was not sure whether you might prefer to have it omitted. That evening on the beach—you remember—you seemed to wish it out of the way. I will conjure it away even now, if you say the word," and I took up the palette and brushes.

There was a pause: she understood me; the colour gradually left her face, which she still kept averted. At length, with a perceptible effort, she said—

"It had better remain."

"I think so too," I said, laying down the palette. The company was now prepared to depart.

"Before you go, Countess, I wish—merely out of curiosity—that you would tell me one thing."

"Well, monsieur?"

"Are you an angel or a devil?"

Then at last she raised her face, pale as marble, and her black eyes met mine in a quiet, strange look. She shrugged her shoulders slightly.

"I know not—well, I am a woman. Adieu. You will not forget me." And there, at all events, she spoke no more than truth.

The modest price which I had put upon my portrait appeared to overtax the resources of Beacon Street, and the work remained upon my hands. That night Madame Enault's chimney caught fire—an occurrence unprecedented in the middle of August. I explained that I had burnt up some rubbish, which had proved to be remarkably inflammable, and made the fullest apologies; but the good lady's nerves did not recover their tone until after the exhibition of tincture of argentum—a sound dose. This, so far as I can recollect, was the last noticeable episode of my summer holiday.

The Story of the Registers.

NEARLY everyone knows that a general system for registering births, marriages, and deaths is in force in England. Nearly everyone would hold that the "hatches, matches, and despatches" of a people ought to be thus comprehensively recorded. But familiar usages of seldom-questioned expediency often escape examination. Few of our readers, perhaps, have enquired much into the history and uses of registration in this country. That some interest, nevertheless, belongs to these subjects we hope to show in the following pages.

In mediæval times entries of marriages and burials were sometimes made in missals and other devotional books; but the germ of the modern register is to be found in the monastic records of those days. Among the labours of the *scriptorium*—a retreat existing in most religious houses of the later middle ages—was that of writing various chronicles of public and private transactions. One of the historical accounts so kept up was a *register*, or recital of the numbers, income, and property of the monastery, with the genealogies of its patrons, and the names of those baptised and buried within its precincts. A second was the *obituary*, in which were entered the deaths of kings, archbishops, bishops, abbots, priests, monks, benefactors of the establishment, and others.*

At the suppression of the English monasteries under Henry VIII., Lord Cromwell, the achiever of this great revolution, bethought him to perpetuate and make general what the monks had but partially carried out. Inspired, perhaps, by the example of Cardinal Ximenes in Spain, he formed the plan of establishing parochial registration in England.

Before it came into force his scheme aroused popular disapproval through a misconception, the rising of 1536 in Yorkshire and Lincolnshire being partly caused by the expected order for registration. "A report of Cromwell's intention," says Mr. Froude, "had gone abroad, and, mingling with the irritating enquiries of the Subsidy Commissioners, gave rise to a rumour that a fine was to be paid to the Crown on every wedding, funeral, or christening."† Somewhat later, a like impression, producing like discontent, was created in Devon and Cornwall. "That somme charges more than hath byn in tymys past schall grow to theym by this occacyon off regesstrynge of thes thyngges," was the fear of the west country folk as expressed in a letter from Sir Piers Edgecombe to Lord Cromwell. The dreaded order was not actually issued until September, 1538, and when issued, it was found to contain no provision for augmenting the royal revenue.

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* See *The History of Parish Registers in England*, by John Southerden Burn, p. 10.

† Froude's *History*, iii. p. 99.

It was, on the contrary, an injunction imposing but slight burdens of any kind, and those on the clergy alone. It directed each vicar and curate to keep a register, and to write therein the day and year of every christening, marriage, or burial taking place in his parish, with the names of all so christened, married, or interred. It ordered that the register should be kept in a chest, and removed therefrom for use only in the presence of a churchwarden. It enforced these rules by a penalty of three and fourpence, which sum was to be forfeited by the parson for each offence, and applied to church repairs.

Orders to much the same effect were promulgated during the two next reigns. But not till the time of Elizabeth was the subject effectually taken in hand. Then, after the issue of new injunctions, and the introduction and abandonment of more than one registration bill in the House of Commons, a Constitution which noticed the great usefulness of parish registers, and laid down minute rules for their making and keeping, was passed by the archbishop, bishops, and clergy of the province of Canterbury, and approved by the Queen under the Great Seal. This took place in 1597.

The registration now ordered was to embrace past as well as future, reaching back to the time at which the first directions on the subject had been issued. Such registers as were copied from previous records under the injunction were signed on each page by the vicar or curate and churchwardens in office at the time of transcription.

Entries in early church registers—and, as we shall see, the remark often applies to those in far later records also—were extremely meagre. A name or a pair of names, a date, perhaps a place—this was all the information given. Each entry was much abbreviated; each was without separate attestation. "Rich^{d} Nevell bap. 29 July. 1563."—"Thomas Hudson & Elizab. Ward mar. 14 Mar. 1596."—"Joan Reed of Netherfold bur. 12 Sep. 1564;"—such were the normal insertions. Where, indeed, persons of distinction were concerned, they were sometimes honoured with fuller mention. The bulk of registration, however, was exactly as we describe.

But, besides the registers kept under ecclesiastical order, others—voluntarily prepared—had already begun to exist. The Protestants who had taken refuge in England so early as the reign of Henry VI. (which sovereign had granted them a charter for the exercise of their religion) had, on forming themselves later into organised bodies, commenced registers of their own for their own purposes. Many of these are now in Government keeping. The most ancient, a volume from the Walloon church of St. Julien, in Southampton, deserves special description. Dating from 1567, it contains carefully written entries of baptisms, marriages, and deaths, with lists of those who were present at the monthly celebrations of the *Sainte Cène*; and these are well worthy of examination. But it also embraces minutes of *jeusnes* and *actions de* *grâces*, which are otherwise interesting; the solemnities having been mostly held on account of public events, as the massacre of Paris, or, "*la dissipation estrange de la flotte d'Espagne.*" It is entertaining to follow the history of the times as set forth in these memoranda. The following quotation (extracted literally) will show that the piety of the refugees was not unmixed with a superstitious belief in portents :—

"*Le 6 d'auril* 1581 *Le Jeusne fut Celebré po^r prier dieu No^s Garder cotre Les effects des signes de son ire dequoy auons esté menaché en la Commette quy s'est commencee a Monstrer le* 8 *d'octobre et a duré jusques au* 12 *decebre puis aussy cotre de grands etrangemens et Reuolutions Aparentes es* (sic) *pais de flandres & p dela: afin que de sa Grace Il luy plaust tout tourner a bien pr Le profit de son Eglise.*"

The other congregations of Walloons, formed towards the close of the sixteenth century in Norwich, Canterbury, and elsewhere, were all attentive to registration; and their records remain as proofs of the pains bestowed upon the matter in early days by those who were not legally bound to give heed to it.

In the first year of James I. (1603), a canon to much the same effect as that passed under Elizabeth was ratified by the King; its predecessor having, it would seem, been after all imperfectly observed. Many parish registers now existing were made up in pursuance of its provisions. Both ordinances enjoined the yearly transmission to diocesan registrars of *attested copies* of the registers; and this injunction—never fully obeyed—embodied an important principle, which it has been found necessary to carry out in modern civil registration.

During the civil wars all registration was much neglected; and a growing opinion against the need or lawfulness of infant baptism joined with other causes to make the records of *christenings* at this time particularly imperfect. *Lay* registration was afterwards for a while established. In 1653, the Parliament passed an Act directing that a civil registrar should be chosen for every parish. This officer was elected by the inhabitants, and on his election was approved and sworn in by a justice of the peace. As soon as he had been appointed, the filled church registers were handed over to him for safe custody; and it was his duty to register *births*, marriages, and burials. He was required to make his entries in volumes "of good vellum or parchment," to be furnished for the purpose. He seems often to have used the old books which he found unfilled, his appointment having first been notified therein. Of marriages he was empowered to receive notices; and he was bound to publish the particulars either "in the public meeting-place commonly called the church or chapel," after "morning exercise" on three separate "Lord's days," or else "in the market-place next to the said church or chapel," on three market days between the hours of twelve and two. For every entry of birth or death he might receive fourpence, and for each marriage entry twelvepence. The ordinance for the appointment of these lay registrars was not observed in all parishes; while occasionally the incumbents continued to register independently of them. Sometimes the parish clerk was appointed registrar.

Subsequent writers in the registers now and then denounce the interlopers severely. In a book at Elwick, Durham, lay registration and other contemporary evils are thus forcibly traced to their source :—

"Mem. that maryinge by justices, election of registers by the parishioners, and the use of ruling elders, first came into fashion in the times of rebellion under that monster of nature & bloudy tyrant Oliver Cromwell."*

The entries made under the ordinance of the Parliament were not verified by *signatures*, except such as related to marriages, to which the subscription of the justice before whom the marriage took place was required.

At the Restoration, the clergy again took the existing registers into their charge, and again became the national registrars. During the reign of Charles II., a singular Act was passed which has left a conspicuous mark on the parish records. It was meant to "lessen the importation of linen from beyond the seas, and to encourage the woollen manufacture of this kingdom;" and with these objects it provided that the dead should be buried in woollen only. Compliance with its requirements was often noted in the registers; occasionally in every burial-entry individually, as at West Bradenham, in Norfolk, where each insertion contains the words: "Buried in woollen and nothing but woollen as appeared by affidavit." This affidavit the statute required to be made by the friends of the deceased, and to be brought to the officiating clergyman. A prejudice still existing among the lower classes in favour of shrouds made of flannel, is no doubt an outgrowth from the now obsolete compulsory usage of two hundred years ago. The Act allowed exemption from its provisions when death had resulted from "plague."

Though parochial registers are mostly silent as to fatal disorders, they often bear witness of no indistinct kind as to the ravages of the epidemics which were known by the name just stated. The records of Great Yarmouth yield an example, giving a valuable history of the visitation of 1664, 1665, and 1666, which affected the mortality of the town from November 17 in the first-named to October 1 of the last-named year. When the malady reached its climax, indeed, two weeks were passed over without any entry. But apart from the season of this significant silence, the record of numbers sacrificed is complete. In one week, out of 138 persons who died from all causes, 116 were victims of 'plague." Between the dates above mentioned, some 1,594 individuals probably succumbed to the epidemic in Great Yarmouth. The blanks are likely to have arisen from the sudden death of those who registered. A book belonging to the parish of St. Nicholas, Bristol, shows definitely how registration was sometimes thus interrupted during the progress of calamities such as we refer to. A memorandum which it contains relating to "plague," after stating some particulars of the visitation, adds: "In which time John Truman the clarke & Phillip Slade the sexton died, by meanes whereof nott only they both, but many others are left outt of this Register."

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* Quoted in *Chronicon Mirabile*, or Extracts from Parish Registers. London: J. B. Nichols and Son. 1841.

Under William III., registration was for the first time turned to account as a means of raising revenue. The earliest statute having this object was called "An Act for granting to his Majesty certain rates and duties upon marriages, births, and burials, and upon bachelors and widowers, for the term of five years, for carrying on the war against France with vigour." The duty on marriage under this Act ranged from 2*s.* 6*d.* to 50*l.*, in proportion to the rank of the bridegroom; that for births from 2*s.* to 30*l.*; and that for burials from 4*s.* to more than 50*l.* The statute also exacted from bachelors and widowers, above the age of twenty-five, a yearly sum varying from 1*s.* to 12*l.* 10*s.* It imposed a penalty of 100*l.* on those of the clergy who should neglect registration, and empowered the tax-collectors to examine the registers without fee. As might have been expected, births were now concealed that the cost of registration might be escaped. This led to a farther enactment, which required parents, under penalty, to give notice of births to the clergy within five days of their occurrence.

A glance at the *non-parochial* registration of the seventeenth century now becomes necessary. The Protestant refugees, whose numbers had been much increased after the massacre of Paris in 1572, became more numerous still on the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685. The artisans, who formed a large proportion of their body, mostly settled in Spitalfields, where they wove silk and built churches. By all the congregations—and there were at one time at least ten in the neighbourhood—pains were bestowed on registration. Government has acquired the books belonging to eight of the number. These records, composed for the most part of carefully written entries, are wanting in specially distinctive features. A far more important contribution to the class of records we are considering is found in the registers of the Society of Friends. No registers exist which have been prepared with more care than these. Above 1,600 volumes of them are now national property; and they form, probably, a nearly perfect genealogical history of the body to which they relate. They include dates reaching back to the beginning of the century with which we are concerned, a period anterior by nearly fifty years to that of the actual formation of the Society. This shows, of course, that middle-aged recruits to the faith of George Fox, as well as those born within the pale of established Quakerdom, were enrolled in these memorials of Quaker rise and progress.

A method of registering at first adopted by the Friends was to enter on a single page the entire history of a family. In one column were inserted the births and marriage of the parents; in another the births of the children; in a third the burials of all. But this plan, at once complicated and imperfect, was not much or long followed. Births, marriages, and burials were mostly registered apart; and entries were verified by the signatures of persons immediately concerned in the occurrences recorded. When a birth was the fact to be dealt with, the particulars were written out in duplicate on parchment sheets, each of which was signed by two witnesses of the event. One of these sheets, being fixed into a book, formed the permanent register; the other was given to the parents. In the case of a burial, the course followed was much the same. Of marriages, entries were for a time more elaborate. The page of the register was headed with a statement of the birth and parentage of bride and bridegroom. Then followed a wordy declaration as to the due publication of the marriage and the absence of objection thereto, with an acknowledgment of the contract entered into. To so much the bride and bridegroom subscribed. A long affirmation of the fact of union was added for the signature of witnesses, who sometimes numbered as many as a hundred and twenty. Later, the form used for marriage-entries became more simple. Notwithstanding some over-preciseness, the Quaker registration was in many respects worthy of imitation; and especially in that it required the authentication of entries by the signatures of those who had personally witnessed the facts entered. The Independents registered births and baptisms, and in some cases deaths and burials. The earliest of their records which we have seen begins in 1644. The entries of births and baptisms were made by the minister who officiated at the baptism, and were usually attested by his signature. The Baptists have, for the most part, been bad registrars, although there are exceptions to this rule. The registers of the Pithay and Broadmead chapels at Bristol represent the more careful registration-work of the last-named body.

The close of the seventeenth century and the first half of the eighteenth introduce us to those scapegrace priests and whimsical registrars the Fleet parsons. With their singular history, however, and with the strange nuptial records which they produced, we have already dealt in this Magazine; and we will not now enlarge on either. It will answer our present purpose to say that Lord Hardwicke's famous Act, which was aimed at the irregular weddings of the Fleet and Mayfair, provided too—as far as marriages were concerned—for a greatly improved method of registration. The Act came into force in 1754. A specimen or two of church marriage-entries, as made before that date, will show how imperfect they had been. In Marylebone we find insertions thus:—"*Marriages.*—August 9th John Johnson & Elizabeth Williams both of this par. p bans" (the year is written at intervals when a new one is entered upon). At Eltham, Kent, we read to this effect:—"*Nuptiæ*—Johannes Davies de Lewisham et Maria Merrett hujus parochiæ conjugio vinciuntur 6 July." These are, we believe, fair samples o the registers in general. The new Act prescribed a form providing f fuller statement, and required that to each entry should be affixed t signatures of the officiating clergyman, of the couple married, and of t witnesses to the espousals. Printed register-books, prepared to receive the specified particulars, now came into use.

A few years before the passing of Lord Hardwicke's Act, a general registry for the chief Nonconformist bodies had been established in London. About a century earlier, Dr. Daniel Williams, a Presbyterian, had founded, in Redcross Street, Cripplegate, a library for Dissenting ministers; and here, in 1742, when the founder had long been dead, a Registry of Births had been begun. Those who resorted to it were mostly Dissenters of the better class. The entries were made from parchment certificates, signed at first by persons present at the births, and later by both parents of the children registered also. The registry was carried on till 1837; and during the ninety-five years of its existence about 50,000 births were entered in its records. These consist of eleven bulky folios, the testimony of which is unimpeachable.

The Wesleyans began to register about 1765. Their society is some twenty years older than are their registers; for its members did not immediately separate from the Church; and in the interval they were, of course, baptised and buried, and their baptisms and burials registered according to Church custom. As to marriages, it must be noted that, save those of Jews and Quakers, *none* could take place except in church, and none consequently were registered except by the Church clergy, from the passing of Lord Hardwicke's Act to 1837. The Wesleyans recorded births, baptisms, and burials on a fairly satisfactory plan. In 1818 they started a metropolitan registry. The office was in Paternoster Row, where for eighteen years the births and baptisms of youthful Wesleyans (10,291 in number) were recorded. The authority for the entries was similar to that required at Dr. Williams's Library.

The eighteenth century saw also the beginning of a register of burials at Bunhill Fields Burial-ground, in the City Road, London, which place had, however, been used for interments more than fifty years before regular records were kept there. This ground was for a long while the chief burial-place of London Dissenters. The registers were imperfectly made out for the first seventy-five years, being little more than memoranda of burial fees received; but subsequently they improved.

We left the Church clergy newly subjected to the provisions of Lord Hardwicke's Act. Before the passing of that measure, a first move had been made towards the legislation which was destined ultimately to relieve them from their duties as sole legal registrars. A Bill had been introduced into Parliament for providing a *general registry of births, marriages, and deaths*. But though it had passed the Commons, the Lords had defeated it. Apart, therefore, from the voluntary registration which, as we have seen, went on amongst Dissenters, the parish parson and his deputy the parish clerk continued for the present to do the registration work of the country.

By 23 George III. c. 67, a stamp duty of 3*d*. was imposed on every entry of burial, marriage, birth or christening in the register of every parish precinct or place in Great Britain; and by 25 George III. c. 75 it was levied on the registers of Dissenters as well as on those of the Church. It was unpopular, and remained in force but a few years. After this there was no more legislation on the subject of registers till 1812, when the Act known as Sir George Rose's Act was passed. The measure, which became law on January 1, 1813, is that under which Church records of baptisms and burials are still kept. As to *marriage* registers, later legislation has superseded its provisions.*

The paucity of particulars and lack of authentication by signatures, which we have before noticed as characterising parochial registers in general, had continued up to this time to mark those of baptism and burial; the improvement secured in these respects having affected marriage entries only. Before 1813, baptismal registers had often been no fuller than this:—"1808. Feb. 10. Edward Smith, of Edward and Mary;" although sometimes the date of birth had been added. Burial entries had frequently been shorter still. The advance now made was but slight. The different registers were to be kept in separate books, and a columnar form was prescribed for entries of both kinds. It seems also to have been intended that the *signature* of the clergyman officiating at the ceremony recorded should appear in each entry. But the clergy often failed to sign, while there was no provision for the authentication of entries by other signatures. The statute contained a useful requirement, under which *yearly copies* of the registers were to be made, verified, and signed by the clergy, attested by churchwardens, and sent to diocesan registrars; this provision, however, remained largely inoperative in all the dioceses. The Act, in short, was both imperfectly conceived and ineffectual in achieving what it aimed at. The recent great growth of Dissent, too, gave a touch of anachronism to legislation recognising none but Church registers. It was now felt that the matter of registration must be dealt with on an improved and extended plan; and the need for a change was more and more widely owned and urged, as, by the increase of wealth and the unfolding of statistical science, the occasions for consulting the registers were multiplied, and the possibilities of their utilisation enlarged.

The parish register, which we are now about to close that we may examine records framed upon a more comprehensive plan, is often to the attentive reader a book of real interest. Its more regular contents are frequently interspersed with curious and miscellaneous memoranda. Notices of royal visits and of royal hunts; of touchings for king's evil; of thanksgivings for British victories, and fasts on account of British defeats; of executions; of excommunications and public penances; of licences to eat flesh in Lent, and to marry during prohibited seasons—as in Advent or on Rogation days; of epidemics; of monstrous births, unusual deaths, and extraordinary ages; of crops and prices, earthquakes and eclipses, floods and storms; of the foundation, repair, and adornment of churches;—these and many other diverse entries are to be found among the insertions of baptisms, marriages, and burials; and, as might be expected, they mostly appear in the registers of retired country parishes, where there was most time to make such memoranda. If observations on some of these matters were systematically made by the parochial clergy in general, the information amassed could hardly fail to prove as valuable as it would certainly be entertaining.

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* See Introduction to *The Acts Relating to the Registration of Births, Dea Marriages.* By J. T. Hammick, Esq., Barrister-at-Law, &c. Shaw & Sons

But the inditers of the often quaint and amusing notes described were not usually accurate registrars or careful custodians of their registers. Often, if not commonly, entries of baptism, marriage, or burial were not made when the occurrences which they notified took place, but were copied afterwards by parson or clerk from jottings set down by the latter. These jottings, being sometimes written as much with reference to fees as to registration, were perhaps not made at all if the dues were paid at the time they were incurred. It might therefore happen that the person registering was obliged to trust wholly to memory or hearsay for the particulars to be recorded; and naturally enough, in some cases, the particulars never found their way into the register-book at all.* Entries too, not being verified by those who had personal knowledge of the facts entered, frequently contained the gravest errors, which perhaps remained undetected till time gave a look of truth to their falsity.

The volumes thus loosely filled were often carelessly kept. They were removed from the chests provided for their custody; they were taken to the clerk's house; they were sometimes lent about the parish to persons of literary, antiquarian, or perhaps merely inquisitive bent. Hence they were liable to injury by accidents, often fell into bad repair, and were accessible to those disposed to make wanton or fraudulent abstractions from their pages. The clerk, moreover, being in some cases too ignorant to understand their value as records, applied their leaves to purposes whose utility he could better comprehend. When a grocer, he has been known to use their sheets for wrapping up his butter; when a tailor, to cut them into slips for measures; or, his daughters being lace-makers, he has been found allowing the young people to employ the vellum pages for patterns. Nor did those who better knew the worth of the registers always treat them with greater respect. One sportsman-parson was accustomed to use the parchment of the old parish records for address-labels in despatching his pheasants. A curate's thrifty wife found in the storied scrolls which she severed from the parochial register books a fitting foundation for kettle-holders. Scarcely less heinous was the sin of a clergyman, of whom a well-authenticated tale is told, that, on being applied to from the Heralds' College for extracts from his registers, he cut out and forwarded by post the *original entries themselves*, naïvely admitting that he could make nothing of them.†

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* *Chronicon Mirabile*, before referred to, quotes thus from a register at Hexham —"1652. No more abt. marriage to be found for this year, *save a note of those whom Mr. Lister had marryed, who had not paid y^e clerk his fees.*

† The foregoing examples are some of them mentioned in Burn's History; the rest

These examples were fairly enough brought forward by the advocates of an improved registration system; and the arguments in favour of an entire change were, on the whole, deemed conclusive by a body possessed of ample means for forming a just judgment.

In 1833, a Select Committee of the House of Commons was appointed to inquire into and report on the state of parish registers and the laws relating to them, and on a general system for registering births, deaths, and marriages in England and Wales. The evidence given before this Committee came from many different sources. The witnesses examined consisted of well-known divines, lawyers, and physicians; of antiquarians and statisticians; of leading Catholics and Nonconformists; of parish clerks and other registering officers; and of persons familiar with foreign registration systems. The testimony given was, in the main, concurrent. It plainly showed the many and important faults of the parish registers as hitherto kept, the excellence of the plans by which registration was carried out in several European countries, and the urgent need existing for improvement here. The Committee recommended that a national system of civil registration should be established.

But the instrumentality to be used for executing the scheme was not easy to choose. Hence more than one attempt to legislate on the recommendations of the Committee fell through. At length, in 1836, Lord John Russell, then Home Secretary, introduced into the House of Commons a Bill for Registering Births, Deaths, and Marriages in England, which passed into law, and came into operation on July 1, 1837.

Amongst the chief aims of the statute were these:—To make registration, as far as possible, a matter of civil business, giving its duties chiefly to men who should be bound to obey the regulations of a civil chief empowered to remove them if necessary; to require all registers to be shaped on prescribed models, and to be written according to the information, and verified by the signatures of those personally concerned in the events registered; to secure also the safe custody of original registers in local register offices, and the preparation of authenticated copies of those registers to be made accessible for reference in a London office. The Act was one of twins, the accompanying measure being concerned mainly with important modifications of the marriage laws. This last-named statute authorised, for the first time, marriages in chapels and in register offices, requiring the attendance of a civil registrar at all such unions. The new system applied to England and Wales only.

Immediately after the passing of these Acts, a Commission was appointed to inquire into the state, custody, and authenticity of registers *other than parochial* already existing. In compliance with the invitation of the commissioners, about 7,000 registers—representing 3,630 religious congregations—were sent for their scrutiny, from all parts of England. Such of these registers as were found by them to be trustworthy were, by leave of the owners, retained in Government k

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were given in evidence before the Committee of the House of Common

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and, by Act of Parliament, extracts therefrom, issued under the Registrar-General's seal, were made evidence, without further proof of the entries. Other documents, of like kind, have since been placed on the same footing. The whole number—nearly 9,000 registers—are in the custody of the Registrar-General; and each of the non-parochial records herein referred to forms part of the collection. All parish registers kept before 1837 remained—and still remain—with the clergy; and no Jewish and but few Roman Catholic registers were amongst those placed in the hands of Government.

The law as to future registration now stood thus:—The provisions of Sir George Rose's Act under which *baptisms* and *burials* were to be recorded by the clergy, remained in force; but *births* and *deaths* were to be civilly registered. Of Church marriages the clergy were still to be the registrars on special conditions: the civil authority as well as the Church was to acquire an original entry of each such marriage, and church weddings were accordingly to be registered and signed *in duplicate*. To the Jews and Quakers also, who possessed ancient marriage privileges of their own, was granted on the same terms the right to register the marriages of their adherents. All other marriages, whether solemnised in chapels, or celebrated in a wholly civil manner at register offices, were to be recorded by a civil registrar. Of each entry of birth and death, and of every entry of marriage by whomsoever made, a certified copy was to be sent quarterly to the Chief Register Office in London, where indexes of these returns were to be prepared; while every original register book filled by a civil officer, and one volume of each completed pair of duplicate registers kept by the clergy and by the registrars of the other two bodies above-named, was to be deposited in a local register office, there to be similarly made available for public reference.

The law of registration so settled has not since been disturbed in respect of these main features. It has, nevertheless, been amended in some important particulars. Birth registration has lately been rendered compulsory, which under the statute of 1836 it was not. Statutory provision has also been made for registering causes of death on competent medical testimony; and upon several other points improvement has been brought about. Meanwhile, at the Metropolitan Register Office the certified copies which embody the total registration results secured, have been accumulating from quarter to quarter in fire-proof vaults prepared to receive them; and indexes for furthering access to every separate entry have been promptly made ready for the public on the same central spot. There, too, the statistical information latent in the records so stored up and indexed has been unceasingly deduced for periodical publication.

It may be said that registers should be framed with two main objects in view:—To furnish plain evidence for the identification and proof of individual facts, and to yield a reliable basis for statistical inquiry. Let us glance at the entries made under the present system, that we may see how these ends are answered by their contents.

It may be asked at the outset, with what degree of accuracy does general registration enable the State to *count the numbers* born, married, and deceased? As to marriages and deaths, the figures furnished may be considered perfect. Of births, it is likely that some escape enumeration; although under the compulsory enactment now in force respecting birth registration, the proportion thus left uncounted is certainly very small.

Birth entries begin with the time and place of nativity. The child's Christian name is usually inserted in the next column; but if baptism or naming have not taken place before registration, it may be omitted here and afterwards added to the entry elsewhere. The *sex*, which occupies the succeeding space, needs the explicit statement it receives; for there may be no name to indicate it, or the name may give concerning it a wrong impression. For example, *Hannah* and *Lucy*, *Jane*, *Ann* and *Amy* are all family surnames, and either may be used in that sense as the sole Christian name of a *boy*. Such applications are not unknown. The name and surname of the child's father follow the statement of its sex; those of its mother come next, and to them her maiden surname is added. The father's rank or profession takes its place in the succeeding column; after which appear the signature, description, and address of the informant (usually one of the parents), the date of registration, and the signature of the registrar. If the child have been born away from its father's home, that home is nevertheless given as the informant's address, if a parent it be who informs. Lastly appears the child's name if given or altered after the original registration; but the space for this insertion is seldom used.

The foregoing particulars are usually amply sufficient to secure identification; and only where the commonest names are concerned can exceptions arise. As the births of about 400 John Joneses who receive no second Christian name are registered yearly in England and Wales, a searcher in the general index in London for the birth of a particular John Jones can hardly expect to find it easy in all cases to distinguish from others the entry he needs. Much difficulty, too, would attend the effort to record further details. When civil registration began in Scotland, an attempt was made to elicit from birth and death informants, and from persons married, many particulars for registration beyond those asked from them in England. At the end of a year, however, the questions put in reference to each class of event were obliged to be largely reduced in number. In dealing with the masses, to multiply inquiries about remote facts is often to do little more than multiply the probabilities that answers will be wanting or unsatisfactory. Registration had better fire at easy game and kill, than aim at shyer feather and only half fill the bag. *Una avis in dextrâ melior quam quatuor extra*—to quote from those early registrars the monks a line in which they have embodied an applicable proverb.

The power to enforce such useful legislation as that of the Vaccination, Elementary Education, and Factory Acts, could not exist apart from general birth-registration; and from the birth-registers pre we describe, the Registrar-General is enabled to deduce much statistical information—published in his periodical reports—which throws light on various social questions of great importance. The numbers and distribution of illegitimate births are among the facts so disclosed.

Every marriage is registered when it happens, and the date opens the marriage entry. The names and surnames of the couple married occupy its next column. Then follow their ages. The statistics of ages in reference to marriage are important; and a precise statement of the years of persons wedded is much desired in all cases. But some bridegrooms —and many brides—object or are unable to say how old they are; while the clergy, it appears, often omit to make exact inquiry on the point. The registers, however, improve in this respect. In 1858 the percentage of entries in which the precise ages of both parties married were not given approached 41; in 1877, it had come down to less than 22. The description "of full age" or "minor" is always used when the exact age is not ascertained We may mention that from the year 1848 there was a growing tendency towards early marriage until 1874, after which year the proportional numbers of persons married under age began to decline. In 1877, out of 194,352 couples married, 15,759 bridegrooms and 42,795 brides—or about a twelfth of the former and more than a fifth of the latter—were under age. The *condition* (i.e. whether that of bachelorhood, spinsterhood, or otherwise) follows the age in a marriage entry. The statistical tables framed from the registers on ages and conditions combined are of great interest. The next succeeding space in the register book belongs to rank or profession; the next to residence; and the two last columns are filled with the names and occupations of the fathers of the couple. Every marriage entry must of course be signed by the persons married. We will pause a moment to notice the valuable information as to the progress of elementary education which is gained by a regular enumeration of the *signatures by mark* affixed to these registers. It is satisfactory to learn that the marksmen and markswomen are diminishing, though slowly. Of 388,704 persons married in 1877, 70,237 signed the register by mark; 29,707 of the number being men, and 40,530 being women. These figures look formidable, but they represent amelioration. Some quarter of a century earlier the proportion of those who did not write their names to those married was about double that above expressed. On the part of the women improvement has been more rapid than on that of the men, though, as the numbers quoted show, the male sex is still much the better educated of the two. Ten years hence, when the Elementary Education Acts now in force begin to affect these records, the diminution in the number of marks will doubtless be great and steady. The registration mark is still the ancient *signum crucis*, though probably few who affix it to entries know what it once meant. Perhaps, nearly as few of those who according to modern usage speak of "signing" their names, consider that the expression can in strictness be applied *only to the marksmen*, since it implies the substitution of a sign or mark for subscription itself.

The particulars recorded concerning a death are —The date and place of decease, and the name and surname, the sex, age, rank or profession, and cause of death of the deceased. The entry ends with the signature, description, and residence of the informant, the date of registration, and the signature of the registrar.

We have seen that as to fatal diseases parish registers were mostly silent. It is one of the main aims of modern registration to secure authentic information on the point which had been thus previously neglected. Not that efforts in the same direction had before been wholly wanting. The Worshipful Company of Parish Clerks had, since 1629, published periodical reports concerning diseases and casualties in the City of London and within the Bills of Mortality; their reports having been based on the investigations of women called searchers, whom they employed to inquire into fatal maladies. But the causes of death now entered in the registers stand on a surer footing. Every registered medical practitioner who has attended a deceased person during his last illness is bound by law to sign a certificate stating to the best of his belief the cause of that person's death. At registration this certificate is handed to the registrar, who is required to copy its statements as to the mortal disease or diseases *verbatim* into the register book. A coroner's certificate of the finding of the jury, also, is so delivered, and so dealt with, in every inquest case. Thus, authoritative, and therefore, we may expect, trustworthy testimony is gained and recorded with respect to the causes of most deaths happening in England and Wales. The proportion uncertified to the total number of deaths registered is but slightly over 5 per cent. The uncertified cases are of two classes—those cases in which the deceased was attended by an unregistered practitioner, and those in which there was no medical attendant at all. The former class is the larger; but in remoter country districts many deaths happen without recourse being had to personal medical aid.

The evidence yielded by the registers as to causes of mortality is constantly turned to practical account. Officers of health are periodically furnished by the registrars with particulars of all deaths recorded; and this information materially aids in directing their salutary labours. By publishing his weekly and quarterly Returns, the Registrar-General furthers the same useful ends in a more important degree; speedily making public in the one case causes of death in large towns, and in the other those throughout the entire country; and so pointing out, with a distinctness which amounts to an authoritative call for action, those spots where the sanitary conditions are faulty.* But it is in the Registrar-General's Annual Reports that the cause-of-death column is most closely cross-examined, and that the entire facts told by registration respecting the national mortality are most fully considered in their connection with external circumstances and with each other. The information given in e volumes as to the rates of mortality among males and females; numbers of deaths from various causes of those of each sex at rent ages; the proportion of infant mortality in the chief centres population; the death-rate in certain places in conjunction with ndant meteorological conditions; the death-rates of foreign countries; comparative fatality of different diseases; the numbers of deaths ublic institutions; the numbers and descriptions of violent deaths different ages; the numbers of deaths from privation, &c.—is of high value as can be fully appreciated only on careful examion. Yet even this cursory mention will serve in some degree ow its far-reaching usefulness.

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* Outbreaks of epidemic disease are *immediately* reported by the Registrar-General to the Medical Department of the Local Government Board, with a view to the adoption of prompt measures for the protection of the public health.

The statistical issues of registration are undoubtedly those to which wider ultimate importance attaches. They also possess the higher ction for study; and some veins of interesting though subordinate stical inquiry underlie the registration domain which have yet been ced but little, e.g. such as concern personal and family nomenclature. viewed simply as evidence of the facts which they record, the registers f most immediate and personal interest, and also of increasing useful- Almost every year furnishes some cause created by fresh legislation, herwise, for a new resort to their testimony in this sense. Through the inheritor of a fortune must seek to realise his inheritance; the nant of ten shillings from some infant's burial club show the ten ings to be due; the would-be factory girl substantiate her right to work and draw wages; the school-attendance officer make good his nd to introduce some chubby freshman to the board school. If erties are to be acquired, apprenticeships arranged, appointments d, assurances effected, or pensions paid, the registers must be placed r requisition. In 1877, 27,030 searches—exclusive of those undern for the purposes of the Factory Acts—were made in the general ces at the Central Register Office; and in a large majority of these the search led to the issue of a certificate. Meantime, in about ocal offices references were also constantly being made to the original ters, and extracts issued therefrom in large numbers; while the nt register books of the entire body of registrars were at the same yielding up their evidence extensively in like manner.

What is wanted for use so much and so constantly ought to be well ted to its ends, carefully preserved, and easy of access. Though the try waited long before these conditions were fulfilled as to its regisit now possesses a system under which each obligation named is satisfied. Whether the registers can be still further improved, and more widely utilised, are questions to be solved by futurity and tion. But now and always the excellence of the records themselves depend largely upon those on whose information they are written. ublic grounds, no less than for personal and family reasons, everyone d upon to state particulars for registration, should spare no pains to e the absolute accuracy of the entry which he dictates and attests.

E. W.

Oxford in the Long Vacation.

It is many years ago since the present writer spent a long vacation in Oxford; and the description of it in the following pages will not be found, perhaps, to correspond in all particulars with the Oxford of the present day. He imagines, for instance, that Oxford is not now so entirely deserted by members of the University in the months of August and September as it used to be, and that, consequently, the contrast between Term time and Vacation is no longer so distinctly marked. The aspect of Oxford, moreover, during term itself, is considerably altered —whether for the worse or for the better may be a moot point—since the present generation was the coming one. Then there were certain rules and understandings in regard to dress, which impressed a character of their own upon the streets and quadrangles of the gray old city. "Men," as members of the University were then called, to distinguish them from everybody else, almost always wore their caps and gowns in the morning, both in college and abroad. Shooting-jackets, coloured suits, and wideawakes were only very rarely visible outside of the college gates; and when you turned out at two o'clock for your walk or ride, the black coat and regulation hat were as indispensable as in the streets of London: more so than they are now. This, however, is the case no longer. The undergraduate dresses at Oxford just as he would dress in a country house; and the exception is not to see men in "beaver" before the middle of the day, but to see them in any other headgear. Here, then, another great difference between term time and vacation disappears. While more men remain up, their outward appearance in the one season is less unlike what it is in the other than in the days to which I now refer.

There has also been, of late years, a great increase in the number of resident Oxonians, mostly, perhaps in all cases, connected with the University; and all along the Woodstock road, looking down upon the Cherwell willows, with the thickly-timbered hills of Elsfield, and Woodeaton, and Stow Wood forming a dark green background, stand clusters of pretty red-brick* villas, the abodes of Professors and married Tutors, and other genteel private families, who have selected Oxford as a desirable residence. The inhabitants of this new quarter do, probably as a rule, disappear during the long vacation. When the University goes down, they endeavour to go down too. But a good many remain behind, and contribute their share towards diminishing the older characteristics, the peculiar repose and solitude, of Oxford during that golden period of the year when summer is just melting into autumn. What contributes still further to the same result is the great increase in the number of examinations, and the number of men to be examined, since the modern system has established itself. The work of the examiner goes on into the middle of July, so that practically the long vacation, from the point of view of this article, can be hardly said to begin before August. What, therefore, were formerly the peculiarities of the long vacation have now become common to the whole year, and what were formerly the peculiarities of the academic year have now become common to the long vacation. But still the difference on the whole, if less strongly emphasised, must be sufficiently marked, I should suppose, to make my own reminiscences a tolerably correct picture of autumnal Oxford even now. Now, as then, the University retires into the background and the town comes more into the front: and the man who "stays up" begins, we suppose, now, as ever, to recognise the fact that there are really two Oxfords in one upon the banks of the Isis—a great county town besides a great University, in which tradesmen bring up their families, and enjoy their own pleasures and festivities; in which the magistrates transact county business, the farmer comes to fair and market, the bagman goes round for orders, and the country girl comes to buy ribbons—just as if the Radcliffe, and the Bodleian, and the schools, and the theatre, and the new museum, and the whole learned body of Fellows, and Tutors, and Professors had no existence.

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* *Are* they red? I really am not quite sure.

This, no doubt, used to be one of the strongest impressions produced upon the minds of men when they first spent an autumn in the University. It will be less strong now, in proportion to the greater likeness between vacation and term time which Oxford now presents. But it can hardly fail to be felt; and twenty years ago it was among the predominant experiences of the half-dozen men who stayed behind during the great annual dispersion of the University community. You began to feel like a stranger in your own stronghold. But, at the same time, the undergraduate in the long vacation was the very aristocrat of undergraduates. He moved in acknowledged superiority amongst, as it were, a subject population, like an English Resident in India, or a Turkish country gentleman, before the war, in a Syrian or Roumelian village. He felt taller by the head and shoulders, as he strode along "the High," perhaps the solitary representative of the wealthy, and powerful, and famous body on which half the people round him were dependent. He fancied that the face of every townsman, as he passed, wore a look of veneration, and that every pretty girl he met was concentrating on his single self the whole stock of admiration which she usually distributed over the whole body of the gentlemen. These were proud and happy, and, doubtless, very silly moments; but they cannot be omitted from among the list of agreeable sensations of which residence in the long vacation was productive. There have probably been Stoics among the sojourners at Oxford at such seasons, who were strangers to such emotions as these; but the average undergraduate is not a Stoic, but a young gentleman with a considerable share of self-esteem, and a sufficiently high estimate of the social advantages of being "a man." The one feeling, however, which overpowers all others in the undergraduate, who is staying up to read, is the sense of freedom which he experiences as soon as the dons have retired, and the watchful eye of authority is no longer fixed on all his movements. To roam about so beautiful a place as Oxford at one's own good will and pleasure, and drink in all its sweetness without any intervening obligations, in the shape of lecture, or chapel, or gates, is in itself no ordinary luxury; and when you are sustained in the indulgence of it by the thought of work to be performed, and the consciousness that you are not staying in Oxford merely for your own amusement, but that your Livy, or your Thucydides, or your Ethics will be proportionably matured by the process, the luxury approaches to beatitude. Not, indeed, that staying up during the long vacation is quite so favourable to study as might be supposed; and that, for the reasons already given. The student finds so much to interest him in the town and the neighbourhood, of which he had never before suspected the existence, that he is insensibly drawn away from his books much more than he had originally contemplated. But still a fair amount of work may be got through, and plenty of time still left for such pleasures as the place affords. We are now speaking of the man who is living in lodgings and not in college, permission to do which in the vacation was at one time very difficult to obtain. Under these circumstances the student would have his time very nearly at his own disposal. He would get up in the morning—probably not over early—but so as to get down to his books by nine. At twelve o'clock, say, he would go to his tutor for an hour; and thus, before lunch, he would have accomplished four hours' good work. A light lunch would be followed by a stroll round Magdalen Walk or Christchurch meadows, and work might be resumed from three to four. From four to seven he would have the very pretty country which lies all round Oxford to roam over, on foot or on horseback, as he chose; at seven he would dine; at nine he would resume his reading, and go to bed at twelve, with the pleasant consciousness of a well-spent day, eight hours of which have been devoted to good honest study. These arrangements may be varied at will. There is the Union; there is the river; and if a man is lucky, and has a taste for the sport, he may often get a little partridge-shooting in the neighbourhood when September has begun. There is the advantage also of greater cheapness in the University at this time of the year, if we may obtrude so vulgar a consideration. Horses cost less, and billiards cost less, or, at least, they used to do so, than when the colleges are full; and though playing billiards with a marker is not an amusement to be recommended, still, if you *are* to play the game, that is the way to learn it. But it is a very bad way of turning Oxford to account to spend any of your time in a fusty billiard-room, when you might be enjoying the glorious beauty of that noble city in the sunshine, or the moonlight, of August or September. Even an undergraduate, of any taste or sensibility, will never weary of these well-known haunts; while, if we suppose our sojourner to be some years older, their charms will probably be trebled for him. Who could ever tire of Magdalen Bridge, and the great tower of the chapel rising over the ancient elms, and the embowered walk round the Cherwell—beloved of Addison—with the rich meadow grass, or scented hay, showing through the trelliced branches? A stroll round these hallowed precincts the first thing in the morning should tune one for the whole day. And if it is asked why these and other pleasures, which are equally accessible in term time, should confer any special charm on the vacation, the answer is not far to seek. The *genius loci* does not speak to us in a crowd so clearly as it speaks to us in solitude; a thousand impertinences intrude to mar the effect of it. The silly young freshman ogling the nursery-maids; the prim young don conscious of his newly won fellowship, and diffusing round him as he walks a fine atmosphere of common rooms; the men on the Cherwell lying on their backs in punts, and smoking and reading novels in the shade: all these objects are, doubtless, good for us to look upon, inspiring, as they do, those emotions of pity and awe which are said to have a purgative effect upon the human heart; but, nevertheless, "if we would see fair Oxford aright," we must see her denuded of these disturbing, if salutary, accessories. Even the bustle of ordinary academic life is out of harmony with the tone of mind best fitted to imbibe the moral music and appreciate the solemn majesty of these venerable and storied scenes. It is not in the tumult of term times, when the talk is of nothing but schools and wines, and eights and elevens, and who has got the Latin verse, and who has won the long jump, that we can people the groves and cloisters of Oxford with the figures of that multifarious past which belongs to the University, or awaken into actual life the associations and memories attaching to them. Few places in the world are richer in treasures of this kind than the ancient city of King Alfred. Whatever is most romantic and interesting in religion, in history, or in literature, has its representative among the traditions of Oxford. Oxford in the Middle Ages, with its thirty thousand eager students hanging on the lips of some scholar of world-wide reputation; Oxford at the Reformation, that central spot where the old world and the new lingered longest in each other's arms like mother and child, so much alike and yet so different; the Oxford of the Catholic reaction, where the young Elizabethan revivalists Holt, and Arden, and Bryant, and Garnet, and Sherwin,* wandered by the Isis and the Cherwell framing schemes for the restoration of religion and the deliverance of the fair Queen Mary; the loyal and chivalrous Oxford of the Caroline epoch, the nursery of knights and gentlemen, with that curious and picturesque combination of the camp, court, and the cloister which it presented during the Great Rebellion; the Oxford of the eighteenth century, still mindful of the King over the water, and still keeping alive in an age of materialism and infidelity, some sparks of that loftier and more generous sentiment which clings ever to a falling cause, and has never yet been seen in a more touching or more tender form than in the melancholy Stuart romance: "all these and more come flocking," as we think of Oxford reminiscences; and to conjure up such visions before the mind's eye, and to clothe with life, and movement, and beauty, the dry bones of such a history, is what only can be done amid the silence and solitude of the vacation. This is what we mean by saying that the *genius loci* then speaks to us with a voice inaudible at other times, and that throwing off something of the muddy vesture of decay which normally encases us, our senses are then opened to other sights and sounds than those which are their daily food; when "sweet and far" from the remote past the poetry of the world begins to whisper to us; and we find the heart beginning to beat and the eye beginning to fill under the influence of we know not what transcendent witchery.

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* Froude, *History of England.*

To a Tory and High Churchman of the old school, Oxford represented almost everything which he held dear: Anglicanism, hereditary monarchy, the scholar and the gentleman, the Wellesleys, the Grenvilles, the Cannings, and the Stanleys,

> Magnanimi heroes nati melioribus annis;

the whole circle of traditions, in fact, in which his moral nature lives and moves and has its being. To be left alone with these—to be able to chew the cud of them without an eye to mark one's abstraction, or voice to interrupt one's reveries, is a luxury not easily to be surpassed in the estimation of one who has experienced it; more especially in an age like the present, when such a one is driven back within himself for the indulgence of his favourite ideas; when the busy world of London and of great cities tell him more and more of irresistible change, and of the passing away of all his landmarks, does he love to find in the society of these ancient towers and these stately elms a sympathy denied him elsewhere. It is not meant, however, that the *genius loci* speaks only of the past, or that all its spell lies in its historic associations. The mere natural beauty of Oxford, and its character as the hereditary seat of learning, where literature has lived so long as to have acquired all the grace and the sweetness and the dignity which are the perquisites of ancient lineage, are sufficient by themselves to make it holy ground to every mind not absolutely deficient in the æsthetic and imaginative faculties.

Term time, of course, has the great charm of companionship. But when your friends are gone and your degree is taken, that charm is over, except for the fortunate few who remain on the foundations. But Oxford in the long vacation is the same as ever. You do not miss your college friendships, for that was not the time when you enjoyed them. There is nothing melancholy in a return to Oxford at this season, though you have been absent from it for a quarter of a century. In term time it is different. You then think of the men whom you knew so well, and who, having accompanied you a shorter or longer way on the path of life, have one by one dropped off: competitors with yourself for scholarships and prizes, the companions of your morning stroll and of your evening glass, with whom you will never again discuss Tennyson, and Wordsworth, and Macaulay, and Carlyle:

Walking about the gardens and the halls
Of Camelot, as in the days that were.

But in the long vacation these memories come back to one in a softer and less vivid form, and modified by the local influences which then subdue every other. It is characteristic indeed of a place like Oxford, when you are once thoroughly under its spell, to throw personal feelings into the background, and to absorb the grief or joy of individuals in its deeper and more solemn associations. It is not in a great abbey or lofty cathedral that we mourn for a departed friend with the acutest sorrow. The *religio loci*, even of a country churchyard, turns one to a softer sadness. And among the aisles and cloisters, the grey walls and venerable domes of *Alma Mater*, no very acute emotion can be long indulged. We feel our own insignificance, and we feel, too, something more perhaps of those hopes and fears and possibilities of the future than we are conscious of in the busy world, under the pressure of our daily occupation.

But if Oxford itself has so many charms for us in the long vacation, what shall we say of its environs, of which so little was known in my day by the majority of Oxford men, even among those who had enjoyed opportunities of exploring them. Perhaps the most charming description of them which has ever been written has already appeared in the poems of Mr. M. Arnold, and in the pages of the *Cornhill Magazine*. I cannot hope to write anything worthy the notice of those who have read *Thyrsis* and the *Scholar Gipsy*. The Cumnor Hills, the distant Wychwood Bowers, the stripling Thames at Bablock Hythe, the Fyfield Elm, the lone homesteads and the mossy farms, all the characteristic features of the scenery on the Berkshire border, have found their *vates sacer* once and for ever. But these poems relate to only one side of Oxford, and Oxford is beautiful on all sides; and what is more, those who only see the neighbourhood in term time never see it at its best. The real glory of summer is never seen in England, not, at all events, in the Midland counties, before July. And fully to appreciate the wood and water, the hill and dale, the meadows and cornfields which form the sides and margin of the basin in which Oxford lies nestling among its gardens and spires, we must roam over them in the dog days, when the foliage is at its richest, when the corn is just beginning to yellow, and when the newly-mown meadows, as yet untrodden and unbrowsed, are more grateful to the eye and to the foot of the tired pedestrian than the choicest bed of flowers on which pastoral poet ever sat.

It matters little on which side you leave Oxford; if you are a genuine lover of quiet English home scenery, you can hardly go wrong. The best known river haunts of University men in term time are in the long vacation apt to be frequented by scouts, and it is not these, of course, to which our present observations point. Sandford, Newnham, Godstow, are familiar to all men, and there is no occasion, therefore, to devote the long vacation to exploring them. Yet few of those who go down to these places in boats, and few of those who take their regular constitutionals on foot by Summerstown, Wolvercot, and Wytham, have any idea of the picturesque nooks and corners which lie to the right and the left of them, when, after crossing Godstow Bridge, and leaving Fair Rosamond's Chapel on the left, you begin to ascend the rising ground among the Wytham woods beyond. By Wytham and Stanton Harcourt, and Bablock Hythe, and Cumnor, you gradually wind round again towards Hinksey, and enter the town once more over Folly Bridge, after a ring through the prettiest cool green country, full of dark-leaved elms and furzy dingles, with the calm, bright river never very far from your track, and glistening at intervals through openings in the woods and hedges. Or, if you like, you may dip down a little further south, and instead of turning back from Cumnor, go round by Appleton and Besilsleigh, and then across the fields by Wootton and Sunningwell, up to Bagley Wood. This is a charming walk, across wide breezy pastures and meadows, with woods both before and behind. Nor are fit associations wanting. At Besilsleigh the squire of the parish is the lineal descendant of Speaker Lenthal. At Stanton Harcourt, Pope translated Homer. At Godstow Priory is the grave of Rosamond Clifford. At Cumnor the "Bear and Ragged Staff," though now but an ordinary village public, and of modern date, recalls to one that well-known group—the melancholy Tressilian, the swashbuckler Lambourne, the Abingdon mercer at his revels, the parish clerk with his air of authority, the jovial yet sagacious Boniface. The site of Cumnor Hall, alas! is no longer to be identified with certainty. But of the oaks "that grew thereby" some, probably, are still standing on which the eyes of Amy Robsart must have rested. On the same side of Oxford lie Bagley Wood and Radley, the old part now enclosed being one of the most picturesque bits of woodland in the county, and hence you may descend upon the river, and come home by Iffley and Cowley, crossing into Oxford at the union of the Cherwell and the Isis, over Magdalen Bridge and under Magdalen Tower. Many a man who fancied he knew these scenes well has found, during the long vacation, that it was possible to know them much better. But still these are the best known and most frequented walks in the neighbourhood of Oxford, and to turn the long vacation to good account, we must go rather further afield.

To the west and north-west of Oxford lie Woodstock, and what, alas! was once Wychwood Forest, now grubbed up, and replaced by turnips and barley. To ride over to Witney, spend a day in these beautiful woodlands, dine at the little inn, and back again to Oxford by moonlight, was one of the delights of the long vacation about the middle of the present century. A pleasure fair used to be held in the forest in the month of September, but to this the present writer never went, and it gave rise to so much disorder that it was put an end to long before the disafforestment. I have the pleasantest memories of Wychwood Forest, of its picturesque glades and gnarled oaks, of its ponds and its wild fowl, and the river Evenlode winding round its skirts, and almost hidden from view by its high banks and overhanging trees. The little town of Charlbury lies just off the Forest, the original seat of the Cooper family, and Ditchley Park is just beyond the cradle of the "loyal Lees."

It is, however, with the other side of Oxford, the eastern, or Buckinghamshire side, that I think Oxford men in my time were the least acquainted. Leaving Oxford by Magdalen Bridge, there were three or four different routes to be taken, all of which in a comparatively short time carried you beyond the radius of the ordinary pedestrian. Dr. Arnold seems to have explored this region to some extent, though even he did not get very far; but, as a general rule, I have found it a closed book to all of my own contemporaries, if I except perhaps a few hunting men who knew the names of the villages and no more. Taking your way by Cowley and Baldon, and bearing in a south-easterly direction, you were not long before you struck the river Tame in its progress towards the Thames at Dorchester. The bridge by which you crossed it at Chiselhampton, a singularly long, low, narrow bridge, is the identical structure which was held by the Roundheads against Prince Rupert on the morning of the 18th June, a day destined to be memorable in the annals of England. And among the many subjects which our artists have chosen from the Civil War we wonder it has never been selected. Pressing forward, you come upon a flattish country, which, five-and-twenty years ago, bore marks of having been recently enclosed; and, as you emerge from a narrow lane, you will see directly before you a small unpretending-looking column lying a little to the right. Take off your hat, whether you be Whig or Tory, for this is Chalgrove Field, and near that column, on the 18th of June, 1643, fell John Hampden, fighting, as it records, "for the free monarchy and ancient liberties of England." Having gazed your fill on this interesting and suggestive scene, you may ride on to the little old town of Watlington, and, while your dinner is getting ready, climb up Watlington hill, from which you have a wide view over the plain below, and can fill in the battle scene according to your own fancy: plume and blade gleaming through the wreaths of smoke, and riderless horses galloping wildly through the corn. A fine range of hills stretches away hence towards Henley; and if you could stay in the neighbourhood for a day or two, you would find a walk from Watlington to Henley over

Swincombe downs would well repay you for your trouble. But we must return to Oxford, and the country which stretches away north and east on the other side of Headington Hill.

Turning off the high road into Headington village, and passing the church, the pedestrian soon comes upon a narrow lane descending by the garden wall of an old country house, and issuing on a footpath through the fields. Crossing some small pastures and meadows, and a little brook, he finds himself again on rising ground among corn and beans and clover, and keeping steadily on past a farmhouse, a hanging copse, called the Wick copse, and leaving some swampy marshy ground on his left, he at length emerges on the high road between Islip and Thame, in front of a large wood and just opposite a good old-fashioned wayside inn, half inn and half farmhouse. This is Stow Wood, and on looking back along the footpath which brought him to it, the traveller sees that he has reached high ground, the spires of Oxford lying quite low down in the valley at a distance of about four miles. Stow Wood contained in my time more than a hundred acres; it was a very pretty place; and I can remember even now its delightful coolness after the hot walk up the hill on a broiling day in the month of July. The wood was said to be famous for its wild flowers. But one never saw a soul inside it. It seemed to be wholly unknown to the busy and learned world of the great city just below; and whether I went there in term time or in the long vacation, I was equally sure of having the place to myself. This was where in my time some good partridge shooting could be had in the month of September; as the farmer who kept the inn and looked after the wood had the shooting over the whole lordship, which was part of the estates of the Bishopric; and these people seem to have acted for some generations as the Bishop's keepers or bailiffs. I remember very well the old man telling me how fond "Madam Bagot"* was of a landrail. If, instead of lingering at Stow Wood and either gathering flowers inside it or chatting with mine host's pretty daughter, "herself a fairer flower," you chose to explore still further, there was a very pretty ride or drive across the Buckinghamshire border up to Brill Hill, a commanding point of view, from which you looked down on the original seat of the Grenville family (now Dukes of Buckingham). The road leads through Stanton, St. John's, and then downwards through the smiling little villages of Horton and Studley, with their pretty thatched cottages and gardens and fruit trees, all telling of a resident proprietor careful for the comfort of his people; on by old farms and open commons, till we reach Boarstall Tower, an old castellated house with a moat round it, on the skirt of an extensive wood. From Boarstall the road begins gradually to ascend, till ultimately we reach Brill, a noted name in the neighbourhood, once for its mineral waters, afterwards for its steeplechases, but now for nothing in particular that I know of except a very fine view. It is about twelve miles from Oxford, and the road all the way is rife with interesting associations. From Forest Hill came Milton's first wife, Mary Powell. Horton and Studley belonged to the family of Croke, famous for its lawyers and antiquaries. One of them was Speaker of the House of Commons in the reign of Queen Elizabeth, and another was one of the two judges who gave judgment against the Crown on the question of ship money. Boarstall Tower was stormed by Colonel Gage with a party of cavaliers from Oxford; and, indeed, the entire neighbourhood swarms with traditions of the Civil War. The whole country is of that peculiarly English character which so arrests the attention of foreigners, green, tranquil, mellow; old yellow hamlets bathed in the afternoon sunshine; the peaceful corn-fields where the pathway winds along the hedge under the shadow of great oaks and elms; the meadows whence the last load of hay is just being carted off, and the vivid green below shows like a carpet of emeralds; the church, six hundred years old, the Manor House of "grey renown," all such things as speak to one of immemorial tranquillity and unbroken order, and that humble happiness which we sometimes think a mere poetic fiction. I have often thought that in this part of England, in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire and Berkshire, there is more of this peculiar style of scenery than there is in any other. Farther north you encounter the manufacturing element. In the south you get too near London. The Eastern counties are not so pretty, and the people are not so nice; they have more light perhaps, but certainly less sweetness than the Buckinghamshire and Berkshire peasantry. Further west, the character of the scenery changes, becomes bolder and more beautiful, but has not, I think, quite the same quiet charm as these drowsy old villages which I remember so well. The difference may perhaps be in myself. And were I to re-visit them now, I might wonder at the words which I have written; but I am recounting impressions, not painting a picture, and so let them pass.

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* The wife of Bishop Bagot, Newman's friend.

When you are at Stow Wood, you have the choice of two or three excursions besides the one already pointed out. Instead of turning eastwards towards Buckinghamshire, you may proceed in a more northerly direction, which will conduct you to places little known to the ordinary Oxford man. Having finished your bacon and eggs in the inn parlour, you could go out at the back of the house, cross the stackyard, and take a path through the wood, which brought you to the very pretty village of Beckley with its fine old church. Beckley lies on the far side of the uplands which divide the valley of the Thames from a wide flat plain called Otmoor, a famous haunt of snipe and wild fowl, watered by the little river Ray, which runs into the Cherwell at Islip. He will not find very much to interest him as he crosses this rather dreary flat; but he will see before him the woods of Ambrosden and Gravenhill, rising from the other side of the moor; and keeping on through the village of Merton, he will reach them in about an hour's walk. Ambrosden has its claim on our respect; for the rector of Ambrosden, about the beginning of the last century, was none other than White Kennett, afterwards

Bishop of Peterborough, one of the most learned of our local antiquarians, whose *Parochial Antiquities*, being the history only of the two parishes of Ambrosden and Burchester, has long been an English classic.

Turning back again towards Oxford, our rambler will pass through the villages of Charlton, Oddington, and the tumble-down little town of Islip; where, however, there is or was a very fair inn, together with the country residence of the Deans of Westminster, though I believe it is so no longer. The road from Islip will bring him back to the other side of Stow Wood, which we have not yet visited, and to a point from which one of the prettiest of the views in the immediate neighbourhood of Oxford is to be obtained. The reader will bear in mind that after leaving Islip he has been coming back in the direction of Oxford, and reascending the slope which led him downwards from Beckley to Otmoor. One corner, the west corner, of Stow Wood runs down a little way to meet him, and here, where the wood comes almost to a sharp point, there stood a very small public-house with an enormous elm tree in front of it. From this spot you look down right across Otmoor to the Ambrosden heights in the horizon, with Beckley common in the right foreground, running down into a leafy hollow, where lies Noke Wood, surrounded by such thickly growing hedgerow timber, that it seems all one continuous mass of leafage. Straight in front of him lies the road he has traversed, beyond which, in the left-hand distance, he may see the shades of Bletchington and Kirtlington. A little way to the left lies Wood Eaton, with its belts of larch and fir; and, close to the road, a long narrow strip of shelving ground, half waste half woodland, dotted with oak, and birch, and holly, and waist deep in the thickest fern. Many and many a time have I gazed on this beautiful scene in silent gladness, rejoicing at the want of curiosity among my Oxford contemporaries, which made it almost a *terra incognita* to them; so that there was little risk of the spell being broken even in term time by the apparition of the respectable constitutionalist, and in the long vacation none at all. I am speaking of many years ago. I have never stood at that well-known corner looking down upon the quiet woody valley since the year after I took my degree. Oxford I have often revisited. Twice I have passed Stow Wood; but the little old public, and the tall elm, and the furzy common, and the fern-covered slope, with its scattered clumps of varied hue, may be all gone for what I know, though they are as fresh in my mind's eye as if I had seen them only yesterday.

Turning on our heel, and taking the road which then lies upon our right, a few steps bring us to a stile and a footpath, which leads into the village of Elsfield, about three miles from Oxford, on the brow of an eminence looking down upon the basin of the Cherwell. Here stands a small but picturesque old manor house with some pretty woods, almost joining the Wood Eaton covers, along which runs a shady and secluded footpath, affording glimpses of the old hall, of which, however, I never got a complete view. I doubt if the footpath was in my time ever trodden by the foot of an Oxford man except myself and one or two of those to whom in the confidence of the long vacation I revealed it. I remember the cool meadows and the thick oaks, and the clustering hazels, and the wood-pigeon crowing overhead, and the jay lobbing down the rides, and the pheasant stealing quietly back to cover, and the woodpecker, with his dipping flight in quest of some insect-haunted trunk—how well I remember them! but I have never seen them since I walked there in the last long vacation which I ever spent at Oxford with one of the many friends who made up the little "Round Table" of our college days, and who are now dispersed to the winds. At Elsfield during one long vacation I had very pleasant cottage lodgings. I read a little, shot a little, and walked and rode a good deal, making myself thoroughly acquainted with the country which I have here been describing; but I am afraid not doing quite as much for the books which filled my small room. Elsfield was visited by Dr. Johnson in 1754, on the occasion of his first visit to the University after leaving it in 1731. His principal companion at this time was Warton, who furnished Boswell with some notes of their former proceedings. Amongst other things he says, "In the course of this visit Johnson and I walked three or four times to Elsfield, a village beautifully situated about three miles from Oxford, to see Mr. Wise, the librarian of the Radcliffe, who had there a house fitted up in a singular manner, but with great taste."

From Elsfield you may either descend into Oxford through Marston, and by a footpath leading to a ferry over the Cherwell, and thence into the Woodstock road, or else by the main thoroughfare, which brings us round again to the foot of Headington Hill, from which we started a few pages back. We have thus gone round the entire circle of which Oxford is the centre; and I believe my Oxford readers, if I have any, will agree with me that I have brought to their attention many scenes of sylvan and rural beauty of whose existence, in the neighbourhood of Oxford, they had no previous conception. It was during the long vacation that I became best acquainted with them myself; and they in turn look their best in the long vacation. English home scenery is not, if I may use such an expression, really ripe before July. I do not know whether Charles Dickens may not be right in calling August the most lovely of the months. But May and June are not, in spite of our poetical traditions. And the country round Oxford never dons its richest vesture till after the "men" have gone down.

But alas! men go down and men come up, and the long vacation does not go on for ever. You have had warnings, however, of what was coming. In Magdalen walks and Christ Church meadows the green has gradually grown yellow. Far away in the country the hedgerows are turning to the colour of tea-leaves; and your favourite footpaths begin to grow greasy and slippery. This, however, you could have endured. But what is felt to be unbearable at such a moment is the sudden revival of tumultuous and unsympathising gaiety which comes with the recommencement of term time. How you shrink away from the first man in cap and gown who proclaims, like some swallow of wonder-land, that winter is upon us. What an intruder he seems to be upon your old domain, and how rudely out of harmony with the tone of feeling you have so long been cherishing. As the leaves die the men return to life; civilisation and learning resume their sway; and the Pagan deities, Silvanus, and the Nymphs, and the Fauns, amongst whom you have so long been living, vanish at their nod. The Union resounds once more with the Dacian descending from the Ister, or with the rivalry of Kings and Senates. Hall again claims you for its own; and the talk of the schools, and the river, and the drag, puts to sharp rebuke your own autumnal fancies, which you take good care, however, to keep locked up in your own breast.

And now that I have written this article, I cannot help asking myself how many people will believe it. I met at dinner the other day a dignitary of the Church, an Oxford man of about my own standing, who will, I hope, forgive this allusion, should this page happen to catch his eye, who repeated the well-worn complaint about the country round Oxford being so flat. As I felt that on this subject, at all events, I was "a rather well-informed person," I ventured, without revealing my literary connection therewith, to expostulate with his reverence. But I soon found it was the old story. He supposed I meant about Nuneham, down the river, and so on—yes, that was rather pretty certainly. I spoke of Headington Hill, and the country stretching out behind it; but a courteous smile, with a gesture betokening incredulity, was the only answer I received, and as he was on the other side of the table I could not push the subject any further. But it was quite plain he knew no more about it than an Athenian of the age of Pericles knew of Cumberland or Devonshire. I am afraid he had not read either *Thyrsis* or the *Scholar Gipsy*; and it may readily be owned that it is not everybody whose taste is formed to enjoy this particular kind of scenery. But for myself it possesses, I must say, an inexpressible charm. I always preferred a pretty face to a beautiful one, and I suppose it is the same with scenery. Still not one Oxford man in five hundred, not at least of my own contemporaries, know that there is anything even unusually pretty in the neighbourhood of the University. And I myself should hardly have found it out, or known it at all events as well as I know it now, but for residence in the long vacation.

As for the other charms of the long vacation there will no doubt be less difference of opinion. To have Oxford all to yourself, free from the restraints of term time, implies a kind and degree of enjoyment which University men only can appreciate. To be fully alive to the poetical influences of the place requires, perhaps, that the sojourner should be somewhat older than the ordinary undergraduate. And in the foregoing pages emotions which belong in their intensity to different periods of life have almost unavoidably been commingled. It is, moreover, quite possible that in describing scenes and places which we have not visited since youth, we may transport into our narrative the feeling with which we gaze upon similar scenes at a more advanced period of life; and that some of the delight which we suppose ourselves to have derived from objects which we remember in the past may be only the reflection of that with which similar objects inspire us at the present time. Memory, however, I am certain does not play me false to any great extent. I remember quite well how I used to glory in the sunshine and the shade of Shotover, and Elsfield and Stow Wood, and Wytham and Cumnor, and "distant Wychwood bowers." I am quite sure of myself; and the pleasure which I have found in revisiting, only upon paper, the fields and the footpaths, the woods, the commons, and the old farmhouses, which are so deeply impressed upon my memory, must be the same kind of pleasure which I experienced when I was actually among them. My trip, however, is now over. I have again been to Oxford in the "long;" have again wandered by myself through the gardens and the cloisters, beneath the towers and the halls, which thrill us with such sweet and solemn fancies; and have again rambled through the hills and the woods, and the villages which, without any pretension to beauty of the higher order, possess a charm of their own, perhaps equally permanent and influential.

It will be a surprise, perhaps, to some people, as it was to myself but a very little while ago, to hear that the river above Dorchester has no title to the name of Isis, which is said to be the invention of some mediæval Oxford poet, who derived the name Thames, Thamesis, or Thame Isis, from the junction of the smaller river with the larger at the place above mentioned. Leland and Stowe seem both to favour the theory that the name is indigenous. But there seems reason to believe that it is not, and so here we part with another of our old-world illusions.

T. E. K.

The Dance of Death in Italian Art.

All visitors to Lucerne remember the quaint old covered bridge whose hobgoblin series of faded pictures seems at first sight in such strange contrast with the tender gleams of malachite and turquoise—the dazzle of fretted sunbeams, caught from the water below and around, through every interstice in the timber planking. Yet the Swiss landscape, even in its fairest aspects, is never wanting in suggestions of the destructive forces of nature, and the company of shattered pinnacles that crowd round the green brim of the Lake of the Four Cantons, grisly and gaunt as skeletons at a banquet, are no inappropriate background to the weird diablerie of the Dance of Death.

To find a scene with whose character it would be utterly incongruous, we must leave behind the cloven precipices of the St. Gothard, and descend the long slopes of Tessin to another sheet of water, mountain-girded like Lucerne, and like Lucerne mirroring in its calm bosom the eternal snows of Switzerland, but with their austere sublimity softened to utter loveliness in the universal smile of nature under the sky of Italy. For the Alps, indeed, are still there, range behind range and summit above summit, but we see only the glory of their crowns, not the travail of their flanks; soaring to heaven instead of crumbling to earth, their silver pallor suggests immortality rather than decay, and makes them seem no longer skeletons, but spirits.

It was then, as might be expected, from the North that the ghastly satire on mortality, so incongruous with Southern nature, made its way into Italy, and the spirit which it met there—religious as well as artistic—tended rapidly to modify its harsh realism. For the idea expressed in it is, notwithstanding its stern moral significance, as antagonistic to Christian feeling as to æsthetic sensibility; and the vividness with which it personifies its terrible protagonist, obscuring the view of a supreme Providence, tends to raise him to the rank of a minor divinity, with almost unlimited power for evil in his own dark realm. Thus the victory which the Apostle had triumphantly declared wrested from the grave is again restored to it, and Death, no longer disarmed of his sting, reappears as conqueror instead of conquered. Moreover, since it is his inexorable power as the great destroyer that is made prominent—since rich and poor, saints and sinners, are represented as equally his victims, irrespective of their future state—the moral most easily deducible from such impartial havoc might be the not very lofty one, summed up in the popular saying, "a short life and a merry one." * That this at least is the lesson invariably learnt from familiarity with the mere fact of mortality, apart from any higher spiritual teaching, is abundantly shown by the records of all great social catastrophes, with their brutalising effects on the mass of humanity. In the Dance of Death, then, we see rather the spirit of German and Scandinavian demonology than of Christian belief, and find it more akin to the popular phantasmagoria of fiends and witches, spectral huntsmen, and churchyard ghosts, than to the religious imagery which aimed at emphasising the survival of man's spiritual nature, as of more moment than the dissolution of its earthly habitation.

The widespread popularity of the skeleton dance was due in part to the cynical force with which it embodied an obvious truth, as well as to the coincidence of its ghastly grotesque with the grim temper of the thirteenth century; but probably, in a still greater degree, to the democratic spirit in which it portrayed Death as the universal leveller, trampling on all earthly dignities, and selecting his choicest victims among potentates and princes. It thus gratified that bitter resentment of the lower classes against their superiors, which produced so many seditious associations of the peasantry throughout Europe in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries; amongst others, those of the Brethren of the White Cap, and of the Pastoureaux in France, both claiming to have originated in a supernatural inspiration. This spirit found vent in various forms of popular satire, but rejoiced especially in the embodiment of Death as the great avenger of all wrong, the common tyrant of humanity indeed, but the more dreaded foe of those who had most to lose in life. Here again we see the wide divergence between the teaching of the mediæval parable and the lessons of the Gospel, for the mild consolation proffered to the poor and afflicted by the one is very different from the fierce exultation in universal destruction fostered by the other.

The perpetual recurrence of the Dance of Death in all countries and in all branches of art north of the Alps, is not more remarkable than the stereotyped monotony of its symbolical treatment. While it is found not alone on the walls of cemeteries and churches, but on glass, tapestry, and household furniture—while it forms a favourite subject equally for painting and sculpture, as for poems, masquerades, and dramatic representations—the figures introduced, and the sequence in which they appear, are unvarying, and evidently conform to some generally received tradition, too deeply rooted to admit of modification by the idiosyncrasy of individual artists. They may show their fertility of invention, indeed, in diversifying accessories and grouping, attitude and expression, but the main features of the bizarre legend are everywhere maintained, and appear unchanged in its English, French, Swiss and German versions. They all portray with astonishing vividness a grotesquely horrible ball,

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* It was in this sense, as an incitement to pleasure, that a miniature skeleton was introduced at the Egyptian feasts.

in which each of the dancers has the King of Terrors as a partner, and is led along by him with the strictest regard to etiquette in the precedence of the various social grades they represent. Thus Death leads off with the Pope, the Emperor follows, after him comes a Cardinal, and the procession generally closes, after a carefully graduated succession of ranks in the descending scale, with a mendicant and a new-born infant. The potentates of Church and State are represented as following reluctantly their skeleton companion, and the higher clergy are frequently rebuked in the explanatory distichs, for pride, avarice, or luxury; while the begging friars, the devout hermits, and the poor and lowly generally, are made to welcome Death as a deliverer. The figures in most cases follow two and two, each living form with its skeleton partner, but in some instances they have joined hands, and are dancing in a ring round an open sarcophagus or yawning grave. In the older representations Death is not portrayed as a completely dessicated skeleton, but in the more dreadful transition stage, in which the artist spares none of the horrors of gradual corruption. The procession is sometimes heralded by a preacher, and sometimes by the figures of Adam and Eve, with Death supporting the Tree of Knowledge and the serpent twining round him. The strange belief of Pythagoras, held by the Romans and adopted in the Middle Ages, that the spinal marrow after death changed into a serpent, is recalled by seeing the dead in other parts of the procession sometimes portrayed with serpents enwreathing their bodies.*

Such is the general outline of the Dance of Death in its pictorial form, and the same ideas are faithfully reproduced in its metrical versions. It is an open question whether painting or poetry can claim priority in treating it, and it may be traced to a very early date in both the sister arts. The troubadour Thibaut de Montmorency, seigneur of Marly, who took the cross in 1160 and afterwards became a monk, wrote some powerful stanzas containing many of the ideas of the popular allegory, and a similar poem was written by a German named Regenbogen in the following century. These compositions, however, have not all the characteristic features of the *Danse Macabre*, and it is in Spain that we find the earliest complete literary treatment of the subject. The *Dansa General de la Muerte*, composed by Rabi Don Santo in the fourteenth century, is a dialogue in which Death, according to the prescribed formula, invites a partner in due order from each of the grades in the social hierarchy, and receives answers varying according to the characters so addressed. Exactly similar in construction is an anonymous Italian poem, *El Ballo della Morte*, ascribed to the fifteenth century, found in the Riccardiana Library of Florence, and recently published, for the first time, by Signor Pietro Vigo, in his exhaustive little monograph, *Le Danze Macabre in Italia*. In a tone of mocking irony Death addresses a stanza to each of the personages, who reply with remonstrances and lamentations, or with cheerful acquiescence, according as they have been in a position to enjoy more or less the good things of this world. The opening moral is spoken in the Italian poem in the person of Philosophy, in the Spanish in that of a preacher, and both compositions probably formed the text of dramatic representations, recited in character on the stage.

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* The Zulus believe that the spirits of the dead transmigrate into serpents, which they venerate on that account.

There was, however, a fresco of the Dance of Death more venerable than either of these quaint ballads, as the subject was depicted on the wall of a nunnery, built in 1274, at Klingenthal, opposite Basle, by a follower of Rodolph of Hapsburg. One of the groups bore the date 1312, and the engravings made of the series in 1756 are still preserved in the library at Basle. They suggested, no doubt, the original idea of the famous frescoes which adorned the Dominican cemetery in the latter place, and which are supposed to have been painted in 1440, by order of the Council then sitting there, in commemoration of the ravages of the plague in the preceding year. This, the most celebrated of all similar works, exists no longer in its original form, as it was deliberately destroyed by the mob during an *émeute* in 1805. It contained ninety-two figures in forty-two groups, and the Pope, Emperor, and King introduced in it, were portraits respectively of Felix V., Sigismund, and Albert II, King of the Romans. Many engravings of it are extant, and Holbein's well-known series is a modification of the theme suggested by it. He, however, gave it a greater variety, by treating it from a purely artistic point of view, and abandoning the rigid uniformity of design that tradition had previously imposed. The most striking of his groups are those in one of which a mounted and mail-clad knight is doing battle with a skeleton; and in the other, known as "Death and the Countess," a lovely lady is having her toilet completed by her maid, while the spectral anatomy crouching behind her throws a necklace of bones over her fair neck. *La Mort de Bâle* passed into a sort of popular proverb, so much so as to be invoked as a *deus ex machinâ* to carry off troublesome or obnoxious relatives, like the *Accidente*, or death by apoplexy, of the Italians.

In various other parts of Switzerland, as well as in Germany and France, the Dance of Death was a favourite subject for painting and fresco; in the cemetery of St. Maclou in Rouen it is represented in a series of bas-reliefs, now much defaced; and in England it was equally popular, as it was found in sundry places; among others at Lydgate and Hexham, as well as on the walls of the Palace of Whitehall, where it was destroyed by fire. There seems reason to believe that all these designs, so uniform in their general features, were originally suggested by some form of dramatic representation of the nature of the Mysteries or Moralities, in which the action on the stage was identical with what we now see portrayed in painting and poetry. The performance of such a piece at Bruges in 1449 is proved by an entry of that date in the archives of Lille, registering the payment of eight francs to a painter, one Nicaise de Cambray, and his companions, for acting in the *Morality of Death*. At Aix, in Provence, too, a series of spectacles given in

1462, in celebration of the Fête Dieu, closed with the appearance of *La Mouert* on the scene, represented by a man with a skull-mask, and a scythe, which he made use of to stimulate the generosity of the spectators, making passes at their legs, if they were backward as the hat went round. Readers of *Don Quixote* will remember the Knight's meeting with the Cart of Death, driven by a demon, and containing the other actors in full costume, the King of Terrors himself, with the Emperor and Queen invariably introduced among his victims; all on their way from one village to another to perform the *Cortes de la Muerte*, or Parliament of Death in honour of the Octave of Corpus Christi. This was one of the *Autos Sacramentales*, with which the feast was always celebrated in Spain, and of one of which the *Dansa General* of Don Santo no doubt formed the text.

A similar performance of the *Danses Macabres*,* lasting for six months, was long believed to have taken place in 1424 in the Cimetière des Innocents in Paris; but M. Langlois,† whose researches on the subject entitle him to speak with authority, has come to the conclusion that the passages supposed to refer to it, really record the execution of a painting or fresco which was completed in that time. Although some of the Mystery Plays lasted forty days, one which ran on through half a year would certainly seem of somewhat exorbitant proportions; but the duration of the picture on the other hand must have been in the opposite extreme of brevity, as no later record of its existence can be traced. Whatever may have been the truth in this instance, there is no doubt that the subject was represented dramatically, probably earlier than it was painted, and its performance in the cemeteries took the form of a semi-religious celebration, beginning with an appropriate sermon to point the obvious moral.

It is conjectured that these strange exhibitions were introduced to obviate a still greater scandal, the desecration of churches and graveyards by profane dances, which the decrees of councils and prohibitions of bishops were almost powerless to prevent. In 1230 and 1245 two successive archbishops of Rouen threatened with excommunication all priests tolerating such abuses, but perhaps a more effectual check was found in arguments addressed to the superstitious fears of the people. Such was the story of the twelve men and three women of Colewitz, in Saxony, who on Christmas Eve of 1012, persisted in dancing in the cemetery in defiance of the priest, and by his curse were compelled to dance for a whole year without stopping, many of them (as may easily be imagined) dying in consequence. A variety of similar legends all point to the same abuse, which they had no doubt some effect in correcting, and for which the more decorous scenic representation was probably admitted as a substitute. The form in which Death is portrayed in the earlier pictures tends to confirm the idea that they were derived from a dramatic performance; for he appears not in skeleton shape, impossible to assume by a living actor, but still clothed in fleshly integuments, the corroded state of which could be conveyed by a judicious use of paint. The head it is true is a bare and fleshless skull, but that could be easily represented by a mask, while the partial drapery in which the figure is generally clad would assist the illusion, and contribute to the decorum of the spectacle. A ghastly form of amusement indeed is that of which these pictures are a relic, and a strange scene must that have been which they call up to the imagination, when the living assembled among the graves of the dead to see their own fate foreshadowed in a grisly pantomime, and all the horrors of the charnel-house counterfeited on the still breathing flesh and blood.

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* The derivation of the word *Macabre* has given rise to many ingenious speculations; but it is probably a corruption of the Arab word *magbarah*, or *magabir*, a cemetery.

† *Essai Historique philos. et pittor. sur les Danses des Morts.* Rouen. 1851.

The fidelity to a conventional type so strictly adhered to by the Northern artists, is immediately departed from by those who have treated the Dance of Death south of the Alps. The subject is complicated by the higher development of religious art it finds in Italy, and the grotesque realism of a procession of animated skeletons is almost invariably redeemed by the introduction of some more imaginative symbolism. Indeed it is only in the sub-Alpine regions of the Peninsula that any picture of the *Danse Macabre* in its literal sense is found at all; and to the same districts are also confined those ossuary chapels so frequently associated with representations of the subject in Switzerland. One of these dismal reliquaries of mortality, whose walls are entirely lined with skulls enclosed behind gratings, is attached to the singularly picturesque church of the Madonna della Campagna, near Pallanza, and similar receptacles are scattered at intervals through the lake country of Italy, but nowhere occur at any distance from the foot of the Alps. Near one on the shore of the Lake of Orta is a painting of two skeletons wearing episcopal mitres, but these mortuary chapels are generally found in remote valleys, where even the rudest class of art is unknown.

The nearest approach to the typical form of the Dance of Death in Italy is the fresco on the façade of the former church of San Lazzaro, near Como, attributed by critics to the latter half of the fifteenth century. The name of the tutelary saint (the patron of the leprous and plague-stricken) makes it seem probable that the church was originally attached to a hospital or *lazzaretto* for the victims of one of those terrible disorders, while the colour of the robe worn by the principal figure shows that it is not Death in the abstract, but Pestilence that is here personified. The fresco is divided into seven compartments, in the first of which the dreadful apparition, portrayed as a living corpse, clad in the long yellow garment emblematic of contagion, beckons to a herald bearing a green flag. The second group consists of a dancing-figure of Death, and a gentleman turning his back to it; the third has suffered so much from time, that only the skull, surmounted by a red cap with a plume, is visible, turning towards some one dressed in green. In the fourth the spectre appears with long hair falling on its shoulders, and inviting a lady also dressed in green and crowned with flowers, who seems to refuse. In the fifth Death is laying hold of a female figure wearing a crown, in the sixth is dancing with a girl who is again robed in green, and in the seventh is addressing a young man, who apparently declines the honour. The frequent recurrence here of the colour green has obviously some symbolical significance, and may perhaps indicate that the fresco was a votive picture, painted by order of those who had recovered from some particular epidemic in that place.

In the cemetery of Penzolo di Valle is a fresco, supposed to be of about the same date, and known as *Il ballo della Morte*. It consists of a procession moving from left to right towards a crucifix, and is formed of the usual series of groups in due order of precedence, beginning with a Pope and gradually descending in the social scale, while each personage is escorted by a figure of Death with a scythe.

Of greater interest and importance is the wall-painting on the exterior of the church of the Misericordia, dedicated to San Bernardino da Siena, at Clusone near Bergamo. Signor Vallardi, who has published a description of this fresco, believes it to have been executed in the fifteenth century, and ascribes it to the Florentine rather than to the Lombard or Venetian school. It is divided horizontally into two compartments; the centre of the upper of which is occupied by an open sepulchre containing the bodies of an Emperor and Pope, with venomous reptiles, vipers, toads, and scorpions crawling on its edge. Before it stands a gigantic skeleton, wearing a knightly mantle, and displaying two scrolls, the one bearing the inscription—

Giunge la morte piena di equaleza,
Sole ve voglio e non vostra richezza.[*]

the other—

Degna mi son di portar corona,
E che signoresi ogni persona.[†]

Beside the tall skeleton stand two lesser ones, in the act of firing, the one an arquebuse of primitive construction, a barrel rudely fitted into a concave piece of wood; the other a bow with three arrows, emblematical, perhaps, of Plague, Famine, and War. These arrows are aimed at a group on the right, consisting of three young men mounted for the chase on richly caparisoned steeds, and attended by dogs and falcons. One, who is wounded, falls backwards in his saddle; another sees with dismay his falcon pierced by the skeleton archer; the third puts spurs to his horse and takes to flight. On the left are seen various dignitaries, offering rich bribes to the inexorable spectre, whose answer is the first distich quoted above, while among them is a king attentively examining a gem furtively presented to him by a Jew merchant. Signor Vallardi interprets this somewhat unusual incident as signifying the power of earthly gauds to distract the thoughts from death, even when close at hand, and we shall find a similar idea expressed elsewhere in another form. The lower part of the fresco has suffered a good deal from time, and some of the figures are completely effaced, but the general design is that of a procession of all ranks and degrees, each led by a skeleton, and with the following motto below :—

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[*] To all alike Death comes the same;
Yourselves, and not your wealth I claim.

[†] Worthy to wear a crown am I,
And lord it over low and high.

O tu che servi a Dio di buon core,
Non havire pagura a questo ballo venire ;
Ma alegramente veni e non temire,
Perchè chi nasce elli convene morire.[*]

This fresco is evidently a painted narrative either of a vision attributed to some saint, a favourite form of moral lesson after Dante's time, or of a popular ballad, from whose text the foregoing mottoes were extracted. Not far from Clusone, on the shore of the Lake of Iseo, stands Pisogne; and a church there, dedicated to the Madonna della Neve, has its façade decorated with a composition called *Il Dogma della Morte.* Signor Vallardi, who has described this picture, together with the one at Clusone, is inclined to attribute it to the Lombard painter, Ambrogio da Fossone, who flourished about 1500. On one side it represents a crowned skeleton firing off five arrows simultaneously from his bow, while a procession files towards him, headed by a pope, and numbering cardinals, bishops, and other lay and ecclesiastical dignitaries, all bearing treasures of gold and precious stones, to denote earthly riches.

On the opposite side of the fresco is depicted another skeleton, but disarmed and with broken bow. A saintly band moves in his direction, preceded by the Redeemer leading the Madonna; five figures follow, distinguished by the nimbus, no doubt symbolical of as many virtues, and probably corresponding to the five arrows of the triumphant skeleton. The rest of the procession consists of princes and potentates carrying banners, and amongst them, emblematical of the distant nations called to the faith, a Turk, a Moor, and a Calmuck are recognisable by their Oriental costumes.

It is obvious at the first glance that this picture resembles those of the *Dance of Death* only in form, and breathes a totally different spirit. It is a strictly theological allegory, and the second part, which represents Death disarmed and baffled, seems to symbolise the doctrine of the Resurrection, thus grafting a new and totally opposite meaning on the traditional arrangement of the *Danse Macabre.*

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[*] Oh, thou who servest God with faithful heart,
Fear not to come, nor timorously fly;
But blithely join and in this dance take part,
For all of woman born are doomed to die

But in leaving the Alps behind, even this arrangement is aba
and south of the Po there is only one group found in Italy which
at all included in the same category as the northern works refer
This is a votive tablet commemorating the escape from shipw
one Franceschino da Prignale, and placed by him in 1361 in the
of St. Peter Martyr, at Naples, but subsequently removed to the
of Santa Teresa degli Scalzi. It is a bas-relief, representing Dea
a double crown trampling on the bodies of worldly magnates, bish
prelates, while, according to the common conceit, a man is pourin
from a sack in the vain hope of bribing him to relent, as is expre
the scrolls issuing from the mouths of both figures. It seems t
solitary instance in Southern Italy of this form of moral lesson, a
other case is it found to recur there.

Almost as widely diffused as the allegory of the Dance of D
that of the *tre Morti e tre Vivi*, much more frequently illustr
Italian art. It is a perfectly distinct subject, and must have
totally different origin, as it is incapable of representation in d
form, and was probably derived from some popular hymn, or r
ballad, current in the Middle Ages. Such a composition, datin
the twelfth century, has been preserved in the archives of Ferra
is now for the first time published at full length by Signor Vi
most recent Italian writer on this subject. The opening is suff
suggestive of its familiar pictorial poem :—

Cum apertam sepulturam
Viri tres aspicerent,
Ac horribilem figuram
Intus esse cernerent,
Quendam scilicet jacentem
Nec recenter positum ;
Imo totum putrescentem
Squalidum et fetidum,
Ossa inter et aliorum
Jam nudata totaliter ;
Prius ille sepultorum
Dixit unus taliter.

The dead man then delivers a homily of more than 160 l
the vanity of earthly possessions—of riches, beauty, fine cloth
worldly delights—when this life comes to an end : observation
ciently trite to modern ears, but expressed with a certain rude fo
energy. The leading idea here conveyed has been the subject c
pictures, all resembling each other in treatment, but of which th
celebrated is that of Andrea Orcagna[*] in the Campo Santo at Pi
has been so often described, that it will suffice to recall to the rea
one portion of the fresco portrays three open sarcophagi with

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[*] The authorship of this work has been disputed, but scarcely on adequate
in the teeth of Vasari's statement.

crawling on their edges, disclosing, the one a skeleton, the others two bodies in earlier stages of decay—all of royal personages. Three splendidly accoutred horsemen, followed by a grand hunting cortège, express their horror at the spectacle by various gestures (one, who holds his nose in disgust, is, according to Vasari, Andrea Uguccione della Faggiuola); while St. Macarius, with other hermits, appears to point the moral, as he invariably does in pictures of this subject. His constant association with it may suggest the idea that he was the original author of the vision or allegory portrayed, as any other monk or solitary, varied in accordance with local tradition, would have been equally appropriate as an example of the superiority of the ascetic over the worldly life. Almost identical in treatment with this compartment of Orcagna's fresco is a picture of the same subject in the Benedictine monastery of Subiaco, the only diversity being that one of the cavaliers is there shown repentant, and about to remain with the anchoret to embrace the religious life, while the other two are seen smitten by death, and falling from their saddles in the act of riding off.

Either Piero or Jacopo Alighieri, both sons of Dante, wrote a poem in which Death menances by turns all classes of sinners with his retributive justice, and a great variety of similar hymns are attributed to St. Bernard; some narrating a dispute or *Contrasto* between the body and soul after death, each reproaching the other with its fate; some an argument between a living and a dead man; all turning on the same ideas, and enforcing the same moral. Jacopone da Todi wrote several of these *Contrasti* in the vulgar tongue, with that spontaneous and direct simplicity which gives such vivid force to all his sacred lyrics.

Petrarch's poem on "The Triumph of Death" may be said to close the series of hymns and allegories on the subject, and is typical of the poet's genius in its combination of classical form with mediæval thought, while both are made subservient to the modern romantic sentiment, of which he was the first exponent. It represents Laura as suddenly accosted while in the midst of a brilliant company, in the zenith of happiness and prosperity, by a dark-robed fury, who announces herself as Death, and claims her for a prey. She recounts her triumphs, calling up a vision of the whole earth, as far as India and Cathay, strewn with her victims, more especially those great ones, "who were called happy." Even Laura must share the universal fate. The apparition "shears from her fair head a lock of gold;"* she expires, and "death seemed lovely in that lovely face."

Here, while the mystic allegory is so blent with ideas of love as to become a vehicle for the poet's homage to his lady, the skeleton protagonist has at the same time disappeared, and is replaced by a female figure more in harmony with the tradition of antique taste. The mediæval spectre which had haunted the long twilight of the world, thus banished from Petrarch's verse, is lost in the dawn of the Italian Renaissance, and vanishes in the night of the past, as Love, the lord of life, rises above the horizon.

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* It is scarcely necessary to point out the obvious resemblance to Virgil's description of the death of Dido, when Iris descends from heaven and severs a lock of her hair before she expires.

This allegory seems to have inspired the remainder of Orcagna's fresco of the "Triumph of Death" in the Campo Santo at Pisa, of which the left-hand portion illustrates the legend of the *Tre Morti*. Death, in the form of a mail-clad fury, with uplifted scythe, swoops from the sky on bat-like wings, while horrible fiends, of monstrous deformity, carry off the souls of the wicked, and those of the just are borne upwards by the angels. Below, a group consisting of the poor, the lame, the blind, and those suffering from every phase of human misery, are invoking Death as a deliverer; but the destroyer is passing them by to select a victim from a happy party on the right, amid surroundings suggestive of the pleasures of the world. Seated in tranquil enjoyment under trees laden with golden fruit, they are lulled into the dream of life by the distractions of the senses, here symbolised by music, and represented by a man playing on the violin and a woman on a small organ. No unlovely skeleton breaks the charmed serenity of this exquisite group; but with a strange mixture of classical and mediæval allegory, the approach of death is heralded by two winged geniuses, who float overhead with inverted torches. The whole treatment so closely follows Petrarch's verse as to suggest the idea that the lovely figure holding a greyhound on her lap, and looking towards the spectator with a pensive expression, immediately below the aërial messengers, may be Laura herself, whom Death is approaching exactly in the form described by the poet.

The same dramatic contrast between present enjoyment of life and its imminent termination is emphasised in a wall-painting of the Triumph of Death in the porch of the hospital at Palermo, generally attributed to Antonio Crescenzio, known as the Sicilian Masaccio. The triumphant skeleton is mounted on a lean horse in full career, and his arrows are striking princes, pontiffs, and all the great ones of the earth, while the wretched and the diseased call on him for deliverance. Not among them, however, will the bolt fall, but amid a merry group on the left, where some dancing girls surround a zither player, and in the fulness of enjoyment are seen smitten by a mortal pallor, the precursor of dissolution. Above these, again, are a company of youths and maidens seated beside a fountain, and ignorant as yet of the gloom around them.

Another series of pictures bearing the same name seem to have had a different origin from these two, and to have been suggested by some of the carnival masquerades.

Of these, "Triumphs," in imitation of those which celebrated Roman victories in classical times, were a favourite form, in which one of the heroes of antiquity was represented, borne on a lofty car, and surrounded by all the emblems of conquest. To substitute Death, in his character of universal victor over humanity, was a novel idea, which much pleased the people of Florence when put into execution by Piero di Cosimo in 1511. The spectacle devised by him and called the Masquerade of Death, consisted of a great car painted with cross-bones, and drawn by black buffaloes, with sepulchres represented all round it, and Death armed with his scythe on the top. At every halt the graves opened, and the dead came forth clad in black linen, on which the anatomy of a skeleton was accurately portrayed in white, while death's-head masks completed the illusion. In this dolorous guise they chanted Antonio Alamanni's poem "Il Carro della Morte," with the refrain :—

Morti siam come vedete,
Così morti vedrem voi,
Fummo già come voi siete,
*Voi sarete come noi.**

The car was followed by a number of lean and bony horses, and a company of people bearing black banners with death's heads and cross-bones, who intoned the *Miserere* as they walked.

A similar spectacle was given by torchlight at Palermo on the 3rd of February, 1563, and was probably intended as a religious pageant to rival the profane mummery of the carnival, as it was preceded by the crucifix and other sacred emblems, and by 200 people scourging themselves in penance. The car was led by Time, and Death standing on the summit dragged after him fifteen prisoners in chains, representing pontiffs, princes, and other exalted personages.

Titian's Triumph of Death† recalls in its main features the idea of these spectacles, as it has the skeleton victor leaning on his scythe enthroned on a funeral car drawn by oxen, preceded by the Parcæ, and surrounded by the prostrate forms of heroes and heroines of antiquity. The names of Hector and Alexander, of Semiramis, Cleopatra, and others, are inscribed beside them, while a pontiff whose name is illegible is among the victims. Very similar in treatment is a painting in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore at Bologna, which has, again, the car drawn by oxen, with the royally-draped skeleton seated on high and a crowd of subjects around him. The Last Judgment is here introduced in an oval, and there is a group in which a man plays the violin, and others listen to him, symbolical of the charm exercised by the pleasures of the senses even when Death is close at hand. The reader will remember how the same idea is conveyed in the fresco at Clusone in the figure of the king who contemplates a gem as he stands on the edge of the grave.

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* Dead are we, as thus you see,
Dead shall we see you I trow ;
We are as you then shall be,
You shall be as we are now.

† It was nominally intended as an illustration of Petrarch's poem, but in no way follows its text. It was engraved by Silvestro Pomareda of Rome in 1748.

We have thus seen that the Dance of Death, originally imported from above the Alps, was generally abandoned in Italian art in favour of the ascetic allegory of the *Tre Morti*; while the semi-classical Triumph of Death, first christianised by being placed side by side with the Last Judgment, has finally become a canticle of passion under the warm breath of reviving humanity. The skeleton personifications which Italy thus modified or rejected were the offspring of the same northern imagination which peopled solitude and darkness with hosts of spectres, and surrounded itself with a world of visionary terrors.

The relapse into gloomy superstition which darkened the earlier period of the Middle Age has generally been attributed to the spirit of monastic asceticism, but it may perhaps have had its source in a diametrically opposite tendency. It appeared at any rate simultaneously with the spread of opinions profoundly hostile to the teaching of the Church, the subsequent extinction of which has effaced the view of their powerful influence on the public mind. The creed of the Albigenses, Paterini, and other kindred sects was stamped out in blood, but the uniformity of faith thus enforced was perhaps rather apparent than real, and the opinions no longer openly professed lingered in the minds of secret votaries, until the movement of Luther drew to itself all the forms of smouldering discontent with the teaching of Rome.

Originally propagated in the East, the first germs of that discontent were transported into central Europe by the great commercial artery of the Danube, from the colony of Paulician sectaries in Bulgaria, who had brought with them from Asia Minor the Manichæan tenets inherited from the Gnostics, and partially embodying the teaching of Zoroaster.* Principal among these was the belief in the creation of the material universe by the evil principle, with which was associated the denial of the Resurrection and other dogmas of Christianity. Such a creed found in the circumstances of Europe from the tenth to the thirteenth centuries an apparent argument in its favour, and approving itself to minds oppressed by the most terrible calamities, cannot but have exercised a powerful influence on the imagination even of those whose faith it failed utterly to subvert. For if the existence of evil, so palpable to mortal vision, be at all times a stumbling-block in the way of Christian belief, to the poor and suffering in those dark ages, the lord of the abyss might well have seemed the supreme ruler of the world. The miseries that afflicted Europe during and after the break-up of the Roman Empire are frightful to contemplate in their extent and duration. Death, in his triple form of war, famine, and pestilence, was let loose upon humanity, and reaped harvests of perpetual havoc. The southern coasts of Europe were harried by the Saracen, the northern by the Norman pirates, at the same time that the countries between were devastated by a Tartar tribe so terrible that the people of Italy added a special clause to their litany imploring deliverance from the arrows of the Hungarians. Those who escaped these public calamities were the victims of petty local hostilities, as every baron waged war against his neighbour, and the wretched bondsmen of the soil suffered in their lords' quarrels. Agriculture was suspended or discouraged amid these turmoils, and famines, lasting for years together, so laid waste the most fertile countries as to compel the poor to sell themselves for sustenance, and reduce the free population to voluntary servitude. The plague was seldom long absent from Europe, and its ravages, unchecked by medical skill or sanitary precautions, destroyed at every visitation a formidable fraction of the human race.

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* It has been denied that the Albigenses held the Manichæan tenets, but it is considered established by Hallam and all the best authorities.

It was not wonderful that amid such scenes of desolation the minds of men should see a host of malignant demons interposed between them and a beneficent Creator, and seek to transfer the responsibility for human suffering to a power which could contemplate it with unmixed delight. Such a power the Northern fancy, inspired by Eastern belief, created in the popular fiend of the Middle Ages, who appears not so much in the capacity of a spiritual tempter as of an agent of material harm. From him and minor emissaries of evil at work in every corner of the earth witchcraft and magic were supposed to derive their borrowed strength, and to a firm belief in a malevolent being as an active principle of the universe we may refer all similar delusions of the human brain. For they could never have been propagated without a substantial belief in their own unlawful powers by those accused of exercising them, and a vital faith in the interference of the Prince of Darkness in the government of the world was necessary to produce the epidemics of panic rage against his votaries. His position once recognised, the apportionment of his kingdom among his satellites would follow as a matter of course, and the embodiment of every individual form of evil in demon or spectre form was the favourite exercise of the popular invention, at that time without any other outlet.

The imagination once uncurbed ran riot in grotesque horror; the night was thick with unseen shapes of evil; the churches were seen to blaze in the darkness with the unhallowed rites of demon worship; the lonely heath resounded to the infernal orgies of the witches' sabbath; the spectral huntsman rode the air, and the ghastly inmates of the churchyard stalked abroad, reanimated by a diabolical counterfeit of life. All the powers of ill are personified in the folk-lore of Provence to the present day, and that not as a poetical figure of speech, but with a firm belief in their phantom existence. The witch's power over this spectre world is there still an article of popular faith, and she is supposed to visit at will the subterranean realm where the Black Lamb who butts at the dying sinner, *Cambal* the spirit of miasma, who rises at midnight in white drapery from the ground, the Laundress who sits on the mountain top and wrings her white clouds on the dripping country, *Gripet* the influenza demon, and hosts of other mischievous sprites, hold high revel and rejoice in their evil powers.

In this sombre hierarchy of malevolence, Death, the king of terrors and arch enemy of mortality, might be expected to hold a conspicuous place, and accordingly he figures as the chief actor in a whole series of legends half humorous, half ghastly. He rejoices in cruelty, he triumphs in destruction, malignant and omnipotent, he knows neither restraint nor relenting, and man glorifies his tyrant, and jeers at his own mortality in the awful satire of the Dance of Death.

The Northern spirit fights its fears by meeting them with mockery, the Southern seeks to shun them by forgetfulness, and the skeleton harlequin never attained to any general popularity in Italy. Religion, indeed, by its own symbolism might there bid men think of another world, and promise them a renewed spiritual existence, but for this lesson it was not necessary to ransack the secrets of the sepulchre, and animate the mouldering relics of humanity with a fiendish and fantastic life. The grave was sealed with the inscription that bade its inmate rest in a peace that should only be broken by the trumpet of the Archangel, not by premature resuscitation in a ghastly skeleton masquerade. The traditions of classical taste were equally opposed to such imaginings, while the soft harmonies of southern nature, the gracious contours of hill and valley, the light that throws a garment of beauty over the landscape, and glorifies all it reveals, have no suggestion of the stern truths so uncompromisingly set forth in the grim allegory of the North.

Her Cuckoo.

(*She speaks.*)

We heard it calling, sweet and low,
That tender April morn; we stood
And listened in the quiet wood,
We heard it, ay some time ago.

It came, and with a strange, sweet cry,
A friend, and from a far-off land;
We stood and listened, hand in hand,
And heart to heart, my love and I.

In dreamland then we found our joy,
And so it seem'd as 'twere the bird
That Helen in old times had heard
At noon beneath the oaks of Troy.

O time far off, and yet so near!
It came to her in that hush'd grove,
It warbled while the wooing throve—
It sang the song she liked to hear.

Ay sweet it is to hear and heed
The Wizard of the Woods in spring
And O it is a blessed thing
To love the lips that fondly plead.

And now I hear its voice again,
And still its message is of peace,
Of fruitful days of still increase—
It sings of love that will not cease—
For me it never sings in vain.

FREDERICK LOCKER.

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XX.

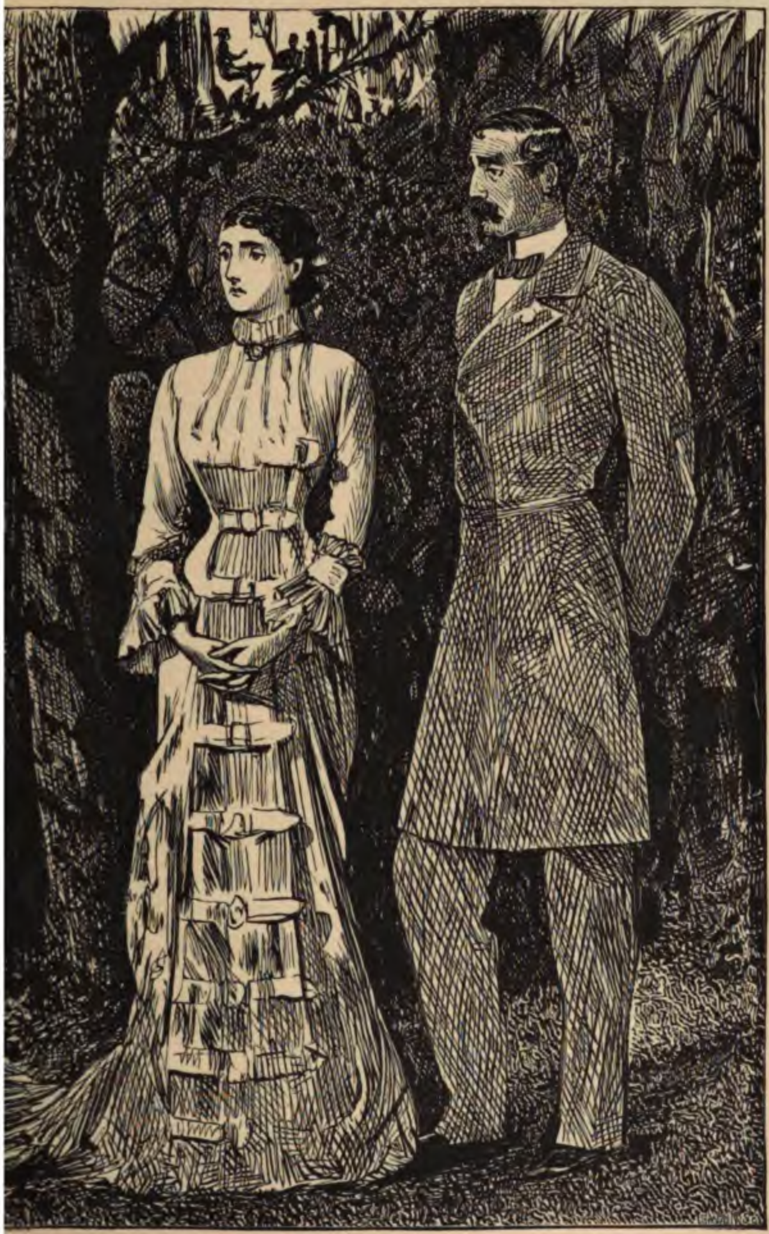
On the Road to La Trappe.

WE all know now that the war of 1870 was undertaken in opposition to the wishes of a vast majority of the French people. That fact, whatever it may be worth, has been conclusively established by the reports of the different Prefects since made public, and no one any longer dreams of disputing it. Whether any conceivable war, just or unjust, necessary or unnecessary, would not, in these days, be unwelcome to the larger portion of any civilised community, and whether, in the case of the Franco-German war, the discontent of the population was founded upon selfish or upon patriotic and moral considerations, are questions which admit of discussion; but it may safely be asserted that a stranger who should have happened to find himself in France during the days immediately preceding the outbreak of hostilities, and who should have endeavoured to gauge the temper of the people by the evidence of his own senses, would have been a man of no ordinary penetration if he had discovered that the coming conflict was in any special sense an unpopular one.

If, here and there, a bureaucrat, like M. de Trémonville, shook his head, or a shopkeeper or two sighed, or a merchant looked grave, it was not that their minds were harassed by doubts as to whether an attack upon Prussia were justifiable or no; and such isolated persons were har distinguishable among the crowds that thronged the cafés, night and haranguing, cheering and toasting the success of the army, or para the streets in gangs, while they bawled out patriotic songs with more unanimity than of unison. Indeed, what with those whose enth

AKE TURNED AWAY, AND [illegible] BACK.

[illegible], what with those whose enthus



JEANNE TURNED AWAY, AND STOOD STILL, WITH CLASPED HANDS.

was aroused by the gentle stimulus of official promptings, what with the idlers who are ever attracted by the sight of regiments on the march towards the frontier, and what with a certain number of honest folks who, to use the words of Uncle Toby, believed that this war was "but the getting together of quiet and harmless people, with their swords in their hands, to keep the ambitious and the turbulent within bounds," there was no lack of citizens ready to do the requisite amount of shouting.

Even in Algiers, where republicanism was tolerably strong, and where the plébiscite of May had revealed the existence of a growing dislike to the established form of government, there were no public demonstrations save such as were of a warlike kind. Farewell dinners and eloquent speeches were not wanting; the newspapers forgot their political differences while publishing denunciations of the infamous Bismarck, relating startling anecdotes bearing upon his private life and that of his royal master, and predicting the speedy discomfiture of the barbarian host; and every day an assemblage composed of all classes of the inhabitants collected upon the quays to see the last of the homeward-bound regiments, and to raise a parting cheer as the huge transports glided slowly out to sea, with flags flying and bands playing. It is true that a great many of these worthy people afterwards averred that they had deprecated from the outset a war dictated solely by aims of selfish ambition; but they disguised their feelings very successfully at the time.

In the midst of all this bustle and excitement the Algerian world almost forgot Mademoiselle de Mersac's approaching marriage. Congratulatory visits ceased; the tongues of the gossips busied themselves with other topics; even in the bride-elect's own household the coming event was less spoken of than Marshal Lebœuf's plan and the unexpected defection of the South-German states. To Jeanne this was an immense relief; and a still greater was a slackening in the attentions of M. de Saint-Luc, who at this time was much occupied in bidding adieu to old friends and comrades, and in watching, a little wistfully, their departure to take part in the great game of which he could now only be a spectator, and who was seldom able to leave the town before nightfall. Even when he did come, he could talk of nothing but the war, the prospect of a rising among the more turbulent of the Arab tribes, and the appearance of the troops who were being hurried out of the colony. And so long as he confined himself to such subjects as these, he was as pleasant a companion as anyone else, and a more intelligent one than the generality.

At length the last of the transports cleared out of the harbour; the streets were no longer blocked by out-going regiments and long trains of baggage-waggons; Zouaves, Turcos, Linesmen, Chasseurs d'Afrique, and Spahis, all were gone; and the town resumed its normal aspect, and more than its normal quiet. Then came a week of suspense, which developed into a vague uneasiness, as day succeeded to day, and no news arrived from the seat of war, except some uncertain rumours as to the disposition of the forces. M. de Fontvieille began to grumble. "This Emperor inspires me with no confidence," he said. "Why does he stay in Paris instead of joining his army? His uncle would have been across the Rhine before now."

In due time, however, came tidings of the affair of Saarbrück, magnified, in the course of transmission, into a decisive victory; and then the croakers were put to silence, and the timid reassured.

It was Léon who, radiant with joy, brought the newspaper containing this good news to El Biar, and read it out in the stable-yard, while Jeanne, who had been holding a conference with Pierre Cauvin, peeped over his shoulder, and the Arab grooms and helpers suspended their work to listen. "*Louis a reçu son baptême de feu.*" It was the Emperor's despatch that he read—that despatch which has been chuckled over by every fool in Christendom, and which has been quoted over and over again—for no very apparent reason—as an example of empty bombast. I don't know that anybody thought it specially ridiculous at the time. Certainly Léon's small audience did not.

"We begin well," said the young man complacently, folding up the paper and replacing it in his pocket. "M. de Fontvieille will believe now that the Emperor knows what he is about."

"A man may be a bad ruler and a good soldier, I suppose," remarked Jeanne. "Let us hope that it is so in his case, and that he may finish this war as soon as possible. It is horrible to think that no victory can be won without thousands of homes being made miserable."

"Thousands of people die every day in their beds," said Léon. "There will always be plenty of misery so long as the world lasts; and what happier end could a man wish for than to be killed in battle? I am not sure that war is an unmixed evil."

"The good God would not have permitted war to exist if there were not some necessity for it," put in Pierre Cauvin, piously. "It is sad to think of the poor folks whose crops are destroyed by the armies; but if they lose, others gain—particularly those who have horses to sell. There is no beast in M. le Marquis' stable that I could not dispose of for the *remonte*, to-morrow, at the price of 800 francs."

"Apropos," said Léon, "I had a letter this morning from Mr. Barrington, to whom I had written, forwarding him the price of the horse which he had left here to be sold. Unfortunately I took the first good offer I had for him. If I had only foreseen that we should have war, I should not have parted with him so readily. However, Mr. Barrington seems satisfied. He writes in a very friendly way, and sends his congratulations to you and Saint-Luc. And now I think of it, there was an enclosure for you, which I must have put somewhere," continued this exasperating young man, searching vainly in all his pockets—"unless I have torn it up by mistake, or dropped it. Oh, here it is."

Jeanne took her letter with an unmoved countenance, and presently carried it, still unopened, indoors with her.

I hope nobody will think the worse of Jeanne because it must be recorded of her that, as soon as she had put four solid stone walls between her and the outer world, she took Barrington's letter out of its envelope and kissed it before reading it. No doubt she forgot her self-respect and her duty to her affianced husband in so doing; but it must be remembered that she was quite alone at the time—which, as everyone will allow, makes a difference. If a prying *diable boiteux* could look in upon us, and exhibit us to our friends at such times as we deemed ourselves most secure from observation, should we not be fortunate indeed to escape conviction of any worse sin than that of raising a sheet of note-paper to our lips? Moreover, Jeanne did not consider her love for Barrington a sin at all, but at the most a humiliation—a weakness to be concealed from the world at large, not by any means to be cast out from her heart, supposing that to be possible. How she arranged matters with the Curé of El Biar, to whom she confessed her peccadilloes with devout regularity and without conscious reservation, I don't know. Possibly she may not have thought it incumbent upon her to inform that holy man of matters which, to her mind, did not come within the category of offences against God or man.

So she kissed the unconscious sheet, and sighed over it, and then read it.

The letter was as little worthy of so much honour as its writer was of the heart he had won; but who or what gets rigid justice in this chaotic world? Barrington wrote much as he spoke—easily, fluently, without much consideration, and thinking, all the time, rather of himself than of the person whom he addressed. His composition—a somewhat diffuse one—was well worded, and not devoid of a certain sentimental grace of diction; but it breathed of self in every line. While penning it, he had been smarting under a genuine and heartfelt sense of injury. In so far as it was given to him to love anyone, he had loved, and did love Jeanne. He had felt tolerably certain, too, that his love was returned; and as soon as he had rallied from the first shock produced upon his mind by Léon's intelligence, he had had little difficulty in persuading himself that he had been jilted. To a man of his temperament such a conviction was almost more painful than the bereavement which it implied. "Now that I have said all that good manners require in the way of congratulations," he wrote, "I may perhaps be allowed to cast aside conventionality for a few minutes, and to confess candidly that the announcement of your engagement to M. de Saint-Luc seems to me too terrible to have any foundation in reality. It is so few weeks since my own eyes and ears convinced me of your positive dislike to this man that I can hardly bring myself to believe in your having, of your own free will, chosen him to be your husband. The whole business strikes me as so preposterous that, as I sit writing here in my club in London, I keep asking myself whether the gloomy stillness of this big room, the rattle of the cabs outside, the peculiar, all-pervading London smell of smoke and stables and the glint of sallow sunlight which falls upon my paper, and upon your brother's letter lying open before me, are not part and parcel of some horrid dream, and whether I shall not presently awake to see the glorious African sun streaming through my *persiennes*, and hear the shrill 'Arri!—ar-r-r-i!' of my old friends the donkey-drivers, and those plaintive, drawling street-cries of the Arabs, which used to rouse me every morning in dear old Algiers. Or is London the reality, and Algiers the dream? I begin to suspect that my life there was nothing else. Of the happy illusions, the groundless fancies, the foolish hopes which I built up for myself in that delicious dreamland, I had, perhaps, better not speak. They are all fading away fast now, dispersed by the pitiless, palpable presence of that letter, dated 'Campagne de Mersac, Algiers,' which stares me in the face, and will not be ignored. I suppose I ought not to complain. No man has a right to expect more than a certain meed of happiness, and perhaps I have had my share. And memory at least remains to me, and can never be taken from me. Memory, which restores to us all that is sweet and beautiful in the past, without its anxieties and petty cares—the roses without the thorns; the sunshine without the rain. Memory, which, in this world of constant change and decay, is a more real and permanent friend than happiness. Memory, which"—et cetera, et cetera. There was a good deal more of this kind of thing. The writer, losing himself gradually in the mists of a complacent sentimentalism, wandered farther and farther from his point, and entirely forgot his original intention of piercing Jeanne's faithless breast by thrusts of polished sarcasm. He wound up, quite contentedly, at length with a poetical, but rather obscure paragraph, the import of which appeared to be that, miserable though he was above all other men, yet his sensibility and culture were such that he could draw from affliction's self sources of delight undreamt of by less refined natures.

To Jeanne, who understood but very imperfectly the character of the man whom she loved, all this poor stuff was the most pathetic eloquence. Her own character was drawn in clear, firm, decided lines, and had none of the shifting shades and gradations which enabled Barrington to look at a subject from fifty different points of view, and to change his mode of action with reference to it a dozen times in as many hours. Black was black to her, and white, white. If Barrington's letter did not mean that he loved her, and that he saw she did not love Saint-Luc, what did it mean? At that moment it was as clear as daylight to her that she had made a terrible mistake; and she could not help asking herself whether, even now, it were an irreparable one. Her first duty, she conceived, was to save Léon; but if she could accomplish this end as well by marrying Barrington as by marrying Saint-Luc, she would throw over the latter unhesitatingly. The difficulty was that, Barri ton not having avowed his love in so many words, and it being imp for her to let him understand that he might venture to do so, she could not free herself from her present entanglement without risk of bringing about her brother's ruin. She sat chafing under the weight of the chains which she had forged for herself, and seeking vainly for some means of breaking them, till she could bear the confinement of the house no longer; and putting on her hat and gloves, went back to the stable-yard, thinking that perchance some practical solution might suggest itself to her in the free open air.

The sight of her pony-chaise standing before the coachhouse put it into her head to take a drive out into the country, and she at once summoned a groom, and told him to put Caïd and Sheikh to. These were the same ponies which Saint-Luc had sold to Léon, upon such favourable terms for the purchaser, a few months before, and which she had for a long time refused to drive. Latterly she had taken to making use of them pretty frequently, it being no longer a matter of any importance whether or no they ought to be regarded in the light of a gift from their former owner. They were a good serviceable pair, not very taking to the eye, but willing and enduring, like all Arabs, and faster trotters than the generality of their race. Jeanne had put a good half-mile of road between herself and home before she was well settled in her seat.

Westward she drove, along the hilly road which leads to Koléah, regardless of the sultry heat and blinding glare, urged on by the goad of her feverish regrets, and caring little whither she went, so that she were able to move swiftly. There was an oppressive hush and stillness in the atmosphere. Over the Atlas mountains, towards the south, brooded a sullen, coppery haze, veiling the snow; northward the sea heaved with a slow, glassy swell; the dusty olive trees that bordered the road, the creepers that hung among the cactus hedges—even the tough, sharp-pointed aloes themselves—seemed to droop and sicken under the fierce rays of the sun. Jeanne looked neither to right nor left; but whirled on through the choking dust and the hot simmering air, past parched fields and silent farmhouses, and many a dry ravine and stony watercourse; till, rattling through the little village of Chéragas, where the white houses were all closely shuttered, and neither man nor beast was stirring, she emerged, at length, upon the upland of Staouéli, and the fertile acres surrounding the monastery of La Trappe.

This plain, once a sterile waste, has been rendered productive, after years of labour, by the monks, assisted by some Governments subventions and private donations. All around their lonely dwelling the air is heavy with the perfume of the sweet geranium fields, which form one of their chief sources of revenue. From the sale of a scent distilled from these plants, from that of a liqueur manufactured on the premises, and from the produce of its own fields, orange groves, and orchards, the silent brotherhood is now able to support itself, and to dispense a fairly large annual amount in charity. It is a community highly respected in the neighbourhood, living as hard and bitter a life as the most determined self-tormentor could wish for—but not a useless one.

The sight of the monastery—a long, low, whitewashed building, standing close to the road, and faced by a clump of stunted palms—reminded Jeanne that she had accomplished a distance of twelve kilometres without slackening speed—a fact to which the heaving flanks and streaming coats of her ponies added their mute testimony. She drew up in the shadow of a wall, and, dropping her reins, allowed the tired beasts to rest for a while.

Presently a lay brother waddled out, shading his eyes from the glare with his hand, and took a leisurely survey of the new-comer. He recognised Mademoiselle de Mersac, with whom he had had dealings from time to time on behalf of his Superiors, and welcomed her with all the warmth of a naturally garrulous soul, whose lot had been cast by ironical destiny among the living dead. While the good man chattered about the crops and the prospects of a sirocco, and the news from the seat of war, and what not, sponging the horses' noses as he talked, and feeding them with slices of black bread, Jeanne let her eyes roam over the melancholy white façade of the building, wondering vaguely what manner of existence was led by the ghastly, mysterious figures whom it concealed, and almost finding it in her heart to envy them their immunity from all earthly cares and perplexities. In her present mood, she was inclined to underrate physical suffering as compared with mental. There are people out in the world who undergo a daily penance as severe as that of La Trappe, and get no credit for it; a penance not of silence but of speech—of forced smiles, of feigned sympathies, of perpetual righteous dissimulation. The monks at least have the consolation of working towards a definite end, and of seeing their reward draw nearer every day, she thought, remembering an inscription which she had noticed once before upon the wall of this same monastery, "*S'il est triste de vivre à La Trappe, qu'il est doux d'y mourir!*"

The words hung in her memory and haunted her, long after she had bidden farewell to her friend of the brown robe, and had set her face homewards again. To one so bewildered and unhappy as herself, death, indeed, appeared sweeter than life; and it was in all sincerity that she sighed out, "Oh, if I could only get a sun-stroke or a fever, and shake off all my troubles in that simple way, how glad and thankful I should be!"

It may perhaps be true that,

> Whatever crazy sorrow saith,
> No life that breathes with human breath,
> Has ever truly longed for death.

But Jeanne, at all events, thought she did so; and that, when you come to consider of it, is pretty nearly the same thing.

It is, however, one thing to desire dissolution in the abstract, and another to face the painful, sickening wrench with which body and soul are separated; and it so fell out that, very shortly after breathing the aspiration recorded above, our heroine had occasion to appreciate this distinction. For while, lost in her own sad thoughts, she hurried her steeds upon their homeward way, there met her suddenly, upon the brow of a hill, a long string of laden camels, moving slowly to the westward, their wild Arab drivers pacing beside them, and their black, misshapen shadows thrown far beyond the road by the sinking sun. To the human eye nothing can be more pleasing than the quaint, unexpected pictures of desert life which thus start up, every now and again, in the midst of the European civilisation of Algiers; to the equine, nothing is more odious. I suppose that there are very few living horses, Arab or other, who can look with perfect equanimity upon a camel, which, in truth, when viewed in an impartial light, and divested of all traditional associations, is as hideous a brute, and as like the creation of a nightmare, as can well be conceived. Caïd, Jeanne's near pony, was a most worthy, well-meaning little beast free from any kind of vice, and, albeit of a somewhat nervous temperament, too conscious of the responsibilities which rested upon him when in harness to indulge in anything beyond a sober shy at the sight of donkeys, wheelbarrows, veiled Mauresques, and other spectacles of an alarming nature; but he drew the line at camels. In the presence of these ungainly monsters he lost all courage and self-respect, and became as one possessed; and now, perceiving the approach of his old enemies, he gave a snort, a plunge, and a swerve, which shook his driver roughly out of dreamland, and very nearly out of her seat into the bargain. She, resenting this abrupt show of insubordination, and acting upon the impulse of the moment, foolishly cut him sharply over the shoulder with her whip. That was final. Caïd flung up his heels, threw himself into his collar, and made a clean bolt for it. As for Sheikh, he, finding himself tearing along the road, willy-nilly, at the rate of an express train, naturally concluded that something very dreadful was the matter, and became as panic-stricken as his companion. And so, in the course of a few seconds, Jeanne came to a clear sense of the fact that she had lost all control over her horses. She twisted the reins round and round her hands, and pulled with all the force of a tolerably strong pair of arms; but she might as well have tugged at a stone wall. There was nothing for it but to sit still, and let the ponies run until they should be exhausted, or until something should stop them.

Jeanne did not like it. She knew that she was in imminent danger of being dashed, head first, against a road as hard as granite, and the prospect had nothing inviting for her. To be killed outright might be a blessing—though even that did not seem quite so clear as it had done five minutes before; but to be mangled, stunned, battered, to break an arm or a leg, to spend the rest of the long, hot summer in bed, and probably not die of it at all, these were possibilities before which Jeanne, courageous as she was, felt her heart fail, and a cold chill creep through her veins. Meanwhile, her light carriage was swaying, lurching, and bumping onwards at a pace too good to last. Before her was a stretch of flat, straight road; but at the end of it was an awkward sharp corner that she knew of, and beyond that was a bridge with stone parapets. It was true that, if by any miracle she should happen to pass safely through these perils, she would shortly reach a stiff piece of rising ground, upon which it was likely enough that she might succeed in pulling up the runaways; but she plainly perceived that her chance of ever seeing that hill was but a poor one, and, in the meantime, she was drawing nearer and nearer to the dreaded corner. Suddenly the tall figure of a horseman shot up between her and the sky, and stood motionless directly in her path. Recognising Saint-Luc and the new danger that threatened her simultaneously, she stood up, steadying herself by grasping the dashboard, and shouted to him, with all her force, to get out of the way. But it was too late. Either he did not hear or did not understand; for, instead of drawing to one side, he spurred his horse towards her, and threw up his arms.

The catastrophe was over in a moment. Caïd swerved violently, crossed his legs, and came down with a crash like the fall of a house, dragging the other pony after him; and Jeanne, thrown forwards by the shock, found herself upon her hands and knees on the wayside grass, dazed and shaken, but not in the least hurt.

When she had in some degree recovered command of her senses, she was standing up, mechanically brushing the dust off the front of her dress. Saint-Luc was bending over her anxiously, with a face as white as his linen jacket; the ponies, trembling and subdued, were upon their legs again, and the blood was slowly falling, drop by drop, from an ugly scrape upon Caïd's shoulder.

"How unfortunate!" she ejaculated, pointing to this wound; "he is marked for life."

"Who? That wretched little beast? As if it signified!" cried Saint-Luc; "but you—are you sure you are not hurt?"

"Yes, there is nothing the matter with me—nothing at all."

"God be praised!" he exclaimed piously, taking off his hat.

Jeanne looked at him with a vague surprise, but said nothing. Her ideas were still a little confused, and she did not yet realise that Saint-Luc had just saved her life, and might possibly expect some words of thanks.

"What a mercy it was that I chanced to meet you just in the nick of time!" he went on. "I am sorry I had to give you such a terrible shaking; but it was the only thing to be done, and the ponies will not be much the worse, I think."

"I should have stopped them when I got to the hill," answered Jeanne, not very graciously. "What could have made you place yourself just in our path? I shall never be able to understand how it was that we were not both killed."

"A horse will never run into another horse, or a man, or indeed anything, unless he cannot possibly stop himself," said Saint-Luc, with some modest satisfaction in the success of his rather hazardous exploit. "I knew that your runaways would see me from a sufficient distance to make an attempt at getting out of my way, and I thought it very likely that they would do what, in fact, they did do—swerve, and slip up. There was the chance of your being thrown out and hurt, no doubt; but I think you would have had a worse accident if I had not stopped you. It makes me shudder to think of what might have happened if your carriage had been dashed, as it almost certainly would have been, against the parapet of that bridge."

"Yes, I had been dreading the bridge," confessed Jeanne. "I daresay you were quite right to do as you did. The only misfortune is that Caïd should be so terribly marked; for I know Léon will be very much annoyed when he sees him. However, it can't be helped. The best thing we can do now is to get him home as quickly as possible, poor little fellow, and have him attended to."

So saying, she got into the pony-carriage again, and resumed the reins, while Saint-Luc admiringly complimented her upon her courage.

"Most ladies," he said, "would have insisted upon walking home."

"Not if they were as tired as I am," answered Jeanne, with a faint smile, as she drew her whip gently across Sheikh's back.

The remainder of the homeward journey—an interminable distance, as it seemed to her—was performed, of necessity, at a foot's pace, her lover riding beside her with an air of watchful solicitude, which, considering that one of her ponies was dead lame and that both were thoroughly exhausted and subdued, was perhaps slightly absurd. At ordinary times, such a display of care and implied proprietorship would have irritated her beyond bearing, but now she was too dispirited to mind it. In her adventure and its commonplace ending, she fancied she could trace an answer to those questioning hopes and fears as to her future with which she had set out some hours before. Apparently there were but two alternatives before her—death, or Saint-Luc; and since the former destiny was evidently not to be hers, where was the use of quarrelling with the latter?

She bore his respectful homage and adoring glances with a composure half forced, half apathetic; and remembering, as her nerves gradually recovered themselves, what was due to her rescuer, thanked him for risking his safety, in a little, cold, set speech, which he jumped at as a hungry dog snatches at a dry bone.

"You have nothing to thank me for," he cried eagerly. "My life is yours to do what you like with, and I am ready to lay it down for you whenever and wherever you please.

"You are very kind to say so," she replied gravely; "but that is not necessary, nor likely to be. Will you not come in?" she added, for they were now at the entrance of the Campagne de Mersac.

"No, thank you," he answered hesitatingly. "You are tired, and do not want me."

She did not contradict him. "Till to-morrow, then," she said, bowing to him, as she turned in through the gates with a look of relief upon her face which she was as powerless to conceal as he was to ignore.

And if Jeanne went to bed with a heavy heart that night, it is probable that Saint-Luc's was not much lighter.

CHAPTER XXI.

AN UNROMANTIC PARTING.

THE very first thing that Jeanne did, on waking, the next morning, was to read Barrington's letter over again from beginning to end; for mere courtesy required of her that she should return some answer to it; and though her half-formed hopes of yesterday were all faded and dead now, she had not yet quite made up her mind as to the shape which that answer should take.

A reperusal of the letter did not help her much. Who does not know what it is to pore and puzzle over a carelessly-written page, and to turn the words this way and that, with an intense longing to get at the writer's real thought and meaning? And who has not learnt the futility of such efforts? How much do those nearest and dearest to us know of what is passing in our minds, or we of what is passing in theirs, even when we sit side by side? We can but suspect and guess, and, as often as not, guess wrongly; and if voice, face, and gesture cannot answer our unspoken questions, what but mere bewilderment and vexation can be expected from a prolonged scrutiny of paper and ink? Jeanne worried herself for an hour over Barrington's rhapsodical effusion, and was a good deal further from understanding it at the end of that time than she had been at the beginning—though, to be sure, its meaning would not have presented much difficulty to a more indifferent reader. In the end it seemed to her at once wisest and most dignified to leave the hints it contained without response, and to reply only to its congratulations. She sat down, therefore, and penned a short, formal note, in which she thanked Mr. Barrington for his good wishes, referred, in a few well-chosen words, to the pleasant days she had spent in his company during the past winter and spring, and expressed a friendly hope that her acquaintance with him might be renewed at some future time. This was all very well; and had Jeanne's letter been suffered to end with her signature, it would have conveyed a salutary snub to a quarter where such gentle correctives were much needed. But unfortunately she thought fit to add, after a good deal of hesitation, a postscript which spoilt all. "I do not know why you should say that I dislike M. de

Saint-Luc. He is, and always has been, very kind to me. In France, as you know, marriages are usually arrangements of family convenience; but in my case, at least, my consent was asked, and given. I suppose that few people, either in France or England, can choose exactly the life they would prefer; and no doubt everybody has dreams and fancies, such as you write of, which end in nothing. My old friend, the Curé of El Biar, who likes to philosophise, says that all earthly happiness is imaginary, and that the more it is confined to dreams the nearer it approaches to reality."

Having made this unwise addition to her letter, Jeanne folded and addressed it; and then, taking up Barrington's two sheets, resolutely tore them across and across, and dropped them into the waste-paper basket. "I have done with the past," quoth she, as she descended the stairs to face the present, which, in the person of M. de Saint-Luc, might, as she knew, be expected to manifest itself at any moment.

An unexpected respite was, however, in store for her. At that moment Saint-Luc, instead of toiling up the hill towards El Biar, was seated in a railway-carriage, jogging westward at the deliberate pace affected by Algerian express-trains, and bent upon the charitable errand of visiting the sick. The early post had brought him a piteous appeal from a young officer of his acquaintance, one Lasalle, who, having been ordered to the hill fortress of Milianah some months before, was now detained there by an attack of malarious fever, after all his comrades had left for the war. "Come and see me," wrote this unlucky soldier, "you, who do not know how to fill up your days. I do not say that you will find the excursion a pleasant one (though it is a fact that our air up here is cooler than that of Algiers, and I believe the scenery is considered fine by those who visit it from choice), but I think you would not hesitate to come if you knew what an inestimable blessing the sight of a civilised fellow-creature would be to me. When I am not burning or shivering, I lie upon my bed, and do nothing at all, except moan, and wish I were dead. The only souls I have to exchange a word with, from morning to night, are my servant and my doctor; and neither of them is very good company. Give me but four-and-twenty hours of your society, and, if I live, I will never forget your kindness."

Saint-Luc, who was as kind-hearted a creature as ever walked the earth in the disguise of a Parisian roué, and who, having had Algerian fever himself in old days, was acquainted with the ups and downs of that wearisome and depressing malady, began to pack up his clothes forthwith. He would, no doubt, have responded to his friend's call in any case; but at that particular time he did so with the more alacrity, by reason of a melancholy conviction that, on private and personal grounds, it would be well that he should take a short leave of absence from Algiers. For some days past it had been evident to him that his presence was irksome to Jeanne, that he was making no progress with her, and that there was not the faintest chance of his gaining her affections before marriage. It wanted now but a few weeks to his wedding-day, and he had come, rather sadly, to the conclusion that, during those weeks, his best policy would be to keep himself as much as possible out of sight.

On his way to the station he encountered Léon, who received the news of his intended departure with perfect equanimity, and undertook to make the necessary explanations at home.

"If I were you, I would make a longer trip of it, and go on to Teniet-el-Haad and the cedar-forest," said that unsympathetic youth. "Algiers is detestable in August, and you have nothing to keep you here. I wish I could offer to accompany you; but I have an engagement to-morrow at Madame de Trémonville's—in fact, for several reasons, I cannot very well go away just now."

"I see," answered Saint-Luc, smiling. "You are wanted here, and I am not. It is consolatory to know that, if I should be detained longer than I expect, nobody will miss me."

Léon began to protest; but Saint-Luc cut him short, saying that he was late for his train, and so hurried on his way, laughing a little under his breath, but without much genuine mirth.

A tedious, hot railway journey brought him at length to the little village of Bou-Medfa, where he hired a horse, and strapping his valise on his saddle before him, set out, in the cool of the evening, to mount the spur of the lesser Atlas, upon which Milianah stands.

Delicious little gusts of fresh air came swirling down the hill-side to meet him, as he rode, and roused a soft, musical stir among the evergreen oaks and firs, the myrtles, lentisks, and brushwood which bordered the way; beneath him the parched plain lay sweltering in a hazy heat; but high above, bare peaks and rocky spires stood out, black and clear, against the fiery glow of the sunset, and every now and then his ear caught the sound of distant falling water. After a time he came upon a small modern village of the universal Algerian type, with detached white houses on either side of its single broad street, a double row of plane-trees to keep the sun from the windows, and a fountain, round which some half-dozen chattering women were clustered. Presently a company of low-browed, thin-lipped Spaniards, with laden mules, came striding down the mountain-side, singing a nasal, plaintive chorus as they walked, and passed on, leaving a fine odour of garlic behind them. On a wall, in the outskirts of the village, lay a couple of lazy negroes sucking oranges. One of them, a stalwart fellow, whose shapely black limbs were scantily clad in white linen, and who had stuck a scarlet pomegranate-blossom behind his ear, turned round, with a grin, as the horseman approached, and offered him a branch of the golden fruit. There was an abundance of life, strength, and colour in this high region which could hardly fail to delight a traveller just escaped from the li
exhaustion of the Metidja; and Saint-Luc, feeling the level of
rising in equal measure with that of his body, congrat

upon the humane impulse which had led him to quit Algiers for a season.

It was fortunate that the incidents of his excursion pleased him so well, seeing that, so far as its chief object was concerned, he might have saved himself the trouble of undertaking it. For the very first person whom he met, after passing through the gates of Milianah, was M. Lasalle himself, who, though pale and thin, was apparently in a condition of exuberant joy.

"Is that you, Saint-Luc?" he cried. "And did you come here to see me? A thousand thanks! but if I had only known, I would have telegraphed to you not to start. I have got my orders to rejoin the regiment forthwith, and by means of threatening the doctor's life I have made him declare me fit for service. Never mind; we will go back to Algiers together to-morrow, and you will be none the worse for having had a little change of air. You have heard the last news, of course?"

"There is no news," said Saint-Luc.

"You mean to say that there was none when you left Algiers, this morning; but a telegram has arrived here which must have passed you on the way, I suppose. And, *ma foi!*" continued M. Lasalle, with a light shrug of his shoulders, "to tell the truth, it is not precisely a telegram of the right kind. Here it is, if you wish to see it."

Dismounting before the door of the modest little Hôtel d'Isly, Saint-Luc read the official despatch announcing the combat of Wissembourg. MacMahon's left wing defeated, General Abel Douai killed, the lines of Wissembourg stormed by the enemy—Saint-Luc pursed up his lips, and looked very grave over it; but his companion, being in a humour to view all things in a rosy aspect, made light of the affair.

"Bah!" said he, "there is no great harm done. Our men fought like lions; but they were outnumbered. And the Maréchal is no fool. Depend upon it, he has his plan, and is only drawing back that he may spring the more surely."

"Perhaps so," answered Saint-Luc, folding up the paper; "but I confess that, for my own part, I do not like plans which begin by accepting a defeat. In the meantime, I am dying of hunger. Come in, and let us see what they can do for us in the way of dinner."

"No, no; you are my guest. I cannot offer you a Maison Dorée *menu*, but such as the food is here, you shall have plenty of it; and we will finish the last bottle of champagne that I shall drink in this accursed place."

But neither dinner, nor champagne, nor any contagion of high spirits, availed to dispel Saint-Luc's gloom. He left all the talking to his friend, ate little, in spite of the hunger he had professed, and while the other fought battles in anticipation, routing the enemy, and triumphantly dictating terms of peace under the walls of Berlin, drummed abstractedly upon the table, oppressed by a vague dissatisfaction which he could not altogether lay to the charge of public misfortune.

Later in the evening the two men strolled out to the ramparts to smoke a last cigar before turning in for the night. Beneath and around the rocky flank of Mount Zakkar, on which Milianah stands, a far-stretching panorama unfolded itself—the fertile valley of the Chélif, dimly seen through the blue night-mists that hung over it, shadowy hills and woods, and jutting promontories, and outlines of rugged mountain-ranges lying solemn and silent under the stars. M. Lasalle, whose finer feelings were stirred, and whose tongue was loosened by the effects of champagne and excitement upon a frame weakened by malaria, felt the influence of the scene in such limited degree as induced speech rather than more fitting silence.

"It is beautiful—it is even sublime," said he, nodding at the landscape with the air of an impartial man resolved to give the devil his due; "but it is desperately melancholy. Yes; rest and peace make up a very pretty picture; but when one is forced to form a part of the tableau, one begins to ask oneself whether life is worth having. They may say what they please about the misery of war, but there is no game like it, and no life like a soldier's. It is better to risk losing a leg or an arm at the wars than to sit in plenty and dulness at home, and read the newspapers."

Saint-Luc grunted. This was the very thought which had been disturbing his own mind for the last two hours, or more; but it vexed him to hear it expressed in plain language, and there was a certain tinge of exultation in his friend's tone which, under all the circumstances, appeared to him to show a deplorable want of good taste.

"Of course, it is the nature of man to delight in destroying his species—everybody knows that," he said. "It only shows how little we are above the beasts."

"That is no affair of mine," answered M. Lasalle, airily. "I did not create the human race, and I am not responsible for its instincts. Such as we are, it is very evident to me that we shall not abolish war during the present generation; and I am glad to think that, so long as France has an army, I shall be in it."

"If you are more fortunate than others, you need not be perpetually telling them so," said Saint-Luc, very snappishly.

Good-natured M. Lasalle burst into a shout of laughter. "I knew it! I knew it!" he cried. "He is not the man to stay at home while his comrades are fighting, this old Saint-Luc. Come to France with me, *mon vieux*, and we will do the campaign together. A place shall be found for you in the regiment—never fear about that. In time of war one can always discover a corner for old friends by squeezing a little; and the Prussian shells will soon give us elbow-room. Besides, I have an uncle at the War Office—which is as much as to say that you are reinstated in your old grade as soon as you please. Let us consider it as settled."

"You forget," answered Saint-Luc, "that I am to be married next month."

"Postpone it, my dear friend—postpone the ceremony; there is never any cause for hurry in such matters. You can be married at the end of the year, or next year, or the year after——"

"Whereas I may never have another chance of dying on the field of battle. I do not deny that, for some reasons, I should like very much to have a look at *messieurs les Prussiens*; but one cannot arrange everything exactly as one would wish; and my wedding-day is fixed."

"Mademoiselle will excuse you for a few months, if you will bring her back some laurels to mix with her orange-flowers."

"No, she will not; for I shall not propose anything of the sort to her," answered Saint-Luc, remembering, with a secret pang, how little opposition Jeanne would be likely to offer to his departure. "And I do not want to be excused. If the war had broken out a year ago, I should have joined the army as a simple trooper, without a moment's hesitation; as it is, the regiment will have to do without me. Shall we go in now? If you linger out here in the night air much longer, you may get a return of your fever, and never see Berlin at all."

M. Lasalle said no more. He was a little afraid of Saint-Luc, and remembered to have heard that there was some romantic history connected with his engagement which might possibly render the subject a delicate one. Only, the whole way back to the inn, he hummed *Partant pour la Syrie*, under his breath, which was neither kind nor considerate of him.

Saint-Luc passed an uneasy night, divided between troubled dreams and scarcely less troubled waking thoughts. A few months earlier, to be the affianced husband of Jeanne de Mersac would have seemed to him the very summit of earthly happiness and the satisfaction of all wildest hope; but now that Fortune had granted him what he had always looked upon as nearly, if not quite, beyond his reach, he was far from being contented, and fretted himself out of a night's rest because he could discover no practicable way of exchanging his imminent happiness against the chance of wounds, privations, and death. Such is the perversity of our mortal nature.

At the same time, it must be said for him that his desire to proceed to the seat of war arose less out of martial ardour (though of that he had as large a share as might reasonably be expected to linger in the breast of a man whose brightest memories were connected with fighting) than from a longing to show Jeanne that he was not quite the contemptible fellow she took him for. He was perfectly aware that she had a poor opinion of him, and did not wonder at it—his own self-estimate being so modest a one; but he knew that, whatever virtues he might lack, he at least possessed that of physical courage; and he fancied, pardonably enough, that he might conquer her respect, if not her love, by doughty deeds.

The thing was, however, entirely out of the question, and there was no use in thinking about it. Scores of times he repeated this conclusion to himself during the night and morning, and then proceeded to think about it more than ever. In fact, throughout the long railway-journey back to Algiers, his mind was occupied with no other subject.

M. Lasalle, meanwhile, continued to behave badly. Of nothing would he speak but of professional matters—of the important part destined to be played by light cavalry in all future campaigns—of the superiority of Arab over European horses—of the glorious excitement of a charge, the one romantic feature remaining in modern warfare. And from time to time he would check himself with an innocent apology for dwelling upon such topics, "which," said he, "no longer interest you, I dare say." Long before the sea came in sight, Saint-Luc had lost all patience with this eager warrior; and, rather than face the *tête-à-tête* dinner which he saw looming before him, he swallowed down the reluctance he always felt to enter the Campagne de Mersac uninvited, and hiring a carriage on his arrival at the station, had himself driven direct thither.

It thus came to pass that the disastrous intelligence of the battle of Reichshoffen first reached him from Jeanne's lips.

"We have just received bad news from France," said she, coming forward to meet him as he entered the drawing-room, and passing by unnoticed his apologetic explanation of the suddenness of his return. "Have you heard it? It seems that the Maréchal has been defeated."

"I arrive this moment from Milianah; I have heard nothing," answered Saint-Luc, and never so much as asked for any particulars. For the moment, it really was not in him to feel for his country's joys or woes, and Jeanne might have announced the result of the battle of Armageddon to him and left him equally unmoved; for all his perceptions seemed, by the exercise of some force beyond his control, to have become concentrated upon her, and there was no room in his mind for any thought unconnected with her. She stood before him in the dim light of the evening, a tall, lithe figure, dressed all in white, with shapely head bent a little forwards, and large, melancholy eyes that looked beyond him. Turco, stationed at her side, wagged his tail in grave welcome. In the shadowy background, the Duchess, M. de Fontvieille, and Léon, were grouped close together, peering over a slip of newspaper, and talking, all three of them at once, in their high-pitched French voices. What was it that made Saint-Luc see, with a sudden, vivid clearness, the impassable gulf that lay between him and the girl whose hand he held, and smote him with a chill certainty that, come what might, they could never be more than virtual strangers to each other? It was no sense of his own unworthiness—that had been with him, even in an exaggerated degree, from the outset—nor was it that her manner evinced the utmost indifference to him; for that was a point upon which he had never harboured illusions. It was a swift, unaccountable flash of conviction, such as everyone experiences occasionally, and mostly at unexpected times; and whether it arose from some occult touch of sympathy, or from a baffled effort thereat, whether it were real or visionary, well or ill founded, it made his heart ache with a hopeless yearning, the like of which he had never felt before.

And all this time—that is to say, during some thirty seconds—Jeanne left her hand lying in his, just as she might have allowed it to rest upon a chair or a table. But now, remembering herself, she drew back a little, and saying, "You would like to see the telegram, perhaps," gently took away the slip of newspaper from the others, who continued their discussion without noticing her, and handed it to him.

It was one of those hastily-printed scraps, issued from a local newspaper office, with which the inhabitants of the French provinces were soon to become well acquainted. There was not much in it beyond the admission that MacMahon's army had received a heavy blow. Rumours of all kinds were abroad, and were duly reported, "under all reserves." "But," concluded the document, "details are absolutely wanting." The Emperor's own despatch, indeed, forwarded from Paris, showed how little was known of the affair at head-quarters. "It was the General de l'Aigle who announced to me that the Maréchal MacMahon had lost a battle on the Sarre—I am about to place myself in the centre of the position—*Tout peut se rêparer.*"

Saint-Luc, who had now recovered possession of his senses, perused these confessions of impotent ignorance with a mixture of anger and dismay. What was there to hope for from a commander-in-chief capable of such foolish candour?

M. de Fontvieille, whose grief at the inauspicious opening of the campaign was in some degree tempered by the recollection that he had always prophesied ill of it, uttered but one comment upon the unlucky despatch. "*He* in the centre of the position! what a menace!" he ejaculated, with uplifted hands; and then withdrew to a window, and looked out at the sunset, fearing lest he might be tempted to weaken the severity of his stricture by further speech.

"That poor Emperor! it is all over with him," remarked the Duchess, with a certain contemptuous pity. "He may go back to Paris now, and pack up his portmanteau; for, unless I am very much mistaken, we have heard the last of Napoleon III."

"And of Napoleon IV.," added M. de Fontvieille, from the window.

"Let us hope so. At present, it seems to me that France is at the mercy of the first successful general. Heaven grant that that may be MacMahon, for he, I think, would only ascend the steps of the throne to prepare it for the king."

"It is more likely to be Bazaine—who would make haste to sit down upon it himself," said Saint-Luc.

Léon observed that they were all in a very great hurry. Campaigns were not decided by the first battle, nor did dynasties fall for a single blunder. No doubt the Emperor had been deceived: he had found that he must reckon with Germany instead of with Prussia, and this might very possibly put an end to all project of crossing the Rhine; but, on the other hand, the invasion of France was a hazardous enterprise of which the Germans would be glad to be relieved. He (Léon) had reason to believe that diplomacy was already at work, and that a solution would shortly be found which would bring about an honourable peace. Something in the shape of a victory would certainly be necessary to satisfy the national *amour propre*; but after the first success obtained by the French troops, negociations might begin. Let the one nation be permitted to consolidate itself into a great empire, and the other to extend its frontier a little—say in a north-easterly direction—and all would be well. The two armies might then shake hands, and march off to their respective homes, singing Te Deum *à qui mieux mieux*.

"That is Madame de Trémonville's view, I presume," said Saint-Luc, divining at once the origin of this specious plan.

"And pray who is Madame de Trémonville?" inquired the Duchess. "Oh, that amusing and impertinent little person, who wears a *pince-nez*. What can she know of diplomacy? I, who have been a little behind the scenes in my time, can assure you that diplomatists have some difficulty in making their voices heard above the thunder of the cannon. You cannot bring a victorious army to a standstill by flourishing a protocol in its face. I have no pretension to say how or when this war will end, nor what we may gain or lose by it, but I am tolerably certain that it will deprive us of one possession which we can very well spare—the Bonaparte family. There is consolation in that."

"Provided we do not get the d'Orléans in exchange," sighed M. de Fontvieille. "Those people are only awaiting their opportunity."

"The d'Orléans have no party," said the Duchess decisively. "They represent nothing—not even constitutional government, which has been filched from them by the Empire. In the coming crisis there can only be two parties—Republicans and Legitimists—and whichever of them can gain the army must win the day. We have nearly reached the time when all loyal subjects should declare themselves. Do you not agree with me, M. de Saint-Luc?"

"Madame," answered Saint-Luc, "it seems to me that the question of dynasties can wait. I think that all loyal Frenchmen should be content to serve France now."

"So do I," said Jeanne.

Saint-Luc glanced at her gratefully, not being accustomed to hearing his sentiments so cordially endorsed in that quarter; and she added, "If I were a man I would go to the war to-morrow."

This speech, which gave Saint-Luc matter for reflection, elicited a vigorous protest from the Duchess, who, ever since the beginning of the struggle, had been haunted by a terror that, sooner or later, Léon would be drawn into it. Such ideas, she said, were altogether childish—not to say unpatriotic. Of those brought up to the military profession she did not speak; but a civilian of talent and education could serve his country in almost any way better than by stopping a cannon-ball—a feat which could be accomplished quite as effectually by any hewer of wood or drawer of water.

In her eagerness she made the personal application of her remarks so evident that M. de Fontvieille, who was quite as anxious as she to keep Léon safely at home, hastened to lead the conversation back into the less dangerous channel of public affairs, down which it flowed quietly and without interruption for the next two hours. The Duchess, M. de Fontvieille and Léon had it all their own way; for Jeanne was even more silent than usual, and Saint-Luc, whose brow was dark with clouds of preoccupation, scarcely opened his lips from the announcement of dinner to the end of that repast, and never once spoke to his fiancée.

But when the whole party had adjourned to the verandah, where cane-chairs, coffee and cigarettes were awaiting them, he approached Jeanne at last, and said, "Mademoiselle"—he had never yet ventured to address her in any less formal manner than this—"will you walk to the end of the garden with me? I have something to say to you."

"Certainly," she answered, with an irrepressible intonation of reluctance which he detected but did not choose to notice; and so they disappeared slowly into the darkness, side by side, to the great delight of the Duchess, whose mind had latterly been a good deal exercised by the unromantic ways of this pair of presumed lovers.

If she could have overheard their conversation, she would have been less contented. Saint-Luc remained so long silent that Jeanne felt compelled, at length, to take the initiative.

"You had something to speak to me about," she began.

"Yes. I have been thinking of what you said before dinner about the war, and that, if you were a man, you would go there. I feel convinced that you are right, and that the army is the proper place just now for every Frenchman who—who has not any very binding ties to keep him at home. And you are not the only person who has expressed the same opinion to me within the last few days."

She stopped short, with a quick gesture of apprehension. "You do not mean Léon?" she exclaimed. "Has he said anything to you upon the subject? Surely you would never be so cruel as to encourage him to leave us! Remember what he is—the last of his name—an only son, one might almost say; for indeed the Duchess is as good as his mother, and would break her heart if anything happened to him. I spoke hastily and foolishly, and I did not really mean what I said——"

"Do not be alarmed," broke in Saint-Luc gently; "I am sure that Léon will do his duty better by remaining where he is than by fighting the Prussians. I had a far less important person in my mind—myself."

"You!"

There was some surprise in her tone, but no inflection of dismay; and Saint-Luc was unreasonable enough to feel pained by her composure.

"Yes," he resumed, striving to assume a cheerful and matter-of-fact air; I learnt the sabre-exercise when I was a lad, and I believe it is the only thing in the world that I can do really well. I can easily join my old regiment now—most likely as an officer, though I don't hold to that—and I know that my death would not cause so much grief to anybody that I need hesitate on that score; but of course, if I went, our marriage would have to be postponed. Would you object to that?"

"No," answered Jeanne slowly; "I should not object."

She debated within herself, for a moment, whether she ought not to make some reference to the payment of Léon's debt, which would thus also require to be postponed; but finally decided that it was not her business to do so.

"And now there is another thing which I should like to ask you," resumed Saint-Luc, after a long pause. "Would you not prefer that our marriage should never take place at all?"

Jeanne turned away, and stood still, with clasped hands, gazing through the dark branches of a belt of cypress-trees at the star-studded sky and the free, wide sea, on which a path of silver from the rising moon shimmered. How gladly—oh, how gladly!—would she have answered Yes, and regained her longed-for liberty. But it was too late to falter now, she thought, and it would be as cowardly in her to abandon her purpose as in a soldier to run away under fire. She was not in the least grateful to Saint-Luc for offering her a means of retreat which he must know in his heart that she could not accept with honour, and it was in particularly icy accents that she replied at last—"You remember what I told you in the beginning, M. de Saint-Luc. I have never deceived you. I never pretended that I should have chosen you for a husband if—if I had only had myself to think of; but I consented to marry you for the reasons which I mentioned at the time. What I said then I say still. Indeed I am more bound to you than I was; for you have been very kind to me; and I suppose that when you stopped the ponies, the other day, you saved my life—which most people would reckon a kindness. If you have changed your mind, and wish our engagement to come to an end, I shall be neither surprised nor offended; but for me, I am as content now as I was then."

Saint-Luc sighed. Almost he felt inclined to give up the game. He was still under the influence of that discouraging impression of hopeless distance from Jeanne which had fallen upon him, in the drawing-room, before dinner, and which her present bearing was little calculated to remove. Yet he could not quite bring himself to resign her. Some lingering rays of forlorn hope even now brightened the darkness of hi prospects. Time, absence, wounds and medals—all these might prov allies; and moreover he still clung to the notion that, with women, lo ften follows, instead of preceding marriage—which, after all, is a enerally received theory, and may possibly be not quite so absurd a one it sounds.

He took time to think over all this; for Jeanne had paused in her alk to gather some of the heavy-scented white bells of a datura-shrub, nd seemed in no hurry for her companion's reply. When he did speak, was more in answer to his own thoughts than to her suggestion.

"While there is a chance for me, I will hold to it," he said. "Let s remain as we are at least until the end of the war. Before then much ay have happened. I may have been killed, for instance, which would ttle everything."

"Are you not afraid of death?" asked Jeanne, looking at him with a ade of curiosity.

"No. Are you?"

"I am not sure. So few people are prepared to die."

"Do you mean that I am not? That is true enough, I dare say; ut I am as prepared as I am ever likely to be. I cannot see beyond e grave."

"Are you a sceptic then?" asked Jeanne, with bated breath, as who ould say, "Are you a murderer?"

"I have scarcely the right to call myself so. I neither believe nor isbelieve; I have never thought about religion at all, one way or the ther, and seldom heard it mentioned, except as a pretty fable or allegory, pported chiefly by social necessities. If it be all true, I have no doubt llowances will be made for me."

"I shall pray for you," said Jeanne gravely.

"Will you? Will you really do that?" cried Saint-Luc eagerly, ttaching more importance, it is to be feared, to the act of intercession han to its possible results. "Then you will think of me sometimes hen I am away?"

"I should pray for anybody who did not believe in God," answered eanne; "and as for thinking of you, of course I should do that in any ase. I never forget people. When do you mean to start?"

"To-morrow, I think."

"So soon as that!"

"Why not? My departure will afflict nobody, and my friend asalle sails at midday. Besides, I must not lose time if I am to take art in the battle of Chalons."

"The battle of Chalons?"

"It will be there, or thereabouts, I fancy. At all events, I shall ave to hurry in order to get to the regiment in time. Even as it is, I ay be detained by useless formalities."

"What will the Duchess say? I don't know how I am to tell her," urmured Jeanne, growing a little alarmed as the serious nature of the tuation revealed itself to her.

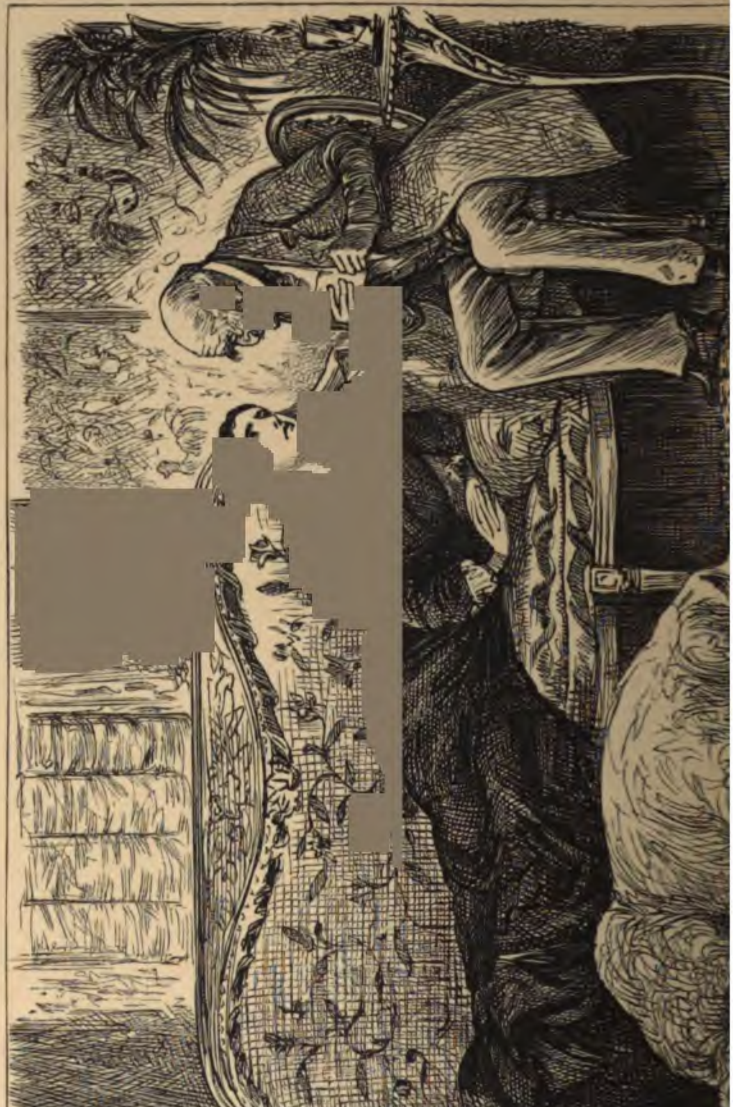
"I will undertake that. What does it signify what she says?

What does anything signify? Let us go in at once, and get it over. And now, as I shall not see you alone again, I will say good-bye."

He took her passive hand, and, for the second time since their betrothal, pressed it to his lips; and she, withdrawing it presently, said, in her low, grave voice, "Good-bye."

This was all their leave-taking; and Jeanne, thinking it over afterwards, reproached herself for having let the poor fellow go without a single kind word to cheer him on his way. Even at the time her heart was a little softened towards him; but she would not show it, being restrained by a foolish apprehension lest, at this supreme moment, encouragement might lead him into some less deferential expression of regard.

So they re-entered the house together; and the unsuspecting Duchess called out gaily, from her corner, "Well, young people, here you are at last! We were thinking of sending Léon out with a lantern to look for you."



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Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XXII.

"THAT IMBECILE OF AN EMPEROR."

N a sultry, airless evening in the beginning of September, a small party of ladies were seated, busily stitching bandages, arranging piles of linen, and tearing up lint, in the *salon* of one of the largest houses in Algiers. The room, which belonged to an old Moorish palace, was lofty, thick-walled, jealously screened by outside blinds against any slant rays of the sun which might penetrate into the narrow streets of the Arab quarter, and from the court-yard below its open windows rose the soft pattering of a fountain, which conveyed some notion of coolness to the ear, if to no other of the senses; but, for all that, the heat was well-nigh unbearable. From early morning the fierce sun had been beating down upon the roofs and walls and pavements of the town, and had so scorched and baked them that even now, when he was sinking below the horizon, they still seemed to throb and glow as they had done at noon. No faintest stir of breeze found its way among those closely-packed dwellings; out of doors the streets were untenanted, save by here and there an exhausted Arab, lying half-asleep in the shade; a universal silence and lassitude hung over the place, and was not without its influence on those busy French ladies, whose occupation was not in itself of a cheering nature, and who had all, besides, good reasons of their own for feeling anxious and dispirited.

However, they chatted away over their work, bravely making the best of bad times, as their people always do.

"Does it *never* rain here in September, madame?" asked one of them of the mistress of the house, a certain Madame André, whose husband had held an appointment in Algiers longer than any of those present could remember.

The old lady shook her head. "Never," she answered; "unless, as sometimes happens, we get a few drops from a passing storm; and that is not enough to cool the air. September is our worst month; but one lives through it, and it only lasts thirty days, when all is said and done."

"Live through it?—that remains to be seen. Never, if I do survive this, will I murmur at the sight of rain again! And to think that, if all had gone well, I was to have been at Baden now for the races! Alas, I fear I have seen the last of Baden."

"Not a doubt of it," said another. "Germany is closed to us for a generation at least; and I am sorry for it; for what shall I do now with my summers?"

"One must make shift with Trouville and Vichy and such places. I do not feel as if I could complain of any fate, so long as I am not left to spend the hot weather in Algeria again. But that is what it is to have a general for one's husband."

"*Mon Dieu*, madame, you might be worse off. Generals are too valuable to be put in dangerous places. My husband, who is but a colonel of infantry, carries his life in his hand. I could almost wish that he were not a field-officer, so that he might be less conspicuous."

"The staff suffer most of all, they say," remarked another lady. "Think of those who used to form our own little circle last winter. Poor M. de Monceaux killed—and so many others! Is it not astonishing how coolly we take it all? I think one of the saddest things about war is that it so soon accustoms people to read quite calmly of wounds and sufferings which would make them shudder in time of peace. One comes to look upon it as a sort of game, and thinks much more of which side wins an engagement than of all the horrors of the battle-field and the hospitals."

"It does not do to let the mind dwell upon such subjects," said Madame André. "I have two sons with the army, and if I were to allow myself to brood over what may be happening to them, I should soon be good for nothing. But I do not. I commend them to t tection of the Blessed Virgin three times a day, and work as hard as I can for the wounded, and comfort myself by thinking that every hour brings us nearer to peace. And sometimes I get a letter from them—not so often as I could wish; but that one must not grumble at. A son, you see, be he never so good a one, is not the same thing as a husband or a lover. Now Mademoiselle de Mersac, I dare say, gets a letter by every mail. Do you continue to have good news of M. de Saint-Luc, mademoiselle?'

Madame André was one of those amiable, thick-skinned persons whose privilege it is to acquaint the hearts of the most forbearing with occasional thrills of the homicidal passion.

"I do not correspond with M. de Saint-Luc," replied Jeanne coldly, without looking up from the heap of *charpie* before her. "My brother hears from him sometimes. He has got his commission as captain, and is quite well, I believe, and in good spirits."

This speech occasioned a swift interchange of significant glances, raisings of eyebrows and noiseless ejaculations; for these ladies were not so wholly absorbed by domestic anxiety but that they had found time to discuss in all its bearings Saint-Luc's sudden and unexplained disappearance within a few weeks of his intended marriage; and the unanimous conclusion at which they had arrived was that he had been very badly treated. What bridegroom, they reasonably urged, would rush off to the wars from the very church-door, so to speak, unless his bride had either dismissed him or tried his patience beyond endurance? They were the more ready to blame Jeanne in this matter because she had not been so fortunate as to have earned their affection. They did not like her, and sometimes showed her their dislike—and she did not in the least care. M. de Fontvieille, to whom this unpopularity of his protégée caused a good deal of secret vexation, used to say that Jeanne would never have many friends among the Algerian ladies, for three sufficient reasons:—Firstly, because she was far handsomer than any of them, secondly because she was better educated than all of them put together, and thirdly because she despised gossip. The first of the causes assigned was, of course, ridiculous, since everybody knows that the notion of feminine jealousy on the score of personal beauty is a mere vulgar calumny, only believed in by silly and ignorant people; but it is possible that the other two may have been less imaginary; for there is unquestionably something a little galling in intercourse with a person who is not only infinitely your superior, but is also, in a placid, polite way, perfectly aware of the fact.

Be this as it may, these excellent ladies had no love for our poor heroine; and when she presently rose, and bade them all a very good-evening, they began to breathe more freely.

"I am never comfortable when that girl is in the room," said one of them, as soon as the door had closed behind her. "She will not speak, and scarcely listens when she is spoken to, and I defy anybody to know what is passing in her mind. I am not aware that there is anything particularly contemptible or laughable about me, and yet she always gives me the impression that she thinks so."

"She is a good girl," said kindly Madame André; "she does a great deal for the poor. But she is eccentric, which is a terrible defect in a woman. One must remember, however, that her mother was an Englishwoman. That explains much."

Jeanne, meanwhile, as she toiled up the staircase-like streets of the Arab quarter, felt her conscience stirred by that chance question of Madame André's and the surprised silence which had followed her answer to it. Upon reflection, it certainly did sound odd that she should not be in direct communication with her future husband; and the annoying part of it was that she need not have made the fact public, and indeed would not have done so, if heat and weariness and the exasperating arch smile of good Madame André had not combined to overpower all prudence. Perhaps, too, it would have been more wise, as it certainly would have been kinder, if she had let Saint-Luc hear from her every now and then. Almost his last words had been a timid suggestion with reference to this subject, but she had not responded favourably to the hint, having, in truth, no desire to be reminded of his existence, and not seeing that she was in any way bound to burden herself with an irksome task. At the time, her one wish had been that he would go away as quickly as possible, and let her neither see nor hear more of him until the day should come for the completion of her sacrifice; for it will easily be believed that, what with M. de Fontvieille's expostulations, and the Duchess's scoldings, entreaties and tears, the evening of separation had not been an altogether agreeable one for either member of the betrothed couple.

But now all these preliminary troubles were over, and well-nigh forgotten. Jeanne's home circle had gradually accepted the inevitable with more or less of philosophy, and four weeks had elapsed since Saint-Luc had bidden a long farewell to Algiers. Four weeks, stormy and eventful on the other side of the Mediterranean, and big with the fate of empires and of generations yet unborn, but quiet and peaceful enough here in remote Africa. Four weeks which had seen the fertile uplands of Mars-la-Tour and Gravelotte deluged with blood, which had witnessed an unbroken series of defeats for the French arms, and had taxed to the utmost the mendacious ingenuity of M. de Palikao and his colleagues. Four weeks which, in spite of the great heat, in spite of the garrulous irritability of the Duchess—who was ill, poor old soul, and naturally worried by the unexpected disturbance of her plans—in spite of the lamentable decease of the jackal Jérémie, who, having broken loose and eaten half-a-dozen chickens, had been incontinently slain by an irate farmer; in spite, too, of many a sad hour and vain regret, had brought more of contentment to Jeanne than she had ever expected to find again. For M. de Saint-Luc was gone; and in that one thought lay measureless relief.

She had kept her promise of praying for him, being in all person of her word, and duly offered up supplications for both his temporal and spiritual welfare at the hour of the *Ave Maria*, when it was her habit to kneel in the little village church. And this she did without mental reservation; for it never occurred to her to think that a German bullet might set many crooked things straight, or to doubt of the wanderer's eventual return. But she dismissed him from her mind, together with the remembrance of her sins and other unpleasant subjects, at the church-door, deeming, with King Solomon, that there is a time for every purpose under the heaven.

When, as would sometimes happen, some trifling incident like Madame André's unlucky speech cropped up to remind her of her chains, she made haste to escape from the odious remembrance with such despatch as she could command; and now, acting upon this rule, she soon persuaded herself that the epistolary question was one which it was altogether unnecessary to consider, after so long a period of silence, and had recovered her ordinary equanimity by the time that she had passed through the gates of the town, and was out in the open country.

A cool breath of evening air met her as she emerged upon this higher ground, where nature was beginning to show signs of returning animation, where the grasshoppers were in full chorus, and where bright-eyed lizards were darting swiftly from every chink and crevice of the rocks. Jeanne drew a long breath, and paused, upon the brink of the cliff, to cast a glance of pity upon the poor, stifled town at her feet. White, glaring and silent, it sloped from brown hill-top to burning sapphire sea, all its touches of winter greenery vanished—a different Algiers indeed from that which had gratified Mr. Barrington's artistic eye, when he had stood upon this same spot some six months before. While Jeanne looked, a little cloud of dust rose from the lower gates of the town, and out of it appeared a cavalry-officer, whose steel scabbard flashed in the sun, as he gallopped helter-skelter up the zig-zag road at a pace worthy of John Gilpin. Jeanne recognised the seat of this impetuous horseman, and smiled.

"Léon will never learn that a horse's legs are not made of cast iron," she sighed.

Léon indeed it was, in the uniform of the Francs-Cavaliers de l'Algérie, a patriotic corps organised for purposes of local defence during the absence of the regular army, and which no doubt made up in valour what it lacked in numerical strength. Léon had been urged to enrol himself in it by M. de Fontvieille, who saw therein a safety-valve for the letting off of warlike hankerings; and so far it had answered its purpose very well, and had kept the young man in tolerable good humour with himself and his lot.

But now news had come from France of such a nature as to effectually rob mock soldiering of its solace, and to render inaction more than ever grievous to all true lovers of their country. Léon, as he stormed up the hill, regardless of the wind of his charger, was so wrapped in his own disturbed thoughts that he would have passed his sister without noticing her, if she had not called to him. At the sound of her voice he pulled up, with a clatter and a jingle, and breathlessly shouted out his evil tidings. "All is lost! The whole of MacMahon's forces have capitulated to the enemy, the Emperor is taken prisoner, Bazaine is shut up in Metz, and France has not a regular army left in the field."

"It is impossible!"

"It is *true*. I had it from the Sub-Governor's own lips. And to crown all, they say Paris is in the hands of the mob."

"What will happen now, then? Shall we have peace?"

"Who knows? It will depend upon what the Prussians may ask of us, I suppose. But I can't stop."

"Where are you going in such a hurry?"

"To Mustapha. I promised to let Madame de Trémonville know as soon as there was any news. *À bientôt!*"

And, with a wave of his hand, Léon spurred his horse, and was soon out of sight.

"Always Madame de Trémonville!" murmured Jeanne, with a slight shrug of her shoulders. "Poor boy! he little knows how ridiculous he is making himself."

I suppose that when a man is being made a fool of by a woman, no one is more quick to discover the fact, and less ready to sympathise with the victim, than the ladies of his own family. Léon knew that Jeanne disapproved of Madame de Trémonville, and of his visits to her house; but, as she had truly said, he had no suspicion that he was making himself ridiculous. On the contrary, his estimation of himself had risen by several degrees since he had been given to understand by the most charming and most cruelly misjudged of her sex that she regarded him as the only real friend she had in the world.

The fact was that Madame de Trémonville had found herself rather short of admirers after the departure of the army, to which branch of the public service she was accustomed to look chiefly for recruits, and a flirtation of some kind being meat, drink and raiment to her, had fixed upon the young Marquis to practise her arts upon, *faute de mieux*. He had been deeply smitten, as we have seen, months before; but now his subjugation was complete; and perhaps no more convincing proof of his devotion could have been found than in the fact that, even when he had such news as the wreck of the Empire to announce, he should have dismounted at the fair lady's gates, and led his horse gingerly up the short avenue, fearing to disturb the siesta which ordinarily occupied the best part of her afternoon.

On the present occasion, however, he might have dispensed with this precaution; for Madame de Trémonville, arrayed in diaphanous white muslin, and holding a rose-lined parasol over her golden locks, met him on the threshold.

"You are come to tell me of the battle of Sedan," she said.

kind of you to hurry up in the heat, and to tire your poor, pretty horse so! But I have heard all about it from my husband, who returned from his office half an hour ago in a pitiable state of agitation. He has weak nerves, this poor M. de Trémonville. What a lamentable spectacle is a man with weak nerves!"

"You, at least, do not suffer in that way," remarked Léon admiringly. "All the way from the town I was thinking how I should prepare you for this terrible catastrophe, and now I find that you take it far more calmly than I can profess to do."

"My dear friend, I have foreseen it for so long. What else could be expected from an army rotten to the very core—demoralised by loose discipline, commanded by generals whose merit consisted in their servility and venality, and headed by that grotesque imbecile of an Emperor?"

"Imbecile of an Emperor!" echoed Léon, aghast at this diatribe from one of the staunchest adherents of the late régime.

"Certainly. Have you not heard me call him so scores of times? No? Ah, well, one has to be careful in speaking of constituted authorities, but I have always thought that the Emperor was half-witted, and the event proves that I was right. If a man who declares war without knowing whether he is prepared or not, who gets himself beaten in every engagement, and finally hurries his last army into a mouse-trap, be not an imbecile, I do not know the meaning of the word."

"You do not think, then, that he will ever return to power?" asked Léon, with innocent irony.

"Never!—never in the world! The Empire is as dead as Henri IV. The only thing to be done with it is to bury it out of sight, and to forget, if possible, all its blunders and infamies."

This was really a little too bad. Mindful of the evening when he had been forced to humiliate himself publicly by shouting "*Vive l'Empereur!*" Léon could not suffer such sentiments as these to pass without a gentle protest.

"Surely you did not think so badly of the Empire six weeks ago, madame?" said he.

"Six weeks ago!" returned Madame de Trémonville impatiently. "Six weeks ago everything was different. The wife of an official cannot always say exactly what she thinks; I should have thought anybody would have understood that. And besides, if the war had ended successfully, that would have atoned for many sins. It would not have been generous to condemn a government which was upon its trial. But are you not coming in? It would be very amiable of you if you would stay and dine, and amuse me for part of the evening."

"I will come in for a few minutes, if you will permit me, madame," answered Léon; "but I am afraid they will expect me to dine at home to-night; and even if I were to consult my own wishes, and remain with you, I should not be likely to amuse you. One can hardly be expected to feel cheerful with France at the mercy of an invader."

Infatuated as Léon was, the cool cynicism of Madame de Trémonville shocked him a little, and made him doubt, for the first time since he had known her, whether he would altogether enjoy an evening spent in hearing her talk.

"I am not cheerful," she answered, turning away; "but I would rather be sad in your company than alone. Of course, though, if your sister has ordered you to be home to dinner, you must go."

This was a cut at Léon's most sensitive point; but he did not choose to notice it, and entered the house in silence.

M. de Trémonville, who was sitting in the drawing-room with his head resting despondently upon his hands, started up at the sound of approaching footsteps.

"Ah, Monsieur le Marquis," he exclaimed, in heart-broken accents, "what deplorable news!"

Léon said it was very bad.

"And we do not yet know the worst of it. If it was only the defeat of the army, the loss of prestige, or even the conclusion of a humiliating peace, one would not need to despair of the future; but, alas! we are only at the beginning of our misfortunes. I greatly fear that we are about to enter upon a period of anarchy, and it may be of civil war. A Republican government, monsieur—for it is with that that we are menaced—is capable of any enormity. It will revolutionise everything; it will throw the whole machinery of the State out of gear; it will dismiss old and tried public functionaries—"

"Bah!" interrupted Madame de Trémonville; "you always look upon the black side of things. It is only the timid who will retire. A brave civilian, like a brave soldier, remains at his post."

"How is a man to remain at his post when he is turned out from it?"

"He must not let himself be turned out. Those who, like you, have always held Liberal opinions, should have nothing to fear."

"I have always supported the Government," said M. de Trémonville, looking a little bewildered.

"But when I tell you that you have always held Liberal opinions!"

M. de Trémonville sighed deeply, but said nothing, and his wife continued:

"If you had a grain of spirit in you, you would know how to keep what you have got; but as it is, you had better leave everything to me, as usual."

"Leave everything to you!" groaned M. de Trémonville, rubbing his bald head despairingly. "Yes, that is what I have done—and see the consequences! Look, I beg of you, at the consequences. You have nearly ruined me by your extravagance; you have compromised my future by your ostentatious Imperialism; you have made me a laughing-stock by your coquetry, to use no harsher word—"

"*Allons, allons, mon ami!*"

"I insist upon being heard. M. le Marquis may take note of w say if he pleases. For once I will speak. It is to you that I owe all my misfortunes. But for you, should I ever have left Bourbeville-sur-Creuse, where I enjoyed a higher salary and more consideration than I do here? Were we not compelled to solicit a change of appointment owing to the constant visits of M. le Préfet, and to Madame la Préfète's declaration that she would tolerate such conduct no longer?"

"Continue—pray continue. You humiliate yourself in insulting me."

"No, it is you who have humiliated me. I have always loved respectability myself," added poor M. de Trémonville, with a touch of pathos—"respectability and a quiet life—and I abhor scandals. If I had had a wife who had shared my ideas, I should perhaps have been a better man to-day—certainly I should have been a richer one. But you, madame, you have blighted for ever a career which might have ended in honourable distinction, and—and a comfortable competence."

And with that he trotted out of the room, head first, feeling probably that his courage would not hold out much longer.

"What coarseness! what ingratitude!" sighed Madame de Trémonville, as soon as he was gone. "You perceive, my friend, what I have to submit to. Shall we have some music now, and try to forget this unpleasant scene?"

But Léon said he must go; and took his leave rather stiffly. The little conjugal discussion to which he had just listened had in some degree served to open his eyes; and moreover, that allusion to the behaviour of the Préfet at Bourbeville-sur-Creuse struck him as eminently unsatisfactory. So he mounted his horse, and rode slowly home, musing sadly, as he went, upon the frailty of all human ideals.

CHAPTER XXIII.

In which Léon asserts his Independence.

"*Eh bien, mademoiselle, v'là que nous sommes une République!*"

Jeanne, waking in the morning with these words in her ears, sat up in bed, and became aware of Fanchette, who had brought in her bath a full half-hour earlier than usual, fearing to be anticipated in the announcement of this startling piece of news, and who stood at the foot of the bed, grinning from ear to ear, as if the whole thing was the best joke in the world.

"How terrible!" exclaimed Jeanne; for she had been brought up to regard republicans with as holy a horror as did M. de Trémonville himself. "Are you sure there is no mistake, Fanchette?"

"Mademoiselle, it is positive. Pierre Cauvin heard all about it down at the market, and says the whole town is *en fête*. It seems that a telegram came, about midnight, to say that the Emperor was deposed, and that there was to be a new Government, composed of a number of individuals whose names I cannot recollect, only I know that Jules Favre is one of them. Mademoiselle remembers Jules Favre, who was here last year—an avocat, with a tangled head of hair—to think of his being in the Government! is it not amusing? Well, when the people in the town heard of this, the first thing they did was to have a salute fired; and then they went up to the Palace, where M. le Sous-Gouverneur was in bed and asleep, and they marched him down to the Place du Gouvernement, where he had to plant a tree of liberty, and cry '*Vive la République!*' Poor gentleman! they say he pulled a long face over it; but what could he do? If he had refused, they would have been capable of throwing him into the harbour. And now, Pierre Cauvin says, they are pulling down all the eagles from above the shop-windows, and they have scratched out the names of the Boulevard de l'Impératrice and the Rue Napoléon, and everybody declares that we are to have no more military Governors, and that very likely M. le Sous-Gouverneur will be sent away to France at once."

Fanchette's political opinions were those of her master and mistress. She was a staunch royalist, and would have been very much offended at being taken for anything else. In principle, therefore, she considered a republic as a far worse form of government than an empire. But, notwithstanding this, she had all a Frenchwoman's mischievous glee at the overthrow of her rulers, and could not refrain from exclaiming a second time, at the conclusion of her narrative, "Is it not amusing?"

To a large proportion of the French people, indeed, all revolutions are much what a successful barring-out of the masters used to be to English schoolboys; and it was with a strong admixture of this feeling that the Algerian Republicans rejoiced over the events of September 4. They were good-humoured enough, upon the whole; and though, in the first flush of unfettered speech, some truculent menaces were hurled at the heads of Bonapartists and *réactionnaires*, nobody was injured.

This forbearance was probably owing in part to the fact that for several months after Sedan no such thing as a Bonapartist was discoverable, and partly also to the silent arguments of a couple of ironclads which lay in the port, and to the use of which the Port-Admiral was said to have pointedly referred when "invited" by a few leading citizens to send in his resignation. Leading citizens, being above all things anxious to avert bloodshed, were fain, therefore, to let off surplus energy by revelling in the full freedom of the press, by filling the windows of the print-shops with caricatures of the Imperial family, and by planting sickly trees of liberty in every open space—forgetting a little, in the enjoyment of these happy privileges, the calamities which had rendered them possible.

Even in the most strongly anti-republican circles, indignation with the fallen Empire overpowered, for a long time, all jealousy of its successors, and was a more frequent topic of conversation than the immediate prospects of the country. M. de Fontvieille, especially, could not contain himself when the name of Napoleon III. was mentioned, and would start to his feet, erect and rigid as a Jack-in-the-box, clenching his little fists, and shrieking "*Ah br-r-rigand!*" What annoyed him more than anything else was the statement made in the newspapers, that the Emperor had driven over into the Prussian lines smoking a cigarette. That the man should have been capable of enjoying tobacco at that supreme moment seemed to him almost more infamous than his failure to "find death at the head of his army"; and when later intelligence announced that the royal residence of Wilhelmshöhe had been assigned to the captive, and that Queen Augusta had sent him her own cook, what further proof could any one want that France had been deliberately sold to the enemy?

The crop of queerly-named, and still more queerly-written journals which, in Algeria as in all other parts of French territory, sprang up after the declaration of the Republic, as thickly as mushrooms after a thunderstorm, unanimously adopted this view. The *Cri du Peuple*, the *Solidarité Algérienne*, and the *Colon en Colère*, were all able to tell their readers, down to the last centime, the sum received by "the man of Sedan" and his accomplices for their treachery, and were, in fact, so full of information upon this and other subjects of a like interesting nature, that they had but little space left for recording the movements of the German armies, which, all this time, were plodding steadily on towards Paris. And so, in due course, came the complete investment of the capital, and M. Jules Favre's proclamation, describing his futile interview with Prince Bismarck at Ferrières, which, as it was a high-sounding composition, the Algerian papers published *in extenso*.

This artless effusion of the unlucky Minister for Foreign Affairs has been sufficiently laughed over in its time, and, by reason of a striking phrase or two, has little chance of obtaining a kindly oblivion. A statesman who, not content with displaying his hopeless ineptitude in the Cabinet, must needs blazon it forth to the world; who, by way of reply to suggested conditions for an armistice, "turns aside to devour the tears that choke him;" who imagines that glowing language is likely to have the smallest effect upon a successful, hard-headed Prussian, and whose notions of propitiatory sacrifice do not include "an inch of our territory, nor a stone of our fortresses," is perhaps a legitimate subject for the mirth of practical people; but, for all that, there was a simple eloquence about the composition which found its way to the hearts of the French people. Jules Favre's words were caught up and echoed throughout the length and breadth of the land; and in truth the humour of them (if humour there be) consists less in the despairing defiance they breathed than in the fact that those stones and inches had to be ceded, in the sequel, by the very man who had so ardently vowed to retain them; while as for tears, they are but an expression of emotion held to be unseemly by northern nations, but not so considered by the Latin races of our own day, nor by the Greeks of old time.

Léon, when he read M. Favre's circular, was very nearly crying over it himself, out of sheer mortification. Ever since September 4 he had been keenly alive to the shame of his present life of inglorious security; and if anything had been wanting to complete his discontent, it would have been supplied by the hastily-written lines in which Saint-Luc recounted his escape from the captured army at Sedan, and his safe reception, after many perils and adventures, into the corps of General Vinoy. Thus far Léon had been prevailed upon to remain where he was, less by the Duchess's piteous pleadings than by the assurance of all his friends that peace was imminent and inevitable; but now he was determined that he would be cajoled in this way no longer. That the struggle would be prolonged to the uttermost was beyond a doubt. People were already beginning to talk of a *levée en masse*; and a time might come when he would be forced to take his share of it, with or without his consent. Should it be said of him that he had declined to fight for his country till his country had had to drag him into the ranks?

Primed with the unanswerable arguments which such thoughts suggested, he sought out his sister, to whom he still instinctively turned in moments of emergency, and, without waste of words, declared his purpose.

"Jeanne," said he, "I am going to join the army immediately."

Jeanne was sitting in a cool corner of the garden, upon a marble bench, shielded from the sun by a tall cypress-hedge and some overspreading umbrella-pines. She neither turned her head nor answered, but gazed absently at the glittering sea beneath her and the clearly-marked-line of the horizon, as if she had heard nothing. Léon, who was familiar with all her moods, knew that with her silence by no means implied consent, and, to save time, replied to her objections before they were uttered.

"What is the use of making the worst of things?" he asked. "The chances are greatly against my being killed; anybody will tell you that; and, in point of fact, all that can be urged against my going simply amounts to this—that you and the Duchess will be uneasy and anxious about me while I am away. You know quite well that I do not think that a matter of no importance; but surely you will allow that it is more important still that I should not be disgraced in the eyes of every man of my acquaintance, and——"

"No one would dare to insinuate that you had disgraced yourself," interposed Jeanne, quickly. "You have your regiment here; and you might be called upon to serve, any day, if the Arabs should rise, as I am told they are very likely to do."

"They are not in the least likely to do any such thing," returned Léon, slapping his leg impatiently with his cane; "and even if they did, I believe the Duchess would at once find some excellent reason for my staying at home."

"The Duchess is ill, and is growing very old. She is convinced that, if you left us now, she would never see you again. It is only natural that she should feel so; and I think you ought to take that into consideration."

"So I do; but I have myself to consider as well. One or other of us must give way; and, admitting that she has every ground for her fears, which of us would sacrifice most—she, by bidding me good-bye now instead of a few months hence, or I, by giving every shop-boy in France, who had carried a chassepôt during the war, the right to sneer at me for the rest of my days? The Duchess means to be kind, but she is a little selfish, as all old people are, and it is useless for me to try and make her understand that I do not choose to undergo all the hardships of a private soldier's life for my own amusement. With you it is different. You have good sense enough to see that it is simply my duty—and a rather unpleasant duty too—to go and fight; and I think you ought to help instead of opposing me. Why, you let Saint-Luc go without a word!"

This was an argument to which Jeanne found it rather difficult to reply; and indeed, though sorely against her will, she could not but inwardly acknowledge that the young man's instincts were right. She was weak enough, however, to put in the old plea of the probability of peace.

"That chance is finally disposed of, as the papers will convince you," answered Léon, pulling the *Cri du Peuple* out of his pocket, and dropping it on to her lap. "Read that, and you will see that we do not mean to give in until we are exterminated. Now I must go, for I have a great many instructions to give to Pierre Cauvin; but remember, Jeanne, when I broach the subject of my joining the army, at dinner this evening, I shall expect you to support me; and if you really love me, you will do so."

And with that he marched off. A year ago, he would hardly have ventured to speak so peremptorily; but he was out of leading-strings now, and had begun to feel all the conscious superiority of a very young man over the womankind of his household.

Jeanne made no effort to retain him. She saw that he would go to France—perhaps even that he ought to go—and that combating his resolution would but serve to strengthen it. But that did not prevent her heart from sinking with apprehension, nor her imagination from conjuring up a host of dire possibilities; for though in most matters she had courage enough for any two, she was a veritable coward where Léon's safety was concerned. If the destinies of France had been entrusted to her hands at that moment, it is to be feared that peace would have been purchased at the price of as large a cession of inches and stones as the invader might have thought fit to demand. Mechanically she unfolded the newspaper which Léon had thrown to her, to see how far popular opinion might seem disposed towards a pacific policy.

Upon this point the *Cri du Peuple* was perfectly explicit. There was to be no yielding, no hesitation, and neither peace nor truce till the enemy should be driven back across the frontier; the resources of the country, both in lives and money, were to be taxed, if need should be, to the utmost; and all able-bodied men (except, of course, such as were required for civil employment and the cultured few whose duty compelled them to stay at home, and write leading-articles) were to be called under arms forthwith. The *Cri du Peuple* considered that the hour had now struck for the converting of every citizen (always with the above-named exceptions) into a soldier, and was further of opinion that the Bonapartists should be placed in the front rank. These editorial utterances filled the first page of the sheet; the second was taken up by Jules Favre's circular, and by appropriate comments thereon; and the third contained an article written by a gentleman of most uncompromising views, who, to use his own forcible words, "was convinced that the peace of the world could only be secured by the final extinction of the traitors, cowards, and bandits who have too long usurped the proud position of rulers of mankind."

"In the sad circumstances in which Europe now finds itself," continued this moderate reformer, "we believe that we are fulfilling a high duty of morality and humanity in suggesting to our Government that the following prices be placed upon the heads of the monsters whose names we append:—

	FR.
Charles-Louis-Napoléon Bonaparte	25,000
Bismarck (the enemy of the human race)	25,000
William, King of Prussia	25,000
Moltke	15,000
Werder (*le bourreau de Strasbourg*)	15,000
Emile Ollivier (of the light heart)	10,000
Clément Duvernois (more than he is worth, but no honest citizen would soil his hands by touching the wretch for less)	5,000"

From the above excerpt (which, by the way, is no caricature) it will be seen that the tigerish element which, according to Voltaire, enters so largely into the disposition of his countrymen, was not wanting among the contributors to the *Cri du Peuple*. The last page of that spirited print offered a very fair example of the simious side of the national character, consisting, as it did, of a series of mischievous and gleeful attacks upon the reputation of local dignitaries. Under the title of "*Les Fonctionnaires de l'Empire: leurs hauts faits et gestes*," Jeanne came upon a paragraph headed "*Bonjean, soi-disant de Trémonville*," in which our old friend was somewhat roughly handled. "The son of a simple peasant, who earned his living in the hamlet of Trémonville in Dauphiné, some fifty years ago, partly by the sale of his own pigs and fowls, and partly by stealing those of his neighbours, the young Baptiste Bonjean early displayed an aptitude for thieving, lying, and fawning upon his superiors. Under the régime from which we have just escaped he could have possessed no better credentials for advancement in life."

Such were the opening sentences of a concise biography, which, after following the juvenile delinquent through the various phases of his successful career, imputing to him enough crimes to have merited a sentence of penal servitude for life, and incidentally disposing of his wife's character in terms whose plainness left nothing to be desired, wound up with a significant warning that the rule of adventurers of this stamp would be tolerated no longer. "We are the more desirous," concluded the writer, "that the citizen Bonjean should at once learn the necessity for withdrawing his dishonoured person from our town, inasmuch as we have been given to understand that he now professes republican principles, and has been sedulously exerting the occult influences which such reptiles know how to use to get himself confirmed in the appointment which he at present disgraces. Should he succeed in his design, the people of Algiers will, without any doubt, find a summary means of getting rid of him."

With a smile that ended in a sigh, Jeanne let the paper slide to the ground.

The truculent absurdities of a half-educated scribbler were of no great importance in themselves, but they served to show which way the wind blew, and that republican was as little disposed as imperial France to look truth in the face. There could be no question but that the war would be prosecuted indefinitely, nor any doubt but that Léon would have to take his part in it.

Oddly enough, it was not death nor wounds that Jeanne dreaded for her brother—these were contingencies which she could not bring herself to contemplate—but the hardships and privations which he must needs undergo, and for which she imagined him to be in no way fitted. As a matter of fact, the young man was as strong as a horse, and as well able to make his dinner off the heterogeneous contents of a camp-kettle, and to sleep on the bare ground afterwards, as any soldier in the French service; but this Jeanne could not see. Her love for her brother had always been of a more or less maternal nature; and now, calling to mind all the minor maladies—colds in the head, toothaches, and what not—which had afflicted him from time to time, she fell to drawing harrowing mental pictures of his sufferings from one or other of these terrible ailments in a wintry, inhospitable land, with no one to pet and comfort him under them, till her heart overflowed with pity and her eyes with tears.

And so she sat idly on her shady bench, while the heavy-footed hours crept by, and the sun struck downwards in his might, shrivelling the brown herbage, and making the air quiver, and the voices of Nature were dumb, and all things were pervaded by a brooding sense of depression which northern people can hardly understand as associated with fair weather.

After a time, there came an audible stir from the direction of the house; a sound of hurrying footsteps, of eager, subdued voices; and then a horse was led out from the stable, and somebody mounted him and galloped away, along the high-road, towards the town. Jeanne started to her feet at once, feeling instinctively that something had gone wrong. There was nothing unusual in what she had heard; in fact, hardly a day passed without a groom being despatched to Algiers upon some commission or other; but when misfortune is in the air, it has a way of making itself felt through the most ordinary channels, and Jeanne was scarcely surprised when Fanchette came hastening out to meet her, wringing her hands and apostrophising all the saints in the calendar.

"Oh, mademoiselle!" gasped the old woman, incoherently, "what a misfortune! Who could have foreseen it?—ah, how terrible!—Madame la Duchesse——"

Jeanne put her aside, and stepped into the house. At the foot of the staircase Léon met her, looking very pale and grave.

"We have got her into bed," he said, "but I don't know what we ought to do till the doctor comes. No—do not go up yet; you would be shocked perhaps, and you can do no good. Her face is so horribly changed, and one side——"

Jeanne waited to hear no more, but hurried upstairs into the bedroom, where, with a group of frightened and helpless women-servants round her bed, the poor old Duchess lay, stricken down by paralysis.

CHAPTER XXIV.

CHANGES.

POOR old Duchess! her long life-journey was drawing towards a close at last. For her not many more suns would rise and set. For her there was an end of planning and plotting, of gossip and tittle-tattle, of jewels and laces, of well-meant, ostentatious charities, of patronising humble folks and smiling upon great ones. Yet a few days, and she would have passed over into the ranks of that silent, unseen multitude to whom "the reed is as the oak." The doctor came up post-haste, but she was beyond help of doctors, as the good man himself was the first to admit, blowing his nose loudly the while, with a many-coloured pocket-handkerchief.

"Ah, Monsieur le Marquis," said he sorrowfully, "I am completely upset. A lady so noble, so venerable! Our consolation must be that she has been spared to reach a great age; and that in spite of a constitution far from robust. I do not say it to vaunt myself, though it is true that Madame la Duchesse has availed herself of my poor services for many years past. Alas, monsieur, in her I lose the most amiable of my patients."

He might have added the most lucrative too; and very likely this aspect of the misfortune did not fail to present itself to him, seeing that doctors are, after all, but men, and very generally have families to support. Some directions and prescriptions he gave, as in duty bound; but he was careful to mention that they would be of very little use. The end might come immediately, or in the course of a day or two; it was not likely, in any case, to be delayed beyond a week. Under the circumstances, one could hardly wish that it should be. And so the doctor took his leave, and scrambled into the shabby leather-curtained waggonette that was waiting for him at the door.

"*Au pas, malheureux, au pas !*" Léon heard him exclaim, in a strident whisper, as the coachman whipped up his rough little horse. "Have you no entrails, then, that you drive away as from a wedding?"

The Duchess did not die that day, nor the next, and gradually recovered consciousness, but not speech. The household was disorganized, as all households are at such times. There was not much to be done, yet nobody liked to go about his ordinary avocations. The servants collected in the corridors, and talked together in awe-struck undertones; M. de Fontvieille hurried in and out, upon one needless errand or another; and Léon wandered uneasily about the house, stealing on tiptoe, every now and then, into the darkened room where Jeanne sat, night and day, by the bedside of the dying woman.

Of what was the poor old soul thinking, as she lay there through the long, hot hours, her eyes wandering restlessly over wall and ceiling, and one withered hand for ever plucking at the bed-clothes? More than once, when Léon was beside her, she struggled hard to speak, and looked at him with a piteous, entreating gaze which troubled the lad a little.

"What is it? What does she mean?" he whispered to his sister; but Jeanne avoided answering the question. She had a feeling that it would be hardly generous to urge, at this time, what she believed to be the Duchess's wish, seeing that it was identical with her own. M. de Fontvieille was less scrupulous. "The cause of her agitation is evident enough," he said. "Promise her that you will remain at home, and take care of your sister, when she is gone, poor, dear lady, and you will see that she will become tranquil at once. Come, my boy, you cannot refuse to perform so simple an act of duty, and to soothe the last moments of one who has been as much as a mother to you."

Léon, however, did refuse. Certainly, he said, he would promise to do his duty towards his sister to the best of his ability. More than that he could not do, and more ought not to be asked of him. For the sake of no one, living or dead, would he bind himself to abstain from striking a blow for his country.

So, if that were what poor old Madame de Breuil wanted, she had to do without it, as she had had to do without many another thing in the course of her long pilgrimage.

"This world is but a poor place," sighed old Fanchette, with her apron up to her eyes—"nothing but vexation and disappointment and pain, from beginning to end. Madame la Duchesse is more to be envied than we who remain behind. Ah, if we had all lived as she has done, there would be little need to say masses for the repose of our souls when our own time came. Heaven be praised! she will soon be an angel in Paradise."

I don't know whether the Duchess was very anxious to be an angel, or in any great hurry to enter Paradise. Once, when Jeanne, in a despondent mood, had expressed a doubt whether life was worth having, the old lady had assured her that in a few years' time she would certainly answer the question in the affirmative. "You young people are fractious and impatient. If life does not bring you exactly what you want, you cry out that you are tired of it. For me life is like an old friend from whom I can take occasional rough usage without murmuring, and whom I should love for old acquaintance sake, if for no other reason." Now she had to bid adieu to her old friend for ever; to leave "the warm precincts of the cheerful day," and set out, shivering and alone, for some unknown land. Very possibly the outlook may not have seemed to her an altogether smiling one. However, as she never spoke again, nobody had any opportunity of arriving at the state of her mind, and the priests who came to administer the viaticum to her declared that her exemplary life had found a fitting conclusion in the most edifying of death-beds.

And so, at length, Louise, Duchesse de Breuil, passed away, fortified by the sacraments of the Church. She had been a well-known woman in her day, but had outlived name, fame, beauty and friends by many, many years, and the news of her death affected nobody beyond her own home circle, unless it was the Duc de Breuil, who considered that he had been kept out of a portion of his rightful income by her for an inexcusably long time.

Jeanne took the loss of her kindly, fussy old duenna terribly to heart. Long as she had foreseen the approach of the inevitable event, and calmly as she had often spoken of it, yet, when it came, it almost stunned her by its suddenness, and overwhelmed her with that feeling of yearning regret and remorse to which few people can be strangers. Now that it was too late to make any amends, she acknowledged to herself humbly and sadly that she had never done the Duchess justice. She remembered, with many a pang of shame, how little allowance she had made for the querulousness of old age and for a character differing at every point from her own. All her bygone rejections of proffered confidences, all her cold or scornful speeches and occasional little shabby acts, rose up before her in proportions which they would undoubtedly never have assumed if the subject of them had been alive and well. Everybody knows the sensation. It passes away with time, like all human sensations, good and bad, and I dare say a great many of us manage to get over it in the course of a week. Jeanne, who felt more deeply than most, did not rally so quickly. Had she been less unhappy on her own score, at this time, no doubt the blow would not have fallen so heavily upon her; as it was, she seemed utterly crushed and altered by it. She would sit for hours, silent and motionless, with her hands before her, unable to settle down to any occupation, and forgetful even of the household duties wl hitherto been as a second nature to her; she could hardly be prevailed upon to eat anything; and any trifle—a passing allusion, the sight of the Duchess's empty chair, or of a sunshade lying where the old lady had laid it down, for the last time, on the hall table—sufficed to send her into a paroxysm of hysterical weeping.

Léon, albeit "profoundly touched"—to use his own expression—by the spectacle of so much sensibility, ended by finding it a little irritating. Grief over their joint bereavement was, of course, highly becoming—he himself had shed "a torrent of tears" on the day of the funeral—but that grief should be thus prolonged, day after day, and week after week, was surely neither natural nor needful; and what made it especially inconvenient was that, while Jeanne continued in this frame of mind, neither he nor M. de Fontvieille liked to trouble her with those discussions as to her future manner of life which the circumstances rendered urgent, and in which both of them felt that her voice ought to be heard. The upshot of it was that they took their own line of action, deeming it, upon the whole, most advisable to keep the person principally concerned in the dark until they should be able to lay some definite proposition before her.

This moment came towards the end of October, when M. Gambetta, newly descended from his balloon, was working with might and main at the formation of a new national army; when Saint-Luc, who had turned up at Tours in the nick of time to receive a colonel's commission, was collecting and drilling a rough corps of *éclaireurs-à-cheval*; when a sudden revival of hope was spreading through the length and breadth of the land, and when Metz, alas! was tottering to its fall.

Algiers and its neighbourhood lay quivering and gasping under the scorching heat of a sirocco which had already lasted two days, blowing not, as in the winter-time, in furious gusts, but in steady, slowly-moving waves of red-hot air—if such an expression be permissible. The sky overhead was of a dull coppery hue; the mountains were veiled; the sun shone dimly through an atmosphere impregnated with a hovering mist of fine sand, which settled and penetrated everywhere—even through the closed windows and shutters of the *salon* where Jeanne, utterly prostrated both in mind and body, lay idly stretched upon a sofa. To her entered M. de Fontvieille, exhausted but unconquered, and seating himself at her side, drew a bundle of letters from his pocket, and cleared his voice with the unmistakable air of one who has a statement to make.

"I fear, my dear child," he began, "that I do not find you much disposed to talk over some matters of importance."

"Not much," murmured Jeanne faintly.

"No; it is not to be expected that you should be. Still, business is business, and correspondence must not be left unanswered. Has it ever occurred to you that, under present circumstances, you can hardly continue to live as you are now living?—that the laws of society do not permit a young lady to dispense with some—protector?"

"Have I not got Léon?"

"It is of a protector of your own sex that you stand in need. And besides, Léon cannot be with you much longer. In point of fact, M. de Saint-Luc has offered to find a place for him in his regiment; and I believe I may say he has accepted the offer."

"He might have told me about it," said Jeanne. "I have never been selfish with him. I should not have attempted to keep him here, now that the Duchess is gone—"

"Dear mademoiselle, neither you nor anyone else could have kept him here. The young man has got the war-fever; and I know of no remedy for that disease except shells and bullets, and even they do not cure everybody. What would you have? We were all young once."

"I am not complaining of Léon—nor of anything. What is it that you wish me to do?"

"I was about to tell you. As soon as I saw that Leon was determined to leave us, and that it would be necessary to place you under the care of some relation or friend up to the time of your marriage, I wrote to your cousins in Auvergne, laying the case before them, and asking them whether they would be prepared to offer you a temporary home, adding, at the same time, that you would willingly contribute whatever sum they might think fit towards the defrayal of any increased household expenditure which your visit might entail. Their answer was not of the most cordial. They said it would give them great pleasure to receive you, but that you would be badly lodged, as the château was unfortunately under repair. They thought it only right to add that, in the present lamentable state of the country, their own plans must be very uncertain, and that they might be compelled to leave France at any moment. Finally, they assured me that, poor as they were, and heavy as the cost would probably be of entertaining one who was not accustomed to their rough country fare, it was not their habit to send in a bill to their guests. Léon and I agreed that, before continuing negotiations with these civil-spoken people, we would address ourselves to your mother's sister, Madame Ashley. Ah, this time, for example, we fell upon a human being! Here is her response, which arrived this morning. Its French is original, its style is not precisely that of the Academy, but its sentiments are those of a woman of heart. Excellent and respectable lady! Here is her letter; read it for yourself.

[Holmhurst, Surrey, October 1870.

"MON CHER MONSIEUR,

"Je viens de recevoir votre lettre, et j'apprends avec sincère regret la mort de Madame la Duchesse de Breuil. Je n'ai jamais eu l'avantage de connaître cette dame personnellement, mais j'ai bien souvent entendu parler d'elle, et je ne doute point qu'elle ne soit entrée, comme vous dites, dans le royaume des cieux, où je compte rencontrer, un jour, tous les bons chrétiens, quoique pas catholique-romaine moi-même.

"Quant à la chère nièce que je ne connais que de nom, je n'ai assurément pas besoin de vous dire qu'elle sera mille fois la bien venue chez nous, que mes filles ont grande envie de faire sa connaissance, et que plus longtemps elle restera avec nous, plus nous serons contents. Je voudrais bien qu'il fût possible que son marriage eût lieu de cette maison. Ce serait pour nous une belle fête, et nous avons même dans le voisinage une très-gentille petite chapelle catholique-romaine où la cérémonie pourrait être solemnisée. Mais pour ça il faudra attendre la fin de cette malheureuse guerre. Dieu veuille que M. de Saint-Luc en revienne sain et sauf, ainsi que mon bon neveu Léon, que nous avons tous appris à aimer pendantson séjour en Angleterre.

"En attendant, Jeanne sera ici comme chez elle. Nous ferons de notre mieux pour la rendre confortable, et j'ose promettre qu'elle n'aura à se plaindre de rien, si ce n'est du climat, qui, du reste, est moins mauvais qu'on ne le prétend. Dites-lui, avec mon meilleur amour (c'est une expression anglaise qui se comprend mais ne se traduit pas) que nous la recevrons de grand cœur.

"Excusez, monsieur, mon mauvais français. Du temps de ma jeunesse je parlais passablement bien votre langue, mais depuis lors j'ai oublié bien des choses, et ce qui est le plus ennuyeux c'est que je ne puis trouver, dans ce moment, ni mon dictionnaire ni mon Noël et Chapsal. C'ést égal—vous n'en comprendrez pas moins q'uil me tarde d'embrasser la fille de ma pauvre chère sœur, et que je vous suis bien reconnaissante de toute la bonté que vous avez eue pour elle.

"Recevez, monsieur, l'assurance de mon amitié sincère.

"ANNE ASHLEY.

"M. Ashley fait dire qu'il ira volontiers prendre sa nièce a Marseille; le voyage ne lui fera que du bien. Il le prolongerait même jusqu'en Algérie, s'il le fallait, mais pour vous dire la verité, il craint un peu le mal de mer."

This hearty missive came like a whiff of cool English air to Jeanne as she sat in the stifling atmosphere of her African home. She read it through twice, smiling a little as she did so, for the first time since the Duchess's death; but when she folded it up and returned it to M. de Fontvieille, she shook her head.

"Dear child," said he persuasively, "do not let prejudice deter you from accepting the hospitality of these good English people. It is true that Madame Ashley expresses herself a little like a provincial and places a superfluous r in *mariage*; but we must not therefore conclude that she is either an uneducated or a vulgar person. On the contrary, I detect in this letter traces of a refinement, blunted, it may be, by rural surroundings, still—"

"I was not thinking of anything of that kind," interrupted Jeanne. "It seems to me that my aunt is as charming as she is kind. But I could not stay at Holmhurst."

"And why not, if you please?" asked M. de Fontvieille, with a shade of impatience in his voice.

"Because I had rather not."

"That is not a reason."

"Is it necessary that I should give my reason for disliking to go to England?"

"No; but it would at least show some consideration for those who love you, and are trying to do their best for you, if you did. And then I should be glad to know what alternative course you can propose."

"Well, there is an alternative. The convent is open to me; and I should be very happy with the good sisters till—till I was wanted in the world again."

"Impossible!" exclaimed M. de Fontvieille, with a gesture of horror. "You, to whom liberty and the free air are as meat and drink, to pass interminable days between the four white walls of that prison-house! Why, you would die of it. No one can accuse me of undervaluing the benefits of religious life and of occasional periods of seclusion. I admit that, by stretching a point or two, you might get through a month of matins, complines, vespers, needlework and the rest, without pining away, like a sky-lark in a cage; but when it came to be a question of six months, or a year—for who can say how long it may take our armies to drive the Prussians over the frontier?—when this house was shut up, and you had no refuge to escape to—"

"I should not mind," answered Jeanne wearily. "What I want is rest and peace."

"No; you want change and amusement. But let that pass. The fact is that neither Léon nor I like the idea of your remaining in Africa at all just now. The times are bad, and will be worse, if I am not mistaken and misinformed. Do you know how many trained soldiers we have in the country? I do not; for troops have been moved hither and thither, during the last few weeks, embarking here, disembarking there, marching in and marching out, till nobody can say anything about them, except that they are no longer visible. What I do know is, that in the province of Oran, in the province of Constantine, and over yonder in Kabylia, *messieurs les indigènes* are growing restless. They have heard that the Empire has fallen, and to their simple notions the Empire is France. For my own part, I have always liked the Arabs; they are a brave race, and we have been educating them into a loyal one; but they have still many things to learn—such as, for instance, the possible existence of a government without a head, the criminal folly of insurrection, and perhaps also the inviolability of convents. Ever since the news of Sedan came, I have observed that the natives have adopted a certain manner of looking at me as I pass. I, who am but an old man, with one foot in the grave, shrug my shoulders, and look at them in return; but I have taken to carrying a revolver, and I have sent away my jewels into a place of safety. It is a measure of precaution for which I hope you will live to thank me one day; and that is why I must strenuously oppose your project of immuring yourself at El Biar."

"As you please," answered Jeanne, too tired and too indifferent to argue. "I will go to my cousins in Auvergne, then."

"Where you will be as welcome as snow in June! I thought you more reasonable, Jeanne. What objection can you possibly have to availing yourself of the kindness of these excellent Ashleys?"

"Dear M. de Fontvieille, do not be impatient with me. I am so tired, and so—so unhappy." Jeanne's lip quivered, and she stopped short; but recovering herself immediately, she resumed, in a steadier voice: "I am ready to do whatever you and Léon think best; and my reason for not wishing to go to England is not of any great importance, after all. It was only that Mr. Barrington lives close to the Ashleys, and that I did not wish to meet him again so soon."

M. de Fontvieille was at once mollified and delighted. A touch of sentiment appealed to his tenderest feelings. "Poor child!—poor child!" he murmured, patting her gently on the shoulder. "You have not forgotten, then; and I, old fool that I am!—have been wrongfully accusing you of heartlessness. I ask your pardon; I offer you my respectful sympathy—I, who have passed, in my time, along the path which you are now treading, and who know all its rough places. Go, dear mademoiselle, go without fear; you will suffer, perhaps, but less than you expect. A *bourgeoise* placed as you are would do well to hesitate; people of our race are differently built. '*L'amour n'est qu'un plaisir, l'honneur est un devoir,*' as Corneille says; and I would answer for it with my life that you will never forget, in the presence of Mr. Barrington, that you are the affianced bride of the Vicomte de Saint-Luc."

Either Jeanne's dormant pride was aroused by this little piece of fanfaronnade, or else she was too weary to resist pressure. She promised to write to Mrs. Ashley by the next post, and to make immediate preparations for her journey.

So M. de Fontvieille went home with his mind at ease, and meeting Léon on the threshold, told him that all was satisfactorily arranged.

"With a little tact and discretion one can always bring reasonable people to understand their duty," said the old gentleman, modestly exultant.

"I'm very much obliged to you, monsieur," answered Léon, as he entered the house, and bade his valuable ally good evening. He, too, had his preparations to make, his last instructions to give, his last words to say, before leaving the old home to which it might well be that he would never return again.

Some Aspects of Robert Burns.

To write with authority about another man, we must have fellow-feeling and some common ground of experience with our subject. We may praise or blame according as we find him related to us by the best or worst in ourselves; but it is only in virtue of some relationship that we can be his judges, even to condemn. Feelings which we share and understand enter for us into the tissue of the man's character; those to which we are strangers in our own experience we are inclined to regard as blots, exceptions, inconsistencies, and excursions of the diabolic; we conceive them with repugnance, explain them with difficulty, and raise our hands to heaven in holy wonder when we find them in conjunction with talents that we respect, or virtues that we admire. David, king of Israel, would pass a sounder judgment on a man than either Nathaniel or David Hume. Now, Principal Shairp's recent volume, although I believe no one will read it without respect and interest, has this one capital defect—that there is imperfect sympathy between the author and the subject, between the critic and the personality under criticism. Hence an inorganic, if not an incoherent, presentation of both the poems and the man. Of *Holy Willie's Prayer*, Principal Shairp remarks that "those who have loved most what was best in Burns's poetry must have regretted that it was ever written." To the *Jolly Beggars*, so far as my memory serves me, he refers but once; and then only to remark on the "strange, not to say painful," circumstance that the same hand which wrote the *Cotter's Saturday Night* should have stooped to write the *Jolly Beggars*. The *Saturday Night* may or may not be an admirable poem; but its significance is trebled, and the power and range of the poet first appears, when it is set beside the *Jolly Beggars*. To take a man's work piecemeal, except with the design of elegant extracts, is the way to avoid, and not to perform, the critic's duty. The same weakness is displayed in the treatment of Burns as a man, which is broken, apologetical, and confused. The man here presented to us is not that Burns, *teres atque rotundus*—a burly figure in literature, as, from our present vantage of time, we have begun to see him: this, on the other hand, is Burns as he may have appeared to a contemporary clergyman, whom we shall conceive to have been a kind and indulgent but orderly and orthodox person, anxious to be pleased, but too often hurt and disappointed by the behaviour of his red-hot *protégé*, and solacing himself with the explanation that the poet was "the most inconsistent of men." If you are so sensibly pained by the misconduct of your subject, and so paternally delighted with his virtues, you will always be an excellent gent but a somewhat questionable biographer. Indeed, we can only be sorry and surprised that Principal Shairp should have chosen a theme so uncongenial. When we find a man writing on Burns, who likes neither *Holy Willie*, nor the *Beggars*, nor the *Ordination*, nothing is adequate to the situation but the old cry of Géronte: "Que diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?" And every merit we find in the book, which is sober and candid in a degree unusual with biographies of Burns, only leads us to regret more heartily that good work should be so far thrown away.

It is far from my intention to tell over again a story that has been so often told; but there are certainly some points in the character of Burns that will bear to be brought out, and some chapters in his life that demand a brief rehearsal. The unity of the man's nature, for all its richness, has fallen somewhat out of sight in the pressure of new information and the apologetical ceremony of biographers. Mr. Carlyle made an inimitable bust of the poet's head of gold; may I not be forgiven if my business should have more to do with the feet, which were of clay?

YOUTH.

Any view of Burns would be misleading which passed over in silence the influences of his home and his father. That father, William Burnes, after having been for many years a gardener, took a farm, married, and, like an emigrant in a new country, built himself a house with his own hands. Poverty of the most distressing sort, with sometimes the near prospect of a gaol, embittered the remainder of his life. Chill, backward, and austere with strangers, grave and imperious in his family, he was yet a man of very unusual parts and of an affectionate nature. On his way through life, he had remarked much upon other men, with more result in theory than practice; and he had reflected upon many subjects as he delved the garden. His great delight was in solid conversation; he would leave his work to talk with the schoolmaster Murdoch; and Robert, when he came home late at night, not only turned aside rebuke, but kept his father two hours beside the fire by the charm of his merry and vigorous talk. Nothing is more characteristic of the class in general, and William Burnes in particular, than the pains he took to get proper schooling for his boys, and, when that was no longer possible, the sense and resolution with which he set himself to supply the deficiency by his own influence. For many years he was their chief companion; he spoke with them seriously on all subjects as if they had been grown men; at night, when work was over, he taught them arithmetic; he borrowed books for them on history, science, and theology; and he felt it his duty to supplement this last—the trait is laughably Scottish—by a dialogue of his own composition, where his own private shade of orthodoxy was exactly represented. He would go to his daughter, as she stayed afield herding cattle, to teach her the names of grasses and wild flowers, or to sit by her side when it thundered. Distance to strangers, deep family tenderness, love of knowledge, a narrow, precise, and formal reading of theology—everything we learn of him hangs well together, and builds up a popular Scotch type. If I mention the name of Andrew Fairservice, it is only as I might couple for an instant Dugald Dalgetty with old Marshal Loudon, to help out the reader's comprehension by a popular but unworthy instance of a class. Such was the influence of this good and wise man, that his household became a school to itself, and neighbours who came into the farm at meal time would find the whole family, father, brothers, and sisters, helping themselves with one hand, and holding a book in the other. We are surprised at the style of Robert; that of Gilbert need surprise us no less; even William writes a remarkable letter for a young man of such slender opportunities. One anecdote marks the taste of the family. Murdoch bought *Titus Andronicus*, and, with such dominie elocution as we may suppose, began to read it aloud before this rustic audience; but when he had reached the passage where Tamora insults unhappy Lavinia, with one voice and "in an agony of distress" they refused to hear it to an end. In such a father and with such a home, Robert had already the making of a famous education; and what Murdoch added, although it may not have been much in amount, was in character the very essence of a literary training. Schools and colleges, for one great man whom they complete, perhaps unmake a dozen; the strong spirit can do well upon more scanty fare.

Robert steps before us, almost from the first, in his complete character—a proud, headstrong, impetuous lad, greedy of pleasure, greedy of notice; in his own phrase "panting after distinction," and in his brother's "cherishing a particular jealousy of people who were richer or of more consequence than himself:" with all this, emphatically of the artist nature. Already in Tarbolton church he made a conspicuous figure, with the only tied hair in the parish, "and his plaid, which was of a particular colour, wrapped in a particular manner round his shoulders." Ten years later, when a married man, the father of a family, a farmer, and an officer of Excise, we shall find him out fishing in masquerade, with fox-skin cap, belted great-coat, and great Highland broadsword. He liked dressing up, in fact, for its own sake. This is the spirit which leads to the extravagant array of Latin Quarter students, and the proverbial velveteen of the English landscape-painter; and, though the pleasure derived is in itself merely personal, it shows a man who is, to say the least of it, not pained by general attention and remark. His father wrote the family name *Burnes*; Robert early adopted the orthography *Burness* from his cousin in the Mearns; and in his twenty-eighth year changed it once more to *Burns*. It is plain that the last transformation was not made without some qualm; for in addressing his cousin he adheres, in at least one more letter, to spelling number two. And this, again, shows a man preoccupied about the manner of his appearance even down to the name, and little willing to follow custom. Again, he was proud, and justly proud, of his powers in conversation. To no other man's have we the same conclusive testimony from different sources and from every rank of life. It is almost a commonplace that the best of his works was what he said in talk. Robertson the historian "scarcely ever met any man whose conversation displayed greater vigour;" the Duchess of Gordon declared that he "carried her off her feet;" and, when he came late to an inn, the servants would get out of bed to hear him talk. But in these early days, at least, he was determined to shine by any means. He made himself feared in the village for his tongue. He would crush weaker men to their faces, or even perhaps—for the statement of Sillar is not absolute—say cutting things of his acquaintances behind their back. At the church-door, between sermons, he would parade his religious views amid hisses. These details stamp the man. He had no genteel timidities in the conduct of his life. He loved to force his personality upon the world. He would please himself, and shine. Had he lived in the Paris of 1830, and joined his lot with the Romantics, we can conceive him writing *Jehan* for *Jean*, swaggering in Gautier's red waistcoat, and horrifying Bourgeois in the public café with paradox and gasconnade.

A leading trait throughout his whole career was his desire to be in love. *Ne fait pas ce tour qui veut.* His affections were often enough touched, but perhaps never engaged. He was all his life on a voyage of discovery, but it does not appear conclusively that he ever touched the happy isle. A man brings to love a deal of ready-made sentiment, and even from childhood obscurely prognosticates the symptoms of this vital malady. Burns was formed for love; he had passion, tenderness, and a singular bent in the direction; he could foresee, with the intuition of an artist, what love ought to be; and he could not conceive a worthy life without it. But he had ill fortune, and was besides so greedy after every shadow of the true divinity, and so much the slave of a strong temperament, that perhaps his nerve was relaxed and his heart had lost the power of self-devotion before an opportunity occurred. The circumstances of his youth doubtless counted for something in the result. For the lads of Ayrshire, as soon as the day's work was over and the beasts were stabled, would take the road it might be in a winter tempest, and travel perhaps miles by moss and moorland, to spend an hour or two in courtship. Rule 10 of the Bachelors' Club at Tarbolton provides that "every man proper for a member of this Society must be a professed lover of *one or more* of the female sex." The rich, as Burns himself points out, may have a choice of pleasurable occupations, but these lads had nothing but their "cannie hour at e'en." It was upon love and flirtation that this rustic society was built; gallantry was the essence of life among the Ayrshire hills as well as in the Court of Versailles; and the days were distinguished from each other by love-letters, meetings, tiffs, reconciliations, and expansions to the chosen confidant, as in a comedy of Marivaux. Here was a field for a man of Burns's indiscriminate personal ambition; where he might pursue his voyage of discovery in quest of true love, and enjoy temporary triumphs by the way.

He was "constantly the victim of some fair enslaver"—at least, when it was not the other way about; and there were often underplots and secondary fair enslavers in the background. Many—or may we not say most?—of these affairs were entirely artificial. One, he tells us, he began out of "a vanity of showing his parts in courtship," for he piqued himself on his ability at a love-letter. But, however they began, these flames of his were fanned into a passion ere the end; and he stands unrivalled in his power of self-deception, and positively without a competitor in the art, to use his own words, of "battering himself into a warm affection," a debilitating and futile exercise. Once he had worked himself into the vein, "the agitations of his mind and body" were an astonishment to all who knew him. Such a course as this, however pleasant to a thirsty vanity, was lowering to his nature. He sank more and more towards the professional Don Juan. With a leer of what the French call fatuity, he bids the belles of Mauchline beware of his seductions; and the same cheap self-satisfaction finds a yet uglier vent when he plumes himself on the scandal at the birth of his first bastard. We can well believe what we hear of his facility in striking up an acquaintance with women: he would have conquering manners; he would bear down upon his rustic game with the grace that comes of absolute assurance—the Richelieu of Lochlea or Mossgiel. In yet another manner did these quaint ways of courtship help him into fame. If he were great as principal, he was unrivalled as confidant. He could enter into a passion; he could counsel wary moves, being, in his own phrase, so old a hawk; nay, he could turn a letter for some unlucky swain, or even string a few lines of verse that should clinch the business and fetch the hesitating fair one to the ground. Nor, perhaps, was it only his "curiosity, zeal, and intrepid dexterity" that recommended him for a second in such affairs; it must have been a distinction to have the assistance and advice of *Rab the Ranter*; and one who was in no way formidable by himself, might grow dangerous and attractive through the fame of his associate.

I think we can conceive him, in these early years, in that rough moorland country, poor among the poor with his seven pounds a year, looked upon with doubt by respectable elders, but for all that the best talker, the best letter-writer, the most famous lover and confidant, the laureate poet, and the only man who wore his hair tied in the parish. He says he had then as high a notion of himself as ever after; and I can well believe it. Among the youth he walked *facile princeps*, an apparent god; and even if, *from time to time*, the Reverend Mr. Auld should swoop upon him with the thunders of the Church, and, in company with seven others, Rab the Ranter must figure some fine Sunday on the stool of repentance, would there not be a sort of glory, an infernal apotheosis, in so conspicuous a shame? Was not Richelieu in disgrace more idolised than ever by the dames of Paris? and when was the highwayman most acclaimed but on his way to Tyburn? Or to take a simile from nearer home, and still more exactly to the point could even corporal punishment avail, administered by a cold, abstract, unearthly schoolmaster, against the influence and fame of the school's hero!

And now we come to the culminating point of Burns's early period. He began to be received into the unknown upper world. His fame soon spread from among his fellow-rebels on the benches, and began to reach the ushers and monitors of this great Ayrshire academy. This arose in part from his lax views about religion; for at this time that old war of the creeds and confessors, which is always grumbling from end to end of our poor Scotland, brisked up in these parts into a hot and virulent skirmish; and Burns found himself identified with the opposition party, a clique of roaring lawyers and half-heretical divines, with wit enough to appreciate the value of the poet's help, and not sufficient taste to moderate his grossness and personality. We may judge of their surprise when *Holy Willie* was put into their hand; like the amorous lads of Tarbolton, they recognised in him the best of seconds. His satires began to go the round in manuscript; Mr. Aiken, one of the lawyers, "read him into fame;" he himself was soon welcome in many houses of a better sort, where his admirable talk, and his manners, which he had direct from his Maker except for a brush he gave them at a country dancing school, completed what his poems had begun. We have a sight of him at his first visit to Adamhill, in his ploughman's shoes, coasting around the carpet as though that were sacred ground. But he soon grew used to carpets and their owners; and he was still the superior of all whom he encountered, and ruled the roost in conversation. Such was the impression made that a young clergyman, himself a man of ability, trembled and became confused when he saw Robert enter the church in which he was to preach. It is not surprising that the poet determined to publish: he had now stood the test of some publicity; and, under this hopeful impulse, he composed in six winter months the bulk of his more important poems. Here was a young man who, from a very humble place, was mounting rapidly; from the cynosure of a parish, he had become the talk of a country; once the bard of rural courtships, he was now about to appear as a bound and printed poet in the world's bookshops.

A few more intimate strokes are necessary to complete the sketch. This strong young ploughman, who feared no competitor with the flail, suffered like a fine lady from sleeplessness and vapours; he would fall into the blackest melancholies, and be filled with remorse for the past and terror for the future. He was still not perhaps devoted to religion, but haunted by it; and at a touch of sickness prostrated himself before God in what I can only call unmanly penitence. As he had aspirations beyond his place in the world, so he had tastes, thoughts, and weaknesses to match. He loved to walk under a wood to the sound of a winter tempest; he had a singular tenderness for animals; he carried a book with him in his pocket when he went abroad, and wore out in this service two copies of the *Man of Feeling*. With young people in the field at work he was very long-suffering; and when his brother Gilbert spoke sharply to them—"O man, ye are no for young folk," he would say, and give the defaulter a helping hand and a smile. In the hearts of the men whom he met, he read as in a book; and, what is yet more rare, his knowledge of himself equalled his knowledge of others. There are no truer things said of Burns than what is to be found in his own letters. Country Don Juan as he was, he had none of that blind vanity which values itself in what it is not; he knew his own strength and weakness to a hair; he took himself boldly for what he was, and, except in moments of hypochondria, declared himself content.

THE LOVE STORIES.

On the night of Mauchline races, 1785, the young men and women of the place joined in a penny ball, according to their custom. In the same set danced Jean Armour, the master-mason's daughter, and our dark-eyed Don Juan. His dog (not the immortal Luath, but a successor unknown to fame, *caret quia vate sacro*), apparently sensible of some neglect, followed his master to and fro, to the confusion of the dancers. Some mirthful comments followed; and Jean heard the poet say to his partner—or, as I should imagine, laughingly launch the remark to the company at large—that "he wished he could get any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog." Some time after, as the girl was bleaching clothes on Mauchline green, Robert chanced to go by, still accompanied by his dog; and the dog, "scouring in long excursion," scampered with four black paws across the linen. This brought the two into conversation; when Jean, with a somewhat hoydenish advance, inquired if "he had yet got any of the lasses to like him as well as his dog?" It is one of the misfortunes of the professional Don Juan that his honour forbids him to refuse battle; he is in life like the Roman soldier upon duty, or like the sworn physician who must attend on all diseases. Burns accepted the provocation; hungry hope reawakened in his heart; here was a girl, pretty, simple at least if not honestly stupid, and plainly not averse to his attentions: it seemed to him once more as if love might here be waiting him. Had he but known the truth! for this facile and empty-headed girl had nothing more in view than a flirtation; and her heart, from the first and on to the end of her story, was engaged by another man. Burns once more commenced the celebrated process of "battering himself into a warm affection;" and the proofs of his success are to be found in many verses of the period. Nor did he succeed with himself only; Jean, with her heart still elsewhere, succumbed to his fascination, and early in the next year the natural consequence became manifest. It was a heavy stroke for this unfortunate couple. They had trifled with life, and were now rudely reminded of life's serious issues. Jean a
to the ruin of her hopes; the best she had now to expect was
with a man who was a stranger to her dearest thoughts; she

be glad if she could get what she would never have chosen. As for Burns, at the stroke of the calamity he recognised that his voyage of discovery had led him into a wrong hemisphere—that he was not, and never had been, really in love with Jean. Hear him in the pressure of the hour. "Against two things," he writes, "I am as fixed as fate—staying at home, and owning her conjugally. The first, by heaven, I will not do!—the last, by hell, I will never do!" And then he adds, perhaps already in a more relenting temper: "If you see Jean, tell her I will meet her, so God help me in my hour of need." They met accordingly; and Burns, touched with her misery, came down from these heights of independence, and gave her a written acknowledgment of marriage. It is the punishment of Don Juanism to create continually false positions—relations in life which are wrong in themselves, and which it is equally wrong to break or to perpetuate. This was such a case. Worldly Wiseman would have laughed and gone his way; let us be glad that Burns was better counselled by his heart. When we discover that we can be no longer true, the next best is to be kind. I daresay he came away from that interview not very content, but with a glorious conscience; and as he went homeward, he would sing his favourite, "How are Thy servants blest, O Lord!" Jean, on the other hand, armed with her "lines," confided her position to the master-mason, her father, and his wife. Burns and his brother were then in a fair way to ruin themselves in their farm; the poet was an execrable match for any well-to-do country lass; and perhaps old Armour had an inkling of a previous attachment on his daughter's part. At least, he was not so much incensed by her slip from virtue as by the marriage which had been designed to cover it; of this he would not hear a word; Jean, who had besought the acknowledgment only to appease her parents, and not at all from any violent inclination to the poet, readily gave up the paper for destruction; and all parties imagined, although wrongly, that the marriage was thus dissolved. To a proud man like Burns, here was a crushing blow. The concession which had been wrung from his pity was now publicly thrown back in his teeth. The Armour family preferred disgrace to his connection. Since the promise, besides, he had doubtless been busy "battering himself" back again into his affection for the girl; and the blow would not only take him in his vanity, but wound him at the heart.

He relieved himself in verse; but for such a smarting affront, manuscript poetry was insufficient to console him. He must find a more powerful remedy in good flesh and blood; and, after this discomfiture, set forth again at once upon his voyage of discovery in quest of love. It is perhaps one of the most touching things in human nature, as it is a commonplace of psychology, that when a man has just lost hope or confidence in one love, he is then most eager to find and lean upon another. The universe could not be yet exhausted; there must be hope and love waiting for him somewhere; and so, with his head down, this poor, insulted poet ran once more upon his fate. There was an innocent and gentle Highland nursery-maid at service in a neighbouring family; and he had soon battered himself and her into a warm affection and a secret engagement. Jean's marriage lines had not been destroyed till March 13, 1786; yet all was settled between Burns and Mary Campbell by Sunday, May 14, when they met for the last time, and said farewell with rustic solemnities upon the banks of Ayr. They each wet their hands in a stream, and, standing one on either bank, held a Bible between them as they vowed eternal faith. Then they exchanged Bibles, on one of which Burns, for greater security, had inscribed texts as to the binding nature of an oath; and surely, if ceremony can do aught to fix the wandering affections, here were two people united for life. Mary came of a superstitious family, so that she perhaps insisted on these rites; but they must have been eminently to the taste of Burns at this period; for nothing would seem superfluous, and no oath great enough, to stay his tottering constancy.

Events of consequence now happened thickly in the poet's life. His book was announced; the Armours sought to summon him at law for the aliment of the child; he lay here and there in hiding to correct the sheets; he was under an engagement for Jamaica, where Mary was to join him as his wife; now, he had "orders within three weeks at latest to repair aboard the Nancy, Captain Smith;" now his chest was already on the road to Greenock; and now, in the wild autumn weather on the moorland, he measures verses of farewell:—

The bursting tears my heart declare;
Farewell the bonny banks of Ayr!

But the great master dramatist had secretly another intention for the piece; by the most violent and complicated solution, in which death and birth and sudden fame all play a part as interposing deities, the act-drop fell upon a scene of transformation. Jean was brought to bed of twins, and, by an amicable arrangement, the Burnses took the boy to bring up by hand, while the girl remained with her mother. The success of the book was immediate and emphatic; it put 20*l.* at once into the author's purse; and he was encouraged upon all hands to go to Edinburgh and push his success in a second and larger edition. Third and last in these series of interpositions, a letter came one day to Mossgiel Farm for Robert. He went to the window to read it; a sudden change came over his face, and he left the room without a word. Years afterwards, when the story began to leak out, his family understood that he had then learned the death of Highland Mary. Except in a few poems and a few dry indications purposely misleading as to date, Burns himself made no reference to this passage of his life; it was an adventure of which, for I think sufficient reasons, he desired to bury the details. Of one thing we may be glad: in after years he visited the poor girl's mother, and left her with the impression that he was "a real warm-hearted chield."

Perhaps a month after he received this intelligence, he set out for Edinburgh on a pony he had borrowed from a friend. The town that winter was "agog with the ploughman poet." Robertson, Dugald Stewart, Blair, "Duchess Gordon and all the gay world," were of his acquaintance. Such a revolution is not to be found in literary history. He was now, it must be remembered, twenty-seven years of age; he had fought since his early boyhood an obstinate battle against poor soil, bad seed, and inclement seasons, wading deep in Ayrshire mosses, guiding the plough in the furrow, wielding "the thresher's weary flingin'-tree;" and his education, his diet, and his pleasures had been those of a Scotch countryman. Now he stepped forth suddenly among the polite and learned. We can see him as he then was, in his boots and buckskins, his blue coat and waistcoat striped with buff and blue, like a farmer in his Sunday best; the heavy ploughman's figure firmly planted on its burly legs; his face full of sense and shrewdness, and with a somewhat melancholy air of thought, and his large dark eye "literally glowing" as he spoke. "I never saw such another eye in a human head," says Walter Scott, "though I have seen the most distinguished men of my time." With men, whether they were lords or omnipotent critics, his manner was plain, dignified, and free from bashfulness or affectation. If he made a slip, he had the social courage to pass on and refrain from explanation. He was not embarrassed in this society, because he read and judged the men; he could spy snobbery in a titled lord; and, as for the critics, he dismissed their system in an epigram: "These gentlemen," said he, "remind me of some spinsters in my country who spin their thread so fine that it is neither fit for weft nor woof." Ladies, on the other hand, surprised him; he was scarce commander of himself in their society; he was disqualified by his acquired nature as a Don Juan; and he, who had been so much at his ease with country lasses, treated the town dames to an extreme of deference. One lady, who met him at a ball, gave Chambers a speaking sketch of his demeanour. "His manner was not prepossessing—scarcely, she thinks, manly or natural. It seemed as if he affected a rusticity or *laudertness*, so that when he said the music was 'bonnie, bonnie,' it was like the expression of a child." These would be company manners; and doubtless on a slight degree of intimacy the affectation would grow less. And his talk to women had always "a turn either to the pathetic or humorous, which engaged the attention particularly."

The Edinburgh magnates (to conclude this episode at once) behaved well to Burns from first to last. Were heaven-born genius to revisit us in similar guise, I am not venturing too far when I say that he need expect neither so warm a welcome nor such solid help. Although Burns was only a peasant, and one of no very elegant reputation as to morals, he was made welcome to their homes. They gave him a great deal of good advice, helped him to some five hundred pounds of ready money, and got him, as soon as he asked it, a place in the Excise. Burns, on his part, bore the elevation with perfect dignity; and with perfect dignity returned, when the time had come, into a country privacy of life. His powerful sense never deserted him, and from the first he recognised that his Edinburgh popularity was but an ovation and the affair of a day. He wrote a few letters in a high-flown, bombastic vein of gratitude; but in practice he suffered no man to intrude upon his self-respect. On the other hand, he never turned his back, even for a moment, on his old associates; and he was always ready to sacrifice an acquaintance to a friend, although the acquaintance were a noble duke. He would be a bold man who should promise similar conduct in equally exacting circumstances. It was, in short, an admirable appearance on the stage of life—socially successful, intimately self-respecting, and like a gentleman from first to last.

In the present study, this must only be taken by the way, while we return to Burns's love affairs. Even on the road to Edinburgh, he had seized upon the opportunity of a flirtation, and had carried the "battering" so far that when next he moved from town, it was to steal two days with this anonymous fair one. The exact importance to Burns of this affair may be gathered from the song in which he commemorated its occurrence. "I love the dear lassie," he sings, "because she loves me;" or, in the tongue of prose: "Finding an opportunity, I did not hesitate to profit by it; and even now, if it returned, I should not hesitate to profit by it again." A love thus founded has no interest for mortal man. Meantime, early in the winter, and only once, we find him regretting Jean in his correspondence. "Because"—such is his reason—"because he does not think he will ever meet so delicious an armful again;" and then, after a brief excursion into verse, he goes straight on to describe a new episode in the voyage of discovery with the daughter of a Lothian farmer for a heroine. I must ask the reader to follow all these references to his future wife; they are essential to the comprehension of Burns's character and fate. In June, we find him back at Mauchline, a famous man. There, the Armour family greeted him with a "mean, servile compliance," which increased his former disgust. Jean was not less compliant; a second time the poor girl submitted to the fascination of the man whom she did not love, and whom she had so cruelly insulted little more than a year ago; and, though Burns took advantage of her weakness, it was in the ugliest and most cynical spirit, and with a heart absolutely indifferent. Judge of this by a letter written some twenty days after his return; a letter to my mind among the most degrading in the whole collection; a letter which seems to have been inspired by a boastful, libertine bagman. "I am afraid," it goes, "I have almost ruined one source, the principal one, indeed, of my former happiness—the eternal propensity I always had to fall in love. My heart no more glows with feverish rapture; I have no paradisaical evening interviews." Even the process of "battering" has failed him, you perceive. Still he had some one in his eye; a lady, if you please, with a fine figure and elegant manners, and who had "seen the politest quarters in Europe." "I frequently visited her," he writes, "and after passing regularly the intermediate degrees between the distant formal bow and the familiar grasp round the waist, I ventured, in my careless way, to talk of friendship in rather ambiguous terms; and after her return to ——, I wrote her in the same terms. Miss, construing my remarks further than even I intended, flew off in a tangent of female dignity and reserve, like a mounting lark in an April morning; and wrote me an answer which measured out very completely what an immense way I had to travel before I could reach the climax of her favours. But I am an old hawk at the sport, and wrote her such a cool, deliberate, prudent reply, as brought my bird from her aerial towerings, pop, down to my foot, like Corporal Trim's hat." I avow a carnal longing, after this transcription, to buffet the Old Hawk about the ears. There is little question that to this lady he must have repeated his addresses, and that he was by her (Miss Chalmers) eventually, though not at all unkindly, rejected. One more detail to characterise the period. Six months after the date of this letter, Burns, back in Edinburgh, is served with a writ *in meditatione fugæ*, on behalf of some Edinburgh fair one, probably of humble rank, who declared an intention of adding to his family.

About the beginning of December (1787), a new period opens in the story of the poet's random affections. He met at a tea party one Mrs. Agnes M'Lehose, a married woman of about his own age, who, with her two children, had been deserted by an unworthy husband. She had wit, could use her pen, and had read "Werther" with attention. Sociable, and even somewhat frisky, there was a good, sound, human kernel in the woman; a warmth of love, strong, dogmatic religious feeling; and a considerable, but not authoritative, sense of the proprieties. Of what biographers refer to daintily as "her somewhat voluptuous style of beauty," judging from the silhouette in Mr. Scott Douglas's valuable edition, the reader will be difficult if he does not approve. Take her for all in all, I believe she was the best woman Burns encountered. The pair took a fancy for each other on the spot; Mrs. M'Lehose, in her turn, invited him to tea; but the poet, in his character of the Old Hawk, preferred a *tête-à-tête*, excused himself at the last moment, and offered a visit instead. An accident confined him to his room for near a month, and this led to the famous Clarinda and Sylvanda correspondence. It was begun in simple sport; they are already at their fifth or sixth exchange, when Clarinda writes: "It is really curious so much *fun* passing between two persons who saw each other only *once*;" but it is hardly safe for a man and woman in the flower of their years to write almost daily, and sometimes in terms too ambiguous, sometimes in terms too plain, and generally in terms too warm for mere acquaintance. The exercise partakes a little of the nature of battering, and danger may be apprehended when next they meet. It is difficult to give any account of this remarkable correspondence; it is too far away from us, and, perhaps, not yet far enough; in point of time and manner, the imagination is baffled by these stilted literary utterances, warming, in bravura passages, into downright truculent nonsense. Clarinda has one famous sentence in which she bids Sylvanda connect the thought of his mistress with the changing phases of the year; it was enthusiastically admired by the swain, but on the modern mind produces mild amazement and alarm. "Oh, Clarinda," writes Burns, "shall we not meet in a state—some yet unknown state—of being, where the lavish hand of Plenty shall minister to the highest wish of Benevolence, and where the chill north wind of Prudence shall never blow over the flowery field of Enjoyment." The design may be that of an Old Hawk, but the style is more suggestive of a Bird of Paradise. It is sometimes hard to fancy they are not gravely making fun of each other as they write. Religion, poetry, love, and charming sensibility, are the current topics. "I am delighted, charming Clarinda, with your honest enthusiasm for religion," writes Burns; and the pair entertained a fiction that this was their "favourite subject." "This is Sunday," writes the lady, "and not a word on our favourite subject. O fy! 'divine Clarinda!'" I suspect, although quite unconsciously to the lady, who was bent on his redemption, they but used the favourite subject as a stalking-horse. In the meantime, the sportive acquaintance was ripening steadily into a genuine passion. Visits took place, and then became frequent. Clarinda's friends were hurt and suspicious; her clergyman interfered; she herself had smart attacks of conscience; but her heart had gone from her control; it was altogether his, and she "counted all things but loss"—heaven excepted—"that she might win and keep him." Burns himself was transported while in her neighbourhood, but his transports grew somewhat rapidly less during an absence. I am tempted to imagine that, womanlike, he took on the colour of his mistress's feeling; that he could not but heat himself at the fire of her unaffected passion; but that, like one who should leave the hearth upon a winter's night, his temperature soon fell when he was out of sight and touch; and in a word, though he could share the symptoms, that he had never shared the disease. At the same time, amid the fustian of the letters there are forcible and true expressions, and the love verses that he wrote upon Clarinda are among the most moving in the language.

We are approaching the solution. In mid-winter, Jean, once more in the family way, was turned out of doors by her family; and Burns had her received and cared for in the house of a friend. For he remained to the last imperfect in his character of Don Juan, and lacked the sinister courage to desert his victim. About the middle of February (1788), he had to tear himself from his Clarinda and make a journey into the south-west on business. Clarinda gave him two shirts for his little son. They were daily to meet in prayer at an appointed hour. Burns, too late for the post at Glasgow, sent her a letter by parcel that she might not have to wait. Clarinda on her part writes, this time with a beautiful simplicity: "I think the streets look deserted-like since Monday; and there's a certain insipidity in good kind folks I once enjoyed not a little. Miss Wardrobe supped here on Monday. She once named you, which kept me from falling asleep. I drank your health in a glass of ale—as the lasses do at Hallowe'en—'with mysel'.'" Arrived at Mauchline, Burns installed Jean Armour in a lodging, and prevailed on Mrs. Armour to promise her help and countenance in the approaching confinement. This was kind at least; but hear his expressions: "I have taken her a room; I have taken her to my arms; I have given her a mahogany bed; I have given her a guinea. . . . I swore her privately and solemnly never to attempt any claim on me as a husband, even though anybody should persuade her she had such a claim—which she has not, neither during my life nor after my death. She did all this like a good girl." And then he took advantage of the situation. To Clarinda he wrote: "I this morning called for a certain woman. I am disgusted with her; I cannot endure her;" and he accused her of "tasteless insipidity, vulgarity of soul, and mercenary fawning." This was already in March; by the thirteenth of that month he was back in Edinburgh. On the 17th, he wrote to Clarinda: "Your hopes, your fears, your cares, my love, are mine; so don't mind them. I will take you in my hand through the dreary wilds of this world, and scare away the ravening bird or beast that would annoy you." Again, on the 21st: "Will you open, with satisfaction and delight, a letter from a man who loves you, who has loved you, and who will love you, to death, through death, and for ever. . . . How rich am I to have such a treasure as you! . . . 'The Lord God knoweth,' and, perhaps, 'Israel he shall know,' my love and your merit. Adieu, Clarinda! I am going to remember you in my prayers." By the 7th of April, seventeen days later, he had already decided to make Jean Armour publicly his wife.

A more astonishing stage-trick is not to be found. And yet his conduct is seen, upon a nearer examination, to be grounded both in reason and in kindness. He was now about to embark on a solid worldly career; he had taken a farm; the affair with Clarinda, however gratifying to his heart, was too contingent to offer any great consolation to a man like Burns, to whom marriage must have seemed the very dawn of hope and self-respect. This is to regard the question from its lowest aspect; but there is no doubt that he entered on this new period of his life with a sincere determination to do right. He had just helped his brother with a loan of a hundred and eighty pounds; should he do nothing for the poor girl whom he had ruined? It was true he could not do as he did without brutally wounding Clarinda; that was the punishment of his bygone fault; he was, as he truly says, "damned with a choice only of different species of error and misconduct." To be professional Don Juan, to accept the provocation of any lively lass upon the village green, may thus lead a man through a series of detestable words and actions, and land him at last in an undesired and most unsuitable union for life. If he had been strong enough to refrain, or bad enough to persevere in, evil; if he had only not been Don Juan at all, or been Don Juan altogether, there had been some possible road for him throughout this troublesome world; but a man, alas! who is equally at the call of his wors and better instincts, stands among changing events without foundation or resource.

DOWNWARD COURSE.

It may be questionable whether any marriage could have tamed Burns; but it is at least certain that there was no hope for him in the marriage he contracted. He did right, but then he had done wrong before; it was, as I said, one of those relations in life which it seems equally wrong to break or to perpetuate. He neither loved nor respected her. "God knows," he writes, "my choice was as random as blind man's buff." He consoles himself by the thought that he has acted kindly to her; that she "has the most sacred enthusiasm of attachment to him;" that she has a good figure; that she has a "wood-note wild," "her voice rising with ease to B natural;" no less. The effect on the reader is one of unmingled pity for both parties concerned. This was not the wife who (in his own words) could "enter into his favourite studies or relish his favourite authors;" this was not even a wife, after the affair of the marriage lines, in whom a husband could joy to place his trust. Let her manage a farm with sense, let her voice rise to B natural all day long, she would still be a peasant to her lettered lord, and an object of pity rather than of equal affection. She could now be faithful, she could now be forgiving, she could now be generous even to a pathetic and touching degree; but coming from one who was unloved, and who had scarce shown herself worthy of the sentiment, these were all virtues thrown away, which could neither change her husband's heart nor affect the inherent destiny of their relation. From the outset, it was a marriage that had no root in nature; and we find him, ere long, lyrically regretting Highland Mary, renewing correspondence with Clarinda in the warmest language, on doubtful terms with Mrs. Riddel, and on terms unfortunately beyond any question with Anne Park.

Alas! this was not the only ill circumstance in his future. He had been idle for some eighteen months, superintending his new edition, hanging on to settle with the publisher, travelling in the Highlands with Willie Nichol, or philandering with Mrs. M'Lehose; and in this period the radical part of the man had suffered irremediable hurt. He had lost his habits of industry, and formed the habit of pleasure. Apologetical biographers assure us of the contrary; but from the first, he saw and recognised the danger for himself; his mind, he writes, is "enervated to an alarming degree" by idleness and dissipation; and again, "my mind has been vitiated with idleness." It never fairly recovered. business he could bring the required diligence and attention with difficulty; but he was thenceforward incapable, except in rare insta of that superior effort of concentration which is required for ser literary work. He may be said, indeed, to have worked no more, and only amused himself with letters. The man who had written a volume of masterpieces in six months, during the remainder of his life rarely found courage for any more sustained effort than a song. And the nature of the songs is itself characteristic of these idle later years; for they are often as polished and elaborate as his earlier works were frank, and headlong, and colloquial; and this sort of verbal elaboration in short flights is, for a man of literary turn, simply the most agreeable of pastimes. The change in manner coincides exactly with the Edinburgh visit. In 1786 he had written the *Address to a Louse*, which may be taken as an extreme instance of the first manner; and already, in 1787, we come upon the rosebud pieces to Miss Cruikshank, which are typical examples of the second. The change was, therefore, the direct and very natural consequence of his great change in life; but it is not the less typical of his loss of moral courage that he should have given up all larger ventures, nor the less melancholy that a man who first attacked literature with a hand that seemed capable of moving mountains, should have spent his later years in whittling cherry-stones.

Meanwhile, the farm did not prosper; he had to join to it the salary of an exciseman; at last he had to give it up, and rely altogether on the latter resource. He was an active officer; and, though he sometimes tempered severity with mercy, we have local testimony, oddly representing the public feeling of the period, that, while "in everything else he was a perfect gentleman, when he met with anything seizable he was no better than any other gauger."

There is but one manifestation of the man in these last years which need delay us; and that was the sudden interest in politics which arose from his sympathy with the great French Revolution. His only political feeling had been hitherto a sentimental Jacobitism, not more or less respectable than that of Scott, Aytoun, and the rest of what George Burns has nicknamed the "Charlie over the water" Scotchmen. It was a sentiment almost entirely literary and picturesque in its origin, built on ballads and the adventures of the Young Chevalier; and in Burns it is the more excusable, because he lay out of the way of active politics in his youth. With the great French Revolution, something living, practical, and feasible appeared to him for the first time in this realm of human action. The young ploughman who had desired so earnestly to rise, now reached out his sympathies to a whole nation animated with the same desire. Already in 1788 we find the old Jacobitism hand in hand with the new popular doctrine, when, in a letter of indignation against the zeal of a Whig clergyman, he writes: "I daresay the American Congress in 1776 will be allowed to be as able and as enlightened as the English Convention was in 1688; and that their posterity will celebrate the centenary of their deliverance from us, as duly and sincerely as we do ours from the oppressive measures of the wrong-headed house of Stewart." As time wore on, his sentiments grew more pronounced and even violent; but there was a basis of sense and generous feeling to his hottest excess. What he asked was a fair chance for the individual in life; an open road to success and distinction for all classes of men. It was in the same spirit that he had helped to found a public library in the parish where his farm was situated, and that he sang his fervent snatches against tyranny and tyrants. Witness, were it alone, this verse:—

> Here's freedom to him that wad read,
> Here's freedom to him that wad write;
> There's nane ever feared that the truth should be heard
> But them whom the truth wad indite.

Yet his enthusiasm for the cause was scarce guided by wisdom. Many stories are preserved of the bitter and unwise words he used in country coteries; how he proposed Washington's health as an amendment to Pitt's, gave as a toast "the last verse of the last chapter of Kings," and celebrated Dumouriez in a doggrel impromptu full of ridicule and hate. Now his sympathies would inspire him with *Scots, wha hae*; now involve him in a drunken broil with a legal officer, and consequent apologies and explanations, hard to offer for a man of Burns's stomach. Nor was this the front of his offending. On February 27, 1792, he took part in the capture of an armed smuggler, bought at the subsequent sale four carronades, and despatched them with a letter to the French Assembly. Letter and guns were stopped at Dover by the English officials; there was trouble for Burns with his superiors; he was reminded firmly, however delicately, that, as a paid official, it was his duty to obey and to be silent; and all the blood of this poor, proud, and falling man must have rushed to his head at the humiliation. His letter to Mr. Erskine, subsequently Earl of Mar, testifies, in its turgid, turbulent phrases, to a perfect passion of alarmed self-respect and vanity. He had been muzzled, and muzzled, when all was said, by his paltry salary as an exciseman; alas! had he not a family to keep? Already, he wrote, he looked forward to some such judgment from a hackney scribbler as this: "Burns, notwithstanding the *fanfaronnade* of independence to be found in his works, and after having been held forth to view and to public estimation as a man of some genius, yet, quite destitute of resources within himself to support his borrowed dignity, he dwindled into a paltry exciseman, and shrunk out the rest of his insignificant existence in the meanest of pursuits, and among the vilest of mankind." And then on he goes, in a style of rhodomontade, but filled with living indignation, to declare his right to a political opinion, and his willingness to shed his blood for the political birthright of his sons. Poor, perturbed spirit! he was indeed exercised in vain; those who share and those who differ from his sentiments about the Revolution, alike understand and sympathise with him in this painful strait; for poetry and human manhood are lasting like the race, and politics, which are but a wrongful striving after right, pass and change from year to year and age to age. The *Twa Dogs* has already outlasted the constitution of Siéyès and the policy of the Whigs; and Burns is better known among English-speaking races than either Pitt or Fox.

Meanwhile, whether as a man, a husband, or a poet, his steps led downward. He knew, knew bitterly, that the best was out of him; he refused to make another volume, for he felt that it would be a disappointment; he grew petulantly alive to criticism, unless he was sure it reached him from a friend. For his songs, he would take nothing; they were all that he could do; the proposed Scotch play, the proposed series of Scotch tales in verse, all had gone to water; and in a fling of pain and disappointment, which is surely noble with the nobility of a viking, he would rather stoop to borrow than to accept money for these last and inadequate efforts of his muse. And this desperate abnegation rises at times near to the height of madness; as when he pretended that he had not written, but only found and published, his immortal *Auld Lang Syne*. In the same spirit he became more scrupulous as an artist; he was doing so little, he would fain do that little well; and about two months before his death, he asked Thomson to send back all his manuscripts for revisal, saying that he would rather write five songs to his taste than twice that number otherwise. The battle of his life was lost; in forlorn efforts to do well, in desperate submissions to evil, the last years flow by. His temper is dark and explosive, launching epigrams, quarrelling with his friends, jealous of young puppy officers. He tries to be a good father; he boasts himself a libertine. Sick, sad, and jaded, he can refuse no occasion of temporary pleasure, no opportunity to shine; and he who had once refused the invitations of lords and ladies, is now whistled to the inn by any curious stranger. His death (July 21, 1796), in his thirty-seventh year, was indeed a kindly dispensation. It is the fashion to say he died of drink; many a man has drunk more and yet lived with reputation and reached a good age. That drink and debauchery helped to destroy his constitution, and were the means of his unconscious suicide, is doubtless true; but he had failed in life, had lost his power of work, and was already married to the poor, unworthy, patient Jean, before he had shown his inclination to convivial nights, or at least before that inclination had become dangerous either to his health or his self-respect. He had trifled with life, and must pay the penalty. He had chosen to be Don Juan, he had grasped at temporary pleasures, and substantial happiness and solid industry had passed him by. He died of being Robert Burns, and there is no levity in such a statement of the case; for shall we not, one and all, deserve a similar epitaph? If you had put that man in Eden, with all his godlike qualities, with all his generous and noble traits, he would have made a desert around him as he went.

WORKS.

The somewhat cruel necessity which has lain upon me throughout this paper only to touch upon those points in the life of Burns where connection or amplification seemed desirable, leaves me little opportunity to speak of the works which have made his name so famous. Yet, even here, a few observations seem necessary.

At the time when the poet made his appearance and great first success, his work was remarkable in two ways. For, first, in an age when poetry had become abstract and conventional, instead of continuing to deal with shepherds, thunderstorms, and personifications, he dealt with the actual circumstances of his life, however matter of fact and sordid these might be. And, second, in a time when English versification was particularly stiff, lame, and feeble, and words were used with ultra-academical timidity, he wrote verses that were easy, racy, graphic, and forcible, and used language with absolute tact and courage as it seemed most fit to give a clear impression. If you take even those English authors whom we know Burns to have most admired and studied, you will see at once that he owed them nothing but a warning. Take Shenstone, for instance, and watch that elegant author as he tries to grapple with the facts of life. He has a description, I remember, of a gentleman engaged in sliding or walking on thin ice, which is a little miracle of incompetence. You see my memory fails me, and I positively cannot recollect whether his hero was sliding or walking; as though a writer should describe a battle, and the reader, at the end, be still uncertain whether it were a charge of cavalry or a slow and stubborn advance of foot! There could be no such ambiguity in Burns; his work is at the opposite pole from such indefinite and stammering performances; and a whole lifetime passed in the study of Shenstone would only lead a man further and further from writing the *Address to a Louse.* Yet Burns, like most great artists, proceeded from a school and continued a tradition; only the school and tradition were Scotch, and not English. While the English language was becoming daily more pedantic and inflexible, and English letters more colourless and slack, there was another dialect in the sister country, and a different school of poetry tracing its descent, through King James I., from Chaucer. The dialect alone accounts for much; for it was then written colloquially, which kept it fresh and supple; and, although not shaped for heroic flights, it was a direct and vivid medium for all that had to do with social life. Hence, whenever Scotch poets left their laborious imitations of bad English verses, and fell back on their own dialect, their style would kindle, and they would write of their convivial and somewhat gross existences with pith and point. In Ramsay, and far more in the poor lad Fergusson, there was mettle, humour, literary pluck, and a power of saying what they wished to say definitely and brightly, which in the latter case should have justified great anticipations. Had Burns died at the same age as Fergusson, he would have left us literally nothing worth remark. To Ramsay and to Fergusson, then, he was indebted in a very uncommon degree, not only following their tradition and using their measures, but directly and avowedly imitating their pieces. The same tendency to borrow a hint, to work on some one else's foundation, is notable in Burns from first to last, in the period of song-writing as well as in that of the early poems; and strikes one oddly in a man of such deep originality, who left so strong a print on all he touched, and whose work is so greatly distinguished by that character of "inevitability" which Wordsworth denied to Goethe.

When we remember Burns's obligations to his predecessors, we must never forget his immense advances on them. They had already "discovered" nature; but Burns discovered poetry—a higher and more intense way of thinking of the things that go to make up nature, a higher and more ideal key of words in which to speak of them. Ramsay and Fergusson excelled at making a popular—or shall we say, vulgar?—sort of society verses, comical and prosaic, written, you would say, in taverns while a supper party waited for its laureate's word; but on the appearance of Burns, this coarse and laughing literature was touched to finer issues, and learned gravity of thought and natural pathos.

What he had gained from his predecessors was a direct speaking style, and to walk on his own feet instead of on academical stilts. There was never a man of letters with more absolute command of his means; and we may say of him, without excess, that his style was his slave. Hence that energy of epithet, so concise and telling, that a foreigner is tempted to explain it by some special richness or aptitude in the dialect he wrote. Hence that Homeric justice and completeness of description, which gives us the very physiognomy of nature, in body and detail as nature is. Hence, too, the unbroken literary quality of his best pieces, which keeps him from any slip into the weariful trade of word-painting, and presents everything, as everything should be presented by the art of words, in a clear, continuous medium of thought. Principal Shairp, for instance, gives us a paraphrase of one tough verse of the original; and for those who knew the Greek poets only by paraphrase, this has the very quality they are accustomed to look for and admire in Greek. The contemporaries of Burns were surprised that he should visit so many celebrated mountains and waterfalls, and not seize the opportunity to make a poem. Indeed, it is not for those who have a true command of the art of words, but for peddling, professional amateurs, that these pointed occasions are most useful and inspiring. As those who speak French imperfectly are glad to dwell on any topic they may have talked upon or heard others talk upon before, because they know appropriate words for it in French, so the dabbler in verse rejoices to behold a waterfall, because he has learned the sentiment and knows appropriate words for it in poetry. But the dialect of Burns was fit to deal with any subject; and whether it was a stormy night, a shepherd's collie, a sheep struggling in the snow, the conduct of cowardly soldiers in the field, the gait and cogitations of a drunken man, or only a village cockcrow in the morning, he could find language to give it freshness, body, and relief. He was always ready to borrow the hint of a design, as though he had a difficulty in commencing—a difficulty, let us say, in choosing a subject out of a world which seemed all equally living and significant to him; but once he had the subject chosen, he could cope with nature single-handed, and make every stroke a triumph. Again, his absolute mastery in his art enabled him to express each and all of his different humours, and to pass smoothly and congruously from one to another. Many men invent a dialect for only one side of their nature—perhaps their pathos or their humour, or the delicacy of their senses—and, for lack of a medium, leave all the others unexpressed. You meet such a one, and find him in conversation full of thought, feeling, and experience, which he has lacked the art to employ in his writings. But Burns was not thus hampered in the practice of the literary art; he could throw the whole weight of his nature into his work, and impregnate it from end to end. If Doctor Johnson, that stilted and accomplished stylist, had lacked the sacred Boswell, what should we have known of him? and how should we have delighted in his acquaintance as we do? Those who spoke with Burns, tell us how much we have lost who did not. But I think they exaggerate their privilege; I think we have the whole Burns in our possession set forth in his consummate verses.

It was by his style, and not by his matter, that he affected Wordsworth and the world. There is, indeed, only one merit worth considering in a man of letters—that he should write well; and only one damning fault—that he should write ill. We are little the better for the reflections of the sailor's parrot in the story. And so, if Burns helped to change the course of literary history, it was by his frank, direct, and masterly utterance, and not by his homely choice of subjects. That was imposed upon him, not chosen upon a principle. He wrote from his own experience, because it was his nature so to do, and the tradition of the school from which he proceeded was fortunately not opposed to homely subjects. But to these homely subjects he communicated the rich commentary of his nature; they were all steeped in Burns; and they interest us not in themselves, but because they have been passed through the spirit of so genuine and vigorous a man. Such is the stamp of living literature; and there was never any more alive than that of Burns.

What a gust of sympathy there is in him, sometimes flowing out in byways hitherto unused, upon mice, and flowers, and the devil himself; sometimes speaking plainly between human hearts; sometimes ringing out in merry exultation like a peal of bells! When we compare the *Farmer's Salutation to his Auld Mare Maggie*, with the clever and inhuman production of half a century earlier, *The Auld Man's Mare's Dead*, we see in a nutshell the spirit of the change introduced by Burns. And as to its manner, who that has read it can forget how the collie, Luath, in the *Twa Dogs*, describes and enters into the merry-making in the cottage?

> The luntin' pipe an' sneeshin' mill,
> Are handed round wi' richt guid will;
> The canty auld folks crackin' crouse,
> The young anes rantin' through the house—

My heart has been sae fain to see them
That I for joy hae barkit wi' them.

It was this ardent power of sympathy that was fatal to so many women, and, through Jean Armour, to himself at last. His humour comes from him in a stream so deep and easy that I will venture to call him the best of humorous poets. He turns about in the midst to utter a noble sentiment or a trenchant remark on human life, and the style changes and rises to the occasion. I think it is Principal Shairp who says, happily, that Burns would have been no Scotchman if he had not loved to moralise; neither, may we add, would he have been his father's son; but (what is worthy of note) his moralisings are to a large extent the moral of his own career. He was among the least impersonal of artists. Except in the *Jolly Beggars*, he shows no gleam of dramatic instinct. Mr. Carlyle has complained that *Tam o' Shanter* is, from the absence of this quality, only a picturesque and external piece of work; and I may add that in the *Twa Dogs*, it is precisely in the infringement of dramatic propriety that a great deal of the humour of the speeches depends for its existence and effect. Indeed, Burns was so full of his identity, that it breaks forth on every page; and there is scarce an appropriate remark either in praise or blame of his own conduct, but he has put it himself into verse. Alas! for the tenor of these remarks! They are, indeed, his own pitiful apology for such a marred existence and talents so misused and stunted; and they seem to prove for ever how small a part is played by reason in the conduct of man's affairs. Here was one, at least, who with unfailing judgment predicted his own fate; yet his knowledge could not avail him, and with open eyes he must fulfil his tragic destiny. Ten years before the end, he had written his epitaph; and neither subsequent events, nor the critical eyes of posterity, have shown us a word in it to alter. And, lastly, has he not put in for himself the last, unanswerable plea?—

Then gently scan your brother man,
  Still gentler sister woman;
Though they may gang a kennin wrang,
  To step aside is human:
One point must still be greatly dark——

One? Alas! I fear every man and woman of us is "greatly dark" to all their neighbours, from the day of birth until death removes them, in their greatest virtues as well as in their saddest faults; and we, who have been trying to read the character of Burns, may take home the lesson and be gentle in our thoughts.

R. L. S.

Madame de Sainte-Folye's Babies.

Madame la Comtesse de Sainte-Folye, wife of the Prefect at Ville Joyeuse, had been married ten years, and had all that time been vainly expecting an heir, when, at last, finding that neither the pious waters of Lourdes nor the ferruginous ones of Spa availed anything—perceiving, moreover, that St. Lætitia, her patroness, disregarded sundry votive offerings of waxen babies and silver-gilt hearts made at her shrine, she resolved that she would adopt a child whom she might call her own. It was told on a former occasion * how that Madame de Sainte-Folye was a very wilful lady, who, when once she had got a whim into her amiable head, took no rest till the same was satisfied. Her husband had discovered this at the outset of his connubial career, and made compliance his rule of life, so that when his consort announced her intention of adopting somebody's baby, he answered, "Yes, my dear," in the tone of a man who would not think of offering opposition. He did not even ask how the bright lady proposed to obtain an infant to her liking, though he noticed that she spoke about the matter as if babies were to be procured in the open market like puppy-dogs.

Such was indeed Madame de Sainte-Folye's opinion; or rather she imagined that there were so many cumbersome babies being dandled about the world by mothers who would rather have been unencumbered, that it would be easy enough to summon a number of them for inspection, and then make a choice. But, of course, Madame de Sainte-Folye wanted a cleanly baby, well dressed, with blue eyes and nice rosy cheeks —a baby who never squalled, and who smiled when spoken to. Others of the ordinary sort were not to her taste at all; and in explaining her wishes to her husband's secretary, M. de Beautoupet, she was particular in requesting that he would find her a baby whom she would be proud to exhibit in her daily walks, borne in the arms of a plump Burgundian nurse in a peak cap.

M. de Beautoupet was a young man, who always dressed in the latest style of fashion, and spent most of his time in snubbing people who came to the Prefect to ask for favours or redress. The Prefect was too shy a person to dismiss applicants himself, and too indolent to concern himself much about the general business of his high office. He was a great whist-player, a lover of horses, dogs, and fat cattle. He never missed an agricultural show, but liked to attend these sights unofficially, without putting on his uniform or being speechified to. He abhorred state, and

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* See Cornhill Magazine for June 1879.

could never be drawn into making a speech of more than five minutes' length, which had caused him to be somewhat respected as a man who thought more than he spoke, though in truth he thought nothing. Count de Sainte-Folye was one of those placemen who keep their offices a long time, because they make no enemies. He had his pockets full of the small coin of civility—kind words, which he distributed ungrudgingly to all postulants. But he gave them nothing else, and generally allowed them to understand that he had bestowed on them all that it was in his power to grant, which is the sum of what a man can do. The people of Ville Joyeuse gave their Prefect credit for the best intentions; but knew that in all serious conjunctures the man to go to was M. de Beautoupet, who took his instructions not from Count de Sainte-Folye, but from the Countess, who was the real Prefect. Thus M. de Beautoupet enjoyed all the prestige which usually encircles the private secretaries of high officials in every country under the sun.

Now M. de Beautoupet, having received Madame's commands to look out for a baby, shrugged his shoulders at the unwelcome job, and proceeded to execute it in the most summary way by sending for the Commissary of Police, and bidding him go and make a choice from among the most personable infants at the Foundling. The Commissary bowed, saying that his own discernment in the matter of babies was not great, seeing that he was a bachelor, and had always found one child look very much like another; but he promised to appeal to the most experienced nun among those who dry-nursed the foundlings, and doubted not that they would make their election with a full sense of the importance of what they were doing.

"I suppose you want a boy?" said he, as he took his leave.

"Why should you suppose we want a boy? I have really not thought about it," answered M. de Beautoupet.

"Well, people who adopt children generally desire boys, to whom they can leave their names."

"Boys are unsafe kind of property to invest in, though," remarked the private secretary; "they get into debt, or become Radicals, and disgrace the names you lend them. I think we had better have a girl."

"Girls make runaway marriages, you see."

"Yes, but they change their names in going to the bad, so that you are well rid of them."

"Or a girl may turn out well," proceeded the Commissary, "and in that case you have the regret of parting with her just as you begin to find her companionable."

"Oh, as to that," answered M. de Beautoupet, with a wink, "you little know madame, if you think that she is going to attach herself to anybody through a course of years. This adopted child of hers will be the toy of a few weeks, and after that she will be very sorry that she ever indulged the whim. However, that is her own look-out."

The Commissary smiled and withdrew. Two hours later, there arrived at the Prefecture a florid peasant-woman, in the custody of a buxom Black Sister or Carmelite nun. The nun carried a bundle of baby-linen; the peasant-woman bore one of the gravest infants that had ever been seen.

Such a solemn, round-eyed, pensive little girl it was, for the Commissary had decided for a girl after all. It neither wailed nor smiled. It did not put its thumb in its mouth, nor struggle in its swaddling-clothes, nor rub its fists into its eyes. It had none of the wayward tricks of infants, but lay still in its nurse's arms like a little waxen image, or like some small cherub that should have come to earth for some high purpose—to lead a life of philosophy, and set an example of staidness in demeanour to all her sex, first as a child, and by-and-by as a woman.

"There, madame!" exclaimed the nun, as she lifted the veil from the baby's face, "this is the best-conducted child in our house. She was left on our door-step one terrible winter night, with a dog-collar round her neck and the name of Fido on it. So we christened her Fidélité."

"Poor little thing!" ejaculated the Countess. "Why, you allowed a dog to become its godfather!"

"Oh, no, madame!" answered the nun, scandalised.

"Yes, yes;" laughed the Countess, "it doesn't matter. I have known dogs who behaved much more like Christians than men. How serious this child is, though! Have you no idea of who its parents were?"

"None whatever, madame. We conclude that the dog-collar was put on her as a mark for identification."

"But supposing the parents should turn up and claim the child just after I had become fond of it?"

"Oh, there is no danger of that," replied the nun, shaking her head. "That's against the rules of the Foundling. Once a child is put there, it becomes lost to its parents for ever."

By this time Madame de Sainte-Folye had lifted the baby out of the nurse's arms, and was again eying it with a smile which invited response. The baby stared back at the Countess, but did not smile. Rather timidly the Countess began to dandle it, but she might as well have dandled a doll for all the pleasure the baby evinced in this mode of caress.

"Dear me!" murmured Madame de Sainte-Folye, "I hope this child is not always going to stare at me like that. I should be as afraid of her as if she were a grown-up woman."

"Is Madame afraid of grown-up women?" inquired the nun demurely.

"Well, no, but I like to see people about me laugh," was the rather rueful rejoinder; "but perhaps this child has—has the stomach-ache."

"They shout loud enough when they have the stomach-ache, Madame," answered the nurse bluntly, and she proceeded to give the baby a character for capital health as well as sweetness of temper. According to her, no more eligible child for adoption could have been discovered. "And she will become a pretty girl, too," added she, "Look at her large eyes and small mouth, you can always judge by those tokens. They are worth as much as a big dower to girls."

"Well, well," said the Countess, in the tone of one who wants to hope for the best, "I will try and be a mother to the poor little creature, and I will even do something for the dog, her godfather, if he calls here." Saying which, she unlocked her desk and drew out some bank-notes, which she tendered to the nun as a gift for the Foundling. The Sister murmured her acknowledgments and retired, leaving the baby and the nurse to be the guests of the Prefecture from that day forth.

Our expectations are seldom fulfilled to the letter, so it cannot be denied that Madame de Sainte-Folye did not derive from her new acquisition all the excitement she had anticipated. On the contrary, the baby's presence had on her a subduing effect, which her husband was the first to appreciate. That long-suffering official had never found his house so quiet as he did during the first few days after little Fidélité had been introduced there. The Countess went about with a serious countenance, putting her forefinger to her lips and saying, "Hush! Baby's asleep!" or "Baby's just going to sleep!" For a man who loved quiet this was nice enough, and the Prefect, who was not devoid of humour, chuckled inwardly to think that a mite of a child had achieved the feat of calming those exuberant spirits and that pertinacious loquacity which the Countess had never abated to please her husband or M. de Beautoupet.

Unfortunately, the halcyon days which had fallen upon the Prefecture were not destined to last long. Fidélité happened to be the offspring of one Soulot, a dog-fancier—which means a fancier of other people's dogs—and of his wife Léonie *née* Hurlard, who worked in a cigar factory and was not a pattern of the virtues. These people used to put their children at the Foundling for the same reason as that eminent reformer of mankind, J. J. Rousseau, did—because they did not care to be bothered with them. Fidélité was the third who had been deposited on the door-step of the old Maison des Enfans Trouvés, which frowned, black as a prison, in one of the most deserted streets of Ville Joyeuse, and the collar had not been put round her neck as a mark for future identification, but simply out of the facetiousness in which M. Soulot, her father, revelled at times when he had been drinking much of the white wine of his native province. In parting with their child the pair of Soulots had certainly never meant to claim her again, but they happened to hear that a baby, remarkable for having been lodged at the Foundling with a dog-collar round her neck, had been adopted at the Prefecture by no less a person than the Prefect's wife, and this, of course, altered their plans. They began to feel very parental indeed towards their little girl.

One bright morning a man smelling strongly of dog, and a woman diffusing an odour of spirits, rang at the Prefecture and were admitted into the vestibule, along with a well-clipped and curly poodle who trotted at their heels. The man carried a toy terrier in his arms and the heads of four puppies protruded from his pockets—two on either side. He gave his name of "Soulot" to the footman, and stated that he had come to speak to the Countess on a matter of business. The footman, concluding that he had come to speak about the sale of a dog, went upstairs with his message, and Madame de Sainte-Folye, who had some time before expressed to M. de Beautoupet the wish to have a tiny pug, ordered the man and his wife to be shown up. But when the Soulots had been ushered into the Countess's presence with the poodle, they put their hands to their eyes and began to snivel. "It's very kind of you to have adopted our poor little daughter, Madame," whimpered the dog-fancier, "but you may be sure we should never have parted from her if we hadn't been compelled by poverty."

"Then it's you who are my poor baby's parents?" asked the Countess, eyeing the pair in deep disgust.

"We are the father and mother of the dear little girl with the dog-collar," responded Soulot, blowing his nose aloud.

"Ah! And is that gentleman—I mean that dog, the owner of the collar?" continued the Countess, pointing to the poodle.

"That's he, Madame," said Soulot's wife eagerly, as if she thought there was an excellent joke in the whole matter. "This poodle—he was only a puppy then—was outgrowing his collar, so we put it on the little girl, just to know her again if we wanted to claim her."

"But you can't claim her," replied the Countess, coldly.

"Oh, Madame! we can't do without our little girl—our poor little girl!" ejaculated Soulot's wife, and began to shed bitter tears through the unclean fingers which she put before her face.

Madame de Sainte-Folye was not a prefect's wife for nothing, and she saw that these unsavoury Soulots were as insincere in their emotion as they were ill-founded in their demands. It was quite evident that the only object of their visit was to extort money; nevertheless, it was a question as to whether there would be any prudence in refusing them some compensation for the adoption of their child. Impulsive in all things, Madame de Sainte-Folye put her hand into her pocket and extracted half-a-dozen napoleons from her purse, but at the sight of gold the ill-smelling Soulot, who would have sold his child for six francs had they been offered to him in a confidential way as a maximum bid, shook his head, and thought he might hold out for a higher sum. "No, Madame, I want ten thousand francs," said he, stubbornly.

"Why, you incredibly base man, you are not entitled to a centime," exclaimed the Countess, indignantly.

"Oh, oh! we want our child," whined the female Soulot, raising her voice, as if she wished the servants to hear.

"And we want ten thousand francs," repeated the male Soulot, likewise raising his voice, so that the poodle barked and the four pups in his pockets snarled.

"You shall not have a sou from me," cried the Countess, stamping her foot, "and if you are not gone this minute, I will have you taken to prison. Oh! you bad people, go away with you!"

It was not the stamp of the Countess's foot, but the opportune entrance of M. de Beautoupet, that induced the Soulot couple to decamp. As they went, however, they muttered threats and pitched their voices in the most lamentable key, so that to the footman who let them out they did really appear to be parents in deep affliction.

"Ah! bad luck to those who rob the poor of their children!" howled Soulot, as he stood on the doorstep with his wife by his side, and his four pups craning their heads out of his pockets. "Heaven didn't mean that the rich should take the children of the poor when they haven't any of their own. The poor have parents' hearts as well as the wealthy."

"Bad luck to the woman who has robbed me of my girl, my poor little girl," shrieked the she-Soulot, shaking both her fists in the astonished footman's face, and this worthy couple, as they left the Prefecture, collected quite a little mob by their dismal vociferations.

When Count de Sainte-Folye heard later in the day of what had happened he emitted a low whistle, which was always tantamount with him to a signal of alarm, and observed to his wife "You'll see, my dear, that all the tag-rag and bob-tail of the town will soon be making a political question of this baby."

"They may break out into revolution about it, if they please," exclaimed Madame de Sainte-Folye, with intense feminine energy, "but even though they took you to the guillotine along with M. de Beautoupet and the whole of the Prefectoral Council, I'll not give the baby up."

"Thank you, madame," laughed M. de Beautoupet, who was present.

II.

Now Madame de Sainte-Folye had been put much out of conceit with her baby by discovering that it was the child of an unwashed pair of dog-stealers. Being of an imaginative turn she had conceived in her mind a pretty romance about the solemn infant's supposed birth. She had decided that the little girl must have been abandoned by a high-born mother in reduced circumstances who was dying of consumption when she laid the poor mite on the steps of the Foundling, hoping it would there find a comfortable home. Even the incident of the dog-collar seemed to the Countess to have a poetical significance, for who could tell but that this collar was that of a faithful dog who had followed the high-born mother and child in their wanderings, and had at last, by a spontaneous doggy instinct, offered the collar—his only property—to the little girl as a parting gift? There had been a time when, scanning the baby's grave face, the Countess had been seized with a slight shiver, fancying she discerned in its lineaments the half-intelligible lines of some most piteous story. . . . So it was a mortifying disappointment to find that little Fidélité's name was Soulot, and that, judging by the theory of congenital tendencies, she might possibly grow up to be as ugly as her mother and as scampish as her father. Anyhow, there could be no pleasure in adopting a baby whose family were known to the whole town as vagabonds.

Nevertheless, from a mere spirit of feminine resistance, Madame de Sainte-Folye resolved to keep the child; and her combative instincts became finely aroused when the Radical journal of Ville Joyeuse, a low print called *Le Tocsin*, published a maliciously untrue account of the adoption story. The *Tocsin* was one of those organs whose notes ring as falsely as the chinking of base coin. It had no principles beyond attacking everything that was done by people in authority and buttering the lower orders with rancid flattery. It represented that the Soulots, having been obliged to deposit their child at the Foundling under great stress of poverty, the Prefect and his wife were making an oppressive use of the law in debarring them from recovering it. In this view all the mothers of Ville Joyeuse were disposed to concur. The case was one purely of sentiment and did not admit of arguing; if the Soulots really loved their child, it was sheer inhumanity to deprive them of it. The dog-fancier and his wife soon found it paid them very well to wash their faces and loaf about with the air of persons who were poor and sad, but respectable, and to whine their untruthful story into the ears of all the active characters of the Radical party. A fund was raised. After handing over a moiety to the bereaved parents, it was decided that the remainder should go towards defraying the expenses of a lawsuit which the Soulots were to bring against the Prefect for the recovery of their infant. A pushing young barrister with no work to do, one M. Bobinard, nobly undertook to plead the dog-fancier's cause for nothing, and three Red Republican members of the Chamber of Deputies bound themselves by an oath to bring the Prefect's dastardly conduct before the notice of Parliament. Dismayed by these things, poor M. de Sainte-Folye besought his wife not to resist the popular clamour; but, in making this request he had the misfortune to speak of Fidélité as a disreputable brat, which gave Madame an excuse for forthwith emptying all the vials of her wrath upon his head.

She happened at that moment to be sitting with the baby on her lap. Catching it up, she held it close to her husband's face, so close that the Prefect stepped back, pulling a grimace which affrighted the infant. Then its dear little tongue became suddenly loosed, and it began to howl in a voice of awful shrillness, as if to make up at one go for all its bygone silence. "My goodness, stuff something into that child's mouth to make it stop," cried the Prefect, appalled.

"It's you who are making it weep with your brutality," scre the Countess, indignantly. "I know you never loved the child, and it's most unmanly of you to join in persecuting the poor little thing."

"My dear, I'm not persecuting," stammered the Count, wiping his eye-glass nervously with his coat-tails.

"Don't tell me," retorted the Countess. "You're joining with the rabble, as you always do when they shout. You've no notion of governing like a man. If the mob asked you to give up your wife I believe you would hand me out to them through the window."

"I don't think I could do it without your consent, my dear," replied the Prefect, with plaintive irony.

"That's right, be sarcastic now," rejoined the Countess; "but if you and the mob think to coerce me, you're mistaken. I know M. de Beautoupet will stand by me."

The Prefect's secretary, who had been a witness of the conjugal tiff, coughed shyly as if inclined to disclaim the chivalrous sentiments imputed to him. He was, however, spared the necessity of making any statement by the opportune arrival of a messenger, who brought a telegram from the Home Office. This document was thus briefly worded: "*You must give up the baby.*" The Prefect, with an inward sigh of relief, handed the message to his wife, who immediately said that she did not care two snaps of the fingers for the Home Minister; but then, feeling the uselessness of resistance, sat down to weep, and presently had a fit of hysterics. M. de Beautoupet took a prompt advantage of the situation. Seizing the baby, he caught it up, hurried from the room and ran to the nursery, where he ordered the nurse to leave the house without a moment's delay and take the child to its parents. Ten minutes later the Soulots were as much surprised as disgusted at being put in possession of their own. A baby was the most unwelcome of all gifts that could have been made to this couple; and while the nurse plumped into a chair and overwhelmed the pair with reproaches for getting her deprived of a good place, the dog-fancier eyed his now speechless offspring with consternation. As for the female Soulot, she examined the beautiful swaddling clothes in which little Fidélité had been attired by the Countess, and tried to console herself by wondering for how much they would sell.

Meanwhile the Countess, having recovered from her fainting-fit, and finding her adopted baby gone, took the gods to witness that she was an ill-used woman, and retired under her tent—that is to say, into her boudoir—meditating plans of vengeance. She remained closeted in dignified sulks, for the rest of the day, and might have sulked through the morrow also, had she not been aroused towards evening by a noisy procession passing under the Prefecture's windows. The Radicals, whose schemes had been disconcerted by the unexpected return of the baby, had concluded to make what political capital they could out of their easy victory by carrying the child in triumph from its parents' house to a certain lay school where it was to be reared according to the soundest

Liberal principles, untainted by religious teaching. All the ragamuffins in the town had mustered to solemnise this important occurrence. First came a Radical brass band, playing the "Marseillaise" with a manly independence of the laws of time and tune; then an open fly, driven by a Republican coachman and containing the nurse with the baby and three Radical politicians, each provided with a money-box which they rattled in the faces of the people, begging pence for the Republican cause in general. Behind followed more Radicals on foot, with a great cohort of street boys, slatternly women and dogs. This soul-stirring procession, halting before the Prefecture, hooted Madame de Sainte-Folye who appeared at the window of her boudoir; and were making preparations for holding a Radical concert when the guard of soldiers on duty at the Palace turned out and ordered them peremptorily to move on. This they did with characteristic alacrity, though they uttered derisive cheers against the military as soon as they had rounded a corner and were out of sight and shot.

One may imagine that, after this affair, which had made her odious in the eyes of some people, ridiculous in those of others, Madame de Sainte-Folye had had enough of adopting babies; and so she had. But Fate does not always shape our ends for us according to our likings, and from the day when it went forth that the Prefect's wife had been deprived (by law, some said) of the child which she had meant to treat so kindly, the Prefecture became a resort for all the mothers of the province who had babies to dispose of. Some came to the Palace with their squeaking progeny in their arms and offered to sell Madame little boys or girls of any age cheap and to seal the bargains by bonds having legal force. Others accosted the Countess as she was going into church; or stopped the Prefect and M. de Beautoupet in the streets, tugging these officials by the coat-tails and bidding them inspect babies that could be recommended as sound of wind and limb. There were other mothers again who, with a less mercenary maternal affection, deposited their children on the steps or in the lobbies of the Prefecture, converting that decorous government institution into a branch house of the Foundling. It became one of the daily plagues of M. de Beautoupet to see the chief clerk of the office enter his study and say, "I have just found another baby in my waste-paper basket, sir," or "We've just found two babies in the coal-box," or again, "What am I to do with this baby, sir, which I found in the cupboard where we keep the archives?"

"Give them to the police," was M. de Beautoupet's invariable cry, for he knew that the very name of infancy had now become odious in the Countess's ears. Nevertheless, as the secretary was not a bad fellow, he occasionally felt a twinge at reading some of the doleful epistles which distracted mothers had pinned to the clothes of the infants whom they forsook. He comforted himself by reflecting that if the Countess had consented to adopt but one out of every ten of the infants brought to her, she would soon have had a family fit to vie with those of the old-time patriarchs.

The Countess, in truth, was becoming very savage at the pranks which were being played with her—pranks which she persisted in thinking were practised from a desire to annoy her, rather than out of any genuine wish to supply her with babies. She had to put up with a great deal of perfidious commiseration from friends of her own sex; and chafed to hear unmistakable titters behind her whenever she appeared in any public place. The French are merciless jokesters, and when it becomes a question of poking fun at officials there is nothing they will not do to raise a laugh. It became the custom for the vulgar street-crowds to utter cries like those of babies whenever they saw the Prefect or his wife; and one night when the Count and Countess were at the theatre a wag let down a big baby-doll from the gallery right over the prefectoral box by means of a rope, amidst the uproarious merriment of the house. The author of this unseemly jest was collared by the police and taken to the lock-up; but it was impossible to punish all the other facetious fellows who imitated him by purchasing dolls and exhibiting them in comical attitudes at unseasonable moments. A certain Radical rhymester went so far as to compose a ditty called *Le Bébé*, which, though interdicted in music-halls, was bawled loudly in the wine-shops, to the total subversion of loyalty among the masses.

All this was bad enough, but, alas! still worse things were to follow.

One day, as Madame de Sainte-Folye sat in her drawing-room reflecting on the great stupidity and wickedness of the world—which had become a favourite subject for meditation with her of late—she heard an animated colloquy outside the door. Some human being with a voice like a parrot's was talking in the vilest French to the butler and M. de Beautoupet, who, to judge by their excited answers, seemed loth to admit him. At last the door opened, and M. de Beautoupet entered with an abashed countenance, ushering an extraordinary figure—nothing less than a full fledged Chinaman in the strange garb of his country. He had a lemon-coloured face, a pig-tail reaching to his heels, blue baggy breeches, a yellow gown and a devilish leer, and he appeared to be of any age between eighteen and eighty.

"Now, what is this new pleasantry?" cried the Countess, starting up from her sofa in anger, for she was not in an enduring humour just then. "If this be some fresh joke, M. de Beautoupet, I warn you that you may repent it."

"But this is no joke at all," answered the bewildered secretary. "This Chinaman is your godson; his name is Lætus Marjorie Tung-Tcheek, and he holds a letter which he says will explain everything."

"Oui, moi filleul à vous, bon chrétien—va à messe, bois vin, aime France et le pape," gabbled the young Chinese in voluble pidgeon-French; and, grinning from ear to ear, he handed to the Countess a big envelope with the seal of the Catholic Church Mission in China.

Madame de Sainte-Folye, trembling with excitement, for she still suspected a hoax, tore open the envelope and read this:—

"Œuvre des Petits Chinois, Canton, Chine.

"*The Rev. Father Superior of the Mission to Madame la Comtesse de Sainte-Folye.*

"Madam,—You may remember the day when, on the occasion of your first communion, you generously subscribed five hundred francs of pocket-money, which you had saved, towards the 'Œuvre des Petits Chinois,' which has for its object the rescuing of infant Chinese from drowning, and the educating of them as Christians. The bearer of this missive would, but for your bounty, have been drowned like other infants belonging to overgrown families, for such is the method of checking the plethora of population out here; but, thanks be to you, he is now alive and well, and stands in a fair way to becoming a useful member of society. He has been christened with the names you gave him, you having been his godmother by proxy. He speaks French, says his prayers in Latin, plays on the violin, and is most clever at carving bones. Hearing, dear and esteemed lady, that you desired to adopt a child, the Church Mission have thought it would be agreeable to you to welcome Lætus Marjorie Tung-Tcheek, who owes you so much, and is, we can assure you, becomingly grateful.

"I have the honour to be, madam, your faithful servant,

"BALBUS, Father Superior."

When the Countess had perused this epistle, she turned it over for a minute without raising her eyes towards the lad, who will be hereinafter described as Tung-Tcheek. She felt the paper, and saw it was true Chinese tissue, soft as silk; she scrutinised the seal, and found it to be undeniably genuine. Then she glanced at M. de Beautoupet, and seeing his face so ruefully expectant, could not forbear from smiling. As if he had been waiting for some such manifestation of geniality, the young Chinaman at once frisked forward, like a funny young dog as he was, seized the Countess's gown and lifted the hem to his lips.

"Stop, sir! What are you doing?" laughed Madame de Sainte-Folye, as she waved him off. "We shake hands here, that's enough. How old are you?"

"Two hundred and sixteen," answered Tung-Tcheek, bobbing his head gleefully.

"I suppose he reckons by months," suggested M. de Beautoupet; "that would make him eighteen."

"Let him answer for himself," rejoined the Countess, silencing the secretary: "I want to find out what's in the lad. Who is the emperor of your country, sir?"

"The Devil," answered Tung-Tcheek, with a shake of the head, as if it saddened him to confess so startling a fact.

"The Devil; what do you mean?"

"The Devil be rule in the hearts of all men not Christians, and most Chinese no Christians—so Devil he rule in China," saying which Tung-Tcheek winked as if he had got his answers pat.

"Ah, I understand; and since you are a Christian, how do you mean to spend your life?"

"I sin seventy-two times a day," answered Tung-Tcheek. "I tell lies and break all de commandments. Dat is what I shall do to my life's end."

"Well, that is a frank confession at all events," said the Countess, astonished.

"Yes; I try to do better, but it's no use," replied the Chinaman, evidently pleased with the impression he was producing; "Man born in sin, sin all his life long—can't help it. But when I die, I go straight to Heaven; nobody can stop me."

"That's a comforting sort of belief; I think I shall take to it," opined M. de Beautoupet.

"The lad is much more religious than you, for there is no dissimulation in him," said the Countess; "but now one question more, Lætus. What is the opinion you have been taught to have of us Franks, as I think you call us?"

"Franks have civilisation—do everything fast: travel by steam, learn fast, forget fast; always think of money; and kill each other with cannon, saying all men brothers and should love each other."

"Decidedly he's charming, and he will be a most entertaining companion until we can send him back to China," said the Countess with a smile. "M. de Beautoupet, you will make inquiries as to when and how we can restore my godson to his native land."

"You don't mean to keep him here, then?" asked the secretary, rather relieved, for he had begun to fear lest his lemon-coloured friend should become the spoilt child of the Prefecture, and develop into a chartered buffoon.

"No, I have had enough of being laughed at," replied Madame de Sainte-Folye, drily.

But the Countess was not destined to be laughed at, at all events for the present, in connection with Tung Tcheek. It chanced that there was a dinner-party that evening at the Prefecture, and when the Chinaman appeared at table with the best-embroidered habiliments which he had brought in his box, he became an attractive object to the ladies, who, moreover, listened with great interest to the narrative of his life. There is a constantly ebbing and flowing fashion for China, so there might as well be a fashion for Chinese. Several ladies, hearing how their hostess had become godmother to a little Celestial during her girlhood, bethought themselves that it would be a *chic* thing to contribute to the "Œuvre des Petits Chinois," and to get each of them a pet godson with a pig-tail whom they could show off at their tables for the amusement of their guests. The wondrously correct demeanour of Tung-Tcheek during the dinner, served to promote the excellent opinion that had been conceived of him at first sight. Peering out of the corners of his small eyes to watch what others did, he appeared laudably anxious to copy their manners and make no mistakes. To be sure, he blundered once or twice, as when he helped himself profusely to pepper instead of to salt, and drank desperately out of the decanter to assuage the fire on his tongue that resulted from this error; he also shovelled some hot potatoes into his pocket to eat them cold by and by as he said, because he preferred them that way, and he called rather loudly for champagne several times out of his turn, for the simple reason, as he said, that he liked that beverage. But these were little quips that did no one any harm, and only served to enhance the conviviality of the repast.

A lady always feels kindly to those who help her to obtain *kudos* of any sort, so as Tung-Tcheek had ministered to the success of the prefectoral banquet, and earned for the Countess a character for sanctity, she was put into a good humour with him. When all the guests had retired, she said:

"Well, Lætus" (for she always called him by his baptismal name), "we are going to give you a good bed now. What did you think of your dinner?"

"Why does your husband wear a pane of glass in his eye?" inquired the Chinaman, staring intently at the Prefect, who sat silent in an armchair, ogling him as if he were some strange and not very welcome animal.

"To see through, I suppose," laughed the Countess. "Now, what do you think of my husband?"

"He very much afraid of you, dat's what I think," replied the Chinaman with engaging candour.

"Hush, Lætus, you mustn't say those things; they are not polite," said the Countess, amused but colouring.

"Why not, if they're true?" replied Tung-Tcheek, amazed.

"Because all truths are not good to tell."

"Take care, my dear, that's a new education you're beginning," remarked the Prefect with a smile.

"If you make me tell lies to please you, you bear blame of them," remarked Tung-Tcheek, wagging his head. "I tell no more than twenty lies a day to please myself."

"This young man will be quite a treasure to us," said M. de Beautoupet, rubbing his hands as he noticed a new blush rise to the Countess's face.

III.

So the Countess had an adopted child at last, for Tung-Tcheek became definitely installed at the Prefecture as the *fils de la maison*.

He was too much lionised for the Countess to care to part with him. His truthful sallies set drawing-room companies in a roar; and he besides, a good boy, for he spent most of his days reading good books given him by the missionaries, or carving bones. Out of a shin of beef he would make very pretty crucifixes, and from a leg-of-mutton bone he sculptured statuettes which were remarkable for the intention, if not for the correctness of the design. All this exemplariness of behaviour lasted for three weeks or so. Then Tung-Tcheek began to be thought rather a bore. His self-esteem being stimulated by the applause which his speeches won, he took upon himself to put barbs to some of the sallies which he shot. He got to have his likes and dislikes. He loved a certain lady because she was redolent of nice perfumes, and loathed another because she had a red nose—which things he avowed without any reserve in the hearing of all whom it might concern. He told an old dowager that he could see she was wearing a wig; and asked a buxom widow, just on the wrong side of forty, why she painted herself? He expressed his conviction that a highly respected senator, who was a relative of the Count's, had a weakness for telling fibs; and roundly taxed the general in command of the garrison with being too fond of the bottle. But worse than all, he one evening entered into controversy with the bishop, and caught that right reverend prelate at fault in his theology. He moreover informed Sa Grandeur that the latter's mode of life was by no means so edifying as that of Catholic bishops in China, who flourished mostly on rice and water, and never indulged in strong drink, lest their example should cause others to sin. This kind of thing soon became unendurable, and Madame de Sainte-Folye perceived that she would lose all her friends if she did not pack off Tung-Tcheek to his country. She became the more disposed to do this as she saw no possibility of giving the truthful lad a career in France. His own talents, as he confessed, were limited to sinning but seventy-two times a day (an allowance which he seldom exceeded) and to carving bones. But it would not have been decent that a godson of the Countess de Sainte-Folye should set up as a bone-seller.

"We will give him a sum of money to open a shop with in Canton, and we will despatch him by the next boat," said the Countess one day, when she had been discussing about her *protégé's* welfare with her husband and M. de Beautoupet.

But Tung-Tcheek, when he got wind of what was brewing, felt far from satisfied. He was too pleased with the civilities shown him in Europe to desire a return to China; and having, with the deep shrewdness of his race, obtained an insight into the position which a French prefect holds, he felt that he was equal to playing, if need were, a game of threats to secure the comfortable berth into which he had fallen. The first time Madame de Sainte-Folye plainly intimated to him her intention of sending him back to China, Tung-Tcheek laid down the bone of a cutlet which he was carving, and said: "No. You saved me from drowning, you bound to make my life happy; and I not happy if I go back."

"Why, but, you little monster, do you think I am bound to listen all my life to your disagreeable language?" exclaimed the Countess, for she was by this time very angry with Tung-Tcheek.

"You no right to complain of truth if you good Christian," answered the Chinaman coolly; "but you no Christian. You silly, frivolous woman, and awful liar; I heard your husband say so."

"How dare you?" cried the Countess, white with rage.

"You listen to me," said Tung-Tcheek, taking up his pigtail, and combing out the tuft at the end, pensively, with his fingers. "I want marry rich wife, and have nice Government post, as all good French Christians do; if not I join de Opposition."

"Well I never!" ejaculated the Countess aghast; "pray, sir, who has been talking to you about Opposition?"

"In dis country," said Tung-Tcheek, as if he were beginning a speech, "every public man have a thousand enemies to one friend, dat's about the proportion. De thousand enemies push to get him down, and de few, few friends don't care much whether he's down or up—dat's my experience. Now I've lived in your house a month, and know all your secrets and everything about you. If you not do as I tell you, I go and make de Opposition laugh by going and repeating all I know. You not like to be laughed at because you silly woman, very vain and proud. Dat's de truth, my godmother."

"Oh you hideous little viper!" ejaculated the Countess, but she remembered all the odium and ridicule she had incurred because of the baby Soulot, and she resolved to dissemble. She was not going to furnish the Radicals with a handle for saying that she bullied helpless foreigners as well as juvenile natives. So though she trembled inwardly from exasperation, she patted Tung-Tcheek on the head and pretended to treat his utterances as a joke. "You're a strange boy," said she, "but we will do our best for you. What sort of post should you like?"

"Plenty pay and little work, like your husband and other Christians," replied Tung-Tcheek, volubly, as he resumed the carving of his bone.

"And what sort of wife should you like?"

"One as much like you as possible."

"Ah! there's a compliment at last."

"No, it's truth—you clever woman, keep your husband in his place. He such a donkey that he no keep his place without you. Besides, you tell so many fibs that you save him all trouble on dat score."

"Go on, sir, go on," cried the Countess, who could scarcely realise the audacity of her *protégé*; "have you any more nice truths to tell?"

Tung-Tcheek said nothing for the moment, but quietly scraped his cutlet-bone with his knife. It was a fine summer evening. A perfume of roses streamed through the windows that opened on to a garden, and one could hear the strains of a distant band that was playing on the parade-ground. Suddenly Tung-Tcheek smiled, and glanced up at

Madame de Sainte-Folye, who had tears in her eyes, for she was growing seriously alarmed at the discovery that she had been fostering such an imp of evil.

"Pardon me, Madame," said the Chinaman rising with a bow, and speaking in much improved French, "please consider all I have said as jokes."

"Queer jokes!" echoed the disgusted lady. "But what means this change I notice in your accent and manner?"

"I must confess I have been imposing upon you," answered Tung-Tcheek, laughing outright this time. "It is quite true that I am a Chinaman, that you saved me from drowning, and that I am your godson. But at the Church Mission School they teach us better French than I have hitherto spoken to you; besides which, I am the adopted son of a wealthy mandarin who has caused my education to be perfected, and who has now sent me to travel in Europe for my pleasure."

"Ah! that's it!" exclaimed the Countess, very much relieved, though Tung-Tcheek's surprising communication did not greatly endear him in her sight, for women do not love to be fooled; "but tell me now why you have been making yourself so offensive. You were so nice during your first days here."

"The Christians who visit us in China and are good enough to bring us opium and brandy, speak to us a great deal of religion and civilisation," said Tung-Tcheek, rather bitterly. "I wanted to see whether you would really allow a man to live here according to the principles you preach, and I find not."

"That is rather a paradox," replied the Countess, recovering her self-possession and good-humour, "but I suppose you will go back to China with a very poor opinion of us all?"

"Not of you," said the Chinaman, with a grave society bow, which proved that he must have been accustomed to bandy soft words with the yellow beauties of his own land.

"In any case," added the Countess, archly, "I presume you no longer insist upon having a post under Government and a rich wife?"

"Oh no," laughed Tung-Tcheek, "the only favour I will beg is to be admitted once more as a guest at your table. But I will don European clothes for the occasion: they will serve to remind me of the kind of language which Christians are expected to speak amongst each other."

"Out of charity," said the Countess.

"Out of charity," assented Tung-Tcheek, with true Celestial courtesy.

So Tung-Tcheek figured that day at table in a swallow-tail coat and white tie, his pigtail being curled up in a roll at the back of his head, and next day he left Ville Joyeuse. One cannot say he was greatly missed. As for the Countess of Sainte-Folye, she felt, poor woman, that she had had enough of adopting other people's children, and she determined not to renew the dangerous experiment.

Earth-born Meteorites.

So many circumstances which had before seemed mysterious in the phenomena presented by meteors and falling stars have of late years been explained by what may be called the astronomical theory of their origin, that students of science have been apt to throw (perhaps somewhat too hastily) into the background, the theory of the terrestrial origin of some at least amongst these bodies. Indeed it may be remarked as a somewhat prevalent mistake in the discussion of scientific views, to recognise in the demonstrated justice of one theory the necessary failure of another purporting to explain the same phenomena. For instance, because it has been shown unmistakably that many faint stars are nearer to us than some of the brightest, the inference is adopted that the brighter stars are not the nearer; whereas, in reality, the choice does not lie between the two theories—that the brightness of a star indicates proximity, and that it indicates superior real size and splendour—seeing that it is possible, nay one may in this case say it is certain, that both views are partly true. On the whole doubtless the brighter stars are nearer than the fainter, and again on the whole there are relatively more of the largest orders of stars amongst those which appear bright than among those which appear faint. The case of meteors and shooting stars is not altogether so simple. Yet it is certain that the clear and satisfactory proof astronomers have obtained of the extra-terrestrial origin of a great number of meteors, does not involve, of necessity, the conclusion that none among the bodies which from time to time reach our earth from without, have had a terrestrial origin in remote past ages when the earth's condition was very unlike that which we now recognise. Recently some evidence of a rather striking kind has been obtained from the constitution of meteoric masses to show that such has indeed been the origin of some meteorites. An astronomer well able to discuss the mathematical relations involved has found reason to regard the theory with favour, if not absolutely accepting it. Some indeed fall into the same fault here into which (as we think) those had fallen who inferred as a necessary conclusion from other evidence that no meteorites can possibly be of terrestrial origin; for they seem disposed to regard all meteorites of a certain large and important class as originally earth-born. We propose now to consider briefly the nature of the evidence in favour of the terrestrial origin of some among the bodies which fall from time to time upon the earth, and then to inquire how far it is likely that the evidence applies to all the members of that particular class of bodies.

In the first place we must briefly indicate the position of meteoric astronomy at the presen time.

It will be remembered by many of our readers that after the meteoric display of November 14, 1866, astronomers succeeded in rapidly bringing together a mass of evidence, cogent at first, but presently found to be overwhelming, in favour of the theory that shooting-stars are bodies travelling in orbits of vast extent around the sun. They were able to ascertain the precise figure and position of some among these orbits, owing to the recognition of the strange circumstance that the two best known systems of shooting-stars travel in the track of two comets, one large and conspicuous, the other telescopic. If they had been in any doubt as to the validity of the reasoning by which this conclusion had been established, all such doubts would have been removed by the observations made on the system of meteors following in the track of the comet called Biela's. It was predicted that on the night of November 27, 1872, when it was known that the earth would pass through the track of that comet, a shower of falling stars would be seen, radiating from a part of the heavens near the feet of the constellation Andromeda, or the Chained Lady—that being the direction from which bodies following in the train of Biela's comet would seem to traverse our skies if, as the earth travelled onwards, they overtook her, and were rendered luminous in their rush through our atmosphere. On that evening, a wonderful display of meteors was seen, thousands being counted by European observers, while according to one account the above-named regions of the heavens from whence, as predicted, the meteors radiated, was aglow with an amber-coloured light, as though illuminated by tens of thousands of faint meteors too minute to be individually discernible. Nor was this all. A European astronomer named Klinkerfues thought that it might be well to direct the attention of astronomers whose observatories commanded the southern heavens, to the circumstance that a flight of meteors following in the train of Biela's comet had swept over the earth from the direction of the northern stars marking the feet of Andromeda, and that therefore possibly the flight might be seen (as a whole) travelling onwards towards the southern stars which lie exactly opposite those northern ones. Accordingly he telegraphed to Mr. Pogson of the Madras Observatory, "Biela touched earth on November 27; look for it near Theta Centauri." Pogson examined that part of the heavens, and there discovered two faint cloudlike objects presenting the appearance of small comets. These, whatever they were, were not star-clouds or nebulæ, for they were seen to be in slow motion athwart the heavens; although it appeared, on further inquiry, that neither could have been the flight of meteors which had swept over the earth (or through which the earth had passed) on November 27. While it was certain that Biela's comet itself was at least twelve weeks' journey further on than these comets (assuming they were really travelling in its track), yet their motion corresponded with the theory that they belong to the train of cometic matter following after Biela's comet, to which beyond all doubt belonged also the flight of meteors which produced the display of falling stars on the night of November 27–28.

But here, in passing, we must correct a notion into which many persons little acquainted with astronomy have fallen, when they have learned that meteors of different orders follow, in flights of many hundreds of millions, in the track of known comets, imagining that the mystery of comets' tails can thus be readily explained. The track of a comet and the tail of a comet are not coincident. If they were, it would of course be natural enough to suppose that when we look at the long tail of such a comet as Newton's or Donati's, we see in reality the stream of meteoric attendants following after the head or nucleus of those splendid objects. This theory has indeed been elaborated by a mathematician of repute, who has fallen into the mistake of supposing that the tail of a comet coincides with the track which the head of the comet pursues in space. It is so easy even for a man of science to fall into a mistake of this kind in dealing with a matter outside the subject of his special study, that we should not be careful to notice the error, were it not, first, that it may mislead many, and, secondly, that the mathematician in question, Prof. P. G. Tait of Edinburgh, has rather a failing for dealing severely (not to say sourly) with errors of the kind, or even with far slighter errors made by others. We may thus at once correct a mistaken notion about a scientific subject, and at the same time we may perhaps teach a too censorious critic to understand how readily even the most careful (for such, considering his severity, we must suppose him to be) may fall into gross and palpable errors.

The first part of the following quotation is correct enough and well worth studying as a sound, if not very elegant, exposition of the visibility of flights of meteors. The fault is in the application at the end; we may say of the "passage," its sting is in its tail. "Let us consider," says Prof. Tait, "a swarm of meteorites" (regarded each as a fragment of stone) like a shower, in fact, of macadamised stones, or bricks, or even boulders, —"what would be the appearances presented by such a cloud? It must in all cases be of enormous dimensions, because the earth takes two or three days and nights to pass through the breadth of the stratum of the November meteors. Consider the rate at which the earth moves in its orbit, and you can see over what an enormous extent of space these masses are scattered. Now, if you think for a moment what would be the aspect of such a shower of stones when illuminated by sunlight, you will see at once that, seen from a distance, it would be like a cloud of ordinary dust; and an easy mathematical investigation shows that it should give when sufficiently thick, except in extreme cases, a brightness equal to about half that of a solid slab of the same material similarly illuminated. The spectrum of its reflected or scattered light should be the spectrum of sunlight, only a great deal weaker. It is easy without calculation, by simply looking at a cloud of dust on a chalky road in sunshine, to assure one's self of the property just mentioned of such cloud of dust or small particles. Remember that in cosmical questions we can speak of masses like bricks, or even paving-stones" (!) "as being mere dust of the solar system, and we may suppose them as far separated one from another, in proportion to their size, as the particles of ordinary dust are. Whether then it be common terrestrial dust, or cosmical dust, with particles of the size of brickbats or boulders, does not matter to the result of this calculation. Spread them about in a swarm or cloud as sparsely as you please, and only make that cloud deep enough and illuminate it by the sun, then it can send back one half as much light as if it had been one continuous slab of the material. Now, look at the moon. You see there a continuous slab of material, and you know what a great amount of brightness that gives. And a shower of stones in space at the same distance from the sun as the moon, and of the same material as the moon, could, if it were only deep enough, however scattered its materials, shine with half the moon's brightness. Now no comet's tail has ever been seen with brightness at all comparable to that of the moon; and therefore it is perfectly possible, and, so far as our present means enable us to judge, it is extremely probable, that the tail of the comet is merely a shower of such stones." . . . "This excessively simple hypothesis," he says further on, after considering how the conflict of meteoric bodies composing a flight might generate the light of the comet's head and coma, and account for the appearance of jets extending from the nucleus sunwards, and thence streaming backwards to form the tail, "appears easily able to account for many even of the most perplexing of the observed phenomena. I must warn you, however," he concludes, honestly and frankly enough (he is by no means always as just in attacking the mistakes of others as in defending his own) "that this is not the hypothesis generally received by astronomers."

The hypothesis is in fact utterly untenable, as every astronomer, or even every one acquainted with the astronomical history of a single large comet, knows well. It may suffice to point out that the tail which we do see extends from the head in a direction exactly opposite from the sun's (the tail may be, and often is, curved markedly, at some distance from the head, but it invariably extends from the head, exactly in the direction mentioned); and this direction can never be the track of any comet except one travelling directly towards the sun. It need hardly be said that no comet has ever been seen to travel in that direction; if a comet ever should be seen to travel in that way, we shall have an opportunity of learning whether Newton was right in supposing that the downfall of a comet on the sun would cause an outburst of solar heat by which terrible mischief would be wrought upon our earth. But while we do see a well-defined stream of cloudy light in a direction which does not coincide with a comet's track, but is often largely inclined to it, and not unfrequently almost exactly opposite the track, we have never yet succeeded in tracing the faintest luminosity along any part of the track of a comet, even where we have reason to believe that meteoric attendants are most numerous. The only case in which a cloudy light has been recognised on a comet's track has already been referred to—the case of Biela's comet and the two cloud-like objects seen by Pogson. But even in this case, which does not in the remotest degree correspond with Professor Tait's idea, we have every reason to believe that actual though subsidiary comets were observed; for Biela's comet divided early in 1846 into two distinct comets, and as it has since been entirely lost, though astronomers were well acquainted with the course it should have pursued since, and have searched for it with excellent telescopes, we may reasonably believe that the comet is now broken up into fragments, two of which Pogson probably saw.

However, it has been fairly demonstrated that large numbers of meteors falling as shooting-stars are bodies which had been travelling in the tracks of comets before encountering our earth, and turning to vapour in their rush through its atmosphere. Now the question had long since arisen how the flights of meteors thus travelling in orbits more or less elongated around the sun, had been caused to pursue their present paths. Schiaparelli, of Milan, advocated the theory that comets which on their voyage from interstellar space towards our solar system chanced to pass near one of the planets, especially if such a planet were one of the giant planets, would be diverted from their former course, into an orbit necessarily passing through the spot where the comet's motion had been thus affected. In other words, the new orbit of the comet would intersect or pass very near the orbit of the disturbing planet. It is singular that the astronomers, including such able mathematicians as Sir George Airy and the late M. Leverrier, who accepted this explanation, should have overlooked the overwhelming objections which exist against it. In the first place, it is obvious that for every comet captured, so to speak, in this way, not millions, but millions of millions, would escape; and we should have to form a much more extended estimate of the total number of cometic systems in the universe than has been usual, or than can be regarded as admissible. But this is not the most serious objection to Schiaparelli's theory. So soon as we inquire how near a comet arriving from remote interstellar space must pass to Neptune, or to Uranus, or to Saturn, or to Jupiter, in order to be compelled to travel in an orbit not extending far beyond the spot of nearest approach, we find so near an approach to be necessary, that a comet of average size would have but a small proportion of its mass suitably deflected,—the rest would pass too near, and be there and then drawn down to the surface of the disturbing planet, or would not pass near enough, and so would travel thereafter on an entirely different orbit from that followed by the small portion deflected into the observed present orbit of such a comet or meteoric flight. We cannot escape the difficulty by supposing the whole mass of a comet to arrive in the form of a cluster much smaller than the head of any known comet; for in that case, though the whole comet would be captured, yet it w captured in the form of a cluster far too compact to undergo such subsequent dissipation, as we must of course account for in the case of every one of the known meteoric flights. Nor could the head of a comet, supposed to be a tolerably dense and massive body, by passing at the right distance from a giant planet, be properly deflected with its whole company of meteoric attendants, except by assuming that the head had such power by virtue of its mass as would effectually prevent its satellite meteors from ever escaping from its control, which they must do before they could extend themselves along hundreds of millions of miles of its track, as we see in the case of such meteor families as those which produce the November and August showers of falling stars.

Failing this explanation, astronomers have found themselves almost compelled to adopt the theory, wild though it seems at a first view, that those comets and meteoric systems whose paths pass very near the track of a planet, must at some remote epoch have actually been expelled from the interior of the planet when that orb was in a sun-like state. Possibly a theory so startling might not have suggested itself, even in presence of evidence which appeared to leave no other available explanation of relations unmistakably existing, had it not been that a number of circumstances had combined to suggest that many of the larger meteoric masses which have from time to time fallen upon the earth have been expelled from the interior of the sun or of some one or other of his fellow-suns, the stars. The microscopic structure of meteorites shows that they were once in a state of intense heat such as exists only in the immediate neighbourhood of suns, if even anywhere save in their interior. The chemical analysis of some meteoric masses has indicated the presence of larger quantities of occluded hydrogen than could (it would seem) have attained that condition except under the enormous pressure prevailing in the interior of a sun. Then the evidence of solar eruptions driving matter from the sun with a velocity so great that such matter would never return to him,—his power of recalling matter expelled from his interior being limited to the control of bodies whose velocity when leaving his surface did not exceed 360 miles per second—suggested the existence of similar power in all suns. And other evidence might be cited, did space permit, in favour of the theory that not only have some meteors which reach the earth been expelled from suns or stars, but that even now these suns continue to expel matter from time to time with such velocities that the expelled matter forthwith starts on a journey through interstellar space, a journey not to cease until, after uncountable ages, such matter shall fall on some other sun (perhaps after multitudinous flittings from system to system) or on a planet circling around such a sun. Now the theory is generally accepted by astronomers of the present day, that every orb in a system like our solar system, even though now dark like our earth, or cold and in a sense dead like our moon, passed through a sunlike stage, when large portions of its mass were vaporous with intensity of heat. In this stage (which possibly some of the giant planets have not so very long since passed, they would expel matter from their interior from time to time, just as suns now do, according to the theory we have just considered. Now their expulsive force would of course be much less than the sun's; for indirectly, though not directly, this power would depend almost wholly upon the total mass or quantity of matter in a sun-like body. But so far as their power of expelling matter never to return to them was concerned, the giant planets—Neptune and Uranus, Saturn and Jupiter—would be not inferior to the sun himself, since the velocity which one of these planets would have to communicate to expelled matter, that it might for ever be freed from the planet's influence (unless chance brought such expelled matter and the expelling planet back after many revolutions of both to the scene of the original catastrophe, when the planet might gather back the matter it had so long before driven forth from its interior), would be much less than that which a sun must give to erupted matter to render it similarly free. In fact a planet would in some degree have an advantage over a sun, since matter expelled to a great distance from a planet would forthwith be under the influence of the sun round which that planet was travelling, and would so travel in an independent orbit, even though the original eruptive action had not communicated to the expelled matter the full velocity necessary to free it from the parent planet if no other orb existed in the universe.

Accordingly, most astronomers who have carefully considered the matter have been led to regard the theory as far more probable which considers the November meteors—to take that system as a convenient illustrative case—to have been originally expelled from Uranus, than the theory which supposes meteors travelling originally amid interstellar space, to have accidentally passed so very near Uranus that his perturbing influence entirely changed the character of their orbit.

But so soon as we recognise that a planet like Uranus would be able to eject matter from its interior as effectively as the sun, or even more readily, we perceive that what is true of the giant planets must be true of smaller planets, like our own earth for instance, or Mars, or even of such bodies as the moon, the satellites which attend on Jupiter and Saturn, the asteroids, and even smaller bodies. In passing, indeed, we may notice that the truth of this theory with respect to such small bodies as aerolites is often illustrated in a very striking manner in our own skies. For whenever one of these bodies is caused by friction with our atmosphere to assume the sun-like condition—that is, to become intensely luminous—we see that it scatters fragments from its own mass, on all sides, and certainly these fragments are not gathered up again by its own attractive energy. So that we might almost be led to infer that the smaller any orb in space may be, the more likely is it, when passing through the sunlike stage, to eject portions of its mass. Without insisting, however, on this conclusion, we may at least consider ourselves free, should other circumstances point that way, to adopt for any meteoric system not explicable as expelled from a giant planet, the theory that the system was at some remote epoch expelled from a smaller planet, a moon, or an asteroid.

It is to a theory of this sort that Dr. Ball, Astronomer Royal for Ireland, has been led by the study of the relations presented by certain meteorites. These relations may be thus presented (we slightly modify Dr. Ball's words): Meteorites are always angular fragments, even before they reach our air. Many meteorites have a crystalline structure, and according to Haidinger, this indicates a very long period of formation at a nearly constant temperature—a condition which can only be fulfilled in a large mass. In other meteoric stones many fragments are welded together, as in the terrestrial formations called breccia. Other meteorites are composed of very small particles, analogous to volcanic tufas.* Many meteoric stones show markings, resembling those seen on terrestrial rocks, and caused by the rubbing together of adjacent masses.

These features were first noticed by Tschermak, in his interesting memoir on the structure of meteorites; and, referring to that paper, Dr. Ball remarks that although he does not feel competent to offer an opinion on the mineralogical questions involved in the discussion, the numerous arguments adduced by Tschermak seem in his (Dr. Ball's) opinion, to justify the conclusion that the meteorites have had a volcanic source on some celestial body. "We may suppose," Tschermak had said in conclusion, "that many celestial bodies of considerable dimensions are yet small enough to admit of the possibility that projectiles driven from them in volcanoes shall not return under the action of gravity: these would really be the source of meteorites." Similar views have been advanced by Mr. J. Lawrence Smith, and others, who have given considerable attention to the subject. Wherefore, Dr. Ball considers that it is not unreasonable to discuss the following problem:—"If meteorites have been projected from volcanoes, on what body or bodies in the universe may these volcanoes have been located?"

He begins first with the sun. "It has been abundantly shown," he says, "that there exists upon the sun tremendous explosive energy. It is not at all unlikely that the energy would be sufficiently great under certain circumstances actually to drive a body from the sun never to return. We might, therefore, find upon the sun adequate explosive power for the volcano: but the projectiles are here the difficulty. There are a number of circumstances (notably the breccia-like appearance of some meteorites) which show conclusively that the meteorites have been torn from rocks which were already nearly, if not quite, solid; and, as it seems in the highest degree impossible that rocks of this nature should exist in the sun, we may conclude that the sun has not been the source of meteorites." Here, it must be remarked, first, that the objection applies only to those meteorites which present such appearances as to compel us to believe that they were torn from rocks nearly or quite solid, so that the general statement that "the sun has not been the source of meteorites" is not established by the evidence. Secondly, however, it is worth considering whether the sunlike stage of a celestial orb is after all that in which the ejecting power of the orb would be most freely developed. May it not be absolutely essential, indeed, to the full ejective activity of such an orb that a solid crust should have formed over the greater part of its surface?

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* The name *tufa*, from the Italian *tufo*, porous ground, is given to certain porous loose rocks, sometimes calcareous, and sometimes composed of fine powdery volcanic dust, more or less completely cemented by the infiltration of water, but generally loose and spongy. It is to tufa of the latter kind that the substance of some meteors seems to be analogous. The dust of such tufas consists chiefly of material ejected from volcanoes, a circumstance on which a part of Dr. Ball's reasoning will be found to depend.

Next, Dr. Ball inquires whether "meteorites" (but it must be borne in mind that certain orders only of meteorites are really in question) "can have come from the moon." "Owing to the small mass of the moon," he says, "the explosive energy required to carry a body away from the moon is comparatively small. Can such a body fall upon the earth? To simplify questions of the kind, we shall suppose various disturbing influences absent. We shall suppose that the projectile is discharged from a volcano in the moon with sufficient velocity to carry it therefrom. We shall then omit all account of the disturbing influence both of the sun and the moon on the projectile, and we shall suppose that the projectile is really revolving round the earth as a satellite;" or, as the rest of the argument requires, that the projectile begins to revolve in this way. Then he shows that, as is indeed obvious, the projectile will fall on the earth if its course when once fairly started from the moon gives to it an orbit intersecting the earth, on passing nearer to the earth's centre than a radius of the earth. And clearly, apart from disturbing influences, if the orbit does thus intersect the earth's globe, the projectile will finish its career as a free traveller before it has traversed quite one half of a complete orbital revolution round the earth; while, if the orbit does not intersect the earth, the projectile will travel for ever round and round its orbit without falling upon the earth. Consequently, lunar projectiles cannot now fall upon the earth, unless the lunar volcanoes are still active, which certainly is not generally the case, and most probably is not the case even with a single lunar volcano. "It is generally believed," says Dr. Ball, and he might as truly have said "it is certain," "that lunar volcanoes are not now active to any appreciable extent, even if the suspected indications of recent change were thoroughly established." Meteoritic masses may have been expelled from the moon in remote times, and may still continue to travel around the earth; while, again, the orbits of such masses may occasionally be caused by perturbing action to intersect the earth, so that the lunar meteorite is caused to enter our atmosphere, and to fall upon our earth's surface. But such cases must be few and far between, and certainly quite too infrequent to account for any but a very small proportion of the meteorites we are dering. Dr. Ball next considers the planets, and in order to the difficulties of the great initial velocity which would be necessary to overcome the gravitation of a large planet, he inquires if a volcano placed upon one of the small planets could accomplish the task. There is no real reason, however, for thus limiting the inquiry, seeing that, as we have already pointed out, the eruptive energy of a still youthful planet—a planet, that is, in the intensely volcanic era of its existence—would depend in the main on the quantity of matter in the planet, precisely as the velocity necessary for the complete rejection of matter would depend on the same relation, so that large and small planets would probably be on about an equal footing in this respect. Indeed, so far as the total quantity of ejected matter was concerned, the larger planets would supply far the larger portion of the meteoric masses now travelling freely about the solar system, for the simple and sufficient reason that the matter-rejecting era of a large planet would certainly last much longer, while the quantity of matter ejected in any given time would probably be much greater than in the case of a small planet. However, Dr. Ball's arguments are not specially affected by this consideration, and having premised so much we may leave the reader to apply to the case of a giant planet, with suitable modifications, the reasoning which Dr. Ball appears to limit to the case of one of the minor planets or asteroids.

He considers "the circumstances under which it would be possible to discharge a projectile from the surface of a planet—say Ceres—so that the projectile shall intersect" the ring of space, between 8,000 and 9,000 miles wide, which the earth's globe traces out year after year around the sun; for in this case only can it happen—and in this case it may happen or may not—that the earth and the meteorite may meet at the intersection of their paths, the long travels of the meteorite being thus brought to an end. "The planet being small," he proceeds, "the initial velocity that would be required to carry a projectile from its surface presents no difficulty: perhaps an ordinary cannon would be sufficient so far as the mere gravitation of the planet is concerned." But, of course, this would not be sufficient. A projectile started from Ceres with such a velocity, although it would perhaps never return to Ceres, would travel round the sun in an orbit scarcely differing appreciably from that of Ceres, and thus would never approach within many millions of miles of the earth's orbit. Herein, indeed, lies the great difficulty in the case of a small planet. The expulsive energy necessary to cause a projectile to travel on a path intersecting the earth's exceeds not merely by a large absolute amount, but *manifold*, that which would be required merely to overcome the gravitating power of the planet itself. In the case of a giant planet the power required to send a projectile on an orbit intersecting the earth's, would still largely exceed that necessary merely to free the projectile for ever from its parent planet; indeed, the excess would be *absolutely* greater in most cases than it would be for a small planet like Ceres travelling much nearer to the earth's orbit; but as compared with the force necessary to overcome the planet's own gravity, the excess in the case of a giant planet would be much smaller than in the case of Ceres or any of the planetoids.

Dr. Ball enters into the calculation for Ceres, regarding this planet as moving in a circular orbit with a velocity of about eleven miles per second. He shows that a volcano on Ceres, to eject a projectile which might encounter the earth, must be at the least capable of producing an initial velocity of three miles per second. "As this is quite independent of the additional volcanic power requisite to carry the projectile away from the attraction of Ceres, it is obvious," proceeds Dr. Ball, "that after all there may be but little difference between the volcano which would be required on Ceres, and that (of six-mile power) which would project a body away from the surface of the earth for ever."

But, even supposing there existed on Ceres or on any or all of the minor planets, volcanoes of sufficient power to eject projectiles with such velocity that they might cross the earth's track, the question still remains whether any considerable proportion of them would do so. Dr. Ball deals with this question in the following form :—"Suppose a projectile is discharged from a point in the orbit of Ceres" (that is, from Ceres) "in a random direction, with a total initial velocity of twelve miles per second, determine the probability that the orbit of the projectile will cross the earth's track." The solution of this problem, though not very complex in reality, would not be by any means suited to these pages. The result, however, is sufficiently simple, and exceedingly significant. It appears that the odds are about 50,000 to 1 against one of these projectiles crossing the earth's track. In other words, for every one of those projectiles which crossed the earth's track, 50,000 or thereabouts must have been ejected. As the total number of meteorites whose paths cross the earth's track enormously exceeds the total number which have been actually encountered by the earth, it follows that we should have to imagine the ejection of millions of millions of meteorites from the asteroids before we could adopt the theory that it is from those bodies the meteorites really have been derived. The argument is increased in strength when we consider the case of a giant planet, for the farther away any planet is from the earth the smaller is the probability that a projectile, even if ejected with sufficient velocity to come nearer to the sun than our earth is, will actually cross the earth's track. Of course the circumstance that some systems of shooting-stars actually have orbits crossing the earth's track while extending farther into space than the orbit of Uranus—in some cases farther even than the orbit of Neptune—is in itself a sufficient answer to any objection implying the impossibility that projectiles expelled from Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune should cross the earth's track. But the general objection remains valid—if we are to suppose that *all* shooting-stars, meteorites, and aerolites have come from the planets of the solar system, we must assume that the volcanic activity of the planets has been enormously developed, since, first, we have not seen one member of many millions belonging to any known meteoric system, and, secondly, the meteoric systems of which we know anything form but a mere fraction of those of which (owing to their position in space) we *may* learn something, while, thirdly, these are but the smallest fraction of those which actually exist—to say nothing of the enormously long time-interval during which meteors of all orders have been gathered up by the earth with none to note the process.

Thus we are led to inquire whether some, at any rate, of the meteorites may not have come from a source which might have ejected meteoric matter under more favourable conditions for subsequent capture by the earth.

At this stage of the inquiry Dr. Ball adopts quite a poetical, one may even say a dramatic, method of dealing with his subject. He no longer speaks of this or that planet by name, but describes the qualities of one particular planet, whose position in the solar system the reader is left to infer from his description. "There is one planet of the solar system," he says, "which has a special claim to consideration. On that planet it is true that a volcano would be required which was capable of giving an initial velocity of at least six miles per second; but every projectile launched from that volcano into space would, after accomplishing its elliptic orbit round the sun, dash through the track of the earth, and again pass through the same point at every subsequent revolution. It is not here a case of one solitary projectile out of 50,000 crossing the earth's track, but every one of the 50,000 possesses the same property." Where, it may be asked, is this specially favoured planet whose meteoric projectiles thus inevitably intersect the track of the earth? We have not far to look for it; it is the earth itself on which we live. The earth is certainly not now able to expel meteors with the velocity required by this theory, or, as the present writer has said elsewhere, "if capable of so doing, she (fortunately perhaps for us) refrains from exerting her full powers in this way." But in the remote past, as we have every reason to believe, the earth possessed much greater volcanic energy than she now does. "If in ancient times," says Dr. Ball, "there were colossal volcanoes on the surface of the earth which had sufficient explosive energy to drive missiles upwards with a velocity sufficient to carry them away from the earth's surface, after making allowance for the resistance of the air, these missiles would then continue to move in orbits round the sun, crossing at each revolution the point of the earth's track from which they were originally discharged. If this were the case, then doubtless there are now myriads of these projectiles moving through the solar system, the only common feature of their orbits being that they all intersect the earth's track. It will, of course, now and then happen that the earth and the projectile meet at the point of crossing, and then we have the phenomenon of the descent of a meteorite." Dr. Ball goes on to remark that this theory was, so far as he knows, first put forward by Dr. Phipson, a statement which at first sight seems abundantly justified by the following passage in Dr. Phipson's useful compilation, *Meteors, Aerolites, and*

Falling Stars:—"If in future years, extended observation enforce more and more upon us the truth of the assumption that meteorites are really *the dust of the earth*—fragments of the earth's mass thrown from it in its early years (in the infancy of the globe, when volcanic action was intense; probably long after the moon was separated from it), which myriads of fragments have continued ever since to circulate along, or near to, the earth's path—then I shall be satisfied to have originated this theory." But Dr. Phipson's theory is in reality entirely different from Dr. Ball's. The orbits he assigns to the expelled meteorites are not orbits round the sun, but orbits round the earth—a thing not only entirely different in character, but standing on an entirely different scientific footing—if it ought not rather to be called entirely unscientific, as compared with the truly scientific theory propounded by Dr. Ball. "We know a planet—Saturn," says Mr. Phipson, "surrounded by several rings which undergo slight perturbations only; and taking especially into consideration the chemical composition of aerolites, we may be tempted to suppose that these meteoroids have orbits *round the earth*" (the italics are his), "not round the sun, and that they constitute a series of *dark rings* round our globe, similar perhaps to the rings of Saturn." He proceeds to enforce this theory (though his arguments are not in reality so valid as he supposes), speaking of it as the satellite theory, up to the passage quoted above, the sentence immediately preceding which (except one referring to later chapters) runs thus:—"After what has been already said, the reader will be able to form his own notions, and to choose between the satellite and planetary theories of meteoroids." Science has long since done so, and has definitely adopted the planetary theory, of which general theory Dr. Ball's indicates but a special case. The satellite theory is, in fact, utterly untenable, for the simple reason that a projectile expelled from the earth so as to remain an attendant of the earth would return to the earth before completing one entire revolution. On the other hand, Dr. Ball's views are entirely in accordance with scientific possibilities, and seem so well to correspond with the observed peculiarities of certain meteorites, that it must be regarded as extremely probable that they are just, though it can by no means be admitted that they account for all meteoric systems, or indeed for those, like the November and August systems, about which astronomers have learned most.

It is noteworthy that almost simultaneously with the enunciation by Dr. Ball of the theory we have been considering above, the Paris Academy indicated its recognition of the labours of M. Stanislas Meunier's researches into the structure of meteorites. Astronomers and physicists had taken great interest in the labours of Daubrée, indicating a connection between meteorites and the lower strata of the earth. M. Meunier, who may be regarded as Daubrée's pupil and follower, has found that this analogy is not confined to mineralogical constitution, but appears to extend also to the relation which these cosmical materials present, when they are compared together, as we compare the constit rocks of our earth. His conclusion is somewhat startling; and even the support his views have derived from the recognition of the Paris Academy will scarcely justify us in regarding M. Meunier's theory as demonstrated by the evidence: he infers that all the meteorites "once belonged to a considerable globe like the earth, having true geological epochs, and that later this globe was decomposed into separate fragments under the action of causes difficult to define exactly, but which we have seen more than once in operation in the heavens themselves." He refers doubtless to the phenomena presented by the so-called "new stars." It it rather a bold assumption, however, that the blazing forth of a new star indicates a process under the action of which a globe has been decomposed into separate fragments. (If by any chance he refers to any other celestial phenomena, then all we can say is that a somewhat wide reading respecting astronomical matters has not yet brought under our notice any phenomena which could be so interpreted.) But it seems to us that, if Dr. Ball's theory be adopted, we have an answer to the otherwise rather puzzling question, what that globe can possibly have been from which the fragments, representing successive geological eras, have reached our earth during countless millions of past ages. As we have elsewhere pointed out, "Stanislas Meunier's theory, as it stands, is preposterous, let Commission or Academy say what they will. That some other planet (for so he presents his theory) has been torn into fragments, millions of which have in successive eras reached our earth, their constitution varying according to the depth of the strata of the planet home from which they were successively torn, is a theory utterly inadmissible so long as the laws of probability are to be our guide in such matters. But that the earth herself, in various past stages of her existence as an intensely volcanic orb, should have expelled immense numbers of bodies, and that the successive periods of meteoric downfall should thus come to exhibit changes corresponding to the successive stages of terrestrial stratification, seems reasonable enough. Nay, we may even say that if many meteorites really are proved by the evidence adduced by Tschermak to have had a volcanic origin, no theory but Dr. Ball's will account for *those* meteorites at any rate, while nothing could accord better than this theory with the results of M. Stanislas Meunier's researches."

But now let us examine the conclusions to which we seem led by the evidence respecting falling stars, meteors, and aerolites. These are not nearly so simple as might be imagined by those who examine merely the results of researches which have led to the formation of special theories. When we read what Schiaparelli, Hoek, Leverrier, and others have written respecting star showers, we might be led to believe that all the phenomena presented by those bodies can be accounted for by what may be called the interstellar theory; the theory, namely, that all meteor systems existed originally as clouds of meteoric matter, travelling amid interstellar spaces, whence they were drawn by the attraction of our sun toward the solar system, in approaching which they were so disturbed by the attractions of some planet, that thenceforth they have travelled in a closed curve, instead of returning to the interstellar depths after making their perihelion swoop around the sun, as in the ordinary course of things they would have done. If we limited our reading to the results obtained by Professor Graham, in the chemical analysis of certain meteors, and to those results of microscopical investigation which seem to support Graham's views, we might infer that all meteors were originally expelled from the interior of bodies like our sun. This theory, extended to include the giant planets, as formerly minor suns, would go far to explain most of the phenomena presented by meteors. But we have seen that from the study of some meteorites Tschermak, Ball, Lawrence Smith, and others, have been led to advance the general proposition that meteorites were originally earth-born. Yet again those who, like the present writer, regard the theory that the solar system was formed by processes of aggregation, as preferable to the so-called nebular hypothesis (which regards the solar system as formed by the contraction of a great mass of gaseous or cloudlike matter), or rather who consider that the nebular hypothesis must be supplemented by such a theory, might be disposed to regard meteors and aerolites as the fragments left after the system had been formed, and to find an explanation of all the principal phenomena of meteoric systems in the results of such processes of aggregation continued until nearly the whole of the matter available for the formation of the solar system had been gathered in. How are we to select from among so many seemingly conflicting theories, for each of which a considerable amount of evidence may be adduced? or, if selection is impossible, how can we either reconcile them as all true, or find some better theory, which may enable us to regard them as all false?

It has long seemed to us that, in dealing with subjects so complex as this, it is unwise to limit our attention to a single theory, or rather (for it is thus that a single theory comes to be advocated as the only available one) to one special section of the available evidence. We must endeavour to attach due weight to all the known facts, not to consider those only which suggest or support some favourite view. In the present case we shall be led, when this is done, to admit that most of the theories above referred to are so strongly supported that, instead of attempting to select among them, we ought to endeavour to show rather how they may all be accepted. Here, of course, we do not refer to theories like the satellite theory of meteors, which could only be supported by persons ignorant of the laws of motion. We know that, on the one hand, matter expelled from the earth never could have formed a ring of meteors round the earth, while, on the other hand, a ring of meteors round the earth never could account for the downfall of meteors upon the earth. And although Schiaparelli's theory of the origin of meteor systems stands, of course, on a very different footing, Schiaparelli being himself a mathematician of considerable power, while his theory has received the support of mathematicians of first-rate abilities, yet it appears to us that when the considerations indicated above are fairly taken into account, this theory must be rejected as inadmissible. But all the remaining inferences of those mentioned in the preceding paragraph are supported by evidence so strong that we cannot readily reject them. It is as nearly certain as a matter of this sort could well be, that a number of the meteorites which fall from time to time upon the earth have been expelled from planets or from a planet having already a solid crust, and the only explanation which seems admissible, so far as such meteorites are concerned, is that they were expelled from our own earth in some remote stage of her existence. Again, whether we trace back the history of the earth by examining the various strata forming her crust, or whether we consider the evidence afforded by the condition, orbital movements, &c., of the solar system, we are alike led to the conclusion that every planet has in the remote past been in a state of intense heat, and that therefore presumably what happened to our own earth must have happened to all the planets, so that the very evidence which supports so satisfactorily the theory of Ball and Tschermak, conducts us also to the conclusion that immense numbers of meteorites must have been expelled from every member of the solar system (unless we exclude the giant planets on the ground that as yet they may not have attained the stage of effective volcanic eruptive action), and therefore that some at least among the meteorites which reach us must have come from other worlds than ours. As it is exceedingly unlikely that the giant planets are as yet so youthful as the exception just suggested would imply, and as the total expulsive action of a planet must be in some degree proportioned to the planet's mass, it would seem probable that large quantities of meteoric matter must come to us from Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus, and Neptune, even if we had no direct evidence of this in the circumstance that so many meteoric systems have orbits carrying them to and beyond the orbits of those giant orbs. But this is not all. The evidence showing that the solar system has been formed by processes of aggregation, although it may be insufficient to establish the theory that aggregation rather than contraction has been the effective process, yet suffices to show that each planet has gathered in no small portion of its entire mass from without. Now if we consider what, under these conditions, would be the present arrangement of meteoric and cometic systems remaining after the progress of aggregation had been continued almost to its close, we perceive that some at least among these systems would have precisely such positions as we recognise among the known meteoric and cometic systems. A nebulous mass which had just escaped capture in the process of aggregation would thereafter travel on an orbit passing very close to the orbit of the forming planet which had failed to effect the capture of the mass. And we could readily understand that in the earlier condition of a planet—that is, when its whole mass was vaporous, and therefore enormously expanded—it would have had a much better chance of effecting such partial captures than in its later condition as a cool condensed globe. (We say partial capture, for it must be remembered that, although in such a case a nebulous mass would not there and then become part of the mass of the planet, it would for ever thereafter travel on an orbit intersecting the planet's, and in the long run could not fail to be captured piecemeal, though countless ages might be required for the purpose,* were it not that the perturbing influences of other members of the solar system might so change the orbit of the nebulous mass that it would pass free of the planet's course.) So that the total number of meteoric systems which we might expect to result from the breaking up of such partially captured nebulous masses would be much greater than could by any possibility be captured in the way suggested by Schiaparelli.

But, passing from the consideration of the various theories which must be taken into account in any complete discussion of meteoric relations, let us study some of the thoughts suggested by the theory which forms the more especial subject of this essay—a theory, be it remembered, which must be regarded as to all intents and purposes established by the evidence, though not as the sole theory in explanation of meteoric phenomena.

In the first place, it should be noticed that the time intervals over which our thoughts must range in considering this theory of meteorites, although not quite so great as those involved in some astronomical theories, are nevertheless enormous. The mere fact that so many hundreds of thousands of these earth-born meteorites have been in the first place strewn around the zone along which the earth pursues her course, and then gathered up by the earth (so far as they have as yet been gathered up), would of itself demonstrate the lapse of many millions of years since the former process began. For, although the earth must of necessity, as we have seen, pass always either through or very near the orbit pursued by each meteorite expelled from her interior (through the orbit before disturbing attractions had affected its shape, and near the orbit even when such attractions had produced their greatest effect on one side or on another), yet, in most cases, many circuits of the earth —that is, many years—would elapse before the earth and an earth-born meteorite would again be simultaneously near the scene of the original outburst which gave the meteorite separate existence; thousands of years would elapse (on the average) before an approach close enough, apart from perturbations, to bring the meteorite to rest upon the earth would occur; and the chances would be enormous against the occurrence of one of these near approaches at a time when the meteorite's orbit was, at this point, in actual intersection with the earth's. Perturbations would sway the meteorite's orbit and also the earth's orbit hither and thither across the mean position of either—not to any great extent, considering the dimensions of the solar system, but by a range amply sufficient to separate the point of nearest approach of the two orbits more than a diameter of the earth from each other. So that unless a close approach of the earth and meteorite occurred at a time when in the swaying hither and thither of the two orbits the effect of perturbations at the place of nearest approach of the orbits was nearly at a minimum, the earth and meteorite would pass clear of each other, however nearly the two might synchronise in their passage of the respective points where the two orbits at the moment approached each other most nearly.* Thus we recognise in the myriads of meteorites which have already been gathered in, and in the circumstance that as yet the supply shows no sign of exhaustion, conclusive evidence that millions on millions of years must have elapsed since first such meteorites were expelled from the interior of the still youthful earth.

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* Simply because to capture a fragment of the nebulous mass before this had become greatly extended, the planet must pass the point of nearest approach of the two orbits when the mass happened also to be there, which might not happen once in the course of many revolutions of both bodies. On the other hand, when the nebulous mass had become greatly extended (as the August and November meteoric systems have become), although encounters would be more numerous, the quantity of matter captured at each encounter would be very small. We have spoken a little later of the possibility that perturbations might so change the orbit of the nebulous mass (regarding it as a whole) that it would pass clear of the orbit of the planet; but it should be noted that the effect of such perturbations would be oscillatory, the mean distances of the orbits remaining constant when long periods of time are taken into account.

But we may carry back much farther the range of our mental vision. The meteorites we are considering present clear signs, as has been shown, of having once formed parts of solid strata, and not only so, but of strata which must have been formed slowly. We thus recognise the co-existence during a long time-interval (a period itself measurable probably by myriads of years) of two features which we have been apt to regard as belonging to different eras of the earth's history—a solid crust and an explosive energy competent to expel matter so forcibly that thereafter it would be free from the earth's control, though not from accidental future encounters with the earth.

But once again we are thus led to recognise the prior existence of yet longer periods, when the greater part of the substance of the forming earth was vaporous, when in fact during the process of slow contraction the earth was gathering, as it were, those powers by which during the sequent stage of her existence she was able to expel millions of meteoric masses from her interior.

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* The non-astronomical reader will find some difficulty in understanding the above sentence, if he does not note carefully the distinction between the close approach of two orbits and the close approach of two bodies travelling in those orbits. The orbits, undergoing constant flux, may approach each other very closely at some point, or may even intersect at a moment when the bodies travelling on those orbits are very far apart; and *vice versâ*, the two bodies may make a near approach to each other by coming nearly simultaneously to the points where the two orbits approach most nearly, yet at the moment the orbits may *there* be separated (owing to perturbations) more widely than usual. For a very near approach of the two bodies, both conditions must be simultaneously fulfilled: the points of nearest approach of the two orbits must be brought by perturbations very close together, and the two bodies must reach those points very nearly at the same time.

Even more interesting, however, than the considerations thus suggested as to the past stages of our earth's history, is the thought that what happened to our earth must have happened to all the planets of the solar system—nay, we may say almost certainly, must have happened, or must be now in progress, or must happen hereafter, with every orb throughout the infinities of space. Each sun and each planet, each asteroid and each moon (to say nothing of nebulæ on the one hand, or of comets and aerolites on the other) has its eruptive stage, in which, diverse though the powers of large and small orbs may be, expulsive power probably has been, is, or will be attained, competent to drive the expelled matter beyond the attractive range (also diverse for orbs of different size) of the parent mass. Nor need we be perplexed by the consideration that, in thus viewing millions of meteors and meteorites as sun-expelled or planet-expelled masses, we seem to set on one side the evidence which shows that the orbs peopling space have been in large part formed by the aggregation of meteoric masses. The two processes are no more inconsistent than are the two processes by one of which trees gather nutriment from the earth, and so grow, bud, blossom, bear fruit, and throw out leaves, while by the other they strew upon the earth leaves, fruit, blossoms, and buds, and in the fulness of time yield even their own substance to the all-nourishing soil. The earth-born meteorites which return in thousands year by year to the earth from which they sprang, are but as the leaves of a tree compared with the soil from which the tree derives its nourishment, when we compare the total mass of all those meteorites with that of those portions of the mighty cosmical nebula from which the mass of the earth itself was formed; while this portion in turn compared with the whole nebula is but as the soil nourishing a single tree to that from which a whole forest derives support.

Obod.

Now and then a venturesome traveller passing down the beautiful Dalmatian coast, tempted by the wild mountains of the range that overlook the Bocche di Cattaro, risks the few hours' climb which it costs to get to Cettinje, the insignificant capital of a significant people, and has a glimpse of Montenegrin life—no longer in its simplicity and typical integrity, however, for these have fled beyond the valleys invaded by the Russians, with their unwise charities and demoralising bounties, during the last war. In these bleak, desolate mountains and unfertile valleys which lie between the plain of Cettinje and the sea, we see the worst of Montenegro and the Montenegrin; yet very few of those who have come so far have the persistence to go farther, though three hours' walk beyond lies one of the most enchanting recesses of natural wilderness I had ever the fortune to blunder into; one of the most impressive and secluded, as well as picturesque, nooks I have ever explored—Obod Rieka, the *river* of Obod.

The stranger arriving at Cettinje has, however, seen enough of the wild-goat tracks which do service for roads in the principality, to be justified in not caring to go farther when he is told that the road to Rieka is worse than that from Cattaro to the capital—unless, indeed, he be a pedestrian of tried valour. He stops at the end of his first day's journey, and, if charitable, wonders—if cynical, rails—at a country which keeps its highways in such a state; and as there is nothing in Cettinje to interest one more than a day, he goes back to Cattaro the day after, abusing Montenegro as a nook of barbarism.

If he had spoken the Serb tongue, and passed his criticism on to the Montenegrin guide who accompanied him back, he would have received for reply :—"Roads? what do we want of roads? only so much weakening of our defences—only ways for the Austrian artillery to come in by one of these days. Oh, no! no roads in our time, I hope!" And so, what between a poverty the most exemplary, and a devotion to liberty the most obstinate, with a nature the most conservative that intelligent mankind can entertain, the Crnagora—i.e. the Black Mountain—has remained an oasis of primitive humanity uninvaded by progress as it is unconquered by the Turk, who never got to Obod as long as the Montenegrin had ammunition.

There is a geological peculiarity in the mountains of the Crnagora proper—i.e. the district between the Bocche di Cattaro and the river Zeta—which accounts for its barrenness and its inaccessibility. The limestone is tunnelled in every direction with passages, by which the water has always escaped underground, instead of gathering and cutting its way out, as in most other lands. So every watercourse ends in an abyss, or sinks through the soil, and reappears lower down, perhaps at the seaside, as at the city of Cattaro, where in the rainy season an immense river runs out from under the mountains; and in the Val d'Ombla, near Ragusa, where a wonderful fountain, of immense size and unmeasured depth, rises at the foot of a precipice and drains the waters of the Trebinischitza, miles away in Herzegovina, into the sea. The only way, then, to get from valley to valley in Montenegro is to climb a mountain range and descend the other side. These unbroken ramparts, precipitous enough, have served so far against Islam and the West alike.

So, leaving Cettinje, one climbs again by a steep zig-zag until the edge of the dividing ridge is gained, and finds himself on the lip of a great crater-like valley—a basin with sharp mountain edges—into which he must descend, and from which he must climb again the opposite ridge to get out of it. This is Dobroskozelo; and from the ridge beyond it, looking down into a deep valley—the only one in the Black Mountain blessed by a river—we see Obod. On the ridge from which we see it, took place the last struggle of the war of 1862, in which the Montenegrin army, its ammunition exhausted and further supplies cut off by the vigorous Austrian blockade of the frontier, came to terms with its almost equally disheartened enemy; and by a treaty, dictated by European diplomacy and the Serdar Ekrem from Scutari, saved the capital from occupation; though the bombastic Croat, Omar Pasha, did not hesitate to date his despatch of victory from Cettinje, which he never saw, and into which not one of his troops ever put his foot except as prisoner; and to reach which he would have had to pass two mountain ridges, each more difficult than anything he had passed. In those days the Montenegrins paid for gunpowder its weight in silver; and even so were unable to get it through the Austrian cordon along the frontier, in quantity sufficient to carry on the war.

Obod stands on a hill, around which the Rieka ("river," so called *par excellence* as the only one in the province) makes a bend, and on two sides a defence, and then winds away like a miniature Bosphorus towards the Lake of Scutari, of which it is one of the principal tributaries. Away in the distance rise the snowy peaks of the Thessalian Olympus, seen in exceptionally bright weather from these heights, and nearer the mountains of the Hotti and Castrati, of the Mirdites and the Dibri; at the left those of the Kutchi, and at the right those about Scutari—all full of legends and poetry, and inhabited for the most part by an unconquerable race, whom the ethnologists seem inclined to recognise as the most ancient of all incomers of our Arian family into these classical regions.

Here was the field of glory of the Skipetar hero Skander Beg; and here at Zabliac, in view at the foot of the hills we stand on, was the home of his Serb companion and ally through his splendid struggle of
of a century, in which the last free remnant of two great r

together against the invading power of the Koran. The brother in arms and brother-in-law of the Albanian hero was the brother of the first recognised independent prince of Montenegro, Stephen Crnoievich. With the death of Skander Beg, the Albanians yielded as much to policy as to force, and accepted a nominal subjection to the Sultan, and, until the day of Ali Pasha of Tebelen, never raised a rebelling head. The Servian remnant, defended on one flank by the dominions of Venice, refused to bend, and so with the Crnoievichi and Obod began a history whose glory is surpassed by no human record.

The wise and experienced mountain pony, on which I have so often passed this wild road, always stopped and shook his head when he came to one part of the descent from the heights of Dobroskozelo into the valley of the Rieka, and there I dismounted and let him pitch by himself down the huge steps into which the rock had broken and been worn. At the foot of this descent he was sure to stop; for there ran the bright, bubbling Rieka, the first really drinkable water after leaving Cettinje. Half a mile beyond the hill of Obod overlooks the winding stream; its white church, which, with the school-house and the priest's house, are all that occupy the site of the ancient fortress of Ivan Crnoievich, gleams from afar: and he who travels carelessly will go on by the direct road along the river to the village of Rieka, successor to Obod, a picturesque little place straggling along the narrow strip of land between the foot of the steep mountain and the river to which the *londras*, huge canoes which do the trade on the Lake of Scutari, come up to load and unload. But the lover of the picturesque will be glad if his guide turns his horse's head up the stream towards the little armoury, the only workshop in the principality. The mountain before you looks as impenetrable as the hill-side did to Ali Baba before he heard the "open sesame;" but, the armoury passed, two or three antique water-mills, with the clatter of their primitive mechanism and rush of the water on their equally primitive wheels, begin to hint of cascades and the chapter of accidents of geology. You leave the mills, and suddenly enter, awe-struck, into an amphitheatre of bare, grey, precipitous rock, the only apparent exit from which is back by the gorge through which you entered, and where the Rieka goes gushing and rushing amongst the hugest and most waterworn of boulders; steep slopes on every other side, grey limestone without a tree, scarcely a shrub, not even grass or herb enough to tempt the goats which after a time you may see like motes upon the summits beyond. The whole bottom of the valley is filled with boulders packed and jammed together, rising as you go on, and reminding you of a moraine underneath a glacier which had suddenly melted away. If you are fortunate enough to get the first view of this amphitheatre by the sun of a summer noonday, you will get one of the most powerful impressions which utter desolation, wreck of nature, chaos arrested, silence made visible, can give. Amongst the boulders, deep between them, rushes the rapid crystal torrent, collecting at the foot of the moraine in huge basins, where the brown and purple rock and the malachite green of the water mingle their hues as the water circles and circles for its new plunge into the basin below. But, up above, the wildness of the stream's bed increases with the confusion of piled boulders, and one begins to understand the Obod Rieka. From the centre of the amphitheatre you look up the mountain side and see a huge grotto, from which there appears to have poured a torrent of boulders, rounded, corroded, water-wasted; and at the foot of the steeper slope, where the rock torrent seems to have been arrested, gushes out the river. Then you understand that what this hot midsummer day offers you is very unlike the spectacle after the melting of the great snows on the mountains above, when the plains of Cettinje and Dobroskozelo are being drained by their Katavothra, and all the water is pouring out through that grotto above you, and the moraine of boulders is a roaring mass of white and angry water before whose force the brown trout that people the stream below must hide in the innermost recesses of their labyrinth of rock; and down to the last deep and well-like pool, where the torrent dashes against the sheer mountain side, and has worn out the recess we see, it drives with the force of an Atlantic storm-wave, until, stopped by the barrier of hard limestone, it turns sullenly to the left about, and starts anew down the gentle rapid which leads to the still water at Rieka village.

I climbed up to the grotto one day, when the source was dry to all outside appearance—though, below, the water always gushes out icy-cold and clear from amongst the boulders—and entered as far as I dared for the deadly chill within, for which I was unprepared. Over head is a roof of massive limestone, and underneath a pavement of closely-packed boulders, driven and pounded into their places by the hammering of all the masses of stone which lie along the slope below. Here and there are crevices through which one hears the water gurgling along; and, where the light fails and the temperature becomes wintry, the crevices are sometimes abysses, through which a man might well slip and disappear for ever. All the engineers of the Pyramid of Cheops would scarcely recover the body of a man lost there.

Deep in this tunnel-like grotto, which the country people told me has an issue in the valley of Dobroskozelo, three miles above, lies asleep, according to Montenegrin belief, their peculiar hero, Ivan Crnoievich, guarded by the fairies, waiting until the hour of the dissolution of the Turkish empire strikes. Then he will come forth and rally the disunited Serbs for the last struggle with the Mussulman—that supreme effort, in the hope of which the Montenegrin endures poverty and continual battle, and has endured it since Ivan in 1482 burned his old capital Zabliac, built Obod and Cettinje, and set about organising his little people for the desperate struggle ahead, being refused all aid, or encouragement to hope for aid in the years before him. His old ally Venice had made pact with the Sultan; and north of him Bosnia, east of him Rascia, and south Albania, conquered already, surrounded a nearly complete circle of fire, open only for a little strip towards the Adriatic. Ivan prepared for a long conflict, left all the plain, shut himself in the natural fortress of the Crnagora, and published the following order of the day :—"In time of war with the Turks, no Crnagorsko may, without the order of his chief, leave the battlefield : he who flies shall be for ever dishonoured, despised, and banished from his family; he shall be dressed in the robe of a woman, and given a spindle, and the women with their spindles shall expel him as a coward and traitor to his country."

Ivan was the son of Stephen, and succeeded to the throne, founded by his father, in 1471. He had shown his military capacity, fighting the hereditary enemy in alliance with Venice, which in 1474 inscribed his name in the Book of Gold as patrician, and until the year 1479 he was the constant ally of the Republic against the Sultan. After this time the Doge and the Commander of the Faithful made peace; and the former, after the manner of his time, forgot the ally, who was of use no longer, and left him to the undivided wrath of the then most dreaded military power in existence; and from that time till 1862 the Black Mountain was the whetstone of the sabre of Islam.

Ivan kept up his friendly relations with the Republic, and married his eldest son and successor to a patrician's daughter, Elizabeth Erizzo; but his alliance was gone, as he learned in 1482, when the successor to Mahomet II. (dead during the last war) renewed the attack on Montenegro and reoccupied Zabliac, taken and retaken by Turk and Montenegro, and this time held it, with the exception of one short interval, for 400 years, resigning it to Montenegro again, in 1878, by the Treaty of Berlin.

And Ivan died in 1490, leaving a nation stamped with his image and draconian military code, circled about with walls of rock and steel; and the faithful of his people, who still hold to the old beliefs and the old ways, look still to see him come some day out of the gloomy abysses of the grotto of Obod Rieka, take the old sabre, and cleanse the Servian lands of the Islamite. And here, in the theatre of the elements, come sometimes the women of the Crnagora to lament their dead heroes. I remember one day, as I was sitting upon the hill-side, sketching the torrent of boulders, a young girl wandered up the gorge, and, climbing one of the highest rocks, sat on the peak of it to sing the accustomed dirge in that silence and solitude. I do not recall any human incident more touching. The dirge is a simple chant, hardly to be called a melody, but sad and plaintive; often improvised, but generally containing phrases which are conventional, and always turning on the praises of the heroism, swiftness of foot, strength, and other manly qualities of the dead. It is never sung by the wife—who shows no external sign of mourning for a husband killed in battle—but by the mother, sister, or female cousin of the dead; and though generally more of a public than a private demonstration, I have heard it when it told the real heart-break. The young girl at Obod had lost a brother, and went by herself, in this grey wilderness of rock, to pour her soul out in the dirge.

It is a two-foot verse, with a refrain occurring at intervals, and sometimes at the end of the line, which reminded me of the old Greek tragedy. I give in English, not a translation but a free example of the song, merely to convey better than by description the character of it, metrical and otherwise :

Oh, my brother!
Oh, my hero!
Bravest fighter,
Swiftest runner,
Dread of Moslem,
Hope of Christian,
Death has struck you!
Oh, my brother!
Gone for ever!
Aï! aï! aï! aï!

And so on, till sometimes hysteria sets in, and the wailer sinks in convulsions. I must say, however, that I do not believe the latter result often obtains in solitude. I had heard it many times, and knew it was a convention, a form of grief which would be unchanged for months, but of all the memories of Obod, this dirge of the young Montenegrin girl, sung to the sun, and rocks, and running water (for I was quite hidden from her), impressed me most with the pathetic character of the Montenegrin life.

And Obod is redolent with the glory of a ruler as wise and great as any of the world's greatest. When he built his fortress, he provisioned it not only with sword and gun, but with wise enactments and brave hearts. Here was established the printing press ; and the first books in the Serb language were here printed, destined for the whole dispersed people of Dushan, the scattered descendants of the fugitives of Kossovo. In 1877, stopping a few days at Moratscha, a convent founded by the son of Stephen Nemania, and whose church bears the date of 1250, I found a copy of the Crnoievich prayer-book—as beautiful a sample of typography as any city of Western Europe could have shown at that date (1484).

Yet another memory of Obod comes to me, of the day I first saw it, in time of peace, before all civilisation was anew suspended by the outbreak of 1876. It was nearly nightfall when I reached Rieka, which is, as I said, built on the river bank, opposite Obod, and I had been assigned quarters for the night in the prince's little lodge, which is by the river; and, while supper was being cooked, I sat on the balcony, enjoying the sunset, when I heard a burst of merry voices of children, and out of the white school-house of old Obod came the juvenility of Rieka, school-book in hand, and shouting "like mad" as they tore down the precipitous road and over the bridge, with a hush and respectful lifting of their caps as they passed me, seeing a stran the prince's house; and, depositing their satchels at home, they reappeared for their evening play on the little quay.

Who knows what the children of Ivan of the Black Mountain might not have become had the 400 years of their existence been passed in peace instead of perpetual fighting for life!

Looking over some Montenegrin chronicles not long ago, I found that in 1541 some notables of the principality went to Venice and negotiated a treaty with the Republic; and in another place that Giuro (George) Crnoievich having been over persuaded by his Venetian wife to leave the horrid wilds, which to her sense, educated in the sea city, Montenegro was, and go to Venice to live, built in 1501 a church to St. George the Martyr. This came back to me, when, later, I was reading Ruskin's *St. Mark's Rest*, and I saw that he quoted from Flaminio Corner that "in the year 1451, some charitable men of the Illyrian or Slavonic nation,[*] many of whom were sailors, moved by praiseworthy compassion in that they saw many of their fellow-countrymen, though deserving well of the Republic, perish miserably either of hard life or hunger, nor have enough to pay the expense of church burial, determined to establish a charitable brotherhood under the invocation of St. George and St. Triphon—a brotherhood whose pledge was to succour poor sailors and others of their nation in their grave need whether by reason of sickness or old age, and to conduct their bodies after death religiously to burial. Which design was approved by the Council of Ten in a decree dated 19th May, 1451; after which they obtained from the pity of the prior of the Monastery of St. John of Jerusalem, Lorenzo Marcello, the convenience of a hospice in the buildings of the priory with rooms such as were needful for their meetings, and the privilege of building an altar in the church under the title of St. George and St. Triphon, the martyrs; with the adjudgment of an annual rent of four zecchins, two loaves, and a pound of wax, to be offered to the priory on the Feast of St. George. Such were the beginnings of the brotherhood called that of St. George of the Slavonians.

"Towards the close of the fifteenth century, the old hospice being ruinous, the fraternity took counsel to raise from the foundation a more splendid new one under the title of the Martyr St. George, which was brought to completion, with its façade of white marble, in the year 1501."

There is scarcely a reasonable doubt that this is Crnoievich's church, or that the "charitable men" were the magnates of the principality of the Zeta (as it was still called, though that principality had, in its prosperous times, included all Albania as far as Berat and Alessio, and even at one time held Avlona and Janina). There was no other "nation" of

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[*] Illyrian and Slavonic were at that time identical terms, though the Illyrians of classic authority, amongst whom Herodotus includes the Venetians, were undoubtedly the race now represented by the Albanians, the Slavs not having appeared in the Balkan country till the sixth century of our era.

Slavonic blood known at this time to Venice; Dalmatia, though peopled by Slavs, except the Venetian colonists in the maritime cities, being still a Venetian possession, and all the remaining Slavonic country except the Zeta and Ragusa, with their sea-coast, being under the Turk. But Ragusa, being Catholic, like the maritime cities of Dalmatia, was not regarded as Slavonic; for even then the distinction between "Greek" and "Latin" was synonymous with Slav and non-Slav, or rather Slavs who preferred to be considered Italians—a distinction which only lately has begun to change its terms, the Catholic Slavs only under the recent movements having begun to take part in Slavonic tendencies. It is, of course, possible that the "charitable men" were Venetian subjects of Orthodox faith acting on behalf of sailors of the same religion; but, *per se*, more probable that they were Orthodox Slavonic traders of other sections, providing, in modern fashion, for destitute seamen, not entitled to public aid in Venice.

The curious coincidence between the visit of the Montenegrin magnates to Venice for the sake of the treaty, and the commencement of the formation of the Slavonian brotherhood, might be *merely* a coincidence; but when we find, fifty years later, the Prince of Montenegro constructing the new edifice, the clue widens to a clear way. The maritime population of that province of the old Serb empire, which is still divided into Dalmatia and Bosnia, had been, between Hungarian and Venetian domination, pretty thoroughly Catholicised; and in most of the Dalmatian cities, until the present generation, no Orthodox church was permitted, while George Crnoievich was an rdent champion of the Orthodox religion and of the Serb nationality. There seems little reason, therefore, to doubt that the building which has excited so much interest on the part of Mr. Ruskin, was really the church of the Montenegrins (or Zetans, in the terminology of that day), and the first Eastern church edifice in Venice subsequent to the separation of the empires and churches.

George never, so far as chroniclers knew, returned to his native mountains. His name is in the Golden Book, and his will, executed at Milan in 1499, is in existence. Several generations of his children are recorded; but nothing more is heard of his family in Montenegro, though there are descendants of Ivan by the female line still known there. He deputed the Vladika (bishop) to fill his place, delegating to him all his powers; and with this Vladika, Vavila, began a theocracy which has scarcely a parallel in the history of Christianity. For 200 years these bishops, receding from all knowledge of the outer world, and in continual combat with the Turk on their borders, kept alive the Orthodox faith. But during the whole 200 years one fatal legacy of the Crnoievichi menaced the independence of the little nation. When George succeeded to the throne of his father Ivan, his brother Stephen, in the manner of many Serb notables of his age, revolted, and, going to Constantinople, asked for military aid against his brother, promising to accept the suzerainty of the Sultan. The aid was accorded on condition that he should accept Islam, which he did, under the name of Skander Beg; and with a few adherents of his own nation—companions in apostasy—and a Turkish army, he invaded his brother's dominions, but was utterly defeated and his forces dispersed, the Montenegrin portion of them asking and receiving permission to return and dwell in their native land without renouncing their new faith. This curious liberality or weakness was the root of many woes; the renegades, forming a separate community and establishing themselves at Obod, held the gate to the country from the side of Scutari, and, constantly in understanding with the pashas and supported by subsidies and intrigues, gathered strength until they became almost a dominant class and imperilled the existence of Montenegro. In 1702 the Vladika Danilo, founder of the line of Petrovich Vladikas, and afterward princes, determined to exterminate the infidels; and on Christmas night, five brothers Martinovich, from Baïtze, on the southern edge of the plain of Cettinje, set out with the blessing of the Vladika on the deadly mission. The concentration of the renegades at Obod made the work easy, and the Martinovichi had orders to call in the aid of the known faithful as they went on their way; but no general attack seems to have been arranged, probably not to betray the scheme. The five brothers on their way met at Dobroskozelo five brothers of one of the Mussulman families of Obod on *their* way to Cettinje. To allow them to escape was to risk the success of the undertaking, and, replying to the habitual insult of the Mussulman by an open defiance, they drew their swords and made the attack. The Christian proved the better man, and the Mussulman five were all killed. One of the Martinovichi in his duel receiving a wound which caused him to cry out, his elder brothers, as they wiped their swords, said to him angrily, "Zigano! (gipsy) what did you cry for?" And his descendants to this day are known as the *Gipsy-Martinovichi*.

The plot succeeded completely. The whole renegade population, except a few who professed willingness to return to the orthodox fold, were put to the sword; and the Vladika breathed again and set to reorganising his people, and for 160 years longer the struggle was kept up by him and his successors before Europe discovered the existence of the principality.

But long ere that discovery took place Obod had disappeared. In 1785, during a voyage of the Vladika, St. Peter, to Russia, where he went to seek aid and ammunition, the Pasha of Scutari, profiting by the absence of the ruler, and intestine feuds consequent thereon, invaded Montenegro with the aid of some treacherous Montenegrins, and as far as Cettinje destroyed everything, going out again by the road to Budua, and back to Scutari. This was the end of Obod: the poverty of the country was so great that no effort could be made for generations to rebuild anything but the churches and monasteries; the Turkish artillery, too, had rendered Obod useless, for, though a strong position against an attack by infantry or raids by irregulars, it was so overlooked by the hills around it, that a battery of the artillery in use in 1780 made it utterly untenable. And the Montenegrins never had a fancy for fighting behind walls. Their strategy was a series of ambushes and onslaughts in which retreat must always be open. The heroic Vladika, seeking in vain for help from Christendom, arrived finally at St. Petersburg, and was ordered off at twenty-four hours' notice with injunctions never to show his face in Russia again, and returned to his country with nothing but his unfaltering faith and courage to help his people to rebuild their homes and social organisation, much shaken by the devastation of the Turkish invasion. Not even a mule load of gunpowder could be wrung from the Christian sympathy of Czar or Kaiser; but, thanks to a character one of the most patriotic, heroic, patient, and astute which the history of modern Europe can show, he so repaired the courage and fortunes of his people by exhortation and example that the end of Obod proved the darkest hour of Montenegrin annals. St. Peter becomes the central figure, prophet, and saint of Crnagora; but his career is identified with Cettinje as that of Ivan was with Obod, which for nearly a century has disappeared from history. I searched in vain for a trace of the city walls, or the shape of the fortress. Here and there were masses of old masonry which might have been anything, but not a stone could be assigned to enceinte, to fortress, or to printing establishment.

Hans Sachs and the Mastersong.

"Not thy councils, not thy Kaisers, win for thee the world's regard,
But thy painter, Albrecht Dürer, and *Hans Sachs*, thy cobbler bard."

SUCH are Longfellow's words to the old merchant town of Nuremberg as he paces its streets and courtyards and dreams over its busy past. The memories of old Nurembergers crowd upon him, their fame is the fame of their city; yet many of us know Hans Sachs only through this very poem. Such knowledge must be nebulous, but need not be incorrect. To associate his name with Albrecht Dürer, to recognise in him a Nuremberg burgher of the sixteenth century, the poet of its toil and traffic, is to find the right stand-point from which to judge him. For Hans is essentially the poet of handworkers and traders, he has the honesty and humour and good sense of the thriving *bourgeois*. He does not detect the passing shadows and delicate tints of life; its crimes and sorrows have for him no mystery; they have a moral; but he sees the world "as Albrecht Dürer saw it; its firm life and manliness, its inner force and steadfastness." *

This plain unromantic way of looking at things was very characteristic of the Reformation. Great pleasure and interest in daily life were accompanied by a certain dullness to its problems. After all the liberty which Luther claimed was in the main a practical one. In his famous doggrel he rejects the cant of the cloister, "Who loves not woman, wine, and song, remains a fool his whole life long." But he would not permit much speculative liberty. The suspension of judgment on which modern science insists, he would have denounced as doubt, as a temptation of the Devil. The obstinate questionings of unseen things which make Shakespeare's plays so free and human, never sounded in his ears, or if they did, were dismissed with a text from Scripture. He occupied a sort of double position. On the one hand, his appeal to private judgment and his joy in the world could not rest within the limits he prescribed, and on the other his resumption of a whole body of Divinity could not harmonise with his other principles. Thus we have in the sequel theologians more Lutheran than Luther condemning pleasure, condemning reason; and we have as his true followers those who face the problems of thought and existence, even should they sink under them in despair. Meanwhile the phenomenon at the Reformation was a hearty acceptance of the facts of life and a hearty acceptance of a theological system. That is what we find in Hans Sachs, and in this aspect he is the poet of the Reformation as before the poet of the guilds.

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* Goethe's *Hans Sachsen's Poetische Sendung*.

Not that he was the first whom these influences inspired. The spirit of reform was working in all the towns, rousing the ablest citizens (e.g., Sebastian Brandt) to satirise old abuses and inculcate a sober, practical morality. And not only did a few such writers arise whose vigour and talent won them fame in other lands, there was a general literary fermentation among the labouring classes. Never before or since did so many workmen devote their time to music and verse-making; indeed those were in the minority who could not rhyme. They formed societies, modelled on their trades guilds, with statutes, penalties, and masters; and their authorised poetry was called the *Mastersong*. This is the third great influence under which Hans Sachs was formed, and as less familiar it must be described more in detail.

One of the official documents sets forth how "certain godless fellows go about the town screaming out shameless street-songs all night long." The staid burghers are much disturbed, perhaps in both senses of the word, by such misconduct, and take measures to suppress "these evil lays and give praises to God." Their remedy is the mastersong which as a harmless and even edifying entertainment is meant to supersede one more questionable. The hard-worked citizens were to find their needful relaxation and religious profit in the Mastersingers' Schools. These schools had a double function, an exoteric and an esoteric; they had their public festivals for the uninitiated, and their private festivals with the necessary rehearsals and practisings for their associates. At the former any one might be present, and all could take part; the subjects of the songs were passages of Scripture, "fair maxims of Ethics," or even stories from profane history, "provided always they be true and profitable." It was in its private meetings that the school showed itself as a school. In virtue of its religious and social character it was held in the town hall, or oftener in the church, and met on the holidays and the Sunday afternoons. Its songs must be religious, and indeed, after the Reformation, scriptural in subject. The rolls were rigidly kept, no member could absent himself without good excuse, and none but members were admitted. Entrance into the association was guarded, the applicant having to satisfy the board of his good character and birth in wedlock. When baptised into the fraternity his labours only commenced. The school was ranged in grades, and before passing from a lower to a higher he must undergo certain tests, for which he was prepared gratis by mastersingers of established fame. When taking his first lessons the associate was called a *scholar*, when he knew the technical rules by heart he became a *school-friend*, when able to sing certain of the existing songs he was raised to the rank of a *singer*, after producing verses of his own in the recognised measures and to the recognised melodies he became a *poet*, and finally he was entitled *master-*

singer only when he had invented a new *tone* or *wise*—terms which include both metre and music. He was called the father of his tone, and choosing godfathers baptised it with some "befitting" name. Thus we have ruddy tones and green tones, long tones and high tones, tones named of dragons, of princes, of "strong nightingales," of "woman's honour." Wherein precisely the fitness consists the present writer is generally unskilled to say. No tone was considered original which encroached on another for more than four syllables, or was sanctioned without solemn deliberations. None was accepted if it violated oftener than seven times the rules of the art laid down in the *Tabulature*. This was the codex of the mastersong, a table of definitions, injunctions and warnings. It fixes that the strophe must be of a threefold form, two like parts followed by one unlike, as we still see in the sonnet. It gives in its uncouth terminology a list of permissible rhymes and verses; a line containing only one syllable was called a *pause*, such as had none to rhyme with them were *orphans*, those which found their rhymes in the next stanza were *grains*. It enumerates the possible blunders, some artificial enough, others all too glaring; the common speech must have been barbarous indeed when it was necessary to point out the latter. The want of the connecting particle between words was condemned as a *blind meaning*, a false rhyme was a *vice*, the transposition of letters a *difference*, the compression of two syllables into one a *Klebsylbe*, a lumped syllable. It is well known how much Luther did for the German language both by his theoretical researches and by the practical examples that he gave of a purer style. We can easily imagine what a godsend they would be to the mastersingers in their struggle with lawlessness and vulgarism. His translation of the Bible was adopted as their standard; idioms to be found in it were accepted, all others were condemned. And it was the final authority, as for the expression so for the thought. We saw that the mastersong was always religious and latterly scriptural in subject. At the scrutiny of a new piece the author had to cite chapter and verse, and the official critic or *marker* who sat behind a screen with a slate in his hands and a Bible on his desk, jotted down not only the mistakes of form but the *false meanings*, the variations from Scripture and the wrong interpretations.

Besides the ordinary practisings, the school had its solemn contests when the masters competed for the prizes; these were chains and wreaths, often of considerable value. In Nuremberg the first prize, a cord with three silver-gilt medals attached, was called King David, after the Hebrew psalmist, who was represented on the centre medal with crown and harp. It was a great event for the master and his friends when he gained a prize, and where the school possessed many such decorations the prize-takers were enjoined to wear them on all ceremonious occasions. It was these prize-takers who initiated the young apprentices into the mystery of the art, who explained the Tabulature and taught them the more difficult measures, often sitting up late into the night without expecting or receiving any fee. When not busy in composing verse, instructing others, or perfecting themselves, they spent their leisure in copying out the standard songs. It is this unwearied devotion that strikes us as so strange and admirable. No doubt the mastersong is on the whole without much merit. It attended only to the form and not to the matter, which it tortured into stubborn and unfitting moulds. Even in form it is scrupulous, laboured, and artificial, on the one hand; yet surprisingly rude and barbarous on the other. We must, of course, remember that we judge of it only by half, and may easily be one-sided; for of the accompanying music we know next to nothing, and Gervinus conjectures that with that before us we should see in the mastersong the germ of the oratorio. But leaving this out of account, it seems a thing quite without parallel for wearied workmen, on leaving their tools and their booths, to devote themselves to a liberal art with, at lowest, the disinterestedness of artists. All their spare time they spent in teaching, practising, or chronicling what was to them their "benignant art."

Such then was the association of which Hans was the scholar and the teacher, which cherished his powers and grew with their growth. This fact must not be lost sight of in estimating his work. On the one hand it acted on him favourably, supplying him with an appreciative audience; on the other, it tied him down to a mechanical style. To understand his mastery over such tools and materials as he had, the state in which he found them, and the improvements which he made, we must know the history of the mastersong.

Strange to say it is descended in direct line from the minnesong, the old love lyric. Much indeed is altered. The poets are no longer adventurous knights, but cautious burghers; the meeting-place is changed from the castle to the church; the worship of ladies has yielded to the praise of God. Yet the connection is not hard to prove between these later theologico-didactic rhymesters and the dreamy minnesingers who sang like birds of love and ladies and flowers. Even in these old days when chivalrous poetry was in full vogue, the more solid and instructive verse of the Renner and Freidank had appealed to the citizens; and at the break up of chivalry, when the degenerate minstrels were no longer received in the degenerate courts, they found a welcome and a refuge in the large towns. There they not only sang, but taught; for after a time the burgher, from listening, began to imitate. He attempted the measures of the court poets, but their melody escaped him; their silken network of sound was changed in his hands to tangled yarn. And if the form was unlovely, the matter was barbarous; not prosaic, because unfit even for literary prose. Many subjects were treated, but naturally the religious interest preponderated, and the religion of the day could supply only subtle scholastic questions about the Trinity, the sacraments, the atonement. Where God was before the creation of the world; how could be born by one of His own creatures; how the Holy Virgin c be the Holy Mother as well—on points like these the honest workmen dilate in stanzas which sometimes contain 120 lines. In such verse, then, did the minnesong issue when transplanted from the castle garden to the town green. The transition is proved beyond question. To some extent we can follow the historical change. To some extent the ancient peculiarities of the verse, and notably the threefold division of the strophe, are still preserved; and among the twelve patriarchs from whom the legends of the mastersong trace its descent, some are famous minnesingers. The story runs that these twelve reproved the shameless lives of the clergy, and were found guilty of heresy; but, on appeal, were acquitted and rewarded by the Emperor, who is sometimes called Henry I., sometimes Otto the Great. This story is not historically true. With Frauenlob, chief of the twelve, and the smith Regenbogen, both minnesingers of the decline, it associates others who lived long before; but probably it contains a reminiscence of the real origin of the mastersong.

The reverent regard in which these minnesingers or twelve wise masters were held shows no less the divergence than the connection between the two schools. In olden times it was considered plagiarism to employ the stanza of another man, whether predecessor or contemporary. The originality of a poet lay in his power of inventing new verse forms. But the unskilled artisans dared not alter their models; they feared to be original. Certain measures were attributed to the twelve masters and called by their names; to these their disciples were tied down, and no new tone was admitted. Such, at least, was the theory. In point of fact the perpetual recurrence of the same leathern forms, and the same wiredrawn subjects, proved too much for the most timorous piety. From time to time new melodies were smuggled in; but they were at once labelled with old names. In the middle of the thirteenth century some such fraud was detected by the mastersingers of Mainz, who seem to have been especially conservative, and the culprit was publicly censured. But, meanwhile, the craftsmen had been working hard at their new craft, and were ready to throw up their indentures. The wiseacres of Mainz must have stood aghast at the reception which their verdict found in the neighbouring town of Worms. Hans Folz, a barber, broke a lance, or perhaps a razor, on behalf of the new art. He ridiculed the pretended enthusiasm for old melodies which were, in fact, chiefly new; he laughed at the pedantry and barbarous language of the schools; he extolled the teachings of nature, and maintained that the best masters were Spring, Summer, and Autumn.

These opinions were revolutionary in art, and in those days a literary quarrel had very practical consequences. Folz made the district too hot to hold him. He had to emigrate to Nuremberg, where, partly through his influence, a new period of the mastersong commenced. Artificial and wooden it remained to the last, but Folz at any rate vindicated a larger sphere to individual talent. Dogmatic riddles still remained the theme of his verse; but probably the new regulation dates from his time, which grants the name of master only to the maker of an original tone.

Few towns of the day were so ready to receive new ideas as Nuremberg. For generations it had steadily grown in mercantile importance, till in 1427 the inhabitants purchased city rights from the Emperor. After this its development became more rapid. The fame of its manufactures, especially in hardware, spread far and near. In commerce it rivalled Augsburg as depôt for the drugs, silks, and spices of the South, which poured in upon it by way of Venice. The prosperity of the great Southern Republic brought new wealth to Nuremberg, and the advantage of their intercourse was not merely commercial—it fostered the taste for gaiety, culture, and art. The streets were always bright and tumultuous at the Carnival; the processions were celebrated with a splendour hitherto unknown; the wealthy burghers' sons had their tilts and tournaments, and knew how to maintain their rights against the neighbouring nobles, who disliked such sports among the commonalty. The governing council was a little despotic and overbearing to the plebs; but it had the interests of all at heart, and the whole population shared in the municipal prosperity. Of great men the town had nourished not a few. It could boast one alleged inventor of gunpowder, one alleged discoverer of America: Schwarz, in the thirteenth century, was its citizen; Behem, in the fifteenth, was its son. Less questionable were other of its claims. The humanist Wilibald Pirckheimer, the friend of Hutten and Erasmus, was a member of its council; Konrad Baumann, the blind organist of St. Sebald's, had a reputation throughout Germany and Italy. Its churches, its fountains, its sculptures, bore witness to the talents of Adam Krafft and the Fischers; and now, at length, it had produced Albrecht Dürer, the genius of earnest and truthful work.

It was in this stirring town that Hans Sachs was born in 1494, when his great townsman was a youth of twenty-three. His father was a tailor, and seems to have succeeded fairly in his trade. But a modest competency did not save a man in those days from narrow alleys and close rooms, and Hans was born at once into the common trials of the time. The plague was raging in the city; both parents were struck down, but not fatally, and strangely enough the infant escaped altogether. In due season, at the age of seven, he went to school, and began a curriculum which quite appals us. Even in these days of higher education what schoolboy but would tremble at the programme:—Grammar, rhetoric, music, logic, arithmetic, astronomy, geography, astrology, philosophy, poetry, and the "science of many creatures in air, water, earth and *fire*." Later, he confesses that he has forgotten it all, perhaps fortunately for his readers; but, in the first place, it cost him ten years to acquire. This period deserves attention, and if the usual one is a credit to his age and his class. For, despite his formidable row of accomplishments, Hans was not to follow any of the learned professions, which, if we may trust Hutten, were all three gigantic swindling societies.

Hans was to be useful at any rate, and turned his philosophy, rhetoric, and astrology, to account in making boots. We are apt to consider his ten years at school rather badly employed; but, after all, he learnt the best the age had to offer. And only when the sciences dwell among the people are they secured against useless flights, only when they become national property can there be a national development. Hans, and perhaps many like him, had a certain acquaintance with the technical world of the schools. They knew something of its ways, could judge roughly of its results, and were not simply puzzled in the controversies which were soon to arise. But, on the whole, the best thing that Hans learned was to speak his mother tongue "neatly, purely, and truly," to play on stringed instruments, and to sing. These lessons at least he did not forget amidst the new cares and duties of his trade. As shoemaker's apprentice he could join the mastersingers' school and so have a right to instruction in their art. This he did, and was taught by Leonhard Nunnenbeck, "the weaver liberal in song." At the same time he did not neglect his business; he seems to have felt a kind of love for it, and did not shrink at a later day from singing the praises of pitch and leather, of bradawl and last. Meanwhile, after an apprenticeship of two years he became journeyman, and entered on his *Wanderjahre*, or years of travel, working his way from place to place after the fashion of German artisans. This enlarged his circle of ideas, and by lifting him out of the Nuremberg world qualified him to become its exponent. For despite the fuller life of the town and its stimulating influences, the artisan may be as dull as the agricultural labourer. If the peasant is connected with no larger existence, the townsman is only a part of such; if the one is naturally a vegetable, the other may become a machine. The years of travel obviate this, and in contact with other principles and ways we get to know our own. Hans was now brought into relation with the confused, restless life of the time which in Nuremberg he could only learn at second hand. The government there was, on the whole, just, enlightened and autonomous. It was a shrewd, orderly trading city; but in less favoured dictricts what abuses, what ignorance, what superstition did not exist! Hans tramping the country learned the ways of the peasants, and the smart young tradesman was vastly amused with their simplicity and slowness. Later, when he could make verses, it was a favourite theme. Thus he tells of certain villagers whose whole wardrobe, like that of the future Bolivar, was a blanket with a hole in the middle; but Hans does not discuss it so profoundly as the philosophic Teufelsdröckh. A crab which a peasant has caught, and which incurs the displeasure of the township, is condemned to death *by drowning*. A country fellow finds a crossbow in the forest, and taking it for a cross, lifts it reverently to his lips; but the bow goes off, carrying away his nose, so he throws it to the ground, exclaiming, "You may lie there a whole year before I pick you up again." At another time, the peasants go to the wood to gather acorns. One slipping from a tree is decapitated by a forked branch and falls headless to the ground. By and by his friends find him and debate whether he had his head with him in the morning. They take him home and appeal to his wife, but she does not know; she is sure he had it on Saturday, but after that she cannot say. Hans, though often harping on the contrast between town and country life, knows that the advantage is only half with the former. In one of his fables the gout meets a spider, and complains that he can't thrive or even live among the peasants. The spider replies that the town housewives won't leave her in peace. They exchange quarters, and the spider is never molested more; while the gout is comfortably housed and fed.

The poor peasants, indeed, were little exposed to such an ailment, harried as they were by all who were stronger or cleverer. They had their oppressors recognised and unrecognised, spiritual and temporal, but always irresistible. The nobles exacted their dues, the priests their tithes; the wandering soldiers robbed in the Emperor's name during war, in their own during peace; the wandering magicians, embryo Fausts, and the resident witches extorted the rest by threats and promises. Much of this Hans, no doubt, would see; much more he would hear. For, despite their alleged stupidity, these peasants had their share of shrewd mother-wit. They told stories against themselves and their oppressors, stories that were in every mouth, but had no author. The French monarchy has been called a despotism tempered by epigram; their condition was misery solaced by anecdote. Such anecdotes Hans would lay up for future use; meanwhile misery needs no boots, and he went further. But to work one's way is a precarious method of travelling. Shoemaking seems to have been as superfluous in town as in country, and at Innsbruck we find Hans with trade changed, acting as forester to Kaiser Maximilian. At this he remained long enough to learn the rules of venery, of which he afterwards compiled a poetical code, and to gain some knowledge of the ways of the Court where the Emperor fostered the arts and sciences, the false and the true. But the independent tradesman could not long remain a servant among the great lords whom he loved to make fun of and ironically calls the "pious nobles." Perhaps, too, in his kindliness to all created things, he had a plebeian dislike to his work. By and by, at least, he describes a "wonderful vision, how sundry hares pursue, catch and roast a huntsman," and his sympathies are evidently with the hares.

But with all his homely predelictions and *bourgeois* morals, Hans was not of those for whom Bohemianism has no charms. He was urged by his companions and drawn by his own desires towards the careless life of the soldier. Only when Genius, "the God of Nature," showed him the smoking homesteads, the ruined churches, the empty schools, the idle workshops, the famine, violence and shame which filled the country; only when he heard the ribald talk of the camp, saw the rags, debauchery and slaughter of the soldiers, did he decide for a peaceful career. Revelry and luxury also tempted him, but even in his youth he was "stern with all folly." What then was he to do with his time when business did not engross nor common pleasures content him? In this perplexity he recurred to the "lovely art of the mastersong;" he found suddenly that he was called to be a poet; for hitherto, though unconsciously gathering materials, he had written nothing. Long afterwards, he described how he awoke to his vocation, and much true feeling shines through the conventional allegory of the narrative. Weighed down with heavy troubles, the falsehood of friends, the hatred of foes, the shame of love, he falls asleep by a rocky fountain among the flowers and the grass. The Goddesses of Art appear and call him to their service, in it he will find relief. Delighted, but doubtful, he hesitates to accept till they approach and reassure him with many gifts. It is worth while noting the list, for it shows what merits he attributed to himself. Characteristically he lays stress on "steadfast will, constant practice, wide experience;" so far he seems to degrade poetry to a handicraft, but his remaining endowments are "joy in his work, a pleasant style, and daintily-leaping measures." Again, the aims set before him, "the glory of God, the praise of virtue, the blame of vice, the instruction of youth," are not exactly what we might expect from the Goddesses of Art, but they do not forget "the delight of sorrowful hearts." Thus Hans Sachs characterises his own genius. Whatever else we may think, there is at least nothing affected or tumid about it. His muse is laborious, practical, didactic, but honest, pleasant and kindly. She is no light-robed, light-limbed heathen nymph, but a homely German housewife who smiles over her work, and goes to church on Sunday. To this muse Hans henceforth surrendered himself with a devotion which no chance nor change could interrupt. At Braunau he composed his first tone, and was made a master. After this, whenever he halted in a city he joined its mastersingers' school, and became one of the office-bearers and teachers.

At the age of twenty-two he returned to settle in his native town. He had learned much in his travels, accustomed himself to other men and ways, and penetrated into the mysteries of his art. But Nuremberg was his home and had his first affection; he loves to sign himself Hans Sachs of Nuremberg. In one of his allegorical dreams he sees a well-hedged rose garden on a round hill. Through the tufted boughs are visible pomegranate and nutmeg, orange and vine, fruit-trees and spice-trees in plenty, and rows of sugar-cane. The dreamer takes it for paradise. On a rose bush warbles a marvellous bird like an eagle with coal-black feathers, one side decked with roses red and white. It gathers its young under its pinions, it feeds them and keeps them safe: it rests right little by day or night for evil birds and beasts that lie in wait to devour it. When they approach it fights manfully, it rends them with beak and claw, and four noble maidens stand by to succour it. The first in robe of white has a golden scroll in her hand; the second is clad in blue, and holds a sword and balance; the third in green bears the sun in her arms; and the fourth is harnessed from head to foot and armed with a great steel hammer. The hill is the site of Nuremberg, the stores of its gardens are the produce of the world, the eagle is emblem of the city and the other birds are its foes, the four maidens are its Wisdom, Justice, Truth, and Strength, which ensure its final triumph. When a man is so proud and glad in the civic life that surrounds him his happiness is secure, and Hans was a happy man. In a little house, at first outside the gate and afterwards in Meal Alley, he plied his trade and resisted the solicitations of Jack Idle, Hal Headstrong, Lazy Lenz, Harry Restless, and other typical figures whom his poems immortalise. At this time he married Kunegund Kreuzer, with whom he lived for forty-one years. After her death she appeared in a dream to comfort him, and his account of this portent, in the main solemn and religious, reveals by one little realistic touch that their household was not invariably peaceful: "She was ever faithful, orderly, and frugal, but somewhat violent in her words to the servants." To more than the servants, if we may trust another account. Hans begins a poem on the "Bitter Sweet of Wedded Life," with the remark that all women have long clothes and short tempers, and proceeds to describe his wife in the same antithetical style. She is his paradise and his purgatory, his angel and his demon, his rosebud and his thunderbolt—in short, all his weal and all his woe.

With a wife who was thus *everything* to him, in a city that he loved, with good business and flourishing family, we see Hans a prosperous man. To crown all he remained true to the Benignant Art. He found it sadly degenerated in Nuremberg, and set himself at once to teach the young apprentices, to heal the dissensions of the school, and to preserve its traditions. With what loving care he fulfilled his task may be seen from a manuscript of extreme beauty executed by him. It contains the songs of his predecessors, only at the end are a few of his own. There is nothing as yet to distinguish these from the ditties of Hans Folz or Nunnenbeck. The rhymes may be smoother, the style purer, but the subjects are still old dogmas, prayers to the saints, hymns to the Virgin. But now an event took place which influenced Hans profoundly in his life and his work. The time of the Reformation was come, and he left versifying for a season to study the new doctrines. In 1521 he had by him forty-one tracts by Luther and his friends; in 1522 he was poring over the Testament; in 1523 he wrote his *Wittenberg Nightingale*, the first fruits of his new style fittingly inscribed to Luther. In his morning wise he greets the dawn of the Reformation. "Wake up," he cries, "the dawn is nigh. I hear a joyous nightingale singing in the green hedge, it fills the hills and valleys with its voice. The night is stooping to the west, the day is rising from the east, the morning red is leaping from the clouds, the sun looks through. The moon quenches her light; now she is pale and wan, but erewhile with false glamour she dazzled all the sheep and turned them from their pasture lands and pastor. Both have they forsaken, they have followed the glistering moon through the forest into the wilderness. The lion, too, have they followed; they have hearkened to his v craftily has he led them far astray into the waste. They have lost their sweet pasture, have eaten weeds and thistles and thorns; the lion has snared them, torn and devoured them; wolves and serpents have bitten them in every limb; therefore are the sheep withered and lean. But now they are roused by the nightingale's song, the sun reveals ravening foe and deceitful pasture. The lion and his brood, swine, goats, cats, snails, and other unclean beasts plot against the nightingale. 'What new thing is he singing?' they ask; 'let him stir up no tumult among the sheep.' But he, secure in his hedge, sings ever the louder. The sheep hear and return, many are slaughtered on the way, but the sun shines on, and none can hide the sunlight."

Quaint and incongruous though it be, does not this suggest another new song to another new dawn? A song like this that welcomes the melting of clouds and dreams and the "stars that shone as sunbeams on the night of death and sin." A song like this that hails the morning, and cannot yet sing the glory of the noon.

For the shades are about us that hover,
   When darkness is half withdrawn,
And the skirts of the dead night cover
   The face of the live new dawn.
For the past is not utterly past,
Though the word on its lips be the last;
And the time be gone by with its creed
When men were as beasts that bleed,
As sheep or as swine that wallow
   In the shambles of faith and of fear.

We have quoted about a quarter of the *Wittenberg Nightingale*, sometimes epitomising. The remaining three-quarters contain an interpretation "that we may understand more clearly," an interpretation which destroys the poetical charm like a bad commentary, but is there with an object which it probably served. Few of us, perhaps, would compare Luther to a singing bird; but he, it seems, is the nightingale whose song brings back the wandering sheep to the true fold. The unclean beasts are his enemies; Emser and Dr. Eck are the goat and the swine—their lives, says the poet, justify the comparison; the relevancy of other names lies in a pun; Pope Leo X. is the lion; the snail is Cochlæus, the theologian; the satirist Murner is the cat. The fading moon is the papacy, the new risen sun the Evangel.

This poem, composed first as a mastersong and then in couplets, was received with delight, was read and re-read and ran through many editions. The reform had begun among the theologians, but had soon reached the people, and now Hans Sachs, one of themselves, was found to carry on the work. He set himself to purge his early songs of the old leaven; they appeared in altered form, "christianly revised, evangelically corrected," *i.e.* with the saints' names expunged and the name of Christ in their stead. His new views inspired new efforts; he paraphrased the

Bible in song after song, and his verses, sung in nearly all the master-schools of Germany, spread the Lutheran faith among the most earnest and energetic workmen of the towns. Moreover, in this he set the fashion; his example became law, and soon in all the great singing guilds nothing but the Scriptures could be heard.

But the mastersongs were confined to the initiated, and Hans wished to teach the nation at large. He took to writing dialogues on the great topics of the day—the right of private judgment, justification by faith, the union of the churches, the new social duties which the new doctrines brought. These questions he discusses in seven tracts, which, says Goedeke, excel all the dialogues of the day, save, perhaps, Luther's; in artistic form (and, we may add, in temper) even Luther must yield the palm to Sachs. Earnest he always is, but never fanatical; keen, not cruel; enthusiastic, but placid. The monks dubbed him the "cursed cobbler;" he accepts the name with a smile, and Hans the shoemaker plays an important part in these colloquies.

The simplicity, force, and homely humour of these papers made them far more popular than the "blasts" of the divines, who began to see in Hans an important ally. Andreas Osiander, an eloquent Nuremberg pastor, had discovered an old book of prophetic pictures, and determined to issue a facsimile with anti-papistical interpretations. He asked and obtained assistance from Hans, whose couplets and quatrains, printed below the plate, summed up all the heavier theological explanations of the opposite page. Luther, whom one of the pictures was altered to suit, disclaimed the compliment but praised the book; he himself (he wrote) would reissue these "hieroglyphica," and, indeed, there are two other editions in the same year. But the town council of Nuremberg did not share his satisfaction. This council, though ultimately deciding for his party, was very cautious and deliberate in its behaviour. It established the new religion, but the monks and nuns were left undisturbed. When an old hymn, *Salve Regina*, was altered to *Salve Jesu Christe*, it forbad the tune altogether. The same tolerance which makes the controversial cobbler gentle as a dove, made the merchant princes wise as serpents. They considered this prophetic picture-book quite out of place, suppressed the edition, summoned, warned, and rebuked printer and authors, adding, in regard to Hans, that it was "not his place nor business to treat such matters, and the council strictly enjoin him to mind his handiwork and shoemaking, and henceforth refrain from publishing any rhyme or pamphlet whatever." Poor Hans, commended by Luther, the truest poet of his age, must "refrain" from doing what he can best do, as "it is no business of his." Strange how Dogberry in all ages insists with clamour that you write him down an ass.

Hans, however, in the midst of his family, in the midst of his township, could not disobey; probably he was too loyal to think of such a thing. His songs, printed separately on loose leaves, become rare du the following years; perhaps along with this public prohibition at this time have been paralysed by a private trouble. What exactly it was we do not know, for he alludes to it vaguely. He describes himself as puffed up with pride and success, walking like the hypocrite in the temple. Only through a sore temptation into which he fell was he taught humility, only through agonies of despair was he restored to his right mind. "God," he says, "drew me to him by the hair of my head." We need not take all this self-reproof too literally. Hans, we may be sure, never swerved very far from decent citizendom; it is easier to believe him unjust to himself than untrue to his principles. But, if great prosperity endangered him, he was soon to be safe. His business went wrong, his seven children died one after the other, and last of all he lost his wife. It is touching to hear him tell us in his simple way how he did not feel his loss till he got home and saw the empty rooms, the unused clothes, or how he forgot that she was dead, and kept thinking she must be with some neighbour, or was late with her marketing.

Meanwhile, from private distress, whether temptation or adversity, Hans found refuge in working all the harder for his people. His political poems become more frequent. He exhorts the nation to unity; attacks the hostile powers of France and Turkey; insists that every selfish man is a public enemy. He feels the importance, the vital necessity, of the citizens having the civic virtues; and it is now, as Gervinus shows, that the classical literature becomes to him a living power, which he studies and partly understands. To his amazement he finds in it exactly what he wants—the ideal citizen. He wonders over the old stores; hunts after new translations; cannot leave the book he has once begun. He throws himself on this study with the same *abandon* as formerly on the Bible. He had paraphrased its stories, and set others to the work; now he will do as much for the classics. Anecdote, history, apologue, dream—inspired by some old maxim—borrowed from some old author—flow without stint from his pen, and all are animated by the same pædagogic intention. Gradually the anecdotes predominate; the didactic moral, though not abandoned, is curtailed; the range of the sources is widened. He returns to Boccaccio, whom he had read as a youth; he dives into chronicles, history, folksbooks; he studies native poetry, and listens to native humour. In his old age he turned his attention to the drama, and produced tragedies, comedies, and farces with the same marvellous fertility. Whatever we may think of them now they were popular at the time. They were in request for representation in public and in the houses of wealthy citizens; for apparently the local magnates resented the shoemaker's fluency only while they disagreed with him. Hans now entered on a new period of prosperity. He married again, and lived happily with his second wife for fifteen years. A publisher, with his sanction, began a collected edition of his works—a rare honour for an author in those days, and the congenial labour of revising, arranging, and registering, occupied Hans in his declining years. Besides this general popularity he was chief of the mastersingers, acknowledged as such in his own and other schools, and surrounded by young disciples in whose measures he would still occasionally compose. One of these admirers, Adam Puschmann, gives a pleasing, but rather suspicious, account of his old age. He dreams of a little house in the garden of a merry city, where an old bearded man, grey and white like a pigeon, sits poring over his books. When strangers enter and greet him he gazes on them and nods gently, without speaking; his senses begin to fail him.

Authentic or not, this is a likely picture of poor old Hans, and we may without scruple think of him thus in his last days; for he lived to a great age, and we may be sure would never leave his beloved books. When he died in 1576, in his eighty-third year, he had written more than 4,000 mastersongs, more than 200 plays, and nearly 2,000 other poems.

How are we to estimate this German Lope de Vega? Many of his works are in manuscript, many are practically inaccessible; but the ordinary editions contain quite enough to overwhelm us. Perhaps the very quantity suggests the first characteristic. Hans must have turned out a new poem almost every day—we were near writing, almost every hour. He does not think long over his work, or wait for inspiration; he does not investigate causes or harmonise motives—he takes his subject very much as he finds it. He is not a shallow writer, but his depth lies more in his temper than in his treatment. He has marvellous facility in rhyme, marvellous power of making pictures; with him everything has definite external features. He is a good storyteller. He is like a man who at his quiet family dinner gives the daily bulletin of news, retailing all that he has heard, or read, or seen. Hans has such a daily bulletin of poetry. Of course he must make considerable loans; but all is done in good faith, and he seldom omits chapter and page of his authority. Sometimes he developes these materials and works them up; sometimes he translates almost literally, adding here and there a happy phrase, or shifting time and place into contemporary Germany.

With all his borrowings, Hans had little understanding of past times or a foreign spirit. This is not strange. All his poems show him content with the present—inspired, not troubled by it. Such unquestioning absorption in his time gives him fluency at the expense of passion and thought; it also disguises the distant and the past, which are in his eyes only another—perhaps in some points a better—present. He has no feeling for tradition. If he tries something in the style of the old minnesingers he breaks down. Thus among his mastersongs there is an imitation of their *aubades*, in which the watchman warns the lady and her lover that the sun is up and the lord of the castle will soon awake. We are astonished to hear such things from moral Hans; but he hastens to explain: the lady is the soul, the strange knight is the flesh, the watchman is conscience, and the unfortunate husband is—we dare not finish lest we seem profane. In the same fashion he approaches foreign authors; he wants above all to make them *lehrreich*. One of his most impo functions is translation: like that "geant translateur, noble

Chaucier," he familiarised his people with the treasures of other tongues. In many cases the sources of the two poets are the same, but how different is their treatment! Thus in the story of Griselda, Chaucer tones down the improbable by humanising touches and sly sarcasms; but Hans takes it all for gospel, and sees nothing in it to laugh at. According to him the story teaches that "the husband, as saith St. Paul, is the head of the wife," a moral which the playful *Envoye de Chaucer* distinctly rejects:

> O noble wyves, ful of heigh prudence,
> Let noon humilite *your* tonges nayle,
> Ne lat no clerk have cause or diligence
> To write of *yow* a story of such mervayle.

Or, again, the history of Isabella's sorrows, which Keats concludes with the wail—

> Oh, cruelty!
> To steal my basil-pot away from me,

contains for Hans two important lessons: (1) that love and (2) that murder will out. It is the same with his translations from the classics. He does not care for the acknowledged masterpieces. Homer and Virgil leave him cold. He loves little gossiping stories, like those about the death of Æschylus or the birth of Augustus, and he never fails to extract from them the inevitable moral. In this branch his versions of Scripture are probably the least interesting nowadays, but they are also the best. Here he has thorough sympathy with the foreign spirit, or rather the spirit is not foreign, Luther had naturalised it—it was the spirit of the age.

And whenever Hans is inspired by the feelings of the day, by the daily life of the time, he ceases to bungle. He is no longer an imitator, but a true original poet; his words are instinct with life—they may be homely, but they are always fresh. He has left us a gallery of pictures, grave and gay, of feelings, customs, and men, which the historian has certainly not exhausted. His *Wittenberg Nightingale* and *Lament for Luther* are masterpieces in their way, and there are many such among his religious, his political, and, above all, his social poems. We mention only *Why art thou cast down, Oh! my soul?—All the works of God are good—The Council of the Gods.* Perhaps the quaintest and most pathetic is his *Vision of the Wild Army.* It overtakes him at nightfall in a forest, he shrinks aside and sees it whirl by—a route of ghastly, famished wretches; the last one stops and hails him grimly. These are the petty criminals, the little thieves, robbers of henroosts and the like, who have been hanged on earth, and now they prick and spur to and fro hunting for justice. *They* are not guiltless; but why do the guiltiest, the great thieves, the usurers, the oppressors of the poor, still live at ease in peace and plenty? Justice they shall find—on the day of judgment. This fancy is typical of Hans Sachs. The progress of the gods has ceased to impose, the demon host to appal; we see instead a crowd of wretched men whose miseries call for pity and redress.

Equally good are his pictures of comic life. Alchemist and witch, priest and lawyer, shrewish wife and henpecked husband, none escape him; and the peasantry, as we mentioned, have the lion's share of his satire. He is at his best when his humour has a purpose, when his love of teaching and his love of laughter become indistinguishable. He warns those who consort with Hans Idle that soon their only cattle will be their cat; he pictures the Good Monday, a day on which workmen would not work, as a hideous beast, seven-legged, pot-bellied, with sharp teeth, and a bald head; it crawls fawning to his bedside when he lies too late—a nightmare that might rouse the laziest dreamer. In his *Schlauraffen-land*, or lubber's paradise, the German Land of Coskayne, roasted pigs run about with knives and forks in their backs; the ponds are full of nicely boiled fish, and birds cooked to a turn fly into one's mouth; the trees grow pheasants, and the horses lay eggs. Men are paid twopence an hour for sleeping; if they gamble their money away, it is restored them double; if they cannot clear their debts, the creditor hands them the amount. The archer who shoots widest of the mark, the runner who is last in the race, receives the prize; the laziest is king, and the honest man is a rogue and a vagabond.

Hans teaches without tediousness and laughs without guile. To modern readers he may sometimes seem profane; but no judgment could be more unjust. A refined man will treat every subject with delicacy, and a subtle man with subtlety; in the same way a humourist will always be humorous—and Hans is emphatically a humourist. With the gravest subject, with the most serious intention, he cannot suppress his genial smile; and because we feel that it is not quite in keeping, it makes us laugh outright. Thus it seems odd for a strict Lutheran to make fun of the devil, and the devil is Hans's favourite butt. When the Prince of Darkness is represented as a gay wooer, as a hen-pecked and then a runaway husband, as the dupe of an old witch, as rather stupid but perfectly good-humoured and harmless, it is impossible to keep one's gravity. On one occasion he hears the *Landknechte* mentioned as people after his own heart, and sends "Belzebock" up to earth to fetch him one. These Landknechte were country louts who took to soldiering, hired themselves to the largest bidder, and went about robbing the country—obviously a set of men whom tradesman Hans would particularly dislike. Belzebock goes to a tavern where some of them are drinking, and hides behind the stove to wait his opportunity. But their talk fills even him with horror; his hair stands on end at their stories, and he is afraid to touch them. At last one fellow who had stolen a cock and hung it up where Belzebock has hid, cries to the host, "Landlord, pluck the poor devil behind the stove and roast him for supper." This command completes Belzebock's dismay; he flies for dear life, and when once more among his friends implores the devil to give up thoughts of these people, and content himself, as hitherto, with monks and nuns.

A second story of these Landknechte introduces us to St. Pet
other comic personage in whom Hans chiefly delights. Thi

extraordinary selection is a new sign of his evangelicism. The Devil whom Luther can frighten with an inkbottle, and who is considered the chief emissary of Rome, is clearly fair game for all good Protestants. In the same way St. Peter, chief of the Roman Hierarchy, has no great claim on their reverence. He is portrayed as a self-opinioned critic of the Divine Government which he wishes to reform. One day he is allowed to try his hand; the first prayer that he hears is from an old woman to look after her goat; the weather is hot, the goat is active, red and breathless Peter must chase it up and down; he has no time for anything else, and at length in a copious perspiration is thankful to resign office. So, too, in the story of the Landknechte, the most amusing of which he is hero. A party of them appear before the gate of Heaven and demand admittance, but Peter has received strict injunctions not to let them in. At this they begin to swear, "Sacrament," "Body of Christ," and so on, till the porter's heart warms to them, for he thinks they are praying. "I never saw such pious people in all my life," he cries, and opens the door. But no sooner are they in than they fall to gambling and quarrelling, and when Peter remonstrates they hunt him through the streets with their naked swords. He escapes panting to the Deity, and asks what is to be done. "I told you how it would be" is the answer. But the matter is not beyond remedy. An angel is sent to blow a trumpet outside the walls, the soldiers hear and think a new war must have broken out; they rush off to enlist, and the door is promptly closed behind them.

But Hans surpasses himself in the story of *Eve's Unlike Children*, the best known and most delicious of all his productions. Adam and Eve cast out of Paradise sit wearied and depressed with their day's work.* Adam trying to comfort his wife mentions, in off-hand fashion, how an angel has just given him a piece of news. God will visit them to-morrow to hold high feast (*hohe fest*), and see how they are keeping house and bringing up the children. Therefore, let Eve sweep the rooms, spread the floors with sweet straw, wash the children, and dress them in their best. The first part of the injunction is easily obeyed, but not so the second. For Eve's children are sharply separated into two groups. Some are very good, pretty, and obedient; the others are bad, dirty, unruly, and deformed. Abel and those like him are soon made tidy, but Cain and his fellows are playing and quarrelling in the gutter, and flatly refuse to let themselves be washed. When Abel announces who is coming, Cain replies, "I'd liefer He would stay away." When his father bids him prepare for the prayer, sacrifice, and sermon of the morrow, the wicked child wishes that "prayer, sermon and sacrifice had never been invented." At this, Eve loses her patience and exclaims, she will leave them the eyesores that they are, and God will find them a dirty rabble foul as pigs; but in one version she relents, and stows them away in the loft, under the straw, in the chimney. Next day the visitor comes as announced, and after a hospitable welcome asks to see the children. Those who are dressed, with Abel at their head, advance singing a psalm, and shake hands with the guest. He asks them questions out of Luther's Catechism on the Lord's Prayer, the Creed, the meaning of Amen, the Commandments, with what they forbid or require, and the children come off with flying colours. Reassured by their success, Eve ventures to produce the other lot; but when they come tumbling in dirty, naked, shapeless, unkempt, God cannot keep from laughing (der Her tet des rostigen haufens lachen). They offer him their left hands, make a frightful mess of the Catechism, and excuse themselves on the plea that they don't see the use of it, that they can't remember it, that they did not know He was coming. The examiner is much displeased and determines to punish them; they and their seed shall be mechanics, fishermen and peasants, but Abel and the good children shall be kings, nobles, rich merchants and professors (gelehrten). Eve in pity for her offspring offers objections, but is told that all is for the best, only in this way can there be order in the world.

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* It was also a favourite subject with the author, who has made use of it four different times. In the following sketch I have borrowed traits from all the versions.

Even here, then, Hans writes with an object, and with the very Lutheran one of justifying the existence of ranks. In this sense Melanchthon tells the story in another version, and to any who have found it irreverent, we may say with Hans himself, that he has it from the Latin of Melanchthon. But such an excuse is unnecessary. Even the figure of the Deity is not irreverent, but only quaint, and at heart truly Protestant. Tieck characterises him as a "strict but affable superintendent." Scotchmen will rather think of the old Presbyterian catechists who used to make the rounds of the outlying districts, stopping at the farms and examining the whole household, parents, children, strangers and servants, on the Bible and Shorter Catechism.

After a lifetime of popularity, and two centuries of neglect, he attracted the affectionate admiration of Goethe. In his autobiography the greater poet describes how this study influenced his style, and in "The Poetical Vocation of Hans Sachs" pays a sympathetic tribute to our worthy mastersinger. In this poem Goethe describes and explains an old wood-cut. Hans sits in his workshop on Sunday. The young damsel Honesty, the old crone History, and a merry-andrew crowd round offering him their stores. Pleased with his task, but at a loss for words, he looks up and meets the friendly gaze of the Muse. She vows him to herself, promises that his heart shall be ever "merry as a bud in thaw," and shows him his wife waiting in the garden to cheer and hearten him in his work. An oak wreath floats above him in the clouds, and a frog-pond in the corner for carping critics completes the picture. "After this manifesto," says Hoffman, "Hans was safe. Few wish to be banished by Goethe into the frog-pond."

M. W. M.-C.

A Sleepless Night.

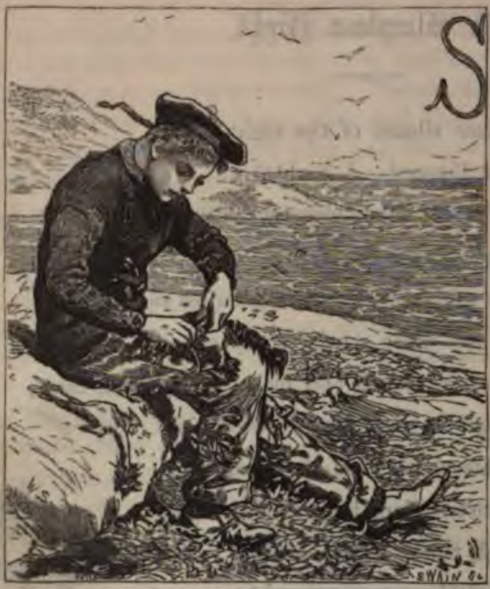
Within the hollow silence of the night
I lay awake and listened. I could hear
Planet with punctual planet chiming clear,
And unto star star cadencing aright.
Nor these alone. Cloistered from deafening sight,
All things that are, made music to my ear:
Hushed woods, dumb caves, and many a soundless mere,
With Arctic mains in rigid sleep locked tight.
But ever with this chant from shore and sea,
From singing constellation, humming thought,
And Life through time's stops blowing variously,
A melancholy undertone was wrought;
And from its boundless prison-house I caught
The awful moan of lone Eternity.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

White Wings: a Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XI.

DRAWING NEARER.



SHE is all alone on deck. The morning sun shines on the beautiful blue bay; on the great castle perched on the rocks over there; and on the wooded green hills beyond. She has got a canvas fixed on her easel; she sings to herself as she works.

Now this English young lady must have beguiled the tedium of her long nursing in Edinburgh by making a particular acquaintance with Scotch ballads; or how otherwise could we account for her knowledge of the "Song of Ulva," and now of the "Song of Dunvegan?"

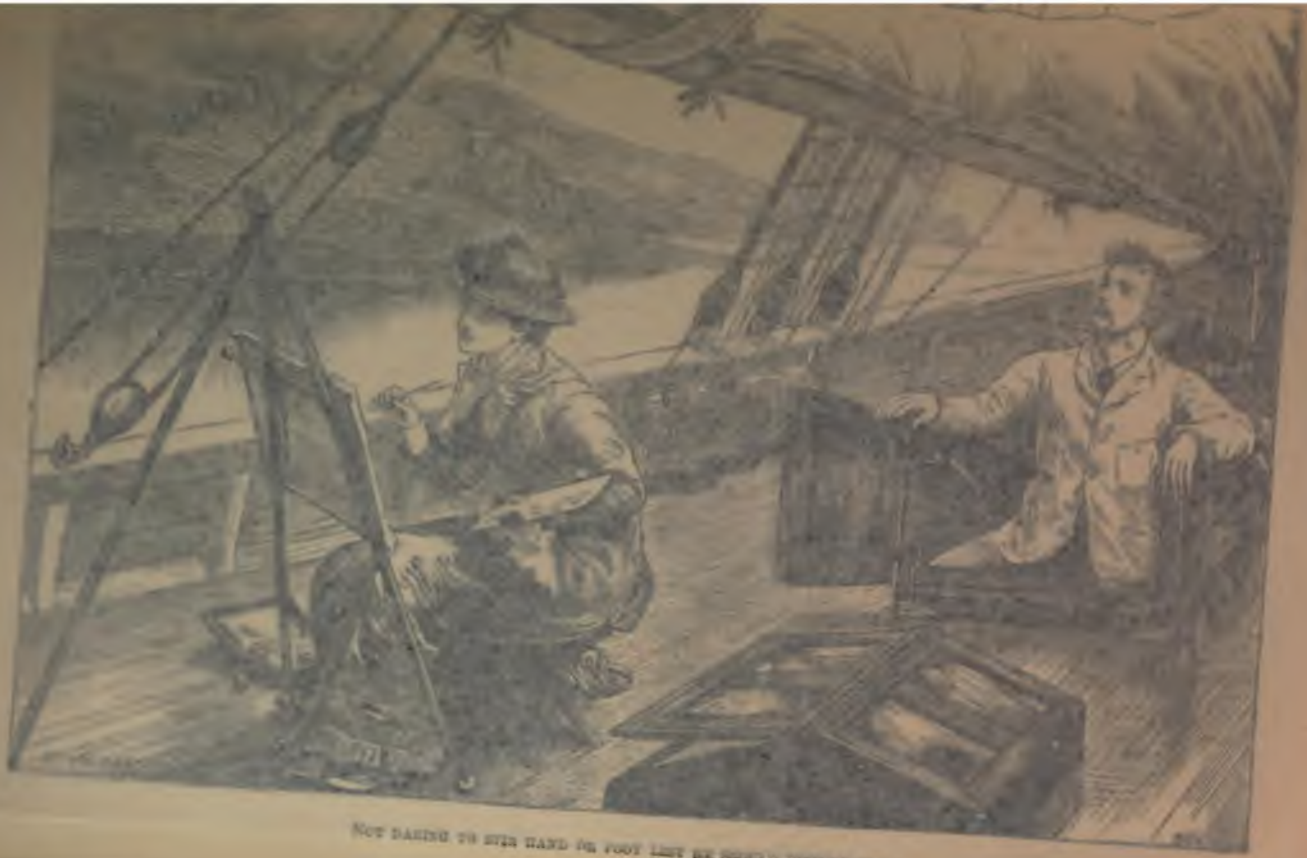
Macleod the faithful, and fearing none!
Dunvegan—oh! Dunvegan!

—she hums to herself as she is busy with this rough sketch of sea and shore. How can she be aware that Angus Sutherland is at this very moment in the companion way, and not daring to stir hand or foot lest he should disturb her?

Friends and foes had our passion thwarted,

she croons to herself, though, indeed, there is no despair at all in her voice, but a perfect contentment—

But true, tender, and lion-hearted,
Lived he on, and from life departed,
Macleod, whose rival is breathing none!
Dunvegan—oh, Dunvegan!



NOT DARING TO STIR HAND OR FOOT LEST HE SHOULD DISTURB HER.

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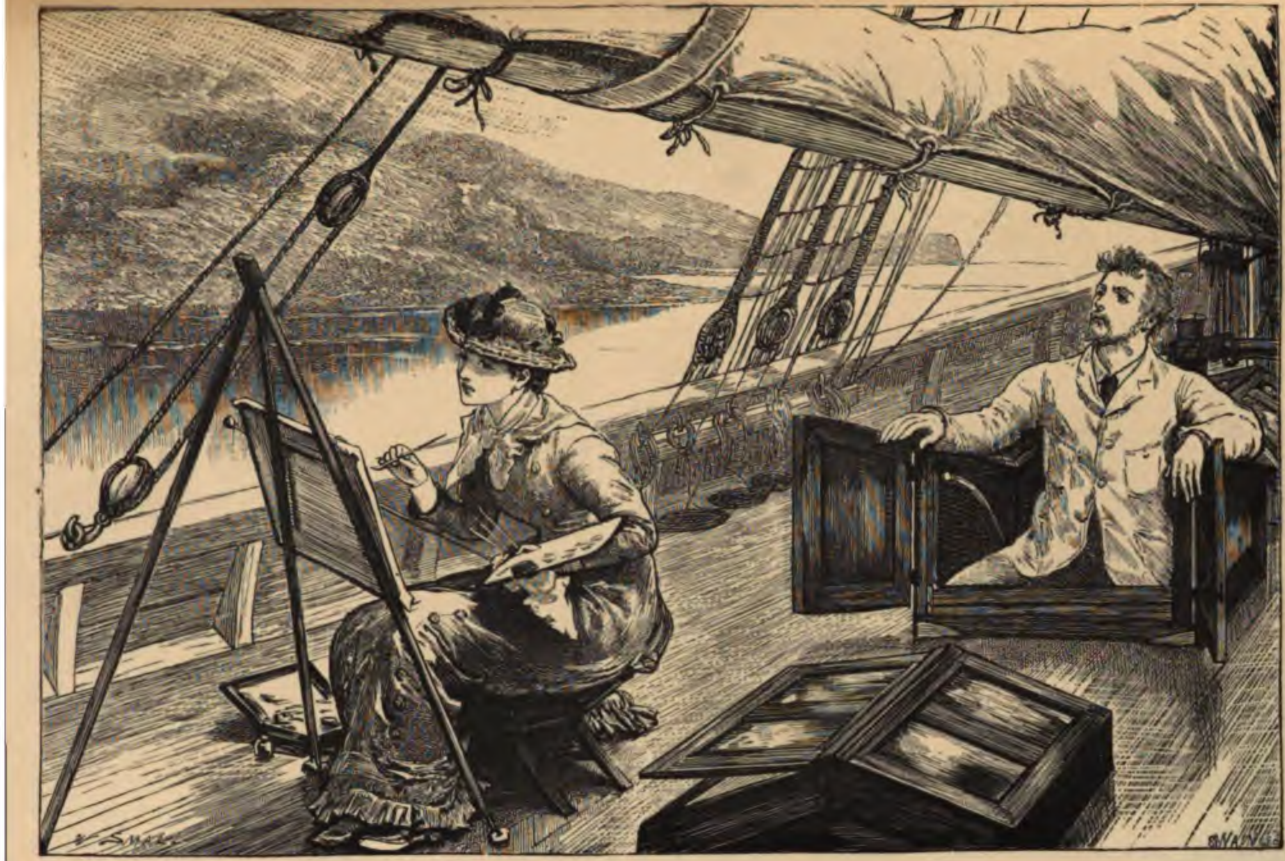

NOT DARING TO STIR HAND OR FOOT LEST HE SHOULD DISTURB HER.

She is pleased with the rapidity of her work. She tries to whistle a little bit. Or, perhaps it is only the fresh morning air that has put her in such good spirits?

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries.

What has that got to do with the sketch of the shining grey castle? Among these tags and ends of ballads, the young Doctor at last becomes emboldened to put in an appearance.

"Good morning, Miss Avon," says he; "you are busy at work again?"

She is not in the least surprised. She has got accustomed to his coming on deck before the others; they have had a good deal of quiet chatting while as yet the laird was only adjusting his high white collar and satin neckcloth.

"It is only a sketch," said she, in a rapid and highly business-like fashion, "but I think I shall be able to sell it. You know most people merely value pictures for their association with things they are interested in themselves. A Yorkshire farmer would rather have a picture of his favourite cob than any Raphael or Titian. And the ordinary English squire: I am sure that you know in his own heart he prefers one of Herring's farm-yard pieces to Leonardo's *Last Supper*. Well, if some yachting gentleman, who has been in this loch, should see this sketch, he will probably buy it, however bad it is, just because it interests him——"

"But you don't really mean to sell it?" said he.

"That depends," said she demurely, "on whether I get any offer for it."

"Why," he exclaimed, "the series of pictures you are now making should be an invaluable treasure to you all your life long: a permanent record of a voyage that you seem to enjoy very much. I almost shrink from robbing you of that one of Canna; still, the temptation is too great. And you propose to sell them all?"

"What I can sell of them," she says; and then she adds, rather shyly, "You know I could not very well afford to keep them all for myself. I—I have a good many almoners in London; and I devote to them what I can get for my scrawls—that is, I deduct the cost of the frames, and keep the rest for them. It is not a large sum."

"Any other woman would spend it in jewellery and dresses," says he bluntly.

At this, Miss Mary Avon flushes slightly, and hastily draws his attention to a small boat that is approaching. Dr. Sutherland does not pay any heed to the boat.

He is silent for a second or so; and then he says, with an effort to talk in a cheerful and matter-of-fact way—

"You have not sent ashore yet this morning: don't you know there is a post-office at Dunvegan?

"Oh, yes; I heard so. But the men are below at breakfast, I think, and I am in no hurry to send, for there won't be any letters for me, I know."

"Oh, indeed," he says, with seeming carelessness, "it must be a long time since you have heard from your friends."

"I have not many friends to hear from," she answers, with a light laugh, "and those I have don't trouble me with many letters. I suppose they think I am in very good hands at present."

"Oh, yes—no doubt," says he, and suddenly he begins to talk in warm terms of the delightfulness of the voyage. He is quite charmed with the appearance of Dunvegan loch and castle. A more beautiful morning he never saw. And in the midst of all this enthusiasm the small boat comes alongside.

There is an old man in the boat, and when he has fastened his oars, he says a few words to Angus Sutherland, and hands up a big black bottle. Our young Doctor brings the bottle over to Mary Avon. He seems to be very much pleased with everything this morning.

"Now, is not that good-natured?" says he. "It is a bottle of fresh milk, with the compliments of —— ——, of Uginish. Isn't it good-natured?"

"Oh, indeed it is," says she, plunging her hand into her pocket. "You must let me give the messenger half-a-crown."

"No, no; that is not the Highland custom," says the Doctor; and therewith he goes below, and fetches up another black bottle, and pours out a glass of whiskey with his own hand, and presents it to the ancient boatman. You should have seen the look of surprise in the old man's face when Angus Sutherland said something to him in the Gaelic.

And alas! and alas!—as we go ashore on this beautiful bright day, we have to give up for ever the old Dunvegan of many a dream—the dark and solitary keep that we had imagined perched high above the Atlantic breakers—the sheer precipices, the awful sterility, the wail of lamentation along the lonely shores. This is a different picture altogether that Mary Avon has been trying to put down on her canvas—a spacious, almost modern-looking, but nevertheless picturesque castle, sheltered from the winds by softly-wooded hills, a bit of smooth, blue water below, and further along the shores the cheerful evidences of fertility and cultivation. The wail of Dunvegan? Why, here is a brisk and thriving village, with a post-office, and a shop, and a building that looks uncommonly like an inn; and there, dotted all about, and encroaching on the upper moorland, any number of those small crofts that were once the pride of the Highlands and that gave to England the most stalwart of her regiments. Here are no ruined huts and voiceless wastes; but a cheerful, busy picture of peasant-life; the strapping wenches at work in the small farm-yards, well-built and frank of face; the men well clad; the children well fed and merry enough. It is a scene that delights the heart of our good friend of Denny-mains. If we had but time, he would fain go in among the tiny farms, and enquire about the rent of the holdings, and the price paid for those picturesque little beasts that the artists are for ever painting—with a louring sky beyond, and a dash of sunlight in front. But our Doctor is obdurate. He will not have Mary Avon walk further; she must return to the yacht.

But on our way back, as she is walking by the side of the road, he suddenly puts his hand on her arm, apparently to stop her. Slight as the touch is, she naturally looks surprised.

"I beg your pardon," he says, hastily, "but I thought you would rather not tread on it ——"

He is looking at a weed by the wayside—a thing that looks like a snapdragon of some sort. We did not expect to find a hard-headed man of science betray this trumpery sentiment about a weed.

"I thought you would rather not tread upon it when you knew it was a stranger," he says, in explanation of that rude assault upon her arm. "That is not an English plant at all; it is the *Mimulus*, its real home is in America."

We began to look with more interest on the audacious small foreigner that had boldly adventured across the seas.

"Oh," she says, looking back along the road, "I hope I have not trampled any of them down."

"Well, it does not *much* matter," he admits, "for the plant is becoming quite common now in parts of the West Highlands; but I thought as it was a stranger, and come all the way across the Atlantic on a voyage of discovery, you would be hospitable. I suppose the Gulf-stream brought the first of them over."

"And if they had any choice in the matter," says Mary Avon, looking down, and speaking with a little self-conscious deliberation, "and if they wanted to be hospitably received, they showed their good sense in coming to the West Highlands."

After that there was a dead silence on the part of Angus Sutherland. But why should he have been embarrassed? There was no compliment levelled at him that he should blush like a schoolboy. It was quite true that Miss Avon's liking—even love—for the West Highlands was becoming very apparent; but Banffshire is not in the West Highlands. What although Angus Sutherland could speak a few words in the Gaelic tongue to an old boatman? He came from Banff. Banffshire is not in the West Highlands.

Then that afternoon at the great castle itself: what have we but a confused recollection of twelfth-century towers; and walls nine feet thick; and ghost-chambers; and a certain fairy-flag, that is called the *Bratach-Sith;* and the wide view over the blue Atlantic; and of a great kindness that made itself visible in the way of hothouse flowers and baskets of fruit, and what not? The portraits, too: the various centuries got mixed up with the old legends, until we did not know in which face to look for some transmitted expression that might tell of the Cave of Uig or the Uamh-na-Ceann. But there was one portrait there, quite modern, and beautiful, that set all the tourist-folk a raving, so lovely were the life-like eyes of it; and the Laird was bold enough to say to the gentle lady who was so good as to be our guide, that it would be one of the greatest happinesses of his life if he might be allowed to ask Mr. Galbraith, the well-known artist of Edinburgh, to select a young painter to come up to Dunvegan and make a copy of this picture for him, Denny-mains. And Dr. Sutherland could scarcely come away from that beautiful face; and our good Queen T. was quite charmed with it; and as for Mary Avon, when one of us regarded her, behold! as she looked up, there was a sort of moisture in the soft black eyes.

What was she thinking of? That it must be a fine thing to be so beautiful a woman, and charm the eyes of all men? But now—now that we had had this singing-bird with us on board the yacht for so long a time—would any one of us have admitted that she was rather plain? It would not have gone well with any one who had ventured to say so to the Laird of Denny-mains, at all events. And as for our sovereign-lady and mistress, these were the lines which she always said described Mary Avon :—

Was never seen thing to be praised derre,[*]
Nor under blackë cloud so bright a sterre,
As she was, as they saiden, every one
That her behelden in her blackë weed;
And yet she stood, full low and still, alone,
Behind all other folk, in little brede,[†]
And nigh the door, ay under shamë's drede;
Simple of bearing, debonair of cheer,
With a full surë[‡] looking and mannére.

How smart the saloon of the *White Dove* looked that evening at dinner, with those geraniums, and roses, and fuchsias, and what not, set amid the tender green of the maiden-hair fern! But all the same there was a serious discussion. Fruit, flowers, vegetables, and fresh milk, however welcome, fill no larder; and Master Fred had returned with the doleful tale that all his endeavours to purchase a sheep at one of the neighbouring farms had been of no avail. Forthwith we resolve to make another effort. Far away, on the outer shores of Dunvegan Loch, we can faintly descry, in the glow of the evening, some crofter's huts on the slopes of the hill. Down with the gig, then, boys; in with the fishing-rods; and away for the distant shores, where haply, some tender ewe-lamb, or brace of quacking duck, or some half-dozen half-starved fowls may be withdrawn from the reluctant tiller of the earth!

It is a beautiful clear evening, with a lemon-gold glory in the north-west. And our stout-sinewed Doctor is rowing stroke, and there is a monotonous refrain of

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[*] *derre*, dearer.
[†] *in little brede*, without display.
[‡] *Sure*, frank.

Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together.
Ho, ro, clansmen!

"We must give you a wage as one of the hands, Angus," says Queen T.

"I am paid already," says he. "I would work my passage through for the sketch of Canna that Miss Avon gave me."

"Would you like to ask the other men whether they would take the same payment?" says Miss Avon, in modest depreciation of her powers.

"Do not say anything against the landscape ye gave to Dr. Sutherland," observes the Laird. "No, no; there is great merit in it. I have told ye before I would like to show it to Tom Galbraith before it goes south; I am sure he would approve of it. Indeed, he is jist such a friend of mine that I would take the leeberty of asking him to give it a bit touch here and there—what an experienced artist would see amiss ye know ——"

"Mr. Galbraith may be an experienced artist," says our Doctor friend with unnecessary asperity, "but he is not going to touch that picture."

"Ah can tell ye," says the Laird, who is rather hurt by this rejection, "that the advice of Tom Galbraith has been taken by the greatest artists in England. He was up in London last year, and was at the studio of one of the first of the Acadameecians, and that very man was not ashamed to ask the opeenion of Tom Galbraith. And says Tom to him, 'The face is very fine, but the right arm is out of drawing.' You would think that impertinent? The Acadameecian, I can tell you, thought differently. Says he, 'That has been my own opeenion, but no one would ever tell me so; and I would have left it as it is had ye no spoken.'"

"I have no doubt the Academician who did not know when his picture was out of drawing was quite right to take the advice of Tom Galbraith," says our stroke-oar. "But Tom Galbraith is not going to touch Miss Avon's sketch of Canna ——" and here the fierce altercation is stopped, for stroke-oar puts a fresh spurt on, and we hear another sound—

Soon the freshening breeze will blow,
We'll show the snowy canvas on her,
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together,
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Well, what was the result of our quest? After we had landed Master Fred, and sent him up the hills, and gone off fishing for lithe for an hour or so, we returned to the shore in the gathering dusk. We found our messenger seated on a rock, contentedly singing a Gaelic song, and plucking a couple of fowls which was all the provender he had secured. It was in vain that he tried to cheer us by informing us that the animals in question had cost only sixpence a-piece. We knew that they were not much bigger than thrushes. Awful visions of tinned meats began to rise before us. In gloom we took the steward and the microscopic fowls on board, and set out for the yacht.

But the laird did not lose his spirits. He declared that self-preservation was the first law of nature, and that, despite the injunctions of the Wild Birds' Protection Act, he would get out his gun and shoot the very first brood of "flappers" he saw about those lonely lochs. And he told us such a "good one" about Homesh that we laughed nearly all the way back to the yacht. Provisions? We were independent of provisions! With a handful of rice a day we would cross the Atlantic—we would cross twenty Atlantics—so long as we were to be regaled and cheered by the "good ones" of our friend of Denny-mains.

Dr. Sutherland, too, seemed in no wise depressed by the famine in the land. In the lamp-lit saloon, as we gathered round the table, and cards and things were brought out, and the Laird began to brew his toddy, the young Doctor maintained that no one on land could imagine the snugness of life on board a yacht. And now he had almost forgotten to speak of leaving us; perhaps it was the posting of the paper on Radiolarians, along with other MSS., that had set his mind free. But touching that matter of the Dunvegan post-office: why had he been so particular in asking Mary Avon if she were not expecting letters; and why did he so suddenly grow enthusiastic about the scenery on learning that the young lady, on her travels, was not pestered with correspondence? Miss Avon was not a Cabinet Minister.

CHAPTER XII.

THE OLD SCHOOL AND THE NEW.

THE last instructions given to John of Skye that night were large and liberal. At break of day he was to sail for any port he might chance to encounter on the wide seas. So long as Angus Sutherland did not speak of returning, what did it matter to us?—Loch Boisdale, Loch Seaforth, Stornaway, St. Kilda, the North Pole were all the same. It is true that of fresh meat we had on board only two fowls about the size of wrens; but of all varieties of tinned meats and fruit we had an abundant store. And if perchance we were forced to shoot a sheep on the Flannen Islands, would not the foul deed be put down to the discredit of those dastardly Frenchmen? When you rise up as a nation and guillotine all the respectable folk in the country, it is only to be expected of you thereafter that you should go about the seas shooting other people's sheep.

And indeed when we get on deck after breakfast, we find that John of Skye has fulfilled his instructions to the letter; that is to say, he must have started at daybreak to get away so far from Dunvegan and the headlands of Skye. But as for going farther? There is not a speck of cloud in the dome of blue; there is not a ripple on the blue sea; there is not a breath of wind to stir the great white sails all aglow in the sunlight; nor is there even enough of the Atlantic swell to move the indolent tiller. How John of Skye has managed to bring us so far on so calm a morning remains a mystery.

"And the glass shows no signs of falling," says our young Doctor quite regretfully: does he long for a hurricane, that so he may exhibit his sailor-like capacities?

But Mary Avon, with a practical air, is arranging her easel on deck, and fixing up a canvas, and getting out the tubes she wants—the while she absently sings to herself something about

Beauty lies
In many eyes,
But love in yours, my Nora Creina.

And what will she attack now? Those long headlands of Skye, dark in shadow, with a glow of sunlight along their summits; or those lonely hills of Uist set far amid the melancholy main; or those vaster and paler mountains of Harris, that rise on the north of the dreaded Sound?

"Well, you *have* courage," says Angus Sutherland, admiringly, "to try to make a picture out of *that*!"

"Oh," she says, modestly, though she is obviously pleased, "that is a pet theory of mine. I try for ordinary every-day effects, without any theatrical business; and if I had only the power to reach them, I know I should surprise people. Because you know most people go through the world with a sort of mist before their eyes; and they are awfully grateful to you when you suddenly clap a pair of spectacles on their nose and make them see things as they are. I cannot do it as yet, you know; but there is no harm in trying."

"I think you do it remarkably well," he says; "but what are you to make of that?—nothing but two great sheets of blue, with a line of bluer hills between?"

But Miss Avon speedily presents us with the desired pair of spectacles. Instead of the cloudless blue day we had imagined it to be, we find that there are low masses of white cloud along the Skye cliffs, and these throw long reflections on the glassy sea, and moreover we begin to perceive that the calm vault around us is not an uninterrupted blue, but melts into a pale green as it nears the eastern horizon. Angus Sutherland leaves the artist to her work. He will not interrupt her by idle talk.

There is no idle talk going forward where the Laird is concerned. He has got hold of an attentive listener in the person of his hostess, who is deep in needlework; and he is expounding to her more clearly than ever the merits of the great Semple case, pointing out more particularly how the charges in the major proposition are borne out by the extracts in the minor. Yes; and he has caught the critics, too, on the hip. What about the discovery of those clever gentlemen that Genesis X. and 10 was incorrect? They thought they were exceedingly smart in proving that the founders of Babel were the descendants, not of Ham, but of Shem. But when the ruins of Babel were examined, what then?

"Why, it was distinctly shown that the founders were the descendants of Ham, after all!" says Denny-mains, triumphantly. "What do ye think of that, Dr. Sutherland?"

Angus Sutherland starts from a reverie: he has not been listening.

"Of what?" he says. "The Semple case?"

"Ay."

"Oh, well," he says, rather carelessly, "all that wrangling is as good an occupation as any other—to keep people from thinking."

The Laird stares, as if he had not heard aright. Angus Sutherland is not aware of having said anything startling. He continues quite innocently—

"Any occupation is valuable enough that diverts the mind—that is why hard work is conducive to complete mental health; it does not matter whether it is grouse-shooting, or commanding an army, or wrangling about major or minor propositions. If a man were continually to be facing the awful mystery of existence—asking the record of the earth and the stars how he came to be here, and getting no answer at all—he must inevitably go mad. The brain could not stand it. If the human race had not busied itself with wars and commerce, and so forth, it must centuries ago have committed suicide. That is the value of hard work—to keep people from thinking of the unknown around them; the more a man is occupied, the happier he is—it does not matter whether he occupies himself with School Boards, or salmon-fishing, or the prosecution of a heretic."

He did not remark the amazed look on the Laird's face, nor yet that Mary Avon had dropped her painting and was listening.

"The fact is," he said, with a smile, "if you are likely to fall to thinking about the real mysteries of existence anywhere, it is among solitudes like these, where you see what a trivial little accident human life is in the history of the earth. You can't think about such things in Regent Street; the cigar-shops, the cabs, the passing people occupy you. But here you are brought back as it were to all sorts of first principles; and commonplaces appear somehow in their original freshness. In Regent Street you no doubt know that life is a strange thing, and that death is a strange thing, because you have been told so, and you believe it, and think no more about it. But here—with the seas and skies round you, and with the silence of the night making you think, you *feel* the strangeness of these things. Now just look over there; the sea, and the blue sky, and the hills—it is a curious thing to think that they will be shining there just as they are now—on just such another day as this—and you unable to see them or anything else—passed away like a ghost. And the *White Dove* will be sailing up here; and John will be keeping an eye on Ushinish light-house; but your eyes won't be able to see anything——"

"Well, Angus, I do declare," exclaims our sovereign mistress, "you *have* chosen a comforting thing to talk about this morning. Are we to be always thinking about our coffin?"

"On the contrary," says the young Doctor; "I was only insisting on the wholesomeness of people occupying themselves diligently with some distraction or other, however trivial. And how do you think the Semple case will end, sir?"

But our good friend of Denny-mains was far too deeply shocked and astounded to reply. The great Semple case a trivial thing—a distraction—an occupation to keep people from serious thinking! The public duties, too, of the Commissioner for the Burgh of Strathgovan; were these to be regarded as a mere plaything? The new steam fire-engine was only a toy, then? The proposed new park and the addition to the rates were to be regarded as a piece of amiable diversion?

The Laird knew that Angus Sutherland had not read the *Vestiges of Creation*, and that was a hopeful sign. But, *Vestiges* or no *Vestiges*, what were the young men of the day coming to if their daring speculations led them to regard the most serious and important concerns of life as a pastime? The Commissioners for the Burgh of Strathgovan were but a parcel of children, then, playing on the sea-shore, and unaware of the awful deeps beyond?

"I am looking at these things only as a doctor," says Dr. Sutherland, lightly—seeing that the Laird is too dumbfounded to answer his question, "and I sometimes think a doctor's history of civilisation would be an odd thing, if only you could get at the physiological facts of the case. I should like to know, for example, what Napoleon had for supper on the night before Waterloo. Something indigestible, you may be sure; if his brain had been clear on the 15th, he would have smashed the Allies, and altered modern history. I should have greatly liked, too, to make the acquaintance of the man who first announced his belief that infants dying unbaptised were to suffer eternal torture: I think it must have been his liver. I should like to have examined him."

"I should like to have poisoned him," says Mary Avon, with a flash of anger in the soft eyes.

"Oh, no; the poor wretch was only the victim of some ailment," said our Doctor, charitably. "There must have been something very much the matter with Calvin, too. I know I could have cured Schopenhauer of his pessimism if he had let me put him on a wholesome regimen."

The Laird probably did not know who Schopenhauer was; but the audacity of the new school was altogether too much for him.

"I—I suppose," he said, stammering in his amazement, "ye would have taken Joan of Arc, and treated her as a lunatic?"

"Oh, no; not as a confirmed lunatic," he answered, quite simply. "But the diagnosis of that case is obvious; I think she could have been cured. All that Joanna Southcote wanted was a frank physician."

The Laird rose and went forward to where Mary Avon was standing at her easel. He had had enough. The criticism of landscape-painting was more within his compass.

"Very good—very good," says he, as if his whole attention had been occupied by her sketching. "The reflections on the water are just fine. Ye must let me show all your sketches to Tom Galbraith before ye go back to the south."

"I hear you have been talking about the mysteries of existence," she says, with a smile.

"Oh, ay, it is easy to talk," he says, sharply—and not willing to confess that he has been driven away from the field. "I am afraid there is an unsettling tendency among the young men of the present day—a want of respect for things that have been established by the common sense of the world. Not that I am against all innovation. No, no. The world cannot stand still. I myself, now; do ye know that I was among the first in Glasgow to hold that it might be permissible to have an organ to lead the psalmody of a church?"

"Oh, indeed," says she, with much respect.

"That is true. No, no; I am not one of the bigoted. Give me the Essentials, and I do not care if ye put a stone cross on the top of the church. I tell ye that honestly; I would not object even to a cross on the building if all was sound within."

"I am sure you are quite right, sir," says Mary Avon, gently.

"But no tampering with the Essentials. And as for the millinery, and incense, and crucifixes of they poor craytures that have not the courage to go right over to Rome—who stop on this side, and play-act at being Romans—it is seeckening—perfectly seeckening. As for the Romans themselves, I do not condemn them. No, no. If they are in error, I doubt not they believe with a good conscience. And when I am in a foreign town, and one o' their processions of priests and boys comes by, I raise my hat. I do indeed."

"Oh, naturally," says Mary Avon.

"No, no," continues Denny-mains, warmly, "there is none of the bigot about me. There is a minister of the Episcopalian Church that I know; and there is no one more welcome in my house: I ask him to say grace just as I would a minister of my own Church."

"And which is that, sir?" she asked, meekly.

The Laird stares at her. Is it possible that she has heard him so elaborately expound the Semple prosecution, and not be aware to what denomination he belongs?

"The Free—the Free Church, of course," he says, with some surprise. "Have ye not seen the *Report of Proceedings* in the Semple case?"

"No, I have not," she answers, timidly. "You have been so kind in explaining it that—that a printed report was quite unnecessary."

"But I will get ye one—I will get ye one directly," says he. "I have several copies in my portmanteau. And ye will see my name in front as one of the elders who considered it fit and proper that a full report should be published, so as to warn the public against these inseedious attacks against our faith. Don't interrupt your work, my lass; but I will get ye the pamphlet; and whenever you want to sit down for a time, ye will find it most interesting reading—most interesting."

And so the worthy Laird goes below to fetch that valued report. And scarcely has he disappeared than a sudden commotion rages over the deck. Behold! a breeze coming swiftly over the sea—ruffling the glassy deep as it approaches! Angus Sutherland jumps to the tiller. The head-sails fill; and the boat begins to move. The lee-sheets are hauled taut; and now the great mainsail is filled too. There is a rippling and hissing of water; and a new stir of life and motion throughout the vessel from stem to stern.

It seems but the beginning of the day now, though it is near lunch-time. Mary Avon puts away her sketch of the dead calm, and sits down just under the lee of the boom, where the cool breeze is blowing along. The Laird, having brought up the pamphlet, is vigorously pacing the deck for his morning exercise; we have all awakened from these idle reveries about the mystery of life.

"Ha, ha," he says, coming aft, "this is fine—this is fine now. Why not give the men a glass of whiskey all round for whistling up such a fine breeze? Do ye think they would object?"

"Better give them a couple of bottles of beer for their dinner," suggests Queen T., who is no lover of whiskey.

But do you think the laird is to be put off his story by any such suggestion? We can see by his face that he has an anecdote to fire off; is it not apparent that his mention of whiskey was made with a purpose?

"There was a real good one," says he—and the laughter is already twinkling in his eyes, "about the man that was apologising before his family for having been drinking whiskey with some friends. 'Ay,' says he, 'they just held me and forced it down my throat.' Then says his son—a little chap about ten—says he, 'I think I could ha' held ye mysel', feyther—ho! ho! ho!' says he, 'I think I could ha' held ye mysel', feyther;'" and the Laird laughed, and laughed again, till the tears came into his eyes. We could see that he was still internally laughing at that good one when we went below for luncheon.

At luncheon, too, the Laird quite made up his feud with Angus Sutherland, for he had a great many other good ones to tell about whiskey and whiskey drinking; and he liked a sympathetic audience. But this general merriment was suddenly dashed by an ominous suggestion coming from our young Doctor. Why, he asked, should we go on fighting against these northerly winds? Why not turn and run before them?

"Then you want to leave us, Angus," said his hostess reproachfully.

"Oh, no," he said, and with some colour in his face. "I don't want to go, but I fear I must very soon now. However, I did not make that suggestion on my own account; if I were pressed for time, I could get somewhere where I could catch the *Clansman*."

Mary Avon looked down, saying nothing.

"You would not leave the ship like that," says his hostess. "You would not run away, surely? Rather than that we will turn at once. Where are we now?"

"If the breeze lasts, we will get over to Uist, to Loch na Maddy, this evening, but you must not think of altering your plans on my account. I made the suggestion because of what Captain John was saying."

"Very well," says our Admiral of the Fleet, taking no heed of properly constituted authority. "Suppose we set out on our return voyage to-morrow morning, going round the other side of Skye for a change. But you know, Angus, it is not fair of you to run away when you say yourself there is nothing particular calls you to London."

"Oh," says he, "I am not going to London just yet. I am going to Banff, to see my father. There is an uncle of mine, too, on a visit to the manse."

"Then you will be coming south again?"

"Yes."

"Then why not come another cruise with us on your way back?"

It was not like this hard-headed young Doctor to appear so embarrassed.

"That is what I should like very much myself," he stammered, "if—if I were not in the way of your other arrangements."

"We shall make no other arrangements," says the other definitely. "Now that is a promise, mind. No drawing back. Mary will put it down in writing, and hold you to it."

Mary Avon had not looked up all this time.

"You should not press Dr. Sutherland too much," she says shyly; "perhaps he has other friends he would like to see before leaving Scotland."

The hypocrite! Did she want to make Angus Sutherland burst a blood-vessel in protesting that of all the excursions he had made in his life this would be to him for ever the most memorable; and that a repetition or extension of it was a delight in the future almost too great to think of? However, she seemed pleased that he spoke so warmly, and she did not attempt to contradict him. If he had really enjoyed all this rambling idleness, it would no doubt the better fit him for his work in the great capital.

We beat in to Loch na Maddy—that is, the Lake of the Dogs the quiet evening; and the rather commonplace low-lying hills, and the plain houses of the remote little village, looked beautiful enough under the glow of the western skies. And we went ashore, and walked inland for a space, through an intricate network of lagoons inbranching from the sea; and we saw the trout leaping and making circles on the gold-red pools, and watched the herons rising from their fishing and winging their slow flight across the silent lakes.

And it was a beautiful night, too, and we had a little singing on deck. Perhaps there was an under-current of regret in the knowledge that now—for this voyage, at least—we had touched our farthest point. To-morrow we were to set out again for the south.

CHAPTER XIII.

FERDINAND AND MIRANDA.

THE wind was laughing at Angus Sutherland. All the time we had been sailing north, it had blown from the north; now that we turned our faces eastward, it wheeled round to the east, as if it would imprison him for ever in this floating home.

"*You would fain get away*"—this was the mocking sound that one of us seemed to hear in those light airs of the morning that blew along the white canvas—"*the world calls; ambition, fame, the eagerness of rivalry, the spell that science throws over her disciples, all these are powerful, and they draw you, and you would fain get away. But the hand of the wind is uplifted against you; you may fret as you will, but you are not round Ru Hunish yet!*"

And perhaps the imaginative small creature who heard these strange things in the light breeze against which we were fighting our way across the Minch may have been forming her own plans. Angus Sutherland, she used often to say, wanted humanising. He was too proud and scornful in the pride of his knowledge; the gentle hand of a woman was needed to lead him into more tractable ways. And then this Mary Avon, with her dexterous, nimble woman's wit, and her indomitable courage, and her life and spirit, and abounding cheerfulness; would she not be a splendid companion for him during his long and hard struggle? This born match-maker had long ago thrown away any notion about the Laird transferring our singing-bird to Denny-mains. She had almost forgotten about the project of bringing Howard Smith, the Laird's nephew, and half-compelling him to marry Mary Avon: that was preposterous on the face of it. But she had grown accustomed, during those long days of tranquil idleness, to see our young Doctor and Mary Avon together, cut off from all the distractions of the world, a new Paul and Virginia. Why—she may have asked herself—should not these two solitary waifs, thus thrown by chance together on the wide ocean of existence, why should they not cling to each other and strengthen each other in the coming days of trial and storm? The strange, pathetic, phantasmal farce of life is brief; they cannot seize it and hold it, and shape it to their own ends; they know not whence it comes, or whither it goes; but while the brief, strange thing lasts, they can grasp each other's hand, and make sure—amid all the unknown things around them, the mountains, and the wide seas, and the stars—of some common, humble, human sympathy. It is so natural to grasp the hand of another in the presence of something vast and unknown.

The rest of us, at all events, have no time for such vague dreams and reveries. There is no idleness on board the *White Dove* out here on the shining deep. Dr. Sutherland has rigged up for himself a sort of gymnasium by putting a rope across the shrouds to the peak halyards; and on this rather elastic cross-bar he is taking his morning exercise by going through a series of performances, no doubt picked up in Germany. Miss Avon is busy with a sketch of the long headland running out to Vaternish Point; though, indeed, this smooth Atlantic roll makes it difficult for her to keep her feet, and introduces a certain amount of haphazard into her handiwork. The Laird has brought on deck a formidable portfolio of papers, no doubt relating to the public affairs of Strathgovan; and has put on his gold spectacles; and has got his pencil in hand. Master Fred is re-arranging the cabins; the mistress of the yacht is looking after her flowers. And then is heard the voice of John of Skye—"*Stand by, boys!*" and "*Bout ship!*" and the helm goes down, and the jib and foresail flutter and tear at the blocks and sheets, and then the sails gently fill, and the *White Dove* is away on another tack.

"Well, I give in," says Mary Avon, at last, as a heavier lurch than usual threatens to throw her and her easel together into the scuppers. ' It *is* no use."

"I thought you never gave in, Mary," says our Admiral, whose head has appeared again at the top of the companion-stairs.

"I wonder who could paint like this," says Miss Avon, indignantly. And indeed she is trussed up like a fowl, with one arm round one of the gig davits.

"Turner was lashed to the mast of a vessel in order to see a storm," says Queen T.

"But not to paint," retorts the other. "Besides, I am not Turner. Besides, I am tired."

By this time of course, Angus Sutherland has come to her help; and removes her easel and what not for her; and fetches her a deck-chair.

"Would you like to play chess?" says he.

"Oh, yes," she answers dutifully, "if you think the men will stay on the board."

"Draughts will be safer," says he, and therewith he plunges below, and fetches up the squared board and the pieces.

And so, on this beautiful summer day, with the shining seas around them, and a cool breeze tempering the heat of the sun, Ferdinand and Miranda set to work. And it was a pretty sight to see them—her soft dark eyes so full of an anxious care to acquit herself well; his robust, hard, fresh-coloured face full of a sort of good-natured forbearance. But nevertheless it was a strange game. All Scotchmen are supposed to play draughts; and one brought up in a manse is almost of necessity a good player. But one astonished onlooker began to perceive that, whereas Mary Avon played but indifferently, her opponent played with a blindness that was quite remarkable. She had a very pretty, small, white hand; was he looking at that that he did not, on one occasion, see how he could have taken three pieces and crowned his man all at one fell swoop? And then is it considered incumbent on a draught-player to inform his opponent of what would be a better move on the part of the latter? However that may be, true it is that, by dint of much advice, opportune blindness, and atrocious bad play, the Doctor managed to get the game ended in a draw.

"Dear me," said Mary Avon, "I never thought I should have had a chance. The Scotch are such good draught-players."

"But you play remarkably well," said he—and there was no blush of shame on his face.

Draughts and luncheon carry us on to the afternoon; and still the light breeze holds out; and we get nearer and nearer to the most northerly points of Skye. And as the evening draws on, we can now make out the hilly line of Ross-shire—a pale rose-colour in the far east; and nearer at hand is the Skye coast, with the warm sunlight touching on the ruins of Duntulme, where Donald Gorm Môr fed his imprisoned nephew on salt beef, and then lowered to him an empty cup—mocking him before he died; and then in the west the mountains of Harris, a dark purple against the clear lemon-golden glow. But as night draws on, behold! the wind dies away altogether; and we lie becalmed on a lilac-and-silver sea, with some rocky islands over there grown into a strange intense green in the clear twilight.

Down with the gig, then, John of Skye!—and hurry in all our rods, and lines, and the occult entrapping inventions of our patriarch of Denny-mains. We have no scruple about leaving the yacht in mid-ocean. The clear twilight shines in the sky; there is not a ripple on the sea; only the long Atlantic swell that we can hear breaking far away on the rocks. And surely such calms are infrequent in the Minch; and surely these lonely rocks can have been visited but seldom by passing voyagers?

Yet the great rollers—as we near the forbidding shores—break with an ominous thunder on the projecting points and reefs. The Doctor insists on getting closer and closer—he knows where the big lithe are likely to be found—and the men, although they keep a watchful eye about them, obey. And then—it is Mary Avon who first calls out—

and behold! her rod is suddenly dragged down—the point is hauled below the water—agony and alarm are on her face.

"Here—take it—take it!" she calls out. "The rod will be broken."

"Not a bit," the Doctor calls out. "Give him the butt hard! Never mind the rod! Haul away!"

And indeed by this time everybody was alternately calling and hauling; and John of Skye, attending to the rods of the two ladies, had scarcely time to disengage the big fish, and smooth the flies again; and the Laird was declaring that these lithe fight as hard as a twenty-pound salmon. What did we care about those needles and points of black rock that every two or three seconds showed their teeth through the breaking white surf?

"Keep her close in, boys!" Angus Sutherland cried. "We shall have a fine pickling to-morrow."

Then one fish, stronger or bigger than his fellows, pulls the rod clean out of Mary Avon's hands.

"Well, I have done it this time," she says.

"Not a bit!" her companion cries. "Up all lines! Back now, lads—gently!"

And as the stern of the boat is shoved over the great glassy billows, behold! a thin dark line occasionably visible—the end of the lost rod! Then there is a swoop on the part of our Doctor; he has both his hands on the butt; there elapses a minute or two of fighting between man and fish; and then we can see below the boat the wan gleam of the captured animal as it comes to the surface in slow circles. Hurrah! a seven pounder! John of Skye chuckles to himself as he grasps the big lithe.

"Oh, ay!" he says, "the young leddy knows ferry well when to throw away the rod. It is a gran' good thing to throw away the rod when there will be a big fish. Ay, ay, it iss a good fish."

But the brutes that fought hardest of all were the dog-fish—the snakes of the sea; and there was a sort of holy Archangelic joy on the face of John of Skye when he seized a lump of stick to fell these hideous creatures before flinging them back into the water again. And yet why should they have been killed on account of their snake-like eyes and their cruel mouth? The human race did not rise and extirpate Frederick Smethurst because he was ill-favoured.

By half-past ten we had secured a good cargo of fish; and then we set out for the yacht. The clear twilight was still shining above the Harris hills; but there was a dusky shadow along the Outer Hebrides, where the orange ray of Scalpa light was shining; and there was dusk in the south, so that the yacht had become invisible altogether. It was a long pull back; for the *White Dove* had been carried far by the ebb tide. When we found her, she looked like a tall grey ghost in the gathering darkness; and no light had as yet been put up; but all the same we had a laughing welcome from Master Fred, who was glad to have the fresh fish wherewith to supplement our frugal meals.

Then the next morning—when we got up and looked around—we were in the same place! And the glass would not fall; and the blue skies kept blue; and we had to encounter still another day of dreamy idleness.

"The weather is conspiring against you, Angus," our sovereign lady said, with a smile. "And you know you cannot run away from the yacht: it would be so cowardly to take the steamer."

"Well, indeed," said he, "it is the first time in my life that I have found absolute idleness enjoyable; and I am not so very anxious it should end. Somehow, though, I fear we are too well off. When we get back to the region of letters and telegrams, don't you think we shall have to pay for all this selfish happiness?"

"Then why should we go back?" she says lightly. "Why not make a compact to forsake the world altogether, and live all our life on board the *White Dove?*"

Somehow, his eyes wandered to Mary Avon; and he said—rather absently—

"I, for one, should like it well enough; if it were only possible."

"No, no," says the Laird, brusquely, "that will no do at all. It was never intended that people should go and live for themselves like that. Ye have your duties to the nation and to the laws that protect ye. When I left Denny-mains I told my brother Commissioners that what I could do when I was away to further the business of the Burgh I would do; and I have entered most minutely into several matters of great importance. And that is why I am anxious to get to Portree. I expect most important letters there."

Portree! Our whereabouts on the chart last night was marked between 45 and 46 fathoms W. S. W. from some nameless rocks; and here, as far as we can make out, we are still between these mystical numbers. What can we do but chat, and read, and play draughts, and twirl round a rope, and ascend to the cross-trees to look out for a breeze, and watch and listen to the animal-life around us?

"I do think," says Mary Avon to her hostess, "the calling of those divers is the softest and most musical sound I ever heard; perhaps because it is associated with so many beautiful places. Just fancy, now, if you were suddenly to hear a diver symphony beginning in an opera—if all the falsetto recitative and the blare of the trumpets were to stop—and if you were to hear the violins and flutes beginning quite low and soft, a diver symphony, would you not think of the Hebrides, and the *White Dove*, and the long summer days? In the winter, you know, in London, I fancy we should go once or twice to see *that* opera!"

"I have never been to an opera," remarks the Laird, quite impervious to Mary Avon's tender enthusiasm. "I am told it is a fantastic exhibeetion."

One incident of that day was the appearance of a new monster of the deep, which approached quite close to the hull of the *White Dove*.

Leaning over the rail we could see him clearly in the clear water—a beautiful, golden, submarine insect, with a conical body like that of a land-spider, and six or eight slender legs, by the incurving of which he slowly propelled himself through the water. As we were perfectly convinced that no one had ever been in such dead calms in the Minch before, and had lain for twenty-four hours in the neighbourhood of 45 and 46, we took it for granted that this was a new animal. In the temporary absence of our F.R.S., the Laird was bold enough to name it the *Arachne Mary-Avonensis*; but did not seek to capture it. It went on its golden way.

But we were not to linger for ever in these northern seas, surrounded by perpetual summer calms—however beautiful the prospect might be to a young man fallen away, for the moment, from his high ambitions. Whatever summons from the far world might be awaiting us at Portree was soon to be served upon us. In the afternoon a slight breeze sprung up that gently carried us away past Ru Hunish, and round by Eilean Trodda, and down by Altavaig. The grey-green basaltic cliffs of the Skye coast were now in shadow; but the strong sunlight beat on the grassy ledges above; and there was a distant roar of water along the rocks. This other throbbing sound, too: surely that must be some steamer far away on the other side of Rona?

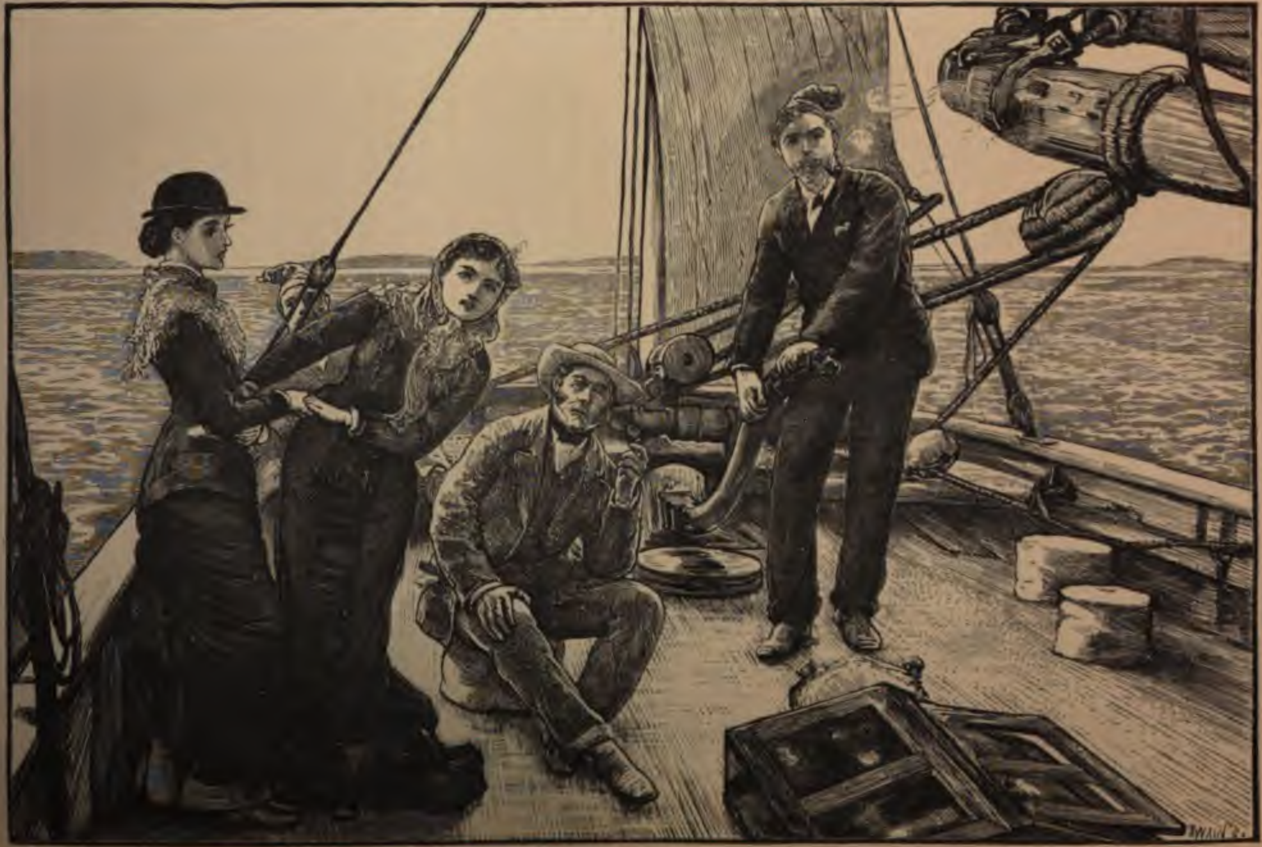
The sunset deepened. Darker and darker grew the shadows in the great mountains above us. We heard the sea along the solitary shores.

The stars came out in the twilight: they seemed clearest just over the black mountains. In the silence there was the sound of a waterfall somewhere—in among those dark cliffs. Then our side-lights were put up; and we sate on deck; and Mary Avon, nestling close to her friend, was persuaded to sing for her

Yestreen the Queen had four Maries

—just as if she had never heard the song before. The hours went by; Angus Sutherland was talking in a slow, earnest, desultory fashion; and surely he must have been conscious that one heart there at least was eagerly and silently listening to him. The dawn was near at hand when finally we consented to go below.

What time of the morning was it that we heard John of Skye call out "*Six or seven fathoms 'll do?*" We knew at least that we had got into harbour; and that the first golden glow of the daybreak was streaming through the skylights of the saloon. We had returned from the wilds to the claims and the cares of civilization; if there was any message to us, for good or for evil, from the distant world we had left for so long, it was now waiting for us on shore.



And still we glided onwards in the beautiful evening.

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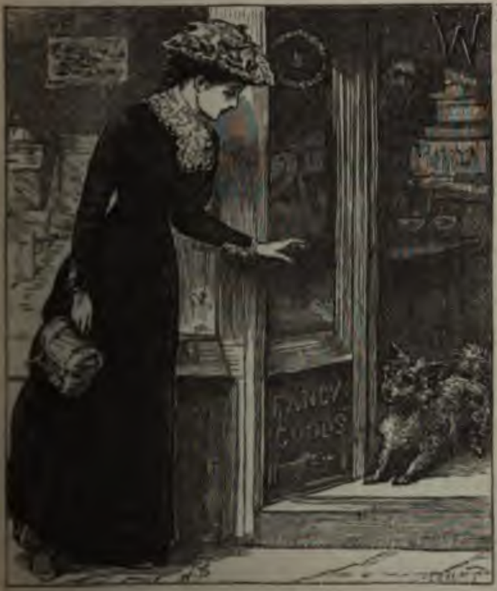
White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XIV.

EVIL TIDINGS.



WE had indeed returned to the world: the first thing we saw on entering the saloon in the morning was a number of letters—actual letters, that had come through a post-office — lying on the breakfast-table. We stared at these strange things. Our good Queen T. was the first to approach them. She took them up as if she expected they would bite her.

"Oh, Mary," she says, "there is not one for you—not one."

Angus Sutherland glanced quickly at the girl. But there was not the least trace of disappointment on her face. On the contrary, she said, with a cheerful indifference—

"So much the better. They only bother people."

But of course they had to be opened and read—even the bulky parcel from Strathgovan. The only bit of intelligence that came from that quarter was to the effect that Tom Galbraith had been jilted by his lady-love; but as the rumour, it appeared, was in circulation among the Glasgow artists, the Laird instantly and indignantly refused to believe it. Envy is the meanest of the passions; and we knew that the Glasgow artists could scarcely sleep in their bed at night for thinking of the great fame of Mr. Galbraith of Edinburgh. However, amid all these letters one of us stumbled upon one little item that certainly concerned us. It was a clipping from the advertisement column of a newspaper. It was enclosed, without word or comment, by a friend in London who knew that we were slightly acquainted, perforce, with Mr. Frederick Smethurst. And it appeared that that gentleman, having got into difficulties with his creditors, had taken himself off, in a surreptitious and evil manner, insomuch that this newspaper clipping was nothing more nor less than a hue and cry after the fraudulent bankrupt. That letter and its startling enclosure were quickly whipped into the pocket of the lady to whom they had been sent.

By great good luck Mary Avon was the first to go on deck. She was anxious to see this new harbour into which we had got. And then, with considerable dismay on her face, our sovereign mistress showed us this ugly thing. She was much excited. It was so shameful of him to bring this disgrace on Mary Avon! What would the poor girl say! And this gentle lady would not for worlds have her told while she was with us—until at least we got back to some more definite channel of information. She was, indeed, greatly distressed.

But we had to order her to dismiss these idle troubles. We formed ourselves into a committee on the spot; and this committee unanimously, if somewhat prematurely, and recklessly, resolved—

First, that it was not of the slightest consequence to us or any human creature where Mr. Frederick Smethurst was, or what he might do with himself.

Secondly, that if Mr. Frederick Smethurst were to put a string and a stone round his neck and betake himself to the bottom of the sea, he would earn our gratitude and in some measure atone for his previous conduct.

Thirdly, that nothing at all about the matter should be said to Mary Avon: if the man had escaped, there might probably be an end of the whole business.

To these resolutions, carried swiftly and unanimously, Angus Sutherland added a sort of desultory rider, to the effect that moral or immoral qualities do sometimes reveal themselves in the face. He was also of opinion that spare persons were more easy of detection in this manner. He gave an instance of a well-known character in London—a most promising ruffian who had run through the whole gamut of discreditable offences. Why was there no record of this brave career written in the man's face? Because nature had obliterated the lines in fat. When a man attains to the dimensions and appearance of a scrofulous toad swollen to the size of an ox, moral and mental traces get rubbed out. Therefore, contended our F.R.S., all persons who set out on a career of villany, and don't want to be found out, should eat fat-producing foods. Potatoes and sugar he especially mentioned as being calculated to conceal crime.

However, we had to banish Frederick Smethurst and his evil deeds from our minds; for the yacht from end to end was in a bustle of commotion about our going ashore; and as for us—why, we meant to run riot in all the wonders and delights of civilisation. Innumerable fowls, tons of potatoes and cabbage and lettuce, fresh butter, new loaves, new milk: there was no end to the visions that rose before the excited brain of our chief commissariat officer. And when the Laird, in the act of stepping, with much dignity, into the gig, expressed his firm conviction that somewhere or other we should stumble upon a Glasgow newspaper not more than a week old, so that he might show us the reports of the meetings of the Strathgovan Commissioners, we knew of no further luxury that the mind could desire.

And as we were being rowed ashore, we could not fail to be struck by the extraordinary abundance of life and business and activity in the world. Portree, with its wooded crags and white houses shining in the sun, seemed a large and populous city. The smooth waters of the bay were crowded with craft of every description; and the boats of the yachts were coming and going with so many people on board of them that we were quite stared out of countenance. And then, when we landed, and walked up the quay, and ascended the hill into the town, we regarded the signs over the shop-doors with the same curiosity that regards the commonest features of a foreign street. There was a peculiarity about Portree, however, that is not met with in continental capitals. We felt that the ground swayed lightly under our feet. Perhaps these were the last oscillations of the great volcanic disturbance that shot the black Coolins into the sky.

Then the shops: such displays of beautiful things, in silk, and wool, and cunning wood-work; human ingenuity declaring itself in a thousand ways, and appealing to our purses. Our purses, to tell the truth, were gaping. A craving for purchase possessed us. But, after all, the Laird could not buy servant girls' scarves as a present for Mary Avon; and Angus Sutherland did not need a second waterproof-coat; and though we reached the telegraph-office, there would have been a certain monotony in spending innumerable shillings on unnecessary telegrams, even though we might be rejoicing in one of the highest conveniences of civilisation. The plain truth must be told. Our purchases were limited to some tobacco and a box or two of paper collars for the men; to one or two shilling novels; and a flask of eau-de-Cologne. We did not half avail ourselves of all the luxuries spread out so temptingly before us.

"Do you think the men will have the water on board yet?" Mary Avon says, as we walk back. "I do not at all like being on land. The sun scorches so, and the air is stifling."

"In my opeenion," says the Laird, "the authorities of Portree are deserving of great credit for having fixed up the apparatus to let boats get water on board at the quay. It was a public-spirited project—it was that. And I do not suppose that any one grumbles at having to pay a shilling for the privilege. It is a legeetimate tax. I am sure it would have been a long time or we could have got such a thing at Strathgovan, if there was need for it there; ye would scarcely believe it, ma'am, what a spirit of opposition there is among some o' the Commissioners to any improvement, ye would not believe it."

"Indeed," she says, in innocent wonder; she quite sympathises with this public-spirited reformer.

"Ay, it's true. Mind ye, I am a Conservative myself; I will have nothing to do with Radicals and their Republics; no, no, but a wise Conservative knows how to march with the age. Take my own posection: for example, as soon as I saw that the steam fire-engine was a necessity, I withdrew my opposition at once. I am very thankful to you, ma'am, for having given me an opportunity of carefully considering the question. I will never forget our trip round Mull. Dear me! it is warm the day," added the Laird, as he raised his broad felt hat, and wiped his face with his voluminous silk handkerchief.

Here come two pedestrians—good-looking young lads of an obviously English type—and faultlessly equipped from head to heel. They look neither to the left or right; on they go manfully through the dust, the sun scorching their faces; there must be a trifle of heat under these knapsacks. Well, we wish them fine weather and whole heels. It is not the way some of us would like to pass a holiday. For what is this that Miss Avon is singing lightly to herself as she walks carelessly on, occasionally pausing to look in at a shop—

And often have we seamen heard how men are killed or undone,
By overturns of carriages, and thieves, and fires in London.

Here she turns aside to caress a small terrier; but the animal, mistaking her intention, barks furiously, and retreats, growling and ferocious, into the shop. Miss Avon is not disturbed. She walks on, and completes her nautical ballad—all for her own benefit—

We've heard what risk all landsmen run, from noblemen to tailors,
So, Billy, let's thank Providence that you and I are sailors!

"What on earth is that, Mary?" her friend behind asks.

The girl stops with a surprised look, as if she had scarcely been listening to herself; then she says lightly:—

"Oh, don't you know the sailor's song—I forget what they call it:—

A strong sou-wester's blowing, Billy, can't you hear it roar now,
Lord help em, how I pities all unhappy folks on shore now.

"You have become a thorough sailor, Miss Avon," says Angus Sutherland, who has overheard the last quotation.

"I—I like it better—I am more interested," she says, timidly, "since you were so kind as to show me the working of the ship."

"Indeed," says he, "I wish you would take command of her, and order her present captain below. Don't you see how tired his eyes are becoming? He won't take his turn of sleep like the others; he has been scarcely off the deck night or day since we left Canna; and I find it is no use remonstrating with him. He is too anxious; and he fancies I am in a hurry to get back; and these continual calms prevent his getting on. Now the whole difficulty would be solved, if you let me go back by the steamer; then you could lie at Portree here for a night or two, and let him have some proper rest."

"I do believe, Angus," says his hostess, laughing in her gentle way, "that you threaten to leave us just to see how anxious we are to keep you."

"My position as ship's doctor," he retorts, "is compromised. If Captain John falls ill on my hands, whom am I to blame but myself?"

"I am quite sure I can get him to go below," says Mary Avon, with decision—"quite sure of it. That is, especially," she adds, rather shyly, "if you will take his place. I know he would place more dependence on you than on any of the men."

This is a very pretty compliment to pay to one who is rather proud of his nautical knowledge.

"Well," he says, laughing, "the responsibility must rest on you. Order him below, to-night, and see whether he obeys. If we don't get to a proper anchorage, we will manage to sail the yacht somehow among us—you being captain, Miss Avon."

"If I am captain," she says, lightly—though she turns away her head somewhat, "I shall forbid your deserting the ship."

"So long as you are captain, you need not fear that," he answers. Surely he could say no less.

But it was still John of Skye who was skipper when, on getting under way, we nearly met with a serious accident. Fresh water and all provisions having been got on board, we weighed anchor only to find the breeze die wholly down. Then the dingy was got out to tow the yacht away from the sheltered harbour; and our young Doctor, always anxious for hard work, must needs jump in to join in this service. But the little boat had been straining at the cable for scarcely five minutes when a squall of wind came over from the north-west and suddenly filled the sails. "Look out there, boys!" called Captain John, for we were running full down on the dingy. "Let go the rope! Let go!" he shouted: but they would not let go, as the dingy came sweeping by. In fact, she caught the yacht just below the quarter, and seemed to disappear altogether. Mary Avon uttered one brief cry; and then stood pale—clasping one of the ropes—not daring to look. And John of Skye uttered some exclamation in the Gaelic; and jumped on to the taffrail. But the next thing we saw, just above the taffrail, was the red and shining and laughing face of Angus Sutherland, who was hoisting himself up by means of the mizen boom; and directly afterwards appeared the scarlet cap of Hector of Moidart. It was upon this latter culprit that the full force of John of Skye's wrath was expended.

"Why did you not let go the rope when I wass call to you?"

"It is all right, and if I wass put into the water, I have been in the water before," was the philosophic reply.

And now it was, as we drew away from Portree, that Captain Mary Avon endeavoured to assume supreme command and would have the deposed skipper go below and sleep. John of Skye was very obedient, but he said:—"Oh, ay. I will get plenty of sleep. But that hill there, that is Ben Inivaig; and there is not any hill in the West Highlands so bad for squalls as that hill. By and by I will get plenty of sleep."

Ben Inivaig let us go past its great, gloomy, forbidding shoulders and cliffs without visiting us with anything worse than a few variable puffs; and we got well down into the Raasay Narrows. What a picture of still summer loveliness was around us!—the rippling blue seas, the green shores, and far over these the black peaks of the Coolins now taking a purple tint in the glow of the afternoon. The shallow Sound of Scalpa we did not venture to attack, especially as it was now low water; we went outside Scalpa, by the rocks of Skier Dearg. And still John of Skye evaded, with a gentle Highland courtesy, the orders of the captain. The silver bell of Master Fred summoned us below for dinner, and still John of Skye was gently obdurate.

"Now, John," says Mary Avon, seriously, to him, "you want to make me angry."

"Oh, no, mem; I not think that," says he, deprecatingly.

"Then why won't you go and have some sleep? Do you want to be ill?"

"Oh, there iss plenty of sleep," says he. "Maybe we will get to Kyle Akin to-night; and there will be plenty of sleep for us."

"But I am asking you as a favour to go and get some sleep *now*. Surely the men can take charge of the yacht!"

"Oh, yes, oh, yes!" says John of Skye. "They can do that ferry well."

And then he paused—for he was great friends with this young lady, and did not like to disoblige her.

"You will be having your dinner now. After the dinner, if Mr. Sutherland himself will be on deck, I will go below and turn in for a time."

"Of course Dr. Sutherland will be on deck," says the new captain, promptly; and she was so sure of one member of her crew that she added, "and he will not leave the tiller for a moment until you come to relieve him."

Perhaps it was this promise—perhaps it was the wonderful beauty of the evening—that made us hurry over dinner. Then we went o again; and our young Doctor, having got all his bearings and directions clear in his head, took the tiller, and John of Skye at length succumbed to the authority of Commander Avon and disappeared into the forecastle.

The splendour of colour around us on that still evening!—away in the west the sea of a pale yellow green, with each ripple a flash of rose-flame, and over there in the south the great mountains of Skye—the Coolins, and Blaven, and Ben-na-Cailleach—become of a plum-purple in the clear and cloudless sky. Angus Sutherland was at the tiller contemplatively smoking an almost black meerschaum; the Laird was discoursing to us about the extraordinary pith and conciseness of the Scotch phrases in the Northumbrian psalter; while ever and anon a certain young lady, linked arm-in-arm with her friend, would break the silence with some aimless fragment of ballad or old-world air.

And still we glided onwards in the beautiful evening; and now ahead of us in the dusk of the evening, the red star of Kyle Akin lighthouse steadily gleamed.* We might get to anchor, after all, without awaking John of Skye.

"In weather like this," remarked our sovereign lady, "in the gathering darkness, John might keep asleep for fifty years."

"Like Rip Van Winkle," said the Laird, proud of his erudition. "That is a wonderful story that Washington Irving wrote—a verra fine story."

"Washington Irving!—the story is as old as the Coolins," said Dr. Sutherland.

The Laird stared as if he had been Rip Van Winkle himself: was he for ever to be checkmated by the encyclopædic knowledge of Young England—or Young Scotland rather—and that knowledge only the gatherings and sweepings of musty books that anybody with a parrot-like habit might acquire?

"Why, surely you know that the legend belongs to that common stock of legends that go through all literatures?" says our young Doctor. "I have no doubt the Hindoos have their Epimenides; and that Peter Klaus turns up somewhere or other in the Gaelic stories. However, that is of little importance; it is of importance that Captain John should get some sleep. Hector, come here!"

There was a brief consultation about the length of anchor-chain wanted for the little harbour opposite Kyle Akin: Hector's instructions were on no account to disturb John of Skye. But no sooner had they set about getting the chain on deck than another figure appeared, black among the rigging; and there was a well-known voice heard forward. Then Captain John came aft, and, despite all remonstrances, would relieve his substitute. Rip Van Winkle's sleep had lasted about an hour and a half.

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* Oh, yes, Mr. Yachtsman, you are perfectly correct. Sailing according to strict rules, we ought to have kept Kyle Akin light white: no doubt. But then, you see, some of us had been round this coast once or twice before—perhaps even three or four times. We were not in imminent danger.

And now we steal by the black shores; and that solitary red star comes nearer and nearer in the dusk; and at length we can make out two or three other paler lights close down by the water. Behold! the yellow ports of a steam-yacht at anchor; we know, as our own anchor goes rattling out in the dark, that we shall have at least one neighbour and companion through the still watches of the night.

CHAPTER XV.

TEMPTATION.

BUT the night, according to John of Skye's chronology, lasts only until the tide turns or until a breeze springs up. Long before the wan glare in the east has arisen to touch the highest peaks of the Coolins, we hear the tread of the men on deck getting the yacht under way. And then there is a shuffling noise in Angus Sutherland's cabin; and we guess that he is stealthily dressing in the dark. Is he anxious to behold the wonders of daybreak in the beautiful Loch Alsh, or is he bound to take his share in the sailing of the ship? Less perturbed spirits sink back again into sleep, and contentedly let the *White Dove* go on her own way through the expanding blue-grey light of the dawn.

Hours afterwards there is a strident shouting down the companion-way; everybody is summoned on deck to watch the yacht shoot the Narrows of Kyle Rhea. And the Laird is the first to express his surprise; are these the dreaded Narrows that have caused Captain John to start before daybreak so as to shoot them with the tide? All around is a dream of summer beauty and quiet. A more perfect picture of peace and loveliness could not be imagined than the green crags of the mainland, and the vast hills of Skye, and this placid channel between shining in the fair light of the morning. The only thing we notice is that on the glassy green of the water—this reflected, deep, almost opaque green is not unlike the colour of Niagara below the Falls—there are smooth circular lines here and there; and now and again the bows of the *White Dove* slowly swerve away from her course as if in obedience to some unseen and mysterious pressure. There is not a breath of wind; and it needs all the pulling of the two men out there in the dingy and all the watchful steering of Captain John to keep her head straight. Then a light breeze comes along the great gully; the red-capped men are summoned on board; the dingy is left astern; the danger of being caught in an eddy and swirled ashore is over and gone.

Suddenly the yacht stops as if it had run against a wall. Then, just as she recovers, there is an extraordinary hissing and roaring in the dead silence around us, and close by the yacht we find a great circle of boiling and foaming water, forced up from below and overlapping itself in ever-increasing folds. And then, on the perfectly glassy sea, another and another of those boiling and hissing circles appears, until there is a low rumbling in the summer air like the breaking of distant waves. And the yacht—the wind having again died down—is curiously compelled one way and another, insomuch that John of Skye quickly orders the men out in the dingy again; and again the long cable is tugging at her bows.

"It seems to me," says Dr. Sutherland to our skipper, "that we are in the middle of about a thousand whirlpools."

"Oh, it iss ferry quate this morning," says Captain John, with a shrewd smile. "It not often so quate as this. Ay, it iss sometimes ferry bad here—quite so bad as Corrievreckan; and when the flood-tide is rinnin, it will be rinnin like—shist like a race-horse."

However, by dint of much hard pulling, and judicious steering, we manage to keep the *White Dove* pretty well in mid-current; and only once—and that but for a second or two—get caught in one of those eddies circling in to the shore. We pass the white ferry-house; a slight breeze carries us by the green shores and woods of Glenelg; we open out the wider sea between Isle Ornsay and Loch Hourn; and then a silver tinkle tells us breakfast is ready.

That long, beautiful, calm summer day: Ferdinand and Miranda playing draughts on deck—he having rigged up an umbrella to shelter her from the hot sun; the Laird busy with papers referring to the Strathgovan Public Park; the hostess of these people overhauling the stores and meditating on something recondite for dinner. At last the Doctor fairly burst out a-laughing.

"Well," said he, "I have been in many a yacht; but never yet in one where everybody on board was anxiously waiting for the glass to fall."

His hostess laughed too.

"When you come south again," she said, "we may be able to give you a touch of something different. I think that, even with all your love of gales, a few days of the equinoctials would quite satisfy you."

"The equinoctials!" he said, with a surprised look.

"Yes," said she boldly. "Why not have a good holiday while you are about it? And a yachting trip is nothing without a fight with the equinoctials. Oh, you have no idea how splendidly the *White Dove* behaves!"

"I should like to try her," he said, with a quick delight; but directly afterwards he ruefully shook his head. "No, no," said he, "such a tremendous spell of idleness is not for me. I have not earned the right to it yet. Twenty years hence I may be able to have three months' continued yachting in the West Highlands."

"If I were you," retorted this small person, with a practical air, "I would take it when I could get it. What do you know about twenty years hence?—you may be physician to the Emperor of China. And you have worked very hard; and you ought to take as long a holiday as you can get."

"I am sure," says Mary Avon very timidly, "that is very wise advice."

"In the meantime," says he, cheerfully, "I am not physician to the Emperor of China, but to the passengers and crew of the *White Dove.* The passengers don't do me the honour of consulting me; but I am going to prescribe for the crew on my own responsibility. All I want is, that I shall have the assistance of Miss Avon in making them take the dose."

Miss Avon looked up inquiringly with those soft black eyes of hers.

"Nobody has any control over them but herself—they are like refractory children. Now," said he, rather more seriously, "this night-and-day work is telling on the men. Another week of it and you would see *Insomnia* written in large letters on their eyes. I want you, Miss Avon, to get Captain John and the men to have a complete night's rest to-night—a sound night's sleep from the time we finish dinner till daybreak. We can take charge of the yacht."

Miss Avon promptly rose to her feet.

"John!" she called.

The big brown-bearded skipper from Skye came aft—quickly putting his pipe in his waistcoat-pocket the while.

"John," she said, "I want you to do me a favour now. You and the men have not been having enough sleep lately. You must all go below to-night as soon as we come up from dinner; and you must have a good sleep till daybreak. The gentlemen will take charge of the yacht."

It was in vain that John of Skye protested he was not tired. It was in vain that he assured her that, if a good breeze sprung up, we might get right back to Castle Osprey by the next morning.

"Why, you know very well," she said, "this calm weather means to last for ever."

"Oh, no! I not think that, mem," said John of Skye, smiling.

"At all events we shall be sailing all night; and that is what I want you to do, as a favour to me."

Indeed, our skipper found it was of no use to refuse. The young lady was peremptory. And so, having settled that matter, she sate down to her draught-board again.

But it was the Laird she was playing with now. And this was a remarkable circumstance about the game: when Angus Sutherland played with Denny-mains, the latter was hopelessly and invariably beaten; and when Denny-mains in his turn played with Mary Avon, he was relentlessly and triumphantly the victor; but when Angus Sutherland played with Miss Avon, she, somehow or other, generally managed to secure two out of three games. It was a puzzling triangular duel: the chief feature of it was the splendid joy of the Laird when he had conquered the English young lady. He rubbed his hands, he chuckled, he laughed—just as if he had been repeating one of his own "good ones."

However, at luncheon the Laird was much more serious; for he was showing to us how remiss the Government was in not taking up the great solan question. He had a newspaper cutting which gave in figures—in rows of figures—the probable number of millions of herrings dest every year by the solan-geese. The injury done to the herring-fisheries of this county, he proved to us, was enormous. If a solan is known to eat on an average fifty herrings a day, just think of the millions on millions of fish that must go to feed those nests on the Bass Rock! The Laird waxed quite eloquent about it. The human race were dearer to him far than any gannet or family of gannets.

"What I wonder at is this," said our young Doctor with a curious grim smile, that we had learned to know, coming over his face, "that the solan, with that extraordinary supply of phosphorus to the brain, should have gone on remaining only a bird, and a very ordinary bird, too. Its brain-power should have been developed; it should be able to speak by this time. In fact, there ought to be solan school-boards and parochial boards on the Bass Rock; and commissioners appointed to inquire whether the building of nests might not be conducted on more scientific principles. When I was a boy—I am sorry to say—I used often to catch a solan by floating out a piece of wood with a dead herring on it: a wise bird, with its brain full of phosphorus, ought to have known that it would break its head when it swooped down on a piece of wood."

The Laird sate in dignified silence. There was something occult and uncanny about many of this young man's sayings—they savoured too much of the dangerous and unsettling tendencies of these modern days. Besides, he did not see what good could come of likening a lot of solan-geese to the Commissioners of the Burgh of Strathgovan. His remarks on the herring-fisheries had been practical and intelligible; they had given no occasion for jibes.

We were suddenly startled by the rattling out of the anchor-chain. What could it mean?—were we caught in an eddy? There was a scurrying up on deck, only to find that, having drifted so far south with the tide, and the tide beginning to turn, John of Skye proposed to secure what advantage we had gained by coming to anchor. There was a sort of shamed laughter over this business. Was the noble *White Dove* only a river barge, then, that she was thus dependent on the tides for her progress? But it was no use either to laugh or to grumble; two of us proposed to row the Laird away to certain distant islands that lie off the shore north of the mouth of Loch Hourn; and for amusement's sake we took some towels with us.

Look now how this long and shapely gig cuts the blue water. The Laird is very dignified in the stern, with the tiller-ropes in his hand; he keeps a straight course enough—though he is mostly looking over the side. And, indeed, this is a perfect wonder-hall over which we are making our way—the water so clear that we notice the fish darting here and there among the great brown blades of the tangle and the long green sea-grass. Then there are stretches of yellow sand, with shells and star-fish shining far below. The sun burns on our hands; there is a dead stillness of heat; the measured splash of the oars startles the sea-birds in there among the rocks.

Send the biorlinn on careering,
Cheerily and all together,
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long, strong pull together!
Ho, ro, clansmen!

Look out for the shallows, most dignified of coxswains: what if we were to imbed her bows in the silver sand?—

Another cheer! Our isle appears—
Our biorlinn bears her on the faster!
Ho, ro, clansmen!
A long strong pull together!
Ho, ro, clansmen!

"Hold hard!" calls Denny-mains; and behold! we are in among a network of channels and small islands lying out here in the calm sea; and the birds are wildly calling and screaming and swooping about our heads, indignant at the approach of strangers. What is our first duty, then, in coming to these unknown islands and straits?—why, surely, to name them in the interests of civilisation. And we do so accordingly. Here—let it be for ever known—is John Smith Bay. There, Thorley's Food for Cattle Island. Beyond that, on the south, Brown and Polson's Straits. It is quite true that these islands and bays may have been previously visited; but it was no doubt a long time ago; and the people did not stop to bestow names. The latitude and longitude may be dealt with afterwards; meanwhile the discoverers unanimously resolve that the most beautiful of all the islands shall hereafter, through all time, be known as the Island of Mary Avon.

It was on this island that the Laird achieved his memorable capture of a young sea-bird—a huge creature of unknown species that fluttered and scrambled over bush and over scaur, while Denny-mains, quite forgetting his dignity and the heat of the sun, clambered after it over the rocks. And when he got it in his hands, it lay as one dead. He was sorry. He regarded the newly-fledged thing with compassion; and laid it tenderly down on the grass; and came away down again to the shore. But he had scarcely turned his back when the demon bird got on its legs, and—with a succession of shrill and sarcastic "yawps"—was off and away over the higher ledges. No fasting girl had ever shammed so completely as this scarcely-fledged bird.

We bathed in Brown and Polson's Straits, to the great distress of certain sea-pyots that kept screaming over our heads, resenting the intrusion of the discoverers. But in the midst of it, we were suddenly called to observe a strange darkness on the sea, far away in the north, between Glenelg and Skye. Behold! the long-looked-for wind—a hurricane swooping down from the northern hills! Our toilette on the hot rocks was of brief duration; we jumped into the gig; away we went through the glassy water! It was a race between us and the northerly breeze which should reach the yacht first; and we could see that John of Skye had remarked the coming wind, for the men were hoisting the fore-staysail. The dark blue on the water spreads; the reflections of the hills and the clouds gradually disappear; as we clamber on board the first puffs of the breeze are touching the great sails. The anchor has just been got up; the gig is hoisted to the davits; slack out the main sheet, you shifty Hector, and let the great boom go out! Nor is it any mere squall that has come down from the hills; but a fine, steady, northerly breeze; and away we go with the white foam in our wake. Farewell to the great mountains over the gloomy Loch Hourn; and to the lighthouse over there at Isle Ornsay; and to the giant shoulders of Ard-na-Glishnich. Are not these the dark green woods of Armadale that we see in the west? And southward, and still southward we go with the running seas and the fresh brisk breeze from the north: who knows where we may not be to-night before Angus Sutherland's watch begins?

There is but one thoughtful face on board. It is that of Mary Avon. For the moment, at least, she seems scarcely to rejoice that we have at last got this grateful wind to bear us away to the South and to Castle Osprey.

CHAPTER XVI.

THROUGH THE DARK.

Ahead she goes! the land she knows!

WHAT though we see a sudden squall come tearing over from the shores of Skye, whitening the waves as it approaches us? The *White Dove* is not afraid of any squall. And there are the green woods of Armadale, dusky under the western glow; and here the sombre heights of Dun Bane; and soon we will open out the great gap of Loch Nevis. We are running with the running waves; a general excitement prevails; even the Laird has dismissed for the moment certain dark suspicions about Frederick Smethurst that have for the last day or two been haunting his mind.

And here is a fine sight!—the great steamer coming down from the north—and the sunset is burning on her red funnels—and behold! she has a line of flags from her stem to her topmasts and down to her stern again. Who is on board?—some great laird, or some gay wedding-party?

"Now is your chance, Angus," says Queen T., almost maliciously, as the steamer slowly gains on us. "If you want to go on at once, I know the captain would stop for a minute and pick you up."

He looked at her for a second in a quick, hurt way; then he saw that she was only laughing at him.

"Oh, no, thank you," he said, blushing like a schoolboy; "unless you want to get rid of me. I have been looking forward to sailing the yacht to-night."

"And—and you said," remarked Miss Avon, rather timidly, "that we should challenge them again after dinner this evening."

This was a pretty combination: "we" referred to Angus Sutherland and herself. Her elders were disrespectfully described as "them." So the younger people had not forgotten how they were beaten by "them" on the previous evening.

Is there a sound of pipes amid the throbbing of the paddles? What a crowd of people swarm to the side of the great vessel! And there is the captain on the paddle-box—out all handkerchiefs to return the innumerable salutations—and good-by, you brave Glencoe!—you have no need to rob us of any one of our passengers.

Where does the breeze come from on this still evening?—there is not a cloud in the sky, and there is a drowsy haze of heat all along the land. But nevertheless it continues; and, as the gallant *White Dove* cleaves her way through the tumbling sea, we gradually draw on to the Point of Sleat, and open out the great plain of the Atlantic, now a golden green, where the tops of the waves catch the light of the sunset skies. And there, too, are our old friends Haleval and Haskeval; but they are so far away, and set amid such a bewildering light, that the whole island seems to be of a pale transparent rose-purple. And a still stranger thing now attracts the eyes of all on board. The setting sun, as it nears the horizon-line of the sea, appears to be assuming a distinctly oblong shape. It is slowly sinking into a purple haze, and becomes more and more oblong as it nears the sea. There is a call for all the glasses hung up in the companion-way; and now what is it that we find out there by the aid of the various binoculars? Why, apparently, a wall of purple; and there is an oblong hole in it, with a fire of gold light far away on the other side. This apparent golden tunnel through the haze grows redder and more red; it becomes more and more elongated; then it burns a deeper crimson until it is almost a line. The next moment there is a sort of shock to the eyes; for there is a sudden darkness all along the horizon-line: the purple-black Atlantic is barred against that lurid haze low down in the west.

It was a merry enough dinner-party: perhaps it was the consciousness that the *White Dove* was still bowling along that brightened up our spirits, and made the Laird of Denny-mains more particularly loquacious. The number of good ones that he told us was quite remarkable—until his laughter might have been heard through the whole ship. And to whom now did he devote the narration of those merry anecdotes—to whom but Miss Mary Avon, who was his ready chorus on all occasions, and who entered with a greater zest than any one into the humours of them. Had she been studying the Lowland dialect, then, that she understood and laughed so lightly and joyously at stories about a
d years of age?

ay," the Laird was saying patronisingly to her, "I see
o the peculiar humour of our Scotch stories; it is

English person that can do that. And ye understand the language fine. . . . Well," he added, with an air of modest apology, "perhaps I do not give the pronunciation as broad as I might. I have got out of the way of talking the provincial Scotch since I was a boy—indeed, ah'm generally taken for an Englishman maself—but I do my best to give ye the speerit of it."

"Oh, I am sure your imitation of the provincial Scotch is most excellent—most excellent—and it adds so much to the humour of the stories," says this disgraceful young hypocrite.

"Oh, ay, oh, ay," says the Laird, greatly delighted. "I will admit that some o' the stories would not have so much humour but for the language. But when ye have both! Did ye ever hear of the laddie who was called in to his porridge by his mother?"

We perceived by the twinkle in the Laird's eyes that a real good one was coming. He looked round to see that we were listening, but it was Mary Avon whom he addressed.

"A grumbling bit laddie—a philosopher, too," said he. "His mother thought he would come in the quicker if he knew there was a fly in the milk. '*Johnny*,' she cried out, '*Johnny, come in to your parritch; there's a flee in the milk.*' '*It'll no droon*,' says he. '*What?*' she says, '*grumblin again? Do ye think there's no enough milk?*' '*Plenty for the parritch*,' says he—*kee! kee! kee!*—sharp, eh, wasn't he?—'*Plenty for the parritch*,' says he—ha! ha! ho! ho! ho!"—and the Laird slapped his thigh, and chuckled to himself. "Oh, ay, Miss Mary," he added, approvingly, "I see you are beginning to understand the Scotch humour fine."

And if our good friend the Laird had been but twenty years younger—with his battery of irresistible jokes, and his great and obvious affection for this stray guest of ours, to say nothing of his dignity and importance as a Commissioner of Strathgovan? What chance would a poor Scotch student have had, with his test-tubes and his scientific magazines, his restless, audacious speculations and eager ambitions? On the one side, wealth, ease, a pleasant facetiousness, and a comfortable acceptance of the obvious facts of the universe—including water-rates and steam fire-engines; on the other, poverty, unrest, the physical struggle for existence, the mental struggle with the mysteries of life: who could doubt what the choice would be? However, there was no thought of this rivalry now. The Laird had abdicated in favour of his nephew, Howard, about whom he had been speaking a good deal to Mary Avon of late. And Angus—though he was always very kind and timidly attentive to Miss Avon—seemed nevertheless at times almost a little afraid of her; or perhaps it was only a vein of shyness that cropped up from time to time through his hard mental characteristics. In any case, he was at this moment neither the shy lover nor the eager student; he was full of the prospect of having sole command of the ship during a long night on the Atlantic, and he hurried us up on deck after dinner without a word about that return-battle at bézique.

The night had come on apace, though there was still a ruddy mist about the northern skies, behind the dusky purple of the Coolin hills. The stars were out overhead; the air around us was full of the soft cries of the divers; occasionally, amid the lapping of the water, we could hear some whirring by of wings. Then the red port light and the green starboard light were brought up from the forecastle, and fixed in their place; the men went below; Angus Sutherland took the tiller; the Laird kept walking backwards and forwards as a sort of look-out; and the two women were as usual seated on rugs together in some invisible corner—crooning snatches of ballads, or making impertinent remarks about people much wiser and older than themselves.

"Now, Angus," says the voice of one of them—apparently from somewhere about the companion, "show us that you can sail the yacht properly, and we will give you complete command during the equinoctials."

"You speak of the equinoctials," said he, laughing, "as if it was quite settled I should be here in September."

"Why not?" said she, promptly. "Mary is my witness you promised. You wouldn't go and desert two poor lone women."

"But I have got that most uncomfortable thing, a conscience," he answered; "and I know it would stare at me as if I were mad if I proposed to spend such a long time in idleness. It would be outraging all my theories, besides. You know, for years and years back I have been limiting myself in every way—living, for example, on the smallest allowance of food and drink, and that of the simplest and cheapest—so that if any need arose, I should have no luxurious habits to abandon——"

"But what possible need can there be?" said Mary Avon, warmly.

"Do you expect to spend your life in a jail?" said the other woman.

"No," said he, quite simply. "But I will give you an instance of what a man who devotes himself to his profession may have to do. A friend of mine, who is one of the highest living authorities on *Materia Medica*, refused all invitations for three months, and during the whole of that time lived each day on precisely the same food and drink, weighed out in exact quantities, so as to determine the effect of particular drugs on himself. Well, you know, you should be ready to do that——"

"Oh, how wrong you are!" says Mary Avon, with the same impetuosity. "A man who works as hard as you do should not sacrifice yourself to a theory. And what is it? It is quite foolish!"

"Mary!" her friend says.

"It is," she says, with generous warmth. "It is like a man who goes through life with a coffin on his back, so that he may be ready for death. Don't you think that when death comes it will be time enough to be getting the coffin?"

This was a poser.

"You know quite well," she says, "that when the real occasion offered, like the one you describe, you could deny yourself any luxuries readily enough; why should you do so now?"

At this there was a gentle sound of laughter.

"Luxuries—the luxuries of the *White Dove!*" says her hostess, mindful of tinned meats.

"Yes, indeed," says our young Doctor, though he is laughing too. "There is far too much luxury—the luxury of idleness—on board this yacht to be wholesome for one like me."

"Perhaps you object to the effeminacy of the downy couches and the feather pillows," says his hostess, who is always grumbling about the hardness of the beds.

But it appears that she has made an exceedingly bad shot. The man at the wheel—one can just make out his dark figure against the clear starlit heavens, though occasionally he gets before the yellow light of the binnacle—proceeds to assure her that, of all the luxuries of civilisation, he appreciates most a horse-hair pillow; and that he attributes his sound sleeping on board the yacht to the hardness of the beds. He would rather lay his head on a brick, he says, for a night's rest than sink it in the softest feathers.

"Do you wonder," he says, "that Jacob dreamed of angels when he had a stone for his pillow? I don't. If I wanted to have a pleasant sleep and fine dreams that is the sort of pillow I should have."

Some phrase of this catches the ear of our look-out forward; he instantly comes aft.

"Yes, it is a singular piece of testimony," he says. "There is no doubt of it; I have myself seen the very place."

We were not startled; we knew that the Laird, under the guidance of a well-known Free Church minister, had made a run through Palestine.

"Ay," said he, "the further I went away from my own country the more I saw nothing but decadence and meesery. The poor craytures!—living among ruins, and tombs, and decay, without a trace of public spirit or private energy. The disregard of sanitary laws was something terrible to look at—as bad as their universal beggary. That is what comes of centralisation, of suppressing local government. Would ye believe that there are a lot of silly bodies actually working to get our Burgh of Strathgovan annexed to Glasgow—swallowed up in Glasgow!"

"Impossible!" we exclaim.

"I tell ye it is true. But no, no! We are not ripe yet for those Radical measures. We are constituted under an Act of Parliament. Before the House of Commons would dare to annex the free and flourishing Burgh of Strathgovan to Glasgow, I'm thinking the country far and near would hear something of it!"

Yes; and we think so, too. And we think it would be better if the hamlets and towns of Palestine were governed by men of public spirit like the Commissioners of Strathgovan; then they would be properly looked after. Is there a single steam fire-engine in Jericho?

However, it is late; and presently the women say good-night and retire. And the Laird is persuaded to go below with them also; for how otherwise could he have his final glass of toddy in the saloon? There are but two of us left on deck, in the darkness, under the stars.

It is a beautiful night, with those white and quivering points overhead, and the other white and burning points gleaming on the black waves that whirl by the yacht. Beyond the heaving plain of waters there is nothing visible but the dusky gloom of the Island of Eigg, and away in the south the golden eye of Ardnamurchan lighthouse, for which we are steering. Then the intense silence—broken only when the wind, changing a little, gybes the sails and sends the great boom swinging over on to the lee tackle. It is so still that we are startled by the sudden noise of the blowing of a whale; and it sounds quite close to the yacht, though it is more likely that the animal is miles away.

"She is a wonderful creature—she is indeed," says the man at the wheel; as if every one must necessarily be thinking about the same person.

"Who?"

"Your young English friend. Every minute of her life seems to be an enjoyment to her; she sings just as a bird sings, for her own amusement, and without thinking."

"She can think, too; she is not a fool."

"Though she does not look very strong," continues the young Doctor, "she must have a thoroughly healthy constitution, or how could she have such a happy disposition? She is always contented; she is never put out. If you had only seen her patience and cheerfulness when she was attending that old woman—many a time I regretted it—the case was hopeless—a hired nurse would have done as well."

"Hiring a nurse might not have satisfied the young lady's notions of duty."

"Well, I've seen women in sick-rooms, but never any one like her," said he, and then he added, with a sort of emphatic wonder, "I'm hanged if she did not seem to enjoy that, too! Then you never saw any one so particular about following out instructions."

It is here suggested to our steersman that he himself may be a little too particular about following out instructions. For John of Skye's last counsel was to keep Ardnamurchan light on our port bow. That was all very well when we were off the north of Eigg; but is Dr. Sutherland aware that the south point of Eigg—Eilean-na-Castle—juts pretty far out; and is not that black line of land coming uncommonly close on our starboard bow? With some reluctance our new skipper consents to alter his course by a couple of points; and we bear away down for Ardnamurchan.

And of what did he not talk during the long starlit nigl person who ought to have been look-out sitting contentedly aft, a mute listener?—of the strange fears that must have beset the people who first adventured out to sea; of the vast expenditure of human life that must have been thrown away in the discovery of the most common facts about currents and tides and rocks; and so forth, and so forth. But ever and again his talk returned to Mary Avon.

"What does the Laird mean by his suspicions about her uncle?" he asked on one occasion—just as we had been watching a blue-white bolt flash down through the serene heavens and expire in mid-air.

"Mr. Frederick Smethurst has an ugly face."

"But what does he mean about those relations between the man with the ugly face and his niece?"

"That is idle speculation. Frederick Smethurst was her trustee, and might have done her some mischief—that is, if he is an out-and-out scoundrel; but that is all over. Mary is mistress of her own property now."

Here the boom came slowly swinging over; and presently there were all the sheets of the head-sails to be looked after—tedious work enough for amateurs in the darkness of the night.

Then further silence; and the monotonous rush and murmur of the unseen sea; and the dark topmast describing circles among the stars. We get up one of the glasses to make astronomical observations, but the heaving of the boat somewhat interferes with this quest after knowledge. Whoever wants to have a good idea of forked lightning has only to take up a binocular on board a pitching yacht, and try to fix it on a particular planet.

The calm, solemn night passes slowly; the red and green lights shine on the black rigging; afar in the south burns the guiding star of Ardnamurchan. And we have drawn away from Eigg now, and passed the open sound; and there, beyond the murmuring sea, is the gloom of the Island of Muick. All the people below are wrapped in slumber; the cabins are dark; there is only a solitary candle burning in the saloon. It is a strange thing to be responsible for the lives of those sleeping folk—out here on the lone Atlantic, in the stillness of the night.

Our young Doctor bears his responsibility lightly. He has—for a wonder—laid aside his pipe; and he is humming a song that he has heard Mary Avon singing of late—something about

O think na lang, lassie, though I gang awa',
For I'll come and see ye in spite o' them a',

and he is wishing the breeze would blow a bit harder—and wondering whether the wind will die away altogether when we get under the lee of Ardnamurchan Point.

But long before we have got down to Ardnamurchan, there is a pale grey light beginning to tell in the eastern skies; and the stars are growing fainter; and the black line of the land is growing clearer above the wrestling seas. Is it a fancy that the first light airs of the morning are a trifle cold? And then we suddenly see, among the dark rigging forward, one or two black figures; and presently John of Skye comes aft, rubbing his eyes. He has had a good sleep at last.

Go below, then, you stout-sinewed young Doctor; you have had your desire of sailing the *White Dove* through the still watches of the night. And soon you will be asleep, with your head on the hard pillow of that little state-room; and though the pillow is not as hard as a stone, still the night and the sea and the stars are quickening to the brain; and who knows that you may not perchance after all dream of angels, or hear some faint singing far away?

. . . .

There was Mary Beaton—and Mary Seaton——

. . . .

Or is it only a sound of the waves?

The Apologia of Art.

Any one who has watched at all carefully the rise and progress of the present increased interest in Art matters,—an interest that is so marked as hardly to be overlooked even by the most careless observer, must, I think, have been struck occasionally by a doubt how far the new desire for Art was an honest and intelligent one, and how far it was merely another instance of the sheep-like docility with which the fashion of the moment is followed by our countrymen. And if, instigated by such a doubt, the observer should have pursued his investigations more deeply, and sought to learn from artists, critics, and admirers, what this Art was which they wrought, estimated, or desired, he would have found that it was no easy task to discover any certain resting place on which to base his artistic conceptions, and that the worth of any style of Art was only matter of individual opinion. Nay, if he listened to the opinions of many of these critics and artists, he would have learnt that no such basis could be found. This would have happened, not from the paucity, but the confusion, of counsel, for the air is full of deep-sounding criticisms and earnest appeals to the masses to have a true sympathy with Art. Critics in faultless dress may be seen in our galleries explaining to titled dames "the sweet secret of Lionardo," or the "brooding stillness" of Michelangelo's faces; and in the *salons* of Belgravia fair devotees of the mysteriously æsthetic murmur, amidst the scandals of the season, of nocturnes, harmonies, and reflective sensuousness. Take, however, one of this set aside, and ask him or her to tell you, simply and shortly, what are his canons of Art, upon what ground he forms his judgment and utters his oracles, and a solemn gaze of surprise, mingled with pity, will be your only answer; and, "perverse inquirer that you are," you will be left in the outer darkness of Philistinism. Nothing can be more dangerous than to ask a disciple of this school to state his meaning in clear words, and define his terms,—it is thought to be a positive brutality.

It must be just noticed in passing, that this school of teachers and disciples of the sensuous æsthetic owe their existence to a perversion of the pre-Raphaelite doctrines, which Mr. Ruskin defended so warmly twenty years since. The pictures painted by Holman Hunt, Rossetti, Burne Jones, and Millais, furnished the keynote to the writings of this school, but it is not their merits, but their faults, which criticism has seized upon. When a modern writer declares his idea of Art's mission to be one of "a solid sensuous character"—to represent a land, where "perfect women with their feet on perfect flowers move across our fancy as in twilight," it is easy to discover the source of his inspiration in those early pictures by Mr. Burne Jones and Mr. Rossetti, whose only failing seems to us to consist in their too exclusive devotion to the sensuously beautiful. It is well known to all students of Mr. Ruskin, that their master's teaching leads them to an entirely opposite conclusion; though it is a very curious fact that many of those whose early admiration of the pre-Raphaelites was due to the clear perception of the truth of their work, which they had gained from a study of Mr. Ruskin's writings, have given in their adherence to the new fashion, and become disciples of the new school. No doubt much of this adherence is due to the fact that, if Mr. Ruskin's principles are followed, judgment of Art becomes impossible save with deep knowledge and long experience and labour; while, on the other hand, the judgment simply resting upon sensuous perception can be delivered and maintained wholly without attention to the question of knowledge, and irrespective of its coincidence with natural fact. Thus, if a critic chooses to praise the exquisite tone of an artist's skies, notwithstanding that they are generally painted of a green colour, instead of a blue, he would be demonstrably wrong according to fact and Ruskin; but he would not be wrong at all according to the new theories, unless the critic discovered that sky to be æsthetically defective. This instance may seem an absurd one; in truth, however, it has actually occurred. There is an artist who habitually paints his skies green, and his pictures, especially the "tone" of his skies, have lately received almost universal commendation; though as I heard an eminent Chancery barrister say, plaintively, "I don't like a green sky at noon-day."

If then we cannot learn from the critics any intelligible statement of what Art is, and wherein its chief power consists, can we learn it from the painters themselves? Alas! one look round the Academy walls is a sufficient answer. It is not only that the mass of the pictures are bad as pictures, for they frequently show a high amount of technical skill and conquered difficulty, and they are pretty enough, perhaps too pretty; but wherever we turn we find hardly a picture which seems to have any ulterior motive save that of temporarily pleasing the eye: we find no sign of the painter having any real theory as to the worth of his vocation. One man has studied Michelangelo, and another has studied Gérôme; this painter does draperies, and that one, donkeys; we have "penitents" and "policemen" and "princes" of various kinds, but the student of Angelo hates the student of Gérôme, and the painter of draperies despises him of the donkeys; and the prince, the penitent, and the policeman are all at deadly feud: there is no trace throughout of any one binding principle in which all agree, nor any sign that there is a common factor which is to be found in all their pictures. Nor, as a rule, is there such a common factor,—why? Because nine-tenths of our pictures are articles of manufacture, not works of Art; productions concocted, like a *vol-au-vent*, with a certain amount of skill and care, in which the dients are always much the same, and the result can be predicted w hesitation. The same conclusion will be arrived at by any one who is conversant with artists' uttered opinions, especially such as are delivered freely enough amongst themselves.

It is strictly true that there is no society in which you gain so low an estimate of the worth of Art as in that of the artists. It is not only that they do not believe in one another, that is comprehensible enough, but they do not even as a rule believe in themselves; they have no deep-seated conviction that they are doing good work in, perhaps, the finest profession in the world, but they fix their standards of merit by almost any other test than their own knowledge—whether their pictures are accepted, well hung, praised by the critics, admired by the public, bought by the dealers, engraved, chromoed, or photographed. Of all these things have I found artists very proud; but as far as I can remember I have never known an artist simply proud of having painted a good picture: I mean a picture which he *knew* to be good, but which was not generally appreciated.

The painters seem to have "spoilt the heritage in their gift," to be unaware of what they might become, had they a higher conception of their calling; but whether this be so or no, one thing is certain, and that is, that we cannot learn from them what Art should be, and whence its power comes. It is impossible in speaking on this topic to avoid mentioning the name of him who has given the world the most eloquent and deeply thought-out criticism of our age, Mr. Ruskin. I do not propose to mention here the incalculable services he has rendered to the cause of Art, nor to attempt to define the few points where, as it seems to me, his system is somewhat weak: it is sufficient if I remind my readers that the acceptance of Mr. Ruskin's theories necessarily entails the acceptance of a certain system of morality, and can hardly be dissassociated from a certain form of religion. Now it is my firm conviction that the power of Art over the human mind does not stand or fall with any system of morality whatever, though I, of course, do not mean thereby to insinuate that the two are in any way opposed, or that there is not between them mutual action and reaction. Moreover, at the present time, when religious opinion is shaken to the very roots, it seems particularly necessary that Art should, if possible, rest upon no special moral or religious sanction. In this paper I have attempted to indicate the chief grounds upon which the claims of Art rest—to hint at the source of its influence. For the inadequacy of the treatment I entreat the kind consideration of my readers, it being beyond my power to give, within the limits to which a magazine article is necessarily confined, more than a few suggestions towards the elucidation of so wide a subject.

My paper falls into two chief divisions:—First, What does the strength, or the secret of Art consist in?—why is it that a picture or a statue has any special power over our feelings?—why are we moved by lofty poetry, or great music, or noble painting? Second, How does this bear upon the judgment of Art and its position in our life?

First, then, as to the source of the power of Art.

In the following pages I have throughout used the word "Art" as including the various divisions of sculpture, painting, music, and poetry; but in all the illustrations I have referred to painting alone, partly for the sake of brevity, partly because it is only of that art that I can speak from actual knowledge. First, then, let us consider the source of the power of Art.

If we look back through the records of past ages, back even to the very dawn of civilisation, we find one fact of human life continually presenting itself: this is, the need of man for expression—his overmastering desire, not only to enjoy, but to show that he enjoys—not only for conquest, but also for triumph. There seems to be some inherent tendency which compels mankind to record their sorrows and their joys, to leave upon the earth some trace of their presence. The earliest traces we can find of Art show us that its birth was due to this impulse; the rhythmic song of the savage was raised in moments of rejoicing or mourning; the adorning of his face with paint, and his head with feathers, was but another way of expressing his joy in battle and his confidence in victory. However the idea first dawned in the world, to whatever accident it was due, it can hardly be doubted that even amongst savage tribes the power of measured sound is recognised to be expressive of some feelings in their nature which cannot otherwise find vent. This I believe to be the fundamental fact concerning the origin of Art, namely, that it gave expression to a new element in man's nature. It will be seen in the later portion of this paper what element I imagine that to be, and how it accounts for the power which Art possesses over us; it is here sufficient to note that with the first glimpse of higher instincts in man, directly he ceases to be wholly animal, there comes this need to him of some fuller power of expression—what I suppose Mr. Matthew Arnold would call the instinct of "expansion"—and that he then finds ready to his hand the instrument of Art. At first, no doubt, rhythmic song was simply audible emotion. The brave shouted again and again in his triumph, till he began to find a pleasure in the repeated sound of the syllable, and from thence the transition was easy to the first rude form of song, which consists in repetition of the same words, merely varying the emphasis. To take an instance from the *Never too Late to Mend* of Mr. Charles Reade, the song here being that of an Australian savage:

> I sléw; he fell by the Wurra-gurra river.
> I slew; hé fell by the Wurra-gurra river.
> I slew; he féll by the Wurra-gurra river,—

and so on, changing the accented syllable each time. In the same way, no doubt, songs of mourning came to be chanted, originally having sprung from the relief to suffering afforded by the "dull mechanic exercise, like deep narcotics, numbing pain." No doubt it is somewhat strange to think Doctors of Music and Slade Professors sprung from such small beginnings, and that the savage's ochred face and dirge-like chant are rudimentary forms of the same impulses that, where cultivated, embody themselves in Beethoven's symphonies and Turner's painting. What I wish especially to note is that in its earlier forms Art was almost exclusively the servant of strong emotion, and it was as the exponent of that emotion that its influence was first gained. There were no painting of faces and singing of songs while all went well and smoothly. It was not in the leisure hours in the wigwam that Art arose; but when the blood was stirred with the anticipated joy of battle, or the man flushed with the pride of victory, or crushed with the weight of grief, that he decorated his face or wailed his melody. And for hundreds, if not thousands, of years subsequently, did this use of Art continue. We know how the Children of Israel sang the songs of their captivity by the waters of Babylon; how the Temple was adorned with all precious things in the devotion of its founder. Turn to Egypt, and carry your thoughts for a moment to those vast barren plains of sand and tufted grass, where the Memnons still lift their stony faces to the rising sun, and the Sphinx looks out passionless over the wilderness. Were these mighty monuments raised in the play of idle fancy, and for the amusement of a vacant hour? No; they were the expression of the fervent devotion of the people who built and carved them—a devotion which, however mistaken, was at least sincere.

Track the progress of Art nearer to the dawn of history, till through the still twilight of Greece the sound of Homer's singing once more echoes upon the world. Think of the monuments with which the Greeks filled their temples, of the epithalamium, and the pæan, and the dirge; it was when there was an occasion of excessive joy, praise, or mourning that Art was called in to assist. No heroic deed could be done, or suffering borne, but it must have its record, and that of its protagonist embalmed, not in the words of the historian, but in those of the poet. And still the best efforts of Art were turned towards the deepest feelings of national life and national religion, till the time when the Christian religion first began to assert its power, and in the new revelation of an eternal soul men first began to forget and then to despise the body. It is far beyond my power and the scope of this article even to hint at the long struggle between religion that condemned Art and the innate need of the latter in men's lives. We all know that at one time Art was all but crushed out, even in those countries where she had reached her greatest height, and that after four hundred years of contest with the Church, the force of nature was too strong for the force of the priesthood, and though still consecrated to the service of religion, Art became free to represent her subjects in her own way, and began that great forward movement that culminated in the Renaissance. From the time of Giotto to the time of Raphael, Art, as it were, took the vows of the Church, and so in narrowed but perhaps deepened channels passed into being the sole exponent of the overmastering religious emotions of the age.

Then came the change, the gradual decline of belief, the imported Classical learning and Greek traditions, the use of Art as a plaything for the rich rather than as an inheritance for mankind. How this ended we are all aware—a brief burst of glory, when, set free from every restraining tie, Art ranged at large over the whole field of humanity, and picture, statue, and poem poured forth in a bewilderment of beauty and profusion such as the world had never seen, and then a long gradual decline, of which perhaps we have not seen the worst even yet. No more the rude means by which an uncultivated people expressed their joys and sorrows; no more the vehicle by which a nation recorded their deeds of heroism and triumphs of endurance; no longer the medium through which a fervent belief in spiritual facts incarnated itself in a thousand glories of colour and design; no more even the sign of liberated thought, and the revulsion from the twisted theories of asceticism; no more, in fact, man's most faithful servant, minister, and friend, but simply a means of adding to rich men's luxury and pride, a plaything to amuse the "gentlefolks" in their hours of *ennui*. This is the change that took place—is it wonderful that with it fell the power as well as the beauty of Art?

Let me now try to hint at the reason why Art had been throughout all the time that I have thus rudely sketched chosen as the medium of expression for the most intense feelings of the race; and in this connection I would ask you to remember the following saying of Mr. Matthew Arnold: "But then the ideal life is, in sober and practical truth, no other than man's normal life as we shall one day know it."

There is in man, besides his nature that feels, thinks, and acts, and according to which he regulates his everyday actions, a second, perhaps a higher one. This second or ideal nature (as I may perhaps call it for want of a better term) he only becomes conscious of at rare moments, and even then can scarcely define its influence or its meaning. Which of us has not felt at some time in his life the thrill of a finer existence run through him, like a melody of music opening out to his soul vague possibilities beside which his loftiest aims and dearest wishes waxed pale and faint? Who has not known what it is to stand for once at least in his life, with, as Carlyle says, "eternity behind him and before," face to face with the great secret of existence. I do not mean by this the times of aspiration and longing, when—

> We look before and after,
> And pine for what is not;

but rather those when we look neither to the future nor the past, but are filled we know not how with some diviner fire than was ever laid upon an altar, are swept into the current of some fuller being, which takes imperious possession of our souls. Even as—

> A star sees the sun and falters,
> Touched to death by diviner eyes,

so in these moments do our commonplace desires, joys, and sorrows cease to have power over us. That such moments do come to all of us will hardly be denied, however different be the interpretation which we may place upon them. With that interpretation I am not here concerned; but of whatever nature they may be, whether they are simply emotions due to certain states of the sensuous organism, or whether they are of purely spiritual origin, they prove in us the existence of some element which our ordinary life is powerless to explain, some capacity for feeling of which we are commonly unconscious, and which we are ignorant how to satisfy. Let me here just note that so far from being a sensuous state, the one to which I refer seems to overwhelm the senses in quite as great a degree as it overlooks the intellect.

Now I maintain that this ideal or spiritual element is as essential a portion of our being as the intellect and the senses, and that therefore any expression of man's nature which leaves it out of account and omits that which has the power at certain periods of utterly overwhelming all thought and feeling—any such expression must be defective and partial. It is here that we discover the reason for the universality of Art, for by it alone can we express the three sides of our nature—the material, the intellectual, and the spiritual. This is why from the earliest ages men have turned in their success, their rejoicing, their sorrow, and their hope, and called Art to their assistance, for in all true art there may be found these three constituent elements, and it is the presence of the third, which is the vital portion of all fine art, for it is in that third element that Art is wholly without a rival. Think for a minute of the pleasure given by a great picture or a great statue—of what kind is it? Our intellect, no doubt, is pleased with the conception, our senses charmed with the beauty, but is that all? Surely not, surely there is to be traced another quality more powerful than either of the other two, due to the spirit of the artist, which (how, we know not) exists for ever in his work—something which for ever answers to our souls, as the beauty of line and colour do to our senses, and the beauty of the idea does to our intellects. Analyse a work of Art as you will, its greatest merit will always be that which is left when we have subtracted all cataloguable qualities; the essence of what makes it imperishable, is one that you cannot name. Why has the world listened to the story of the Trojan war for three thousand years? Why is a Venus by Titian, a Madonna by Raphael, different to all other Venuses and Madonnas? Why, but because in Homer or Titian or Raphael or Michelangelo, or any other of the great artists of the world, the spirit penetrated and suffused the form; that in one shape or another their works appeal to our whole nature, that their elements are at the same time physical, intellectual, and spiritual.

If we grant then, that it was owing to its power of given adequate representation to the whole nature of man, that Art became the exponent of his emotions, we may well be asked, Why it was that only in harmonies of colour and sound would this whole nature be shown? Why is it that language cannot give the same degree of meaning? To this I can only suggest a possible answer. For our definite thoughts and emotions we can find words which shall paint them with far greater clearness than Art can ever do; the emotion of poets, for instance, can be analysed and detailed in prose to a far greater extent than would be possible in either a picture or a poem, though in the latter we might give an instance of the passion that should light up our prose analysis with a fuller meaning. But when the spiritual element has to be grasped in words, we find ourselves comparatively powerless; an instrument is not subtle enough for the tune we wish to play upon it, words are too hard, cold, and definite to express the feeling we would put into them. Here it is that Art steps in to our rescue, talking to us, as it were, in two languages at once, supplementing the deficiencies of language by the harmonies of colour and line. The subject and its correct drawing may well be compared to language expressing the emotion and the thought; the combinations of line and colour, by which the artist expresses his idea, stand in the relation of the spiritual element to the rest of the picture. And as it is true that the vital power of any scene or beauty is one which we alone cannot put into words, so the vital power of any work of great Art is that spiritual element which has unconsciously to itself breathed its influence over the master's mind and his hands' work.

It is worth noting how this theory explains the eternal power of a great work of Art, for it is the spiritual element of man which remains the same through all changes of feeling or of thought. The pride of life, ardent patriotism, and heroic endurance, which formed the Greek ideal of manhood, has little in common with the doubts, difficulties, and discoveries of our century, and were the vital power in their art dependent upon these qualities it would long since have ceased to interest us. But the spiritual element which elevated men and women into ideals of beauty is with us still, though with changing circumstance it has changed its aim. Where do you think the divinity of those old statues came from? Did it arise from the big muscles and smooth skins of the models who sat for them? No, the divinity was then, as it is or should be now, in the artist's mind, in the meaning which he saw through his spiritual insight. People talk vaguely about the spirit of beauty in these Greek statues, but the same loveliness (though not the same amount of technical perfection) is to be found in all great works of Art as in these, and it arises from the painter or the sculptor having expressed in the work not only his sensuous and intellectual, but, chief of all, his spiritual insight. Says George Eliot, "A woman's arm touched the soul of a great sculptor two thousand years ago, so that he wrought an image of it for the Parthenon that moves us still, as it clasps lovingly the time-worn marble of a headless trunk." What is it that moves us still? the beauty of the marble curves alone? Surely not, for if so our admiration must be of the same kind, though infinitely inferior to that we bestow upon the ordinary every-day reality. Or is it the fineness of the execution, its perfection of delicacy and strength?

None of these would move us to aught but critical admiration, cold as it is clear. No, the essential loveliness is that which has passed into the marble from the soul of the sculptor, it is his feeling which we are brought into contact with, his love which moves our own. This is why all schools of painting have inevitably ended in lowering the standard of work, for after all a school is nothing but the attempt to produce works like those of a given master. And as the vital principle of that master's conception lay in a quality inimitable by his pupils, the attempt is a similar one to that of making a living body from the accurate imitation of a wax figure. The first condition of an artist being this finer sight, which reveals to him depths of thought and emotion, which are hidden from his brethren, how can he communicate this insight to his pupils, and how without it can they even comprehend the meaning of his work? The one indispensable thing for Art, as for thought, is to give it plenty of freedom, and fresh air; it must "pipe, but as the linnets sing," if it is to pipe at all; you cannot make it like the

> Trained boudoir bullfinch
> That pipeth the semblance of a tune and mechanically draweth up water.

When Tintoretto puts upon his studio wall "the design of Michelangelo and the colour of Titian," he is not only making a foolish boast, but one which it is impossible he should fulfil. Nor should we have been anything but losers if he could have fulfilled it. Angelo and Titian combined could not have given us anything but a half-hearted copy of each; far better, in every way, is Tintoretto's own work, perfectly individual and original. I do not mean by this that artists do not gain immensely from the work of their elders, but that they never gain by trying to subdue their own work into what they admire. No doubt that the admiration for Titian's colour and Michelangelo's design had the most marked effect upon Tintoretto in raising his ambition; and, by placing before him a standard of almost unparalleled grandeur, he ultimately reached a perfection which he could otherwise have hardly dreamt of.

Let me beg my reader's patience for a few moments while I shortly recapitulate the theory above expressed. I claim for Art that by it alone can the whole of man's nature be expressed; and that in all great works of Art the three elements of the intellectual, the emotional, and the spiritual, are to be found.

I maintain further that the vital quality in all fine Art is the presence of this spiritual element, this deeper insight which endows with new meaning whatever it touches. And regarding this element as the highest in man's nature, I consider that to be the highest Art in which the proportion of the spiritual insight to the intellectual meaning and the sensuous perception is the greatest.

There is an especial danger of seeming to write obscurely upon this subject, as the quality of which I am speaking is one that defies strict analysis; but I hope that my meaning in the above sentences will be plain to those of my readers who wish to understand it; and for the rest, they are welcome to find it as obscure as may suit their purpose.

It may be thought by some that the above definition of Art-value has a tendency to deprive Art of its primary quality of beauty; such, however, is not the case. To those who have studied either the beauty of nature or man with any attention, the truth that beauty cannot be found merely in outside colour, or any wholly sensuous perfection of line, becomes clearly manifest. Take the most perfect photograph of Nature that any great photographer (say Mr. Vernon Heath or Mr. Frith) can produce for you, and I defy you to feel the same pleasure in it as you would from a very imperfect pencil sketch of the same scene. Why is it that the defective gives more pleasure than the perfect?—why does the "apparatus that cannot lie" move us less than the work produced by a very fallible instrument? Simply because behind the first there is nothing but an arrangement of lenses; and behind the second there is a human being whose spirit, unconsciously to himself, passes into the work. To the man, the man appeals. Could we get an apparatus that was æsthetic enough to look at photographs, it would doubtless recognise and enjoy the work of a brother-machine.

The highest beauty is fraught with spiritual meaning, and is indeed impossible without it; and one of the points on which I wish to insist most is, that all the higher qualities of pictorial beauty cannot be had without this finer insight and deeper feeling.

Will any one imagine that this theory commits them to a didactic art, a sort of "Miss Edgeworth painting" and sculpture? Such would be the very reverse of my meaning. No man can order himself to feel such and such things. No one can penetrate behind the veil in order to support anything, no matter how righteous; or impose any truth, no matter how edifying.

Nor does this theory of the worth of Art tend to narrow its range or confine it in any way to subjects of lofty thought or ideal beauty. It is in trivial events, scenes, and passions, as well as in those of greater importance, that genius may find occasion for its work. Read what George Eliot says upon an analogous point in the *Mill on the Floss*:—

> The pride and obstinacy of millers and other insignificant people, whom you pass unnoticingly on the road every day, have their tragedy too; but it is of that unwept, hidden sort, that goes from generation to generation, and leaves no record—such tragedy, perhaps, as lies in the conflict of young souls, hungry for joy, under a lot made suddenly hard for them, under the dreariness of a home where the morning brings no promise with it, and where the unexpectant discontent of worn and disappointed parents weighs on the children like a damp thick air, in which all the functions of life are depressed; in such tragedy as lies in the slow or sudden death that follows on a bruised passion, though it may be a death that finds only a parish funeral.

No function of Art seems to me to be nobler than the one which is suggested in the above lines. To penetrate the mask of comm circumstance and familiar indifference that spreads between the rich and the poor; to show them governed by the same passions, subject to the same needs, and crushed by the same sorrows, as their more fortunate brethren; to find in the death of a vagrant as great an element of pathos as in that of a Cæsar; in a word, to show that the same heart beats beneath frieze, fustian, and broadcloth coats—this, at any rate, is a legitimate sphere for Art, and one in which its very highest qualities may find fitting exercise.

Let us see the bearing of this theory upon what is commonly called Academic Art, that is, on a species of Art which exacts from its disciples that they should be governed by certain laws of composition, chiaroscuro, and even subject and manner of drawing, such as have been evolved from the traditions or examples of the old Italian Masters.

Academic Art may be briefly defined as the endeavour to paint actions in a way which could never have taken place, with the idea of thereby creating a pleasing effect upon the eye of the beholder. The creed of those who adhere to this school is this: A picture is not to be judged by any other rules than those of pictures, that is to say, you must not blame a picture for being unnatural, or uninteresting, or meaningless, or even absurd, or all or any of these; but you must simply notice whether the effect produced by the lines upon the eye is a pleasing one, whether the figures are arranged in obedience to the laws of composition, whether the light and shade are evenly distributed and skilfully opposed, whether the figures have dignity of gesture and form, and so on. Plainly stated, this sounds as if it were a burlesque, but it is strictly and literally the creed of Academists, though they would probably hesitate to write it as clearly as I have done.

If this be the end and aim of Art, I confess myself a "Philistine" at once; better never have another picture in the world, and then go on adding absurdity to absurdity and thinking it to be Art. How long will it be, I wonder, ere all the dreary formulas of the schools cease to be heard among us; when a picture will be judged, not by its accordance with empirical rules, but in accordance with established truth; when our students are taught to put thought as well as drawing, feeling as well as colour, into their work?

Fortunately, however, Academic Art is dying in England, dying slowly of inanition. Though it is still taught, it is but little practised —the people have practically declared that they will have none of it. It is more important to say a few words of the place which the realistic Art of the present day should hold according to this theory. In so far as it finds its subjects in the realism of passing events, fashions, and amusements, it may claim the merit of showing future generations one phase of our social life, but can hardly be considered seriously from any æsthetic point of view. So far from possessing the elements which are essential, it possesses scarcely more than one, for it can hardly be called intellectual, and certainly not spiritual. It is chiefly the exponent of low forms of sensuous emotion—*low* forms, because the details of dress, furniture, and ornament must be considered comparatively inferior ways of raising in us the emotion of pleasure or interest. When, however, this realism, as is most frequently the case, is connected with some subject of emotional interest, as, for instance, when a young painter in the Academy of this year painted the interior of a modern church, giving every detail and pew, candlesticks, pavement, &c., with scrupulous fidelity, and in addition depicted a young bride coming down the aisle, leaning upon the arm of an elderly husband, while her young lover watched her with reproachful eyes from a side pew,—here we had both the intellectual and the emotional elements in the little story clearly and forcibly expressed: the realism of the accessories, vulgar as were the details of new pew, aisle, and bridal dresses, was heightened in its value by the skill with which the artist had conveyed the sentiment, though it was but the sentiment of a hackneyed subject. The great defect in the picture (if the artist will pardon us for noticing it) was that he had not been possessed with his subject and its inner meaning so much as with the effective details by which he might surround it; he did not remember or understand that the emotions of reproach, sorrow, and love would be only vulgarised by *insisting* upon details of furniture and dress. He had inverted the relative proportions, and thrown in a hint of emotion to increase the interest of his minute painting, instead of bringing his minute painting to the enforcement of his meaning.

I dwell upon this point rather as it indicates one of the besetting fallacies of the English school at this moment, and curiously enough it springs from the practice of two thoroughly different schools of Art. The style of painting which has been made popular during the last five-and-twenty years by several of our elder Academicians and their followers, and which finds its highest possible exponent in the works of the French painter Meissonier, whatever merits it may possess in other respects, has had for its chief aim the realistic rendering of costume and inanimate accessories of all kinds. The actors in the pictorial scenes by painters of this school, which have hung, and do hang, year by year, on the walls of our Academy, have no life, no individuality apart from the clothes in which they were dressed, nor has there been in the majority of their works any sign that the painter aimed at aught beyond a careful and pictorial transcription of certain outward facts. This represents one of the lowest of our schools of realism, and it must be noticed that it consists of a very low form of Art—that, properly speaking, it is not Art at all, and has hardly a claim to be considered in a different light to the picture which the fashionable upholsterer paints for us on the front of a coalscuttle. The second school of realists in England have sprung from what is generally known as the pre-Raphaelite movement—a movement which had for its motive power the revolt against the traditions of historical composition and "the grand style," which a few clever and earnest students perceived led to nothing except half-hearted reproductions of the work of former times. It must suffice here to say that these painters took as their watchword "Reality," and that they agreed to paint their figures and scenes as they saw them, and their subjects as they might have actually taken place. After much ridicule and many struggles, they became a real influence in the world of Art, and from them has sprung a school of natural realists, who apply (chiefly to landscape painting) their precepts of literal truth. The great difference between the art produced by this school, and by that which we have above spoken of, is that the pre-Raphaelite realists are copying something which is so essentially beautiful that their work has always great traces of that beauty, besides which the earnestness of the endeavour to be true to the great facts of Nature has a wholly different and far more ennobling effect upon the spirit of their painting than their endeavour to be true to the intricacies of a ruff or the legs of a Chippendale table. Feeling the greatest possible sympathy with the pre-Raphaelite form of landscape painting, I am yet bound to point out that in my opinion it errs and fails in exactly the way in which, according to the theory of Art above given, it might be expected to fail. It is possible to serve, even though one's master is truth; we may be under bondage to strict accuracy and miss truths of finer meaning. The great drawback to pre-Raphaelite landscape is that it commonly substitutes small patches of beauty for the grandeur of nature as a whole. The temptation to do so is almost irresistible, nay, the very excellences of the school tend this way, for the perfect fidelity to the detail of Nature both in colour and form is almost certain to entail a preference for those portions of true beauty which can be adequately rendered.

Again, any one who will go and look at the large landscape by Rubens in the National Gallery, or the "Crossing the Brook," by Turner, or even the "Mousehold Heath," by old Chrome, and then compare either with the small picture of Jerusalem and the Valley of Jehoshaphat, which hangs in the first room of the same exhibition, will, I think, agree with me when I say that the latter,* with all its minute beauty, lacks the grandeur and open-air feeling of the former works. I conceive this comparative pettiness to be due to the fact that this school work has been produced under the false impression that truth of detail, if carried far enough, will give all the beauty of Nature, that in fact the parts, if carefully collected and arranged, will make the whole. It is logically true, but æsthetically false. The one essential of a work of Art being the spiritual element that we have endeavoured to describe, any practice which tends to put before it the details by which it has to be shown, makes an exactly similar error to that of a teacher, who, wishing to make his pupil understand a verse of Shelley, should cause him to parse every word, and forbid him to read it as a whole. It is true that the highest possible landscape art can only be reached by the perfect understanding of detail, but that understanding must never be put forward as the chief value and aim of the work. That Nature is wonderfully beautiful in herself no one will deny, but the beauty of Nature in a work of Art is not that cold loveliness which a camera or lens (even if it centred in colour as well as grace) can produce for us, but in its relation to the spirit of man, to his hopes, passions, and sorrows; and no painting of landscape has power to move us which omits from its record the human element.

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* It is a very fine example of its class, by Mr. Seddon, who was one of the original sympathisers with the pre-Raphaelites, and who lived for several years at Jerusalem, with Mr. Holman Hunt, while painting the above-mentioned picture.

As an instance of true modern Art in landscape painting may be adduced the work of Mr. Albert Goodwin, one of our most original, and, I fear must be added, one of our least generally appreciated painters. The two little pictures of his in this year's Academy, illustrating the Voyages of Sindbad the Sailor, were, in their small way, perfect examples of fine imaginative Art. Truth of nature in the rendering of atmospheric effect and delicate veracity of detail were to be found in them, as also was beauty of form and colour. And there was besides these, suffusing the whole picture, that amount of creative imagination, of penetration into the very essence of the subject, that I have dwelt upon as the vital quality of Art, and which we find in its greatest height in the landscape work of Turner.

Let us just note how this theory bears upon the spuriously classical works which are produced by some of our most celebrated Academicians. The attempt is, by copying the Greek style of subject and treating it as far as possible in the Greek manner, to produce a work of equal or similar beauty; but does anybody think that the way in which the Greek felt and thought can have much kinship with the feeling of the nineteenth century? And if it has not, is not the attempt of our artists vain to embody a religion in which they do not believe, and which, not believing, they cannot reproduce? In so far as the love of beauty is common to them and us, we may produce works of similar spirit—witness, for instance, those of Mr. Albert Moore—but directly we attempt to embody the conceptions of their poets, or scenes in which the national characteristics of the race should appear, we must certainly fail. We shall either paint without feeling at all, and so produce a classical outside without meaning or life; or we shall put into the picture our nineteenth-century ideas, hopes, doubts, and difficulties, and so compose a monstrous anachronism. Exactly similar obstacles stand in the way of those who (for instance, like Mr. Poynter) endeavour to rival Michelangelo, or any other favourite Italian master, in his own style. The underlying beauty in Angelo's work is not his mastery of anatomy, or his grand disposition of the human body in his compositions, or the sublimity of his conception, though all these are great merits; it is that which, working upon his knowledge, gave life and beauty to these, and from which his merits cannot be dissevered and coldly copied. Immensely useful, of course, as a shining light of what has been achieved, these giants of Greece and Italy are pernicious in the highest degree directly they are made models for slavish imitation. Every man who has the power of being an artist at all has in him something which (throughout this paper) I have called spiritual insight, and this he can no more impart to or take from another artist, no matter how great, than he can check the sea or the wind. It is necessary to insist upon this point, as hundreds of Art-students are yearly ruined by being urged by their instructors to paint in certain ways, in imitation of certain men, and so gradually come to think that if their work is to be right it must be right in one given way.

In conclusion, how does this theory consist with the two great opinions held upon Art by the majority of the inartistic, which may be briefly described as, first, the theory of its triviality; second, the theory of its immorality?

With regard to the first, it shows that by Art alone can the whole nature of man find complete expression: that it is only in the methods of Art that he can, at the same time, gratify his perceptions of sense and give free play to the thoughts of his intellect and the emotions of his spirit. It extends the range of Art to every fact of nature and life in which the whole man can feel an interest; it removes from Art all the accidents of fashion, and mere pettinesses of colour and detail, which are incapable of moving our hearts or elevating our minds; it makes the greatest artist him who, possessing not only high thoughts and great aspirations, but also all sensuous perceptions of beauty, embodies these in his work, and who tells us that in this sense, or in this action, we may find such music as there is in immortal souls—

> Though while this muddy vesture of decay
> Doth grossly close it in, we cannot hear it.

And last, of its significances: it shows that Art may hint to us of a meaning we cannot fathom—of a world we cannot see, and keep alive in hearts perhaps that have no other faith, a whisper of the far-off Heaven, in which they once believed, and for which they still hope.

It is unnecessary that I should defend Art from the charges of its immorality. I must have expressed myself obscurely indeed, if my readers do not perceive how wholly inconsistent is the theory which I have endeavoured to suggest, with the purely sensuous interpretation of Art too common (as I said in the beginning of this paper) with a certain set of fashionable æstheticians. Art, for Art's sake, is their motive, than which nothing seems to me more noxious, or more untrue. Art, for man's sake, is the true and only reading: if Art cannot be defended from that point of view, it cannot be defended from any; and it is because I believe so sincerely that it is one of the greatest influences in the world for good, that I have given my best endeavours for some years to making a true conception of its power manifest, and attacking those sham forms of Art-culture, Art-practice, and Art-criticism which are prevalent just now.

There are those, I know it well, who deny to Art any such place in the social scheme, as I here claim for it; who maintain that it can only be regarded as a toy, one of those which we do not throw aside with childish years, but which nevertheless is scarcely more useful to us than the coloured balls and untearable picture-books of our infancy. Unfortunately this opinion seems to gather weight from the want of principles and careless indifference of many of our artists. How can we expect the people to believe in the virtue of a priesthood who no longer feel assured of the worth of their vocation, and who practise their rites more in accordance with the voice of popular opinion than in deference to the instruction from within the shrine? There is a proneness to substitute mere labour and accuracy of drawing and colour in a picture for the more subtle influences of feeling, imagination, and meaning that goes far to render the English artist the dull fellow he appears to be, on a general survey of his works. This notion that you can produce Art as you can produce chairs and tables, without sympathy, insight, or aught but mere mechanical dexterity, is at the root of a large portion of the bad artistic works of the present time; and another side of it is that which Mr. Ruskin has attacked so thoroughly and successfully in his works, namely, that the merit of a work of Art is a mere matter of individual opinion, and not an ascertainable fact. This last fallacy is the frequent refuge of those who, having given no study to the subject, wish to place themselves upon an equality of critical judgment, and to find an excuse for their crude opinions. "We like it," they say of some bad picture, "and you do not, and there is an end of the matter, since it is only a matter of taste!"

There will always be, no doubt, two parties amongst those who worship the Beautiful: the one those to whom sensuous beauty is the only conceivable one; the other, those who do not greatly care for sensuous perfection, unless there can be traced in it some elements of spiritual life. What I have tried to show in this way is, that the last and not the first school of artists have the right on their side; that the influence over the heart of man which Art has always exercised, and will always exercise, does not lie alone in the fact of the soft pleasure it gives to the sensuous portion of our natures, but in the appeal it makes to our whole being, physical, mental, and spiritual. And that its rank is determined, as is that of man himself, by the extent to which it can subdue its lower elements in the service of its highest qualities. This is the Apologia of Art, that, besides casting a glory of its own over the commonplace, and discovering for us new beauties in our every-day lives and scenes, it also accompanies and helps us, in the moments when our nature is raised into fullest being, and interprets for us thoughts, feelings, and aspirations for which we have not even a name.

H. Q.

An Elderly Romance.

CHAPTER I.

THERE is a house in Dinglefield, standing withdrawn in a mass of shrubbery, and overshadowed by some fine trees, which has been called by the name of Brothers-and-Sisters for a longer time than any one in the village can recollect. It presents to the outside world who peep at it over the palings, between the openings which have been carefully cut to afford to its inmates pleasant glimpses of the lower part of the Green, on which the cricket-matches are played, the aspect of a somewhat low white house, with no apparent entrance, and a great number of chimneys of different heights, chimneys which I suppose suggested to some wag the unequal stature of a family of children, and thus procured the house its popular name. In the map of the estate on which Dinglefield stands it is called Bonport House, and this is how the General's letters, I need not say, are addressed. But yet the common name sticks, all the more because of the character of the family who now inhabit that hospitable place. It is literally a house of brothers and sisters. General Stamford, the head of the family, is a hale and ruddy old warrior of sixty, who has seen a great deal of service, and who has been knocked about, battered, and beaten from the age of sixteen until now: sent to every unfavourable place where a soldier without money or influence has to go, and engaged in every fierce little war in which it has been the pleasure of England to indulge without any consideration for the feelings of her fighting men. He has been at Bermuda; he has been on the Gold Coast; he has braved all the fevers and fought all the savages within our ken; and outliving all this, has settled down with his sisters and brother in our village, one of the most peaceable yet the most active of men. It is for this last reason that General George (as we have all got to call him, partly because there are other generals about, and to say General Stamford every time you mention a man in a neighbourhood like ours is fatiguing, and partly for kindness) has so many things on his hands. He is one of the directors of our railway; he is on several boards in town, where he goes almost every day punctual as clockwork, brushed to perfection, and driven to the station by Miss Stamford in the pony-carriage, which always takes him there, and always meets him when he comes back. Miss Stamford is the eldest sister of all. She is very like her brother, and there never was such a tender brotherly-sisterly union as between these two old people. They have known each other so long, longer than any husband and wife. They have the recollections of the nursery quite fresh in their minds, as if it were yesterday—when it was always Ursula who found George's books for him, and gave him good advice, and most of her pocket-money, and looked after his linen when he was at home, and his pets when he went away. Miss Stamford knows all the occurrences of her brother's chequered life better than he does himself, and recollects everything, and knows all his friends, even if she never saw them, and can recall to him the exact relationship between the young man who comes to him with an introduction, and old Burton who was killed by his side among the Maoris; or Percival who died of the yellow fever at Barbadoes. She is his remembrancer, his counsellor, half his heart, and a good part of his mind; and, indeed, there is nobody among us who ever thinks of the one without thinking of the other. What she was doing with herself all those years when George was fighting on the outskirts of civilisation, or sweltering in the tropics, none of us know, but some of us wonder now and then. Did nothing ever happen to Miss Stamford on her own account? has all her life been only a reflection of her brother's? But this is what nobody can tell.

The next member of the family in due succession is Mrs. St. Clair, who is the second sister, and who has been so long a widow that she has forgotten that this is not the normal condition of women. I don't think, for my part, that she remembers much about her husband, though he did exist, I have every reason to believe. Her married life was a little episode, but the family is all her idea of ordinary existence. That little sip of matrimony, however, has made her different from the rest. I cannot quite tell how. There is a tone that is more mellow; she is a little more—stout, if I may use such a word: her outlines are a little fuller, both of mind and body. Miss Stamford takes care of the house and the General, but Mrs. St. Clair takes care of the parish. She is the Rector's lay curate, and a most efficient one. It is she who watches over, not only the poor, but the district visitors, and even the curates, whose juvenile importance she makes very light of, keeping down all rampant sacerdotalism. When a young man comes into a parish full of very fine ideas of priestly state and dignity, and fortified besides by all the talk in the newspapers about adoring ladies and worked slippers, it is hard for him to find himself confronted by a lively middle-aged woman who has no particular respect for him, and knows all his kind, and all their little ways. Mrs. St. Clair was of the greatest use to us all in this particular. She kept us from innovations. Our excellent Rector has not a very strong will, and how far he might have been induced to go in respect to vestments, or candles, or even Gregorians, it would be hard to say, but for Mrs. St. Clair, who kept the young men down. Everybody who has ever been at Dinglefield has met her about the roads, with her grey hair neatly braided, and her soft brown eyes smiling, yet seeing everything, and a basket in her hand. She always had the basket; and the basket, if it had been examined, would have been found always to contain something which was to do somebody good.

Miss Sophy, the third sister, was much younger than the others, and she was one of those who are always young. Nothing had changed much with her since she was eighteen. She lived quite the same sort of life as she had done then, and wore the same kind of dresses; and felt, I believe, very much the same. Life had never progressed into a second chapter with her, and she felt no need of a second chapter. She did little commissions for everybody, and carried little messages, and played croquet, and went out to tea, and performed her little pieces on the piano with undiminished and undiminishing satisfaction. She was as kind, as sweet, and as innocent as any girl need be; and, in short, she was a girl—but of forty-five. The reader may think this is a sneer; but nobody ever thought of sneering at Miss Sophy; that malign amusement found no encouragement in her simplicity. You smiled at her, perhaps, then blushed for yourself, abashed at your own heartlessness in finding anything absurd in a creature so guileless and true. She had no particular *rôle* of her own in the family, except to be kind to everybody, and to do what everybody wished, as far as a merely mortal sister could. If there was one thing that she thought especially her duty and privilege, it was to look after the faith and morals of the other brother, who occasionally formed part of the household. He was a barrister, an old bachelor like the rest, who had chambers in town and came when he pleased to Brothers-and-Sisters. He spent the Sundays there, and Miss Sophy took him to church. She would have made him say the Collect if she could; and, indeed, always questioned him about his opinions, and argued with him on the Sunday afternoons upon the points on which he was astray. And when I add that Mr. Charles was a clever lawyer and a man of the world, and astray upon a great many points, it will be seen that Sophy had her hands full. She argued herself into palpitations and headaches, but I fear her arguments were less potent than her intention. This energetic effort to keep Charles right in theology was, so far as any one knew, the only duty exclusively hers.

These delightful people were only a small part of the family to which they belonged. Behind them was a bodyguard of married brothers and sisters, a sort of milky way of family plenitude, from which arose an army of nephews and nieces who were always looming about, sure to come down upon us in force when anything was going on. There were always men to be had for a dance, and actors for theatricals on application to the Stamfords. "Tell me how many you want, and give me two or three days' notice," Mrs. St. Clair would say, and then Sophy would write the letters, and after a while the air of Dinglefield would be thick with nephews. There was room for an untold number of them in the old, many-chimnied house. When it was the time for garden parties, or when there was a bazaar for some charity, it was the turn of the nieces, who came like the swallows, with a skimming of wings, and a chirping and chattering of pleasant voices. It was astonishing how soon we got to know them all, discriminating Sophy Humphreys from Sophy Thistlethwaite, and both from Sophy Stamford number one, called Soff, or Henry's Sophy, to distinguish her from Sophy Stamford number two, who was called Fia, or William's Sophy. Sophy was the pet name of the race; the mother's name from whom they all sprang.

And it would be difficult to give any stranger an idea of the addition they were to our limited society at Dinglefield. Go when you would the genial house was always open, a pleasant party always to be found on the lawn in summer, by the drawing-room fire in winter. They had their anxieties and sorrows like other people, no doubt; but not so many as other people, for the time was over for personal pangs and trouble; and when one nephew out of twenty goes a little wrong, or one niece (also out of twenty) makes a bad marriage, the pang is not so keen or so lasting as when it is a son or a daughter who has broken down. And this was the worst that could now befall the house. It was a house made for the comfort and succour of every aching heart or troubled mind within its range. There was nothing they would not do for their neighbours and friends; how much more for their relations. General George lent his kindly ear, a little, just a little, hard of hearing (but no, not hard of anything, the word is unworthy to be used in his connection), to every request. He would do his best to place your son, or invest your money; or order early salmon or turbot for you when you were going to have a dinner-party. I should not have liked to ask Mr. Charles Stamford to order my fish, but I have no doubt he too would have done it, had he been asked; and as for the sisters, they would, as the poor people said, put their hand to anything.

One day Sophy came into my cottage with an air of some excitement to tell me that George had sent a telegram, and was bringing down a large party of his fellow-directors to dinner. "Will you come, dear Mrs. Musgrave? Fancy! how shall we ever entertain these twelve business gentlemen?" said Sophy, in a flutter. "If only some of the girls had been here. Not that the girls would have cared for these old creatures. But the worst is that Ursula herself is away. She went up to town this morning to see her great friend, Mrs. Biddulph. And though she will be back for dinner, all the responsibility will be upon Frances and me. I must run away now this moment to James the gardener, to see how many strawberries he can give us. Don't you think it was tiresome of George to bring down so many upon us without warning? It is just like him—no, he is not tiresome—never! he is a darling! But sometimes he does a tiresome thing."

And Sophy tripped away, light-footed, light-hearted, with no greater thought than the strawberries. She was still as slim as a girl, and there was about her all the eagerness and breathless mixture of fright and pleasure which are natural at eighteen. She *was* eighteen, spiritually speaking. I watched her tripping along in her light summer dress, and smiled; I could not help it. I saw her again three times that day, and, indeed, I saw Mrs. St. Clair too, who was equally full of business "Twelve men!" Mrs. St. Clair cried. "Is it not a nuisance? I can't think how George could do it. They have a nice bit of villany in hand; they are going to cut up all our pretty view, and take away the poor people's gardens; and then they expect us to give them dinner!"

"Did Sophy get the strawberries?" I asked.

"Oh, yes; more than they deserve. But you are coming, and you shall see." She went on, waving her hand, too busy to talk. A dinner of twelve gentlemen when you have made no arrangements, and provided nothing but what was needed for the family, is a serious matter in a country place, especially when the real housekeeper is out of the way.

CHAPTER II.

ALL this time Miss Stamford knew nothing of what was going on. She had gone up to town early in the morning, and she had spent the day with her friend, who was ailing; and in the afternoon she had missed the usual dinner train by which General George always travelled, coming by the next one, which was about half an hour later. She came down in the same carriage with a gentleman who, she afterwards admitted, attracted her attention at once. He was a tall man—well, not young certainly—oldish, elderly, "about the same age as other people"—with a long face, like Don Quixote. She remarked him; and he remarked her apparently, showing her several little politenesses: opening and shutting the window, &c. He was very like Don Quixote. This was the chief remark Miss Stamford made.

She was a little late for dinner, having been taken entirely by surprise by the great preparations she found on her return. She had left everything in the ordinary quiet, no company expected, and had ordered the usual dinner for the family before she went away; and the sight of Williams the greengrocer, and Jones the verger, both in grand official costume, on duty in her own hall when she got back, astonished her.

"Company, ma'am, as the General has brought home from town, unexpected," Williams said, as he opened the door. Their own homely butler, Simms, had been promoted to the rank of major-domo for the moment, and was a very great personage with two men under him. Miss Stamford changed her dress as quickly as possible, but dinner had begun before she got downstairs. Mrs. St. Clair had taken the head of the table, and Ursula slid quietly into the vacant place which had been left for her. She nodded to me across the table as she sat down. She had not even put on her best cap, and her gown was anything but new. And it did not seem to me that Ursula Stamford was by any means looking her best. She was a little prim in appearance, though so liberal and generous in heart; and she looked sixty, while to my knowledge she was only fifty-seven. You will say that was not a difference which mattered much; but I assure you we think a great deal of a year or two up here among the snows of life. She sat down so quietly that the gentleman on one side did not at first notice that the place was taken by his side, and she occupied herself with the other whom she happened to know. There was a great deal of talk going on at the table. Mrs. St. Clair had picked up a few ladies in haste to make the balance a little more even. Mrs. Stokes had sent Lucy, who was going to be married, and Miss Woodroof had come from the Rectory, and Mrs. Sommerville, the young widow who was living with her brother, the curate. There were seven of us altogether to thirteen gentlemen, for by way of making the table a little more crowded Charles Stamford had thought proper to come, though it was not his day. And we all talked as if our lives were at stake. The younger ones were much amused to be on duty thus, to be called upon to take care of the old gentlemen, and the rest of us understood the obligation we were under to talk, and worked resolutely at the conversation. For my part, I did very well, I had quite a pleasant neighbour; and, indeed, I have found that a great many of the City gentlemen are very pleasant to talk to. He told me all about the new railway it was intended to make, and scarcely laughed at all when I declared myself an enemy to new railroads, in our neighbourhood at least.

"Why should you cut up our pleasant smiling county?" I said. "We have all the railways we want, and more. I do not say anything against what is necessary; but why make gashes across the country when it is not wanted——"

"Gashes—I don't think they are gashes," said my neighbour. "When I saw the white steam flying along the valley just now, I thought it very picturesque. I allow I do not like it too near; but Dinglefield is as safe as if it were in Paradise. No railway will climb your peaceable heights. If there was question, however, of a railway into Paradise itself, there is the man who would do it," he said, looking across the table. "I am a mere innocent myself. I do what other people tell me: but there is the dangerous man. I hope, for your sake, that he will give his word against this, for he would scale the moon if he thought it likely to answer——"

I peeped between the little thickets of flowers with which Sophy had covered the table, and looked at the man thus pointed out to me. He was sitting by Ursula Stamford, but he was not talking to her—she, as I have said, was occupied by her other neighbour at her right hand. He was an old man, not far from seventy, according to appearance, with snow white hair, but a beard still almost black, a combination which is generally striking. His features were fine, his dark eyes deeply sunk under eyebrows still dark like his beard. There was a gentleman on the other side of him whom he did not seem to care to talk to, and he was sitting scarcely speaking, his face in repose.

"Do you mean that handsome old man?" I said.

"Old," said my companion, slightly startled; he was about the same age himself if I had thought of it. "Well, I suppose he *is* old," he added, with a little laugh. "You should talk to him. I don't know a more interesting man; and, as I tell you, he is the man to whom, if there was a railway to be made to the moon, everybody would turn. If he took the Channel tunnel in hand he would carry it through."

"But that must be impossible," said I. "I hate the crossing; but I would not trust myself in a tunnel under the sea, not for——But you are laughing—it is impossible——"

"Impossible!—not in the very least—ask *him*. I think myself he's too speculative. But there is one thing certain. If Oakley took it up, it would go through. He'd do it. He is a man who does not believe in difficulties. There might be a great catastrophe next day, but one way or other he'd drive it through."

I am a very quiet person myself, therefore it stands to reason that I should like a man who drives things through. Besides, he was a handsome old man. I looked at him again behind the flowers, while my companion went on talking, and I saw something which interested me. Miss Stamford came to a pause in her conversation with the man at her right hand, and she seized the opportunity to turn to the man on her left. At the first sound of her voice his abstract countenance lightened up. He turned hastily round with a look of recognition. How could he know Ursula Stamford, I said to myself? His face lighted up with a gleam of intelligence and pleasure, and something which, not knowing any other word, I can only call sweetness. He turned quite round to her, and began to talk with an interest and warmth which roused my immediate sympathy. I seemed to be looking on at an interesting scene in the theatre, seen from so great a distance that it was only the dumb-show which made it intelligible. And my neighbour carried on his discourse all the time.

"He has sprung from nothing," he said. "I don't know if he ever had a father. He began in the humblest way. The first time I heard of him was about thirty years ago, when he was struggling into business. He was not what you would call a young man then. (You ladies are hard upon age—you don't like it talked about yourselves, but you stamp us down as old men without a bit of fellow-feeling——")

Here I interrupted my instructor. "I thought it was a weakness of ours only to dislike to be called old. I thought men were superior to such a little vanity—as to so many others."

"You are satirical now. You think we are not superior to any vanity, and I shouldn't wonder if you were right. I was saying old Oakley was not a young man to start with. He was a sort of an engineer, self-taught, all self-taught, and he was trying to get into business as a contractor. Mrs. Musgrave," said my companion solemnly, "have you any idea what that man is worth now? I thought so, as you didn't seem impressed.

He is worth more than a million, that is the fact—he is made of money; losses don't seem to touch him. I do not suppose," my friend added, with awe in his voice, "that he knows how much he has——"

This information did not excite me as he expected, but I looked again between the geraniums at Mr. Oakley. I am afraid his handsome head interested me more than his fortune. "And there are so many people who have nothing at all!" I said; "but to look at him he might be a philosopher without a penny."

"That is just like you ladies—you would think more of him if he were a philosopher without a penny. What an extraordinary mistake!" cried my companion, "as if money were not a power quite as interesting and a great deal more tangible than philosophy."

His countenance flushed and changed. He was an enthusiast for money. I have met many such among General George's City friends: not in the sordid way we think of, but really as a great power.

When Mrs. St. Clair gave the sign to go away, I was quite sorry to break off the conversation, which was so much more interesting than the ordinary kind of talk. It was a beautiful June evening, and, instead of going into the drawing-room, we all went out upon the lawn where Simms had laid down the great lionskin, of which they are all so proud, and some rugs which the General brought from India; for it is unnecessary to say that we elder people were a little afraid of the dew on the grass. But nobody could have taken cold on such a night. The borders were all red and white with roses standing out against the deep-green of the shrubberies behind, and the colours seemed to repeat themselves in the sky, which was all one flush of rose above the blue, deepening into crimson as it descended, and burning like fire between the trees on the horizon line. Dinglefield stands high, with the broad Thames valley lying at its feet, of which you could get glimpses through the cuttings on the western side, if your eyes were not dazzled with all that blaze of gold. Miss Stamford was tired with her day in town, and established herself at once in her favourite basket-chair on the lawn. She sat there tranquil and happy while the rest walked about; her presence, her smile, the rest that seemed to breathe about her, gave stability and meaning to the whole place. She was only an old maid according to the vulgar, but you could not look at her without feeling sure that where she was, there was a home. I don't know that it had ever occurred to me to think so much about Ursula Stamford before. There was something in the air which affected me, though I did not know how. We could see the lighted windows of the dining-room, and hear the sound of the voices and laughter, though at a distance; and we all laughed too in sympathy, though we did not know what the jokes were. It was very pleasant and friendly, and rather droll. None of us had any particular desire to be joined by the gentlemen. We had done our duty by them, talked our very best to them, and flattered ourselves that it had all gone off very well; but though we were glad they were enjoying themselves now that our part of the entertainment was over, we were not very sorry to think that they must all go away shortly by the last train. And no heart among us, I am safe to say, beat one pulsation the quicker when they came out upon the lawn, some of them slightly flushed with the laughter and the good cheer, to take their coffee, and their leave. It had grown almost dark by that time, and the white waistcoats (for they were in their morning dress, and most of them wore white waistcoats) made a great show in the half light. The greater part of them thanked us all for the delightful evening, not being quite clear which were, and which were not, the ladies of the house, but determined to fulfil all the duties of politeness. We walked with them to the gate to see them go, and shook hands with them all, though we did not know their names. I recollect the whole scene as clearly as a picture, though I knew at the time no reason why I should remember it: the dining-room brightly lighted, the table with all its fruit and flowers, and the vacant chairs pushed away, standing in all manner of ways: the drawing-room much more dim, just showing a glimmer of newly-lighted candles: the table on the lawn with Miss Stamford's white cap and half visible figure close to it: and all the rest of us standing about telling each other how well it had gone off, and listening to the voices of the gentlemen getting fainter and fainter as they streamed off behind the shrubberies along the road to the station. If any one had told us what changes would come from that visit! But how could any one have guessed the changes that were to come?

It was not the next day, but the day after that I met General George in the afternoon coming from the station. It was at least two hours before his usual time, and he was walking. The sight of him gave me a little shock. Something, I thought, must have happened. I ran over in my mind, as one naturally does, as I went up to him, the things that were most possible. There were nephews scattered about over all the world. Could it be that there was bad news of George Thistlethwaite in Ceylon, or Bertie Stamford at the Cape? or was it pleasanter intelligence from young Mrs. Thurston (*née* Ursula Humphreys) or Lucy Thistlethwaite, or one of the Lincolnshire girls? but that (I said to myself) would not be enough to bring the General home so much sooner than usual. When he came nearer, however, my mind became easier. He did not look unhappy, he looked puzzled, and now and then a gleam like laughter came over his face. When he saw me he came forward with an air of pleasure.

"You are the very person I wanted to see—if you will let me, I will walk home with you; but let us go the back way," said General George to my intense surprise, "for I don't want to see my sisters till I have taken your advice."

"My advice! before you see your sisters—before you tell *Ursula*,' I cried, and then the General laughed and frowned, and looked angry and amused all in one. "That is just where my difficulty lies," he said. A difficulty about Ursula! it took away my breath.

"You will not believe it," he said, "but it is quite true. Charles came to me this morning with the absurdest question. He came to ask me who it was that sat next Mr. Oakley at dinner at Bonport on Tuesday—eh? what, did you notice anything?" he asked abruptly, for I had not been able to restrain a little exclamation. I have never boasted of my penetration, but from that moment I seemed to know exactly what he was going to say.

"I know who sat next Mr. Oakley at dinner," I said.

"Ursula, wasn't it? we laid our heads together, and from all we could make out. He went to Charles first to find out who it was, and Charles, of course, made up his mind that it must have been one of the young ladies that had made such an impression. He proposed Miss Woodroof and then the young widow—no, no. Oakley said it was not a young lady. It was a lady whose hair was turning grey, who wore a cap and used a double eye-glass. At last the conviction forced itself upon me. By Jove! it was Ursula—*Ursula* the man was thinking of! We both burst out laughing in his face—— But afterwards," the General added gloomily with a flush of displeasure, "afterwards—I feel furious, Mrs. Musgrave, though I may not show it; and that is why I have come first to you."

"What did he want?" I said, though I allow there was some hypocrisy in my question.

"What did he want?—you may well ask. He is a man of sixty-five, older than I am. He wants—to marry my sister," said the General, with a half suppressed outcry of rage—"a man who has risen from the ranks—a stranger—a—a confounded—— I beg you ten thousand pardons, Mrs. Musgrave; he wants to pay his addresses, if you please, to Ursula! God bless us all—did you ever hear such a thing? I feel much more like cursing than blessing, to tell the truth."

"But, General, he is very rich—richer than any one ever was before."

"Ah, you have got bitten too," he said, with a tone almost of disgust. "That is what Charles says; but what is his money to me? What is it to any of us, Mrs. Musgrave? *You* would not upset all the order of your life and change your habits, and give up your own ways for a million of money, would you? After all, when you have enough to be comfortable, what does money matter? Even the most extravagant of women can't put more than a certain number of yards of stuff into her dress. When you have enough, what does it matter whether the overplus is counted by hundreds or by thousands," said the General, with magnanimous but new-born indifference. If he cared so little about it, why should he go to the City every day, I could not help saying to myself: and, indeed, it came to my lips before I knew.

"If we all thought that," I said, "it would save a great deal of trouble. Perhaps you would not then have had these twelve gent down to dinner and made all the mischief, General."

General George laughed. "Perhaps I shouldn't," he said, "but that is different. It is not for the money, but the occupation, Mrs. Musgrave; and, of course, when one has money invested one wants to make something by it. However! My opinion is that it would be much better to say nothing about this folly to Ursula. To be sure," he added, with a look of half-defiant assurance which he belied by a suspicious glance of inquiry at me, "it might amuse her; but it could have no other effect. I don't see why I should take any notice to Ursula."

"But Mr. Oakley—will he be satisfied?"

"Old Oakley? Upon my word, I don't see why I should consider him or what will satisfy him," said the General, growing red; but he was uneasy. He paused, then turned to me again. "If you were in my position, what should you do?"

"I should tell her, and let her judge; after all, it is she who must decide."

"Decide—judge! you speak," cried General George, "as if it were possible—as if it might be within the bounds of—— Bah! do you suppose that Ursula—*Ursula*! my sister—would, could hesitate one moment?"

"No." I said "no," half because I really thought so, but half because he was so much excited, and it was necessary to calm him. "I do not suppose she would; but still a woman should be told when a man—— It is the greatest compliment he can pay her, and it is always flattering even when it is impossible."

"Flattering—a compliment! What can you be thinking of?" the General cried in high disdain, "that an old fellow like that should propose to appropriate and take possession of—a lady! I don't say my sister, which, of course, is the sting of it," he said, with a laugh, calming down again, "but any lady——"

"Dear General, forgive me," I said, "you always talk, you gentlemen, of marriage as the end of every woman's ambition, and you are always ready to jibe at those who have not attained that great end. Then how when this elevation is in her power, do you venture to think of keeping her in ignorance of it?"

He turned round upon me almost with violence. "Elevation!" he cried; then, perceiving, I suppose, by something in my eyes, what I meant, laughed more uneasily than ever. "Come," he said, "we may say silly things, I allow we all say silly things: but when you come to that—to speak of elevation for my sister from any offer, or that she should think it a compliment!—God bless us all!—there are a great many foolish things that one says, but you know better than to take it all for gospel. Of course when one speaks of women one does not think of—— By Jove, I am only getting deeper. Don't hit a man when he is down, but be serious, and give me your advice."

"One does not think of one's own sisters," said I, for I did not mean to spare him, "only of other people's sisters, or of those who have nobody to stand up for them; but I will not be ungenerous, General, I will give you my advice. Tell Ursula, and let her judge for herself."

"Judge!—she can have but one opinion. But that is what Charlie says. I suppose the two of you must be right," said the General grudgingly. He walked on by my side in silence, cutting down the weeds by the roadside ferociously with his stick; then repeated with a still more churlish assent, "I suppose what you two people of the world say must be right."

I smiled within myself to be called a woman of the world; but one must not take the words of an angry man to heart. When he came to the turn of the road which led to Brothers-and-Sisters he muttered something about getting it over, and took off his hat and left me without another word. Poor General George! under all his pretences at anger he was in a great fright. Either he believed his own careless talk, and thought that a husband was too fine a thing for any woman to refuse, or else—— But I need not discuss the vague feeling of insecurity which had begun to creep over him. For my part, I did not feel alarmed. I had more confidence in Ursula's faithfulness than he had. At the same time the crisis was exciting, and I thought the time very long until the evening began to darken, and I felt myself at liberty—dinner being over—to run over the corner of the Green which lay between us, as I often did in the evening, and see what Ursula said.

CHAPTER III.

THE family party was on the lawn as usual; Miss Stamford seated in her own chair with her knitting and her feet upon the lionskin; while Mrs. St. Clair beside her, with a basket full of bright scraps, had been dressing dolls for a bazaar. Sophy was cutting off the withered roses with a large pair of garden scissors; all their occupations were quite as usual. But there was an aspect about the family which was not usual. In the distance, the General's step was audible, pacing about; and there was an odour of his cigar in the air; all as peaceful, as homelike, as it always was; but yet a something in the atmosphere which had not been there yesterday. As I came up with my shawl over my head, the General tossed his cigar away and came nearer, and Sophia put down the basket with the dead roses, and Mrs. St. Clair got up to get me a chair. The only one that had not changed in the least was Ursula, who raised her head and her eyes and gave me a friendly nod as she always did. She went on with her knitting without any intermission. It is work which does not demand attention, nor so much light as doll-dressing. They were all very glad to see me, more glad even than on ordinary occasions: for it was clear that the situation was highly *tendu*, as the French say, and that a new-comer was a relief.

"What a beautiful evening!" we all said together, and then abashed, as people do who have rushed into the same commonplace speech.

Then Ursula added, "Of course, that is the first thing we must say to each other. I think there never was such a summer—so bright, so steady, one fine day after another. Here is a fortnight, or nearly so, that we have not had one drop of rain."

"Quite wonderful," said I. "The hay, I hear, is a sight to see. A day or two more, and we shall all begin to pray for rain. We are never content whatever we have——"

"A little variety is always pleasant," Mrs. St. Clair said. Meanwhile while we talked about the weather, the General hung about over our little group like a storm-cloud. He did not say anything, but he looked tempestuous; he, who was always so calm. Presently he turned away, and went off to say something to Simms, who appeared just then with a note or a message.

"I suppose," said Mrs. St. Clair, turning to me, "*you* know all about it. George told us that he had met you, and told you——"

"Yes, he told me;" but I did not know what to say; they all wore a look of agitation, except Ursula, who was as calm as usual—more calm than usual, I should have said; but, no doubt, that was only in comparison with the agitation of the rest.

"And I suppose you think like the rest, that I will jump at a husband the moment one is offered to me," said Miss Stamford, with a smile.

"We don't think so, Ursula. We know it is not the first time. It is only George that is so frightened, poor fellow."

"Why should he be so frightened?" Miss Stamford cried. "No; it is not the first time. I may take that little credit to myself. I might have my head turned, perhaps, if it had been the first time. But, after all, it is not so much to brag of. I suppose he wants somebody to take care of him when he gets old and feeble; but he ought to have somebody younger than me."

Sixty-five is not what you would call young; but it was odd how we all were of opinion that Mr. Oakley's time for being old and feeble was still a good way off, a thing to come. I acknowledge that I shared this weakness. We were all about the same age, and it did not occur to us that we were already old.

"He shows his sense," said I, taking the part of the absent to whom nobody did any justice, "as well as his good taste. Poor man, though he is so rich, I am very sorry for him. I wish Ursula had met him twenty years ago when there would have been no harm——"

"No harm! do you know that he is a nobody—a man self-made?" said Mrs. St. Clair; "not a match for Ursula Stamford, if he had been ever so young."

"But you did not think of that in Fia's case," said Sophy; "he was rich and you never said a word. You thought it quite reasonable.

'What do his grandfathers matter to us?' you said. I am not sure myself whether it does or not; but you said so, you know; and George proposed the bride and bridegroom at the wedding, and everybody was pleased. Now this Mr. Oakley is a very nice man, whatever you say, for I had a good deal of talk with him myself; and if Ursula chose——"

"You should not interfere," said Mrs. St. Clair; "you are always sentimental. Of course, if there is so much as a thought of a marriage, Sophy is always in favour of it; but to think of Ursula at her time of life!"

"You all talk very much at your ease about Ursula," said Miss Stamford. "I suppose Ursula may have a word, a little share in it, for herself. The way my family consult over me"—she said, turning to me with a slight blush and laugh. "I think George might have held his tongue; that would have been the more satisfactory way."

"It was my fault," I cried, hurriedly: "he told me that he thought it would be best not to tell you. You must forgive me, Ursula, if I gave him bad advice; I thought you ought to know."

Before I had half said this, I saw I had made a mistake; but one must finish one's sentence, however foolish it may be. Ursula suspended her knitting for a moment and looked at me with calm amazement.

"Not tell *me!*" she said. "Why should he have kept it from *me!*"

The emphasis was very slight, but it meant a great deal. It never occurred to her that a thing which concerned her so closely should have been kept from herself; the question was why should we know? and I confess I felt very much ashamed of having any say in it, when I met the calm astonished look of her eyes.

"It is getting a little chilly," she said, rising up. "I think it is time to go indoors."

We all followed her quite humbly, and the General came stalking after us, more like a thunder-cloud than ever. He had been talking to poor Simms in a voice which was not pleasant, and he appeared at the drawing-room window by which we all entered with the large lionskin in his arms.

"I can't have this left out all night in those heavy dews," he said. I do not think I ever saw those signs of suppressed irritation, which are too common in families, among the Stamfords before.

Next morning General George came in for a moment before I had breakfasted, to tell me for my satisfaction that all was right. His face was quite clear again. "I was a little cross last night. I fear you may have supposed that I for a moment doubted my sister. Not a moment, Mrs. Musgrave. I have got to give him his answer, poor old fellow. I can't help feeling a little sorry for him all the same. What bad luck for the poor old beggar! Of all the women there to hit upon the one who was simply hopeless! Some men always have that sort of fate."

"He showed his taste," said I; "but I heard he was the man in the world, General; that he always succeeded in everything; that however wild the project was, he was the man to carry it through."

I said this partly in malice, I am bound to admit, and I was very successful. The General's face clouded over again: he set his teeth. "He shall not succeed this time," and he said something more in his moustache, some stronger words which I was not intended to hear. It was all over then, this odd little episode. I stood and watched him from my door half relieved, half wondering. Was it all over? I did not feel so satisfied or so certain as General George.

A few days of perfect quiet ensued. When a week passed we all felt really satisfied. It was over then? Mr. Oakley had accepted his refusal. To be sure one did not see what else he could have done, though I confess that I had not expected it for my part. However, on the Sunday morning the moment I looked across to the Stamfords' pew after getting settled in my own, it seemed to me that I could see indications of a new event. Both Mrs. St. Clair and Sophy were looking at me when I raised my head; they could not restrain themselves. They gave me anxious significant glances with little hardly perceptible signs of the head and hand. When the service was over, and we were going out, Sophy was at my side in a moment. We were not out of church actually, when I felt her arm slide into mine and a whisper in my ear. "She has got a letter!" Sophy said, all in a tremble of eagerness. Mrs. St. Clair came up on the other side as soon as we were clear of the stream of people. "It is getting really serious," she said; "he will not take a refusal. It is quite absurd, and George is dreadfully angry. *He* is just as absurd on the other side."

"And what does Ursula say?"

"Oh, Ursula does not say anything. Of course we could not help knowing about the letter. It was very long and very much in earnest——"

"Oh, quite impassioned!" cried Sophy. She had not encountered anything so exciting for years. She was pale with interest and emotion, shaking her head in intense seriousness. "He says that he appeals to her sense of justice, not to condemn him without a hearing. It is quite beautiful. I am sure he is a nice man."

"And then, you know, there is the other side of the question," said Mrs. St. Clair, seriously. "I did not quite understand when we spoke of it last. Charlie says he is immensely rich—not just ordinarily comfortable like so many people, but a true millionnaire. That changes the aspect of the matter a little, don't you think? Not that I am a mercenary person, still less Ursula; but when you come to think of it, wealth to that extent is something to be considered. Just fancy the good she might do," cried the sensible sister, "and the number of young people we have looking to us! I do think it is not exactly right to ignore that side of the question."

"Charlie thinks it is quite wrong," said Sophy, shaking her head.

The General had not even stopped to say "Good morning" outside the church door as he usually did. It was his brother Charles who was with Ursula. The General walked straight home, without looking to the right hand or the left. I felt a great sympathy for him. It was he that would feel it most *if anything happened*; and he was the only one of the family who had that fantastic delicacy of sentiment which some of us feel for those we love, so that the merest touch of anything that could be called ridicule, seemed sacrilege and desecration to him.

I must not attempt to go in detail into all that followed. Miss Stamford wrote a very beautiful letter (they all told me) to her antiquated lover, telling him how sorry she was to be the cause of any annoyance to him, and hoping that the vexation would be but temporary, as indeed she felt sure it must be—but that his proposals were quite out of the question. This, of course, was what every woman would have said in the circumstances. But neither did Mr. Oakley take this for an answer. There was another letter by return of post in which they said he implored her to believe that nothing about the matter was temporary—that it was a question of life and death to him; that now was his only chance for happiness. Happiness! a man of sixty-five! For my part I could not help laughing, but it was no laughing matter for the household at Brothers-and-Sisters. A few days after this I met Mr. Oakley himself on his way to the house. He recognised me at once, but naturally he did not know who I was. He took me for one of the family, and came up to me carrying his hat in his hand. He was a very handsome old man. His hair was snow-white, a mass of it rising up in waves from his forehead, with eyebrows still black and strongly marked, and the finest brilliant dark eyes. I said to myself mentally: "If it *had* been I, I should have given in at once." And his manners were beautiful—not the manners of society—the deferential respect of a man who knows women chiefly through books, and does not understand the free and easy modern way of treating us. He kept his hat in his hand as he stood and spoke. "I do not know," he said, "if I have the honour of speaking to a sister of Miss Stamford's, but I know I met you there."

"Not a sister, but a very affectionate friend," I said. His face lighted up instantly; he almost loved me for saying so. "Then if that is the case we ought to be friends too," he said. I was so much interested that I turned and walked with him, regardless of prudence. What would the Stamfords say if they saw me thus identifying myself with the cause of their assailant? but the interest of this strange little romance carried me away.

"I must see her," he said. "Don't you think I have a right to see her? They need not surely grudge me one opportunity of pleading my own cause. No, indeed, I don't blame them. If I had such a treasure—nay," he went on with a smile, "*when* I have that treasure, I will guard it from every wind that blows. I don't wonder at their precautions. But

Stamford does not treat me with generosity; he does not trust to my honour: that is why I adopt his own tactics. I come to try to effect an entrance while he is away——"

"I don't think Ursula will have you, Mr. Oakley," I said.

"Perhaps not; but that remains to be seen. She has never seen me—that is, she has never seen the real John Oakley, only a director of her brother's company, two different persons, Mrs. Musgrave, if you will allow me to say so."

"But she saw you before she knew you were a director. She travelled with you. You were the gentleman like Don Quixote ——"

How foolish I was! Of course I ought not to have said it. I felt that before the words were out of my mouth. Such encouragement as this was enough to counterbalance any number of severities. "Ah! I am like Don Quixote, am I?" he said; and once more, and more brightly than ever, his handsome old face blazed into the brightest expression. Poor Mr. Oakley! I threw myself heart and soul into his faction after this; for indeed, as I afterwards heard, he had not at all a pleasant "time," as the Americans say, that afternoon. When he sent in his name at Brothers-and-Sisters he was told that the ladies were out, and, though he waited, all that he managed to obtain was a hurried interview with Mrs. St. Clair, who conveyed to him Ursula's entreaty that he would accept her answer as final, and not ask to see her. Sophy told me after (she must have hidden herself somewhere, for nobody but Frances was supposed to be present) that his behaviour was beautiful. He bowed to the ground, she said, and declared that no one could be so much interested as he was in observing Miss Stamford's slightest wish; that he would not for the world intrude upon her, but wait her pleasure another time. Mrs. St. Clair's heart softened too, and she did not protest, as perhaps she ought to have done, against this "other time." He passed by my cottage as he went away, and I do not deny that I was in my little garden looking out. "I have had no luck," he said, shaking his head, but still with a smile, "no luck to-day; but another time I shall succeed better."

I ran to the gate, I felt so much interested. "Do you really think, Mr. Oakley," I said, "that it is worth your while to persevere?"

"Worth my while?" he said; "certainly it is worth my while: for I am in no hurry. I can bide my time."

Bide his time at sixty-five! I stood and looked at him as long as he was in sight. There is nothing like courage for securing the sympathy of the bystanders.

After this the excitement ran very high both in the house of the Stamfords and in the community in general. We all took sides: and while General George made himself more and more disagreeable, and we all watched and spied her every action, Ursula was subjected all the time to a ceaseless assault from the other side. Letters poured upon her; beautiful baskets of flowers arrived suddenly, secretly, so that no one knew how they came. After a while, when the autumn commenced, there came hampers of game and of fruit, all in the same anonymous magnificent way. And then the clever old man found out a still more effectual way of siege. The Stamfords had always nephews who wanted appointments or who required to be pushed. For instance, there was young Charley of the Inner Temple sadly in want of a brief: when lo! all at once, briefs began to tumble down from heaven upon the young man. In a week he had more business than he knew what to do with. And Willie Thistlethwaite had a living offered to him; and Cecil, whom they were so anxious to place with an engineer, though the premium was so serious a matter, suddenly found a place open to him with no premium at all. I believe in my heart that it was Mr. Charles Stamford who helped the old lover to recommend himself in this effectual quiet way; for how should he have found out all the nephews without help? But as one of these mysterious benefits after another happened to the distant members of the family, the feeling rose stronger and stronger among all their friends. We set down everything, from the flowers to the living, unhesitatingly to Mr. Oakley; and at last public sentiment on the Green got to such a pitch that whereas people had laughed at the whole matter at first as little more than a joke, everybody now grew indignant and protested that Ursula Stamford ought to be cut and sent to Coventry if she did not marry Don Quixote. I don't know who had betrayed this description which she had herself given of him. But everybody now called him Don Quixote, and the whole community took his cause to heart. While this feeling rose outside, a wave of the same sentiment, but still more powerful, got up within. Mr. Charles spoke out and declared (as, indeed, he had done from the first) that to neglect such an opportunity of strengthening the family influence would be a mere flying in the face of Providence; and then something still more extraordinary happened. Frances herself—who looked upon all married ladies in the light of prospective widows, and regarded the one state only as a preparation for the other—Frances herself suddenly threw off her allegiance to the General and went over boldly to the other side. Sophy had been Mr. Oakley's champion all along. They began to turn upon Ursula, to accuse her of behaving badly to her unwearied suitor—they accused her of playing fast and loose, of amusing herself with his devotion. They raised a family outcry against her, and brought down all the married sisters and the distant brothers upon her, with a storm of disapproving letters. "The man that has provided for my Cecil," one indignant lady wrote, "surely, *surely*, deserves better at *my* sister's hands;" and "I really think, my dear Ursula, that any petty objections of your own should yield before the evident advantage to the family," was what the eldest brother of all, the father of the young barrister, said. On the other side, with gloom on his face, and a sneer upon his lip (where it was so completely out of place), and a bitter jibe now and then about the falsity and weakness of women, General George stood all alone, and kept a jealous watch upon her. His love for his favourite sister seemed to have turned to gall. He would have none of her usual services; he no longer consulted her about anything—no longer told her what he was going to do. It is to be supposed that by this cruel method the General intended to prove to his sister how much kinder and better a master he was than any other she could aspire to; but if this was the case, he took a very curious way of showing his superiority. And Ursula stood between these two parties, her home and her life becoming more and more unbearable every day.

At last she took a sudden resolution. Sophy ran over to tell me of it late one September evening. There were tears in Sophy's eyes, and she was full of awe. "Ursula has made up her mind," she said, almost below her breath. "It is all over, Mrs. Musgrave. She has written him a *terrible* letter—it is quite beautiful, but it is something terrible at the same time; and she is going off *abroad* to-morrow. She says she cannot bear it any longer; she says we are killing her. She says she must make an end of it, and that she will go away. Poor Mr. Oakley!" Sophy said and cried. As for me, I also felt deeply impressed and a little awe-stricken, but I had a lingering faith in Don Quixote notwithstanding all.

CHAPTER IV.

THERE had been very little time left for preparations, and hardly any one, Sophy told me, was aware they were going away. Except myself, no one of the neighbours knew. All the arrangements were hastily made. Ursula wanted to be gone if possible before Mr. Oakley could take any further step. I went over early next morning to see if I could be of any use. Ursula was in her room, doing her packing. To see her in her old black silk with her simple little cap covering her grey hair, and to think she was being driven from her home by the importunities of a too-ardent lover, struck me as more ridiculous than it had ever done before. She saw it herself, and laughed as she stood for a moment before the long glass, in which she had caught a glimpse of herself.

"I am a pretty sort of figure for all this nonsense," she said, permitting herself for the first time an honest laugh on the subject; but then her face clouded once more. "The truth is," she said, "it would all be mere nonsense, but for George. It is he that takes it so much to heart."

"Indeed," said I. "I think it is not at all nice of the General; and I don't think it would be nonsense in any case. There is some one else I acknowledge, Ursula, that I think of more than the General."

She did not say anything more. Her face paled, then grew red again, and she went on with her packing. It is needless to say that I was of no manner of use. I got rid of a little of my own excitement by going, that was all. I went again in the evening to see the last of them. It was a lovely September evening. There had been a wonderfully fine sunset, and the whole horizon was still flaming, the trees standing out almost black in their deep greenness, though touched with points of yellow, against the broad lines of crimson and wide openings of wistful green blueness in the sky. The days were already growing short. There is no time of the year at which one gets so much good of the sunset. As I went across the corner of the Green, the gables and irregular chimneys of the old house stood up among the heavy foliage against the lower band of colour where the green and blue died into yellow, the "daffodil sky" of the poet. They, too, looked black against that light, and there was a wistful look, I thought, about the whole place, protesting dumbly against its abandonment. Why should people go away from such a pleasant and peaceful place to wander over the world? There was a solitary blackbird singing clear and loud, filling the whole air with his song. I wonder if that song is really much less beautiful than the nightingale's? I was thinking how blank and cold the house would be when they were all gone. The chimneys and gables already looked so cold, smokeless, fireless, appealing against the glare of the summer, which carried away the dwellers inside, and extinguished the cheerful fire of home. As I went in I saw the fly from the "Barleymow" creeping along towards the house to carry the luggage to the station. The old white horse came along quite reluctantly, as if he did not like the errand. I suppose all that his slow pace meant was that he had gone through a long day's work, and was tired; but it is so natural to convey a little of one's own feelings to everything, even the chimneys of the old house. There was nobody downstairs when I went in. Simms told me in a dolorous tone that Miss Stamford was putting on her bonnet.

"And I don't like it, ma'am—I don't like it—going away like this, just when the country's at its nicest. If it was the General for his bit of sport, his shooting or that, I wouldn't mind," said Simms; "but what call have the ladies got away from home. They'll go a-catching fevers or something, see if they don't. It's tempting Providence."

"I hope not, Simms," said I; but Simms took no comfort from my hoping. He shook his head, and he uttered a groan as he set a chair for me in the centre of the drawing-room. No more cosy corners, the man seemed to say—no more low seats and pleasant talk—an uncompromising chair in the middle of the room, and a business object. These were all of which the old drawing-room would be capable when the ladies were away. I set down Simms along with the house itself, protesting with all its chimneys, and the old white horse lumbering reluctantly along to fetch the luggage, and the blackbird remonstrating loudly among the trees. They were all opposed to Ursula's departure, and so was I.

The door opened, and Sophy came in more despondent than all of these sundry personages and things put together. "They are rather late—the boxes are just being put on to the fly. Will you come out here and bid her good-by?" said Sophy, who was limp with crying. I never could tell whether it was imagination or a real quickening of my senses, but at that moment, as I rose to follow Sophy, I heard as clearly as I ever heard it in my life the galloping of horses on the dry dusty summer road. I heard it as distinctly as I hear now the soft dropping of the rain, a sound as different as possible from all the other sounds I had been hearing—horses galloping at their very best, a whip cracking, the sound of a frantic energy of haste. Then I went out into the hall following Sophy. It must have been imagination, for with all these lawns and shrubberies round, one could not, you may well believe, hear passing carriages like that. Ursula was standing at the foot of the stairs in her travelling dress. It was a large, long hall, more oblong than square, into which all the rooms opened; the drawing-room was opposite the outer door, and the General's room (the library, as it was called) was further back nearer the stairs. He was inside, but the door was open. Ursula stood outside talking to the cook, who was to be a kind of housekeeper while they were away. "Don't trouble Miss Sophy, except when you are perplexed yourself. On ordinary occasions you will do quite nicely, I am sure; you will do everything that is wanted," she was saying in her kind, cheerful voice, for Ursula did not show any appearance of regret, though all of us who were staying behind were melancholy. The men were hoisting up the trunks with which the hall was encumbered on the top of the fly, which was visible with its old white horse standing tired and pensive at the open door. And Mrs. St. Clair appeared behind her sister, slowly coming downstairs with a cloak over her arm and a bag in her hand. There was nothing left but to say good-by and wish them a good journey and a speedy return.

But all at once in a moment there was a change. The horses I had been dreaming of, or had heard in a dream, drew up with a whirlwind of sound at the gate. Then something darted across the unencumbered light beyond the fly and came between the old white horse and the door. I think he—for to use any neutral expressions about *him* from the first moment at which he showed himself would be impossible—I think he lifted his hand to the men who were putting up the trunks to arrest them; at all events they stopped and scratched their heads and opened their mouths, and stood staring at him, as did Sophy and I, altogether confounded, yet with sudden elation in our hearts. He stepped past us all as lightly as any young paladin of twenty, taking off his hat. His white hair seemed all in a moment to light up everything, to quicken the place. Ursula was the last to see him. She was still talking quite calmly to the cook, though even Mrs. St. Clair on the stairs had seen the new incident, and had dropped her cloak in amazement. He went straight up to her, without a pause, without drawing breath. I am sure we all held ours in spellbound anxiety and attention. When Ursula saw him standing by her side she started as if she had been shot—she made a hasty step back and looked at him, catching her breath too with sudden alarm. But he had the air of perfect self-command.

"Miss Stamford," he said, "will you grant me half an hour's interview before you go?"

For the first time Ursula lost her self-possession; she fluttered and trembled like a girl, and could not speak for a moment. Then she stammered out, "I hope you will excuse me. We shall be—late for the train."

"Half an hour!" he said; "I only ask half an hour—only hear me, Miss Stamford, hear what I have got to say. I will not detain you more than half an hour."

Ursula looked round her helplessly. Whether she saw us standing gazing at her I cannot tell, or if she was conscious that the General behind her had come out to the door, and was standing there petrified, staring like the rest of us. She looked round vaguely, as if asking aid from the world in general. And whether her impetuous old lover took her hand and drew it within his arm, or if she accepted his arm, I cannot say. But the next thing of which we were aware was that they passed us, the two together, arm in arm into the drawing-room. He had noted the open door with his quick eye, and there he led her trembling past us. Next moment it closed upon the momentous interview, and the chief actors in this strange scene disappeared. We were left all gazing at each other—Sophy and I at one side of the hall, Mrs. St. Clair on the stairs, where she stood as if turned to stone, her cloak fallen from her arm; and the General at the door of his room with a face like a thunder-cloud, black and terrible. We stared at each other speechless, the central object at which we had all been gazing withdrawn suddenly from us. There were some servants also of the party, Simms standing over Miss Stamford's box, the address of which he affected to be scanning, and the cabman scratching his head. We all looked at each other with ludicrous blank faces. It was the General who was the first to speak. He took no notice of us. He stepped out from his door into the middle of the hall, and pointed imperiously to the box. "Take all that folly away," he said harshly, and with another long step strode out of the house and disappeared.

He did not come back till late that night, when all thoughts of the trains had long departed from everybody's head. Before that time need I say it was all settled? I had always been doubtful myself about Ursula. She had been afraid of making a joke of herself by a late marriage. She had shrunk, perhaps, too, at her time of life from all the novelty and the change; but even at fifty-seven a woman retains her imagination, and it had been captivated in spite of herself by the bit of strange romance thus oddly introduced into her life. Is any one ever old enough to be insensible to the pleasure of being singled out and pursued with something that looked like real passion? I do not suppose so; Ursula had been alarmed by the softening of her own feelings; she had been remorseful and conscience-stricken about her secret treachery to her brother. In short, I had felt all along that she must have had very little confidence in herself when she was driven to the expedient of running away.

They would not let me go, though I felt myself out of place at such a moment, so that I had my share in the excitement as I had in the suspense. And after all the struggle and the suspense it is inconceivable how easy and natural the settlement of the matter seemed, and what a relief it was that it should be decided.

As soon as the first commotion was over, Mrs. Douglas came to me, took my hands in hers and led me out by the open window. "George!" she said to me with a little gasp. "What shall we do about George? How will *he* take it? and if he comes in upon us all without any preparation, what will happen? I don't know what to do."

"He must know what has happened," said I; "he saw there was only one thing that could happen. He must know what he has to expect."

Mrs. St. Clair clasped her hands together. What with the excitement and the pleasure and the pain the tears stood in her eyes. "Ursula was always his favourite sister," she said; "how will he take it? and where is he? wandering about, making himself wretched this melancholy night."

It was not in reality a melancholy night. It was dark, and the colour had gone out of the sky, which looked of a deep wintry blue between the black tree-tops which swayed in the wind. Mrs. St. Clair shivered a little, partly from the contrast with the bright room inside, partly from anxiety. "Where can he be? where can he be wandering?" she said. We had both the same idea—that he must have gone into the woods and be wandering about there in wild resentment and distress. "And we must not stay out here, or Mr. Oakley will think something is wrong, and Ursula will be unhappy," she said, with a sigh.

It was then I proposed that I should stay outside to break the news to the General when he appeared—a proposal which after a while Mrs. Douglas was compelled to accept, though she protested—for after all my absence would not be remarked, and it was easy to say that I had gone home, as I meant to do. But I cannot say that the post was a pleasant one. I walked about for some time in front of the house, and then I came and sat down in the porch "for company." There was nothing, as I have said, specially melancholy about the night, but the contrast of the scene within and this without struck the imagination. When a door opened the voices within came with a kind of triumph into the darkness where the disappointed and solitary brother was wandering: and so absorbed was I in thoughts of General George and his downfall that I almost missed the subject of them, who came suddenly round the corner of the house when I was not looking for him. It was he who perceived me, rather than I who was on the watch for him. "You here, Mrs. Musgrave!" he said, in amazement. I believe he thought, as I started to my feet, that I had been asleep.

"General!" I cried then in my confusion. "Stop here a moment, do not go in. I have something to say to you."

He laughed, which was a sound so unexpected that it bewildered me. "My kind friend," he said, "have you stayed here to break the news to me? But it is unnecessary—from the moment I saw Oakley arrive I knew how it must be. Ursula has been going—she has been going. I have seen it for three or four weeks past."

"And, General! thank heaven, you are not angry, you are taking it in a Christian way."

He laughed again, a sort of angry laugh. "Am I taking it in a Christian way? I am glad you think so, Mrs. Musgrave. When a thing cannot be cured it must be endured, you know. I am out of court—I have no ground to stand upon, and he is master of the field. I don't mean to make her unhappy, whatever happens. Is he here still?"

"Yes," I said, trembling. He offered me his arm precisely as Mr. Oakley had offered his to Ursula. "Then we'll go and join them," he said.

This was how it all ended. There was not a speck on his boots or the least trace of disorder. Instead of roaming the woods in despair, as we thought, he had been quietly drinking Lady Denzil's delightful tea, and playing chess with Sir Thomas. They had seen nothing unusual about him, we heard afterwards, and never knew that he ought to have been starting for the Continent when he walked in that evening, warmly welcomed, to tea—which shows what sentimental estimates we women form about the feelings of men.

The marriage took place very soon after. Mr. Oakley bought Hillhead, the finest place in the neighbourhood, very soon after; he was so rich that he bought a house whenever he found one that pleased him, as I might buy an old blue china pot. The one was a much greater extravagance to me than the other was to him. And they lived very happy ever after, and nobody, so far as I know, has ever had occasion to regret this love at first sight at sixty—this elderly romance.

Forms of Salutation.

It has often occurred to me that national salutations, both by word and by action, might, in most cases at any rate, have a natural history within the limits of investigation; and that their form might be shown or surmised to have been due in some degree, perhaps entirely, to the history, character, geographical position, occupations, or other peculiar circumstances of each particular nation or group of nations, or might at least furnish an interesting parallel to these specialities: while occasionally also the salutation might throw a ray of light upon the conditions of the past. However the matter may stand, the inquiry is, at all events, so far inviting in that it supplies us with all the elements of a speculation which may lead us along some of the pleasant byways skirting the main road of the world's progress.*

The materials collected in investigating a subject so fertile exceed the bounds of any reasonable paper, and, in consequence, I am obliged to confine myself to as judicious a selection as I can make of those salutations which appear to me most striking. On the threshold I have to confess that the laudable ambition which at first fired me to strive after a scientific classification, has been ignominiously frustrated. I have given up in despair the attempt to draw any rational parallels between divisions of salutations and divisions of language, or divisions of race. Semitic, Indo-European, Turanian, Monosyllabic, Agglutinative, Inflectional, furnish but faint lines of correspondence; nor have I drawn more comfort from Caucasian, Mongolian, Ethiopian, American, and Malay. I still think that a partial classification might be made on some basis of the kind I have mentioned, but I am reduced to hope that this will be the reward of efforts other than my own.

The order of treatment has been selected more by instinct than by reason. I can only hope it will not be found injurious to the discussion of the subject.

Naturally we turn to the East for the origin of most of our customs, and I cannot do better, I think, than begin with the salutations of those Eastern nations of whose customs we have the earliest knowledge.

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* Mr. Herbert Spencer, in one of his articles in the *Fortnightly Review*, on "Ceremonial Government" (July number, 1878), makes a passing remark that "some [forms of salutation] take their character from surrounding conditions." The subjoined paper (which was read before the Birmingham Graduates' Club two years before Mr. Spencer's article appeared) is, in part, an attempt to follow out an idea akin to that which Mr. Spencer glances at, but does not pursue. The writer has naturally been led by Mr. Spencer's investigations to modify a few of his conclusions, but in the main, with the exception of necessary alterations, the paper now appears as it was originally read.

A large, if not the largest, class of salutations can be traced to intercession. The deeply religious character of the Orientals showed itself specially in their salutations. The Hebrew word *barak*, "to bless," had all the meanings of saluting, welcoming, and bidding adieu, the person spoken to being in each case commended to God. "Blessed be thou of the Lord;" "The Lord be with thee;" "And Jacob blessed Pharaoh, and went out from before him;" are instances which illustrate the usage of the word. They are paralleled by the Arabian, "God grant thee his favours," "May God strengthen your morning," "May your morning be good;" by the Persian, "I make prayers for thy greatness;" and by the Ottoman, "Be under the guard of God," "My prayers are for thee," "Forget me not in thy prayers." And we cannot be surprised that this kind of salutation is found to exist, in some shape or other, among all national greetings. Our religion has come from the East, and some of their religious salutations still survive; as, for example, in the Esthonian "God guide you," the "Adieu" of the French, the "Go with God, Señor" of Spain, and our "God be with ye," corrupted into "Good-bye." And here it may be remarked, in passing, that the obviously religious phrases have been preserved by nations in a sense less distinctly religious than the English, while they have been lost or changed among ourselves. Has the closer intimacy of the Continent with Roman Catholicism produced an effect upon outward expression, or is the change due to our greater reverence for sacred names—a reverence often, of course, merely Pharisaic, but which has led us, as it led the later Hebrews, to shrink from uttering the actual name of the Deity, and either to corrupt it as in "Good-bye," or eliminate it as in "Mercy me," "Save you, sir," while the French are much more lavish with their "*Mon Dieu*," and the Germans with their "*Mein Gott ?*" If these suggestions will not hold, perhaps we may find a more rational solution in the universal tendency of the West, and especially of the English, towards brevity; which tendency would find illustration in our "Good day," in the German "*Guten Tag*," in the Swedish, "*God dag*," and in the French "*Bonjour*."

Under the distinctly religious category come all wishes for good health; and here, again, we find the Easterns retaining the name of God, and the Westerns usually dropping it. The χαῖρε of the Greeks, the *Salve*, *Ave*, *Vale*, of the Romans, the Swedish *Farwol*, the German *Leben Sie wohl*, the Esthonian and Russian *Be well*, and our *Farewell*, are all instances of the repression of the Oriental mention of the Deity.

The religious character of the Easterns is obvious, or obtrusive, likewise in their answers. To the question, "How is your health ?" an Arab would reply, "Praise be to God," the tone alone showing whether he was well or ill. "Is it well with thee ?" would draw forth the response, "God bless thee and preserve thee." These were the stock answers which it was and is still considered rude to vary—an insta by the way, of punctilio and conservatism truly characteristic of Oriental ceremoniousness and stagnation. This style of answer reminds us of the *Deo gratias*, a salutation of the early Christians, who, carrying out the apostolic injunction, "In all things give thanks," laid themselves open to the ridicule of the heretics, who said it was only an answer. "Thank God, how are you?" is one of the salutations in Arabia at the present time. In Andreas Hofer's district of the Tyrol the people still salute with "Praised be Jesus Christ." Among the poorer classes in Poland the visitor often says, "The Lord be praised," to which the reply is, "World without end. Amen."

The salutation "Be prosperous," "Mayest thou have ease and plenty," has been from the earliest times the commonest of all in the East. We are reminded of the Old Testament age, when prosperity in this world was regarded as the reward of goodness, and as the mark of the favour of God, who blessed "the basket and the store." However much the Western nations value the same prosperity, they have ceased to regard rich men as presumptively favourites of Heaven. Christianity and experience have taught them otherwise, though there is a tendency still among certain more or less religious men of commerce to make Providence invariably responsible for their gains.

Connected with prosperity was peace. This salutation has always been common to Hebrew, Arab, and Persian; but I am not aware that it is extant in Europe, save among the un-original Slavs. "Peace be on you" takes us back to those ages when wars, important and insignificant, were chronic among the nations and tribes of whom we are speaking, and when neither person nor property was safe from the enemy and the marauder. Amid such conditions, "peace" was equivalent to the whole heart's desire; with it came prosperity and all other excellent gifts, leisure for cultivating land and body and mind, for fattening the flocks, and multiplying the herds. Hence the complete formula, "Peace be upon you, and the mercy of God and all his blessings," was often concentrated into the single phrase, "Peace be upon you." When Christianity was blending the East and West, their salutations were, to some extent, blended likewise, or transferred bodily from the one to the other. Thus the Pauline greeting, χάρις καὶ εἰρήνη, "Grace and peace," seems to have been a combination of the Eastern *Peace* and the Greek χαῖρε. But the Apostle's "Rejoicing" or "Faring well" was all spiritual, the free gift of God; and the peace was spiritual too, ensuing upon the same free gift—the peace which passed all understanding, and which dwelt in the heart and mind. The external had become the internal. The ecclesiastical salutation, *Pax vobiscum*, had of course the same Oriental and Christian basis.

Another blessing upon which the Easterns laid great stress was long life. We find the corresponding salutation among the Phœnicians, the Hebrews, the Babylonians, and the Persians, chiefly addressed to chiefs or kings, but apparently also to superiors generally. The Hebrews regarded length of years as a reward for obedience, and premature death as a punishment for some open or secret iniquity. A good man's life ended naturally when he was gathered to his fathers, old and full of days. Thus long life depended, in Eastern opinion, on the favour of God, and the salutation, clothed in characteristic hyperbole, "Let the king live for ever," had its origin in intercession. So far as this formula was addressed to non-royal personages, it has not been preserved among Western nations, save in Paddy's "Long life to your honour," a salutation furnishing an interesting parallel to certain Oriental characteristics of the Irish nature; among others, that loyalty to ancient families which is a lingering homage to the patriarchal form of government. Even as addressed to royalty, the phrase cannot be said to have been borrowed as a salutation properly so called; for the Latin *vivat*, the Italian *viva*, the French *vive le Roi*, and our own "Long live our gracious Queen," are scarcely salutations, although personal communication was their starting-point. In their intercession for long, peaceful, prosperous life, the passivity of the Orientals is illustrated; the Occidental world, on the other hand, has thrust it aside to make room for salutations more characteristic of industry, hurry, and restlessness, and of climates too where winds and fogs and snows chill the enjoyment derived from mere existence.

The Oriental code of politeness supplies an example also of their clannishness in religion, their inclusiveness as well as their exclusiveness. No social distinction ever stood in the way of a Moslem greeting one of his own faith, or served as an excuse for not returning a salutation; this neglect was expressly forbidden by Mahomet. But if a Moslem found that he had by ill luck saluted a Jew or Infidel, he instantly recalled the salutation to himself with the words: 'Peace be on us, and on all the true worshippers of God," or else, taking advantage of a fortunate similarity of sound in the phrases of blessing and cursing, he changed his *Al-salamo-alaica* into *Al-samo-alaica*—"Death to you," to which the Jew responded, *Alaica*, "The same to you." * The Jews refrained from saluting Gentiles and Publicans, their aversion to the latter being both religious and political; for the Publicans, though Jews, were scorned as traitors who had sold themselves to the idolatrous oppressor. Our practice, on the contrary, is to segregate classes rather than religions. In the East, as we learn from the story of Boaz and Ruth, the poor were treated with courtesy, being reminded by forms of speech of their brotherhood before God; and the early Christians, breaking down all barriers, strove to honour all men as men by equality in salutation. The servile demeanour of the poor among ourselves, wherever it still obtains, is the result of feudalism, which sided with human nature against a comprehensive Christianity; and we cannot be surprised if the reaction which has now set in against the old servility should seem to threaten religion likewise, when we recall how those who have taught a religion of submission to our betters, have striven to mix the spirits of Christianity and feudalism.

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* Compare an article on this subject in the *Quarterly Review*, vol. lxxxvii., to which my attention was called while this paper was in progress, and to which I will here take the opportunity of making a general acknowledgment.

The absence of hurry, the leisure of Oriental life was exemplified in their practice of salutation. Modern life is too short here in the West, business is too pressing, we have scarcely time to do anything well; the Easterns, however, took their time about everything—*ab ovo usque ad mala*—salutations included. Two friends meet after a journey; they join their right hands together, compliment one another upon their safety, describe the mutual desolation brought to each of them respectively by the absence of the other: "Thou hast made me desolate by thine absence from me:" "May God not make us desolate by thine absence." Then succeed good wishes many times repeated, the position of the hands being changed at each alternation of compliment. Such a portentous business did this become in the East, when performed according to the letter of ritualistic politeness, that a whole set of such salutations occupies twelve ordinary pages. Can we wonder that these various compliments were often omitted in crowded streets and by persons whose business required haste? So did Elisha urge on his servant Gehazi when he was despatching him to lay his staff on the face of the dead Shunamite child: "If thou meet a man salute him not; and if any salute thee, answer him not again." When the seventy, again, were sent forth on their pressing mission, they were ordered to "Salute no man by the way." We have changed all this; it suits neither our more phlegmatic character, nor our busy life, nor the independence which is the outcome of industrial relations between man and man; and the only survivor of such Oriental effusiveness—the friend that holds your hand in his and shakes it in a way that resembles a cross between a minute-gun and a dropping fire—is a source of blushing uneasiness and is voted an infinite bore.

Fatalism, in a greater or less degree, is, of course, a characteristic of Eastern thought and action, and its presence is most marked in the greetings of those countries which are affected by Mohammedanism. The Arab reveals a strong tinge of fatalism mingled with his religiousness, when he salutes his friend, "If God will, thou *art* well:" "If God will, all the members of thy family enjoy good health;" by his very tense referring to such a prearrangement of all things that the present and future are only the fulfilment of past ordination. The salutations of the West, on the contrary, have, as we should expect, a reference not so much to predestination as to freewill: but of these presently.

The climate of the Persian is the background of his salutations, "May God cool your eye," and "May your shadow never grow less," wishes that would sound strange indeed among the frosts of Siberia. In these the poetical sense also is revealed, as well as in the common Oriental salutation, "Peace be upon you," instead of "with" thee; the "upon thee" reminding us of the gentle descent of the dew or of the dove. The hyperbolical and poetical salutations of the Persian stand in direct contrast to those of the grave, proud, laconic Ottoman—hitherto a ruler over conquered races—whose only poetical salutation seems to be, "Thy visits are as rare as fine days."

"May your shadow never grow less," if it be genuine, reminds us of the respect which the Orientals entertained for obesity. In that melting, sweltering climate, none could venture to aspire to imposing proportions unless plenty to eat and little to do enabled him to repair his daily losses. Hence a fat man meant a rich and prosperous man, and a never-decreasing shadow stood sponsor for a never-decreasing opulence. I am grieved to say, however, that, sanctified as this salutation is by the acceptance of some generations, it does not appear to be (so Professor E. H. Palmer informs me) a genuine Oriental formula, but only a specimen of the *bogus* school of Oriental apologue common in the last century. The nearest approach to such a salutation (he tells me) is, "May God prolong his shadow;" but this is rare, and is used only of a king, who is often called *Zill Allah*, "the shadow of God."

The Egyptians take another view of the melting process. The pores in that feverish climate are the loopholes of quotidian, tertian, and quartan; and hence some of their salutations take the shape of an anxious inquiry, "How goes the perspiration?" "Do you sweat copiously?"

Before we pass from the verbal salutations of the Orientals (conventionally so called), I may be allowed to notice the practice of saluting after a sneeze. This curious custom is found, or has at some time or other been found, in almost all countries. It existed in Africa among nations unknown to the Greeks and Romans. Strada, in his account of Monomotapa, informs us that when the prince sneezed, all his subjects in the capital were apprised of it that they might offer up prayers for his safety. The author of the *Conquest of Peru* assures us that the Cacique of Guachoia having sneezed in the presence of the Spaniards, the Indians of his train fell prostrate before him and stretched forth their hands, invoking the sun to enlighten him, to defend him, and to be his constant guard. Sneezing seems to have been regarded among the Greeks and Romans as a good omen generally, but sometimes as a bad one. To Parthenis, who sneezed in the middle of her love-letter to Sarpedon, it supplied the place of an answer. To Penelope the sneeze of Telemachus promised the return of Ulysses. The sneeze of a soldier (Xenophon's *Anabasis*, bk. ii.) encouraged Xenophon to order an advance. Yet there are instances on the other side. "You are struck with astonishment," said Timotheus to the Athenians, who wished to return into harbour with their fleet after he had sneezed, "because among ten thousand there is one man whose brain is moist."*

The origin of the custom is given, whether truly or not, by Mahomet, quoting from the Rabbis. He says that sneezing was a sign of death inherited from the first man, till the evil omen was taken away from it by the special intercession of Jacob; from that time the salutation first began as a grateful acknowledgment. Polydorus Virgilius, on the other hand, says that in the time of Gregory the Great there was prevalent in Italy an epidemic distemper which carried off all its victims by sneezing; whereupon the Pontiff ordered prayers to be offered up against it, accompanied by certain signs of the Cross. It is difficult, therefore, to ascertain the veritable origin of the custom, and to decide either where it took its rise, or whether the salutation was an intercession or a congratulation. The salutation assumed various forms: in Arabia, for instance, "Good life," was the phrase; among the Romans we find, "*Sit faustum ac felix*," "*Sit salutiferum*," "*Servet te Deus*," "*Bene vertat Deus;*" in modern Italy they say, "*Felicità;*" in France, "*Dieu vous bénisse;*" in Germany, "*Gesundheit;*" in the Swedish language the equivalent of "God bless you;" and "Bless you" among ourselves; for the custom still obtains in some parts of Scotland, where one sneeze is considered lucky and two unlucky. On the whole, in spite of some contrary evidence, and in spite of Aristotle's tracing it to natural religion because sneezing was connected with the brain, and in spite of the legend that sneezing was the first sign of life betrayed by the man whom Prometheus had created—(a legend, by the way, which has a curious parallel in the story of Elisha's miracle, "and the lad sneezed seven times, and opened his eyes")—I am inclined to that solution which finds the origin of the custom in sneezing regarded as a sign of mortality.

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* See *London Cyclopædia*, article on "Sneezing."

It would be quite impossible to discuss in detail the Oriental salutations by gesture. They vary with the dignity of the person saluted, and range from a mere gentle inclination of the body, accompanied by the placing of the right hand across the breast (for a bow only has never been held enough), to the most abject prostration, with a kissing of the ground. Sometimes the hand is put first to the forehead, and then to the breast, as in Turkey, representing (it may be) the homage of the intellect and of the heart, or implying that the head and breast are to be considered as grovelling in the dust. Sometimes the hand of the person saluted is kissed upon the back, or on the back and front, and then put to the forehead, as when the servant salutes his master, or the son the father, or the wife the husband. This is no doubt a typical embrace of the sign of power, and more suitable on the part of inferiors than the kissing of the face, which involves an erect position of the body, and implies greater familiarity of contact. Sometimes the hand is laid under the beard of the person saluted, and then the beard is raised to the lips, homage being in this way paid to that part of the man to which veneration has always been attached. Thus Joab took Amasa with the right hand, by the beard, to kiss him; and the custom prevails to this day, after long separation. In Arabia Petræa it is more common to put cheeks together: which reminds us that the Arabs have never really grovelled under an oppressive and degrading rule. Kissing was primarily a sign of tender respect and reverence, simulated affection being both respectful and propitiatory: the worshippers of Baal, for example, used to kiss or throw kisses to their god. The salute had its origin no doubt in the desire to taste, and so to realise vividly the person for whom affection was felt; just as (to quote Mr. Spencer's illustration) pigeons bill and coo one another, and the Chittagongs smell one another, and the Esquimaux rub noses, while the Gond people pull the ears of their friends, a mild form of the wholesale embrace by which the delight in the sense of possession, or the desire to possess, was first of all gratified and intensified, and afterwards professed for the sake of politeness or propitiation. There is a curious, and, at first sight, inexplicable form of salutation of which I have heard, and which may possibly be explained as the converse of kissing, a desire to give, instead of a desire to take. In some of the South Sea Islands, I am told, they spit on their hands, and then rub the face of the complimented person. This appears to be the nearest approach possible to giving your friend something of yourself, and is paralleled or surpassed by the ancient practice in Carmana, a province of Persia, where the inhabitants, when they wished to show peculiar esteem, used (so Athenæus says) to open a vein and present the blood as it issued, for their friends to drink; a form of salutation that, of course, falls likewise within the sphere of those which have sprung from "militancy," and, as in the old Frank presentation of a hair from the beard, symbolically surrender the whole person to the authority of the real or assumed superior. But to return to the notion of respect in kissing. The kissing of the cheek or mouth, which is scarcely any longer with us accounted a token of reverence, was regarded in this light by the ancient Persians. Cyrus is represented in the *Cyropædia* as kissing his grandfather, "because he wished to honour him." The kissing of the hand (as among ourselves), of the foot (still perpetuated ecclesiastically in the salutation of the Papal toe), of the hem of the garment, and even of the footprint, furnished humbler and humbler gradations to those who were, or for the time represented themselves as being unworthy to kiss a higher part of the body. The "kiss of peace," in the early Church, was a mode of greeting which sprung from the Oriental element, and was no doubt a sign of respect, unity, and brotherhood at a time when it was natural and important that all the members of a sorely tried community in any particular place should be united together in closest sympathy.

The salutation by gesture is, I take it, the result of the feeling that acts speak louder than words, and the further we retrace our steps towards the time when words were less numerous, and when the machinery of language was less perfectly developed, the more manifold and expressive shall we find such salutations to have been. The mother countries of language, moreover—I speak of such languages as have been really studied—are also those countries in which fewest linguistic changes have been made, and which are least prone to change or progress of any kind. For this reason, among others, such salutations are much more numerous there than among the progressive countries of the West. The more progress, the more haste and the less ceremony; the more men mix with one another, and the more the facilities for speedy communication are increased, the less necessity is there for men to be continually testifying their respect, or rather, I should say, the more naturally they cease to do so; especially as industrial relations go hand in hand with progress, and an approximation to equality inevitably follows in their wake. Perhaps the inclemency of climate also may help to explain how men in the North and West do not spend so much time in standing still to talk and bow; certainly, to take a concrete instance, an Englishman will never, until his winds become less cutting, stand in the street with his hat off, as the Frenchman does, while he is talking to a lady. But however much or however little each of these causes may have respectively contributed to the grand result, there is no doubt that the fastest going nations expend least time and effort in gestural salutations, or, in fact, in any salutations whatever. There is a great gulf fixed between the Semitic prostration, with its multiplex accompaniments, and the English or American nod, in which curt gesture respect has deteriorated into mere recognition; while the shaking of hands, however much foreign matter may be exceptionally imported into it, has ceased to express more than acquaintance and cordiality. As to kissing, it has decreased gradually from East to West. It is said to have been unknown in England, as a greeting between the sexes, until Rowena kissed Vortigern. Only in early wassail times was it a salutation between men and men, as in Continental countries it always has been. As a common salutation between men and women it lasted in England long after it had gone out in France, perhaps because our civilisation came later; and it was finally accounted by foreigners an English custom. Erasmus has left behind him a humorous letter in which he tells Faustus that, if he (Faustus) had wings to his feet, he would fly to England because of the kissing. But how little store was really set by it in this country may be gathered from a remark in the autobiography of a certain John Mitchell, who, in speaking of the jealousy felt towards him by a Mr. Alexander Dunlop, a Scotch minister, curiously observes that he, John Mitchell, had never *so much as* kissed Mrs. Dunlop's mouth in courtesy for eleven years before the minister's jealousy broke forth. This salutation continued till the reign of William and Mary; from that date it became less prevalent, partly, no doubt, because the Restoration had brought in French modes of politeness, in some degree; but partly also because, as the civilisation and refinement of the nation advanced, such signs of familiarity declined. The influence of French gallantry upon Teutonic coarseness, both by inheritance and by contiguity, may account for the disappearance of the kissing of women: the influence of English common sense and manliness upon Continental effusiveness may account for the disappearance of kissing between men.

And now, perhaps, I may be allowed to follow the march of migration from East to West, and take such European salutations as I have not already been led to discuss incidentally.

What, then, shall we say to the old Greek χαῖρε: "Rejoice, be glad?" Does it not suddenly throw a light upon the national character? "From the cradle to the grave, in the *agora* and in the vineyard, in the torch-lighted *thalamus* or on the battle-field—every moment of the Greek's existence was filled with joy, with joy and grace." The word flashes before us all at once their cloudless sky, their sunlit hills and valleys, their limpid streams, the music of their language, and the harmony of their lives. From their deteriorated descendants the joy and grace have mostly vanished, and the salutation has vanished too. The substitute τί κάνεις, "What dost thou?" if not connected with the prying and over-reaching elements of their modern mercantile reputation, may perhaps be traced back to the age when Greece became Achaia, and the χαῖρε became the *quid agis?* of the conquering Roman. The Romans said *Salve*, *Ave*, *Vale;* and what was their *beau-idéal?* Health, vigour, fitness for quitting themselves like men, readiness for fighting, conquering, and governing. *Vale* suggests to us *valor*, in the senses of *value* and *courage*, and tells us how the value of a man was measured according to his valour; and *ave* (connected perhaps with *augeo*), pictures to us the growth of his powers and the aggrandisement of his authority. Somewhat later we find *quid agis?* "What dost thou?"—a hint of his indomitable activity. But in the more degenerate days, when freedom and independence were on the wane, more effeminate salutations came into vogue—such, for instance, as *Quid agis, dulcissime rerum?* "What dost thou, sweetest creature?" a greeting intelligible enough when simpered from the lips of the "gentleman about town," but utterly at variance with the spirit of the sturdy warrior of the republican period. The answer of Horace to the button-holder: *Cupio omnia quæ vis*, "I am your most obedient," certainly breathes an air of later refinement.

In more modern Italy the salutations have much increased in number; and here, again, in some cases the harmony between them and the character and circumstances of the several districts is very striking. The Genoese in the Middle Ages used to say, "*Sanità e guadagno*," "*Health and gain*." Could any phrase have been a more perfect commentary upon their characteristics? But at the present time the brand of long oppression and servility still remains impressed upon the phraseology of the people, and the priest-ridden Neapolitan hails you with, "Increase in holiness," while the Piedmontese salutes you, "I am your slave." With the growth of freedom and commerce, the last few years have done much, I believe, to reduce sycophantic verbiage of address, of dedications and of subscriptions. As to the common *Come sta?*—"How stand you?" it seems to bring before us at once and in brief the *far niente* of the indolent Italian, basking in the sun, eating maccaroni, and letting life flit lazily and delightfully away.

In Spain we approach nearer to the Oriental than in any other country which can strictly be termed European, and consequently we meet with more distinct traces of the East in its salutations. The Divine name is frequently used, and the prayer for long life is not uncommon. In *Vaya con Dios, señor*, "Go with God, señor," we seem to detect Eastern religiousness and Castilian haughtiness combined. The constant use of *Vuestra merced*, "Your mercy," "Your grace," *e.g.* "I kiss my hands to your grace," exhibits the contrast between the grave, somewhat curt reverence of the Spaniard and the diffusiveness of the Italian. His punctilio also is illustrated by the fact that the *Vuestra merced* is contracted into *Usted*, a proof of its perpetual and well-nigh burdensome use. The peculiar influence of the Roman Catholic religion upon the Spanish mind finds its counterpart in their salutations. For instance, a few years ago it was *de rigueur*, on entering or leaving a house, to say "Ave, Maria purissima!" to which the reply was made "Sine peccato concepta."

Comment vous portez-vous? "How do you carry yourself?" Is not this the phrase of a nation that has striven chiefly after outward grace? Unjust as it would be, in the easy and sweeping style which is so common, to fling at the French people the charge of flippancy, superficiality, and incapacity for seriousness, yet I think no one will be found to deny that, in their past history, they have given the impression of caring for show more than for reality, for the theatrical rather than the practical, for the *how* they did a thing rather than *what* the thing was. But now "the time past of their life has sufficed for them," we trust, to prate and vapour about *la gloire*, and to tear one another in pieces for the colour of a flag. There is an air of eager triviality, too, about the sound and sense of *Comment ça va-t-il*, "How goes it?" Far more calm and self-contained is the semi-Latin Gascon, when in his *Commo vas?* he saves his breath, and does not skip and hop over an infinity of little words.

I suppose there is some connection between the *comment ça va-t-il* and the *comment vous trouvez-vous* of the Frenchman, and the *wie geht's* and *wie befinden Sie sich* of the German. But they conjure up, for the fancy at any rate, different ideas according to the different characteristics of the two nations. If the French somewhat less usual greeting *comment ça va-t-il?* "how goes *it*?" unveils to us the abstraction and speculation, the logic, too inexorable for facts, experience, and friction, of the typical Frenchman, how much more may this be said of *wie geht's*, the habitual familiar greeting of the cloud-inhabiting German? *How goes it?* Not "how go *you*?" but "how goes *it*?" Paul Richter said that to the German nation was reserved the empire of the air. If Socrates brought philosophy down from the clouds, the Germans have in a sense taken it up again. "How goes *it*?" "the great abstraction, that which permeates our lives and shapes our ends," the great omnipresent and omnipotent ἀνάγκη, the eternal not-ourselves that makes for everything conceivable and inconceivable? And *wie befinden Sie sich*, too, brings before us the everlasting investigation of the German spectacle-compelling night-lamp, and explains to us the higher criticism of the Tübingen school, and the rationale of Kant, Hegel, and Schopenhauer. There is, moreover, a tone of simplicity, familiarity, and equality about the bluff hearty *wie geht's* which reminds one of the times "when there was not much difference in thought, accent, or idiom between the Prince of Saxe-Pumpernickelhausen and his Serene Highness's postilion." Would you expect a more characteristic salutation from the square-shouldered *Mein Herr* as he receives you with open arms in his *Bierbrauerei*, a high-art pipe dangling from his mouth, with a portrait of the Kaiser or Martin Luther upon it, a *Flasche Bier* in front of his capacious ventricle; while as he raises his glass to meet the glass of his *lieber Freund*, his big-boned physiognomy gleams through the spectacled eyes with a genial sense of brotherhood and fatherland! And as he says good-by to you in the *Kirschwasser Strasse*, and raises his cotton-velvet above his head with a *Leben Sie wohl*, you can take in all at once with eye and ear that there was a time when good living was the *beau-idéal* of German life; the long *sederunts* at their dinner-parties bearing witness that the old paths are not yet altogether forsaken. And when we recall Sir Francis Head's summary of German *cuisine*, "Whatever is not sour is greasy, and whatever is not greasy is sure to be sour," we are not surprised that "we are introduced to the *Speisesaal* with the salutation 'good appetite,' and dismissed from it with the parting prayer for 'good digestion.'"

The Low Dutch greeting, "How fare you?" "How travel you?" is a most suggestive representation of Dutch history and manners. It will not let us forget the naval and commercial commonwealth, "occupying" (as says Motley) "a small portion of Europe, but conquering a wide empire by the private enterprise of trading companies, girdling the world with its innumerable dependencies in Asia, Africa, America, and Australia—exercising sovereignty in Brazil, Guiana, the West Indies, New York, at the Cape of Good Hope, in Hindostan, Ceylon, Java, Sumatra, and New Holland—a commonwealth which was the precursor of the English scheme of empire, and which bequeathed its chief characteristics, resistance to dogmatism and despotism, to the Great Republic of the West." Was it not consistent with the fitness of things that the nation whose ships thus explored the world "from China to Peru" should have the salutation "How travel you?"

But, of all salutations, none perhaps is more characteristic than the Anglo-Saxon "How do you do?" It has been our meeting-word ever since the days of the restless Plantagenet. It contains in itself the essence of productive existence, national and individual—it is the formula of activity; it is the correlative of the *All right! Right away!* of the English railway-guard, and the *Go-ahead!* of the Yankee boiler-burster. It accounts for the British Constitution, Magna Charta, and the Great Rebellion; for the steam-engine and the telegraph; for Trafalgar, Waterloo, Commodore Vanderbilt, and the Grand Pacific Railway; for the *Times*, *Punch*, the *New York Herald*, and even for the *Matrimonial*

News. "How are you?" is less active in appearance, and may perhaps represent the opposite side of the English character, the phlegmatic, "let alone" side. On the other hand, it may exhibit the national restlessness in another phase. It has been suggested that it may imply a constant inquiry on your own part before you can answer such a question; a ceaseless reckoning with yourself not only in reference to your present state, but to its connected past and future. The great problem of the whence, why, and whither may be contained in the three words, "How are you?"

The secularising tendency of English social life—and I do not here mean to confound secular with atheistic, according to the practice of some good and well-meaning people, but I mean that tendency born of our natural reserve, which inclines us to estimate religious feeling in inverse proportion to religious froth—this tendency, I say, may account partially, as has been before hinted, for the curtailment of certain salutations which originally contained the name of God. Such a secularisation of the outward is not necessarily an unmixed good, but it is at any rate less revolting than "God save you," in the mouth of a Falstaff, or the *Pax vobiscum* of a fuddled friar.

Is not the canny and inquisitive Scot betrayed in his peculiar formula, "Hoo's a' wi' ye?" Not content with the knowledge of how you are yourself, he wants to know the condition of all your surroundings. Perhaps inquisitiveness is nowhere developed so fully as across the Border; especially does Sandy feel that he has a right to all information concerning you, if he is within the sixty-third longitudinal line of relationship. And inquisitiveness is first-cousin to canniness. Sandy *will* know "hoo's a' wi' ye"—your whisky before he will consent to dine with you, as well as your bank balance before he will consent to do business with you.

The Irishman's "Long life to your honour; may you make your bed in glory!" proves by its first member his Oriental kinship more conclusively than all the mythical blarney of his genealogical tables. The second member of the salutation appears to be the offspring of a religion which, with most Irishmen at all events, is more or less materialistic in its foundation and prospects.

The only remaining European salutations which call for any remark are those of the Slavs: and here our attention is attracted chiefly by the absence of originality. As far as I can ascertain, Russians, Poles, Bulgarians, Servians, *et hoc genus omne*, of whom "we have lately heard so much," cannot boast a single salutation which may fairly be considered their own. "Peace be to you," "The Lord be praised," answered by "World without end. Amen," are all borrowed from the early Christianity of Constantinople. "Be well," "How hast thou thyself?" "How dost thou live on?" are, it need hardly be said, equally unoriginal. "Art thou gay?" again, is merely an adaptation of the Greek χαῖρε. But is not all this consistent with the history of the race, as a whole? Does not Mr. Carlyle say that the great faculty of the Russian nation is a capacity for submission? Perhaps the faculty is wearing out just now, but the statement is true of the not distant past, whether or not the ancient preamble to petitions be authentic which Mr. Spencer quotes with some reserve: "Do not order our heads to be cut off, O mighty lord, for presuming to address you, but hear us!" The Slavs have not, broadly speaking, shown originality either in government, or in religion, or in industry. Perhaps when the contagious example of surrounding nations has affected them more vitally, their salutations, if never original, may cease to begin with "Your slave," "Your serf," or to degrade the old Greek salutation of χαῖρε into the craven supplication for "pardon."

One word, before leaving Europe, in reference to the practice of shaking hands. Mr. Spencer traces the origin of the custom to the movement which would be likely to occur if each of two persons desired to draw the hand of the other to his lips, and each at the same time endeavoured to withdraw his own hand, in deprecation of the submissive salutation. This solution, I feel bound to say, appears to me to prove chiefly the difficulty of finding a solution at all. Would it not be better to imagine that the offer and acceptance of a swordless hand indicated peace and brotherhood, the grasp of the hand being a demonstration that it contained no weapon at the time? I have some recollection, though I cannot verify it, that the salute was so regarded at all events among the Norsemen. The shaking could easily be the hearty outcome of the earlier seizing. It is not uncommon in the East to seize the hand, but among Teutonic nations only is it usual to shake hands. Of course the usage has found its way into other nations, but so contrary is it to their instinct that, in France, for example, a society has been recently formed to abolish "*le* shake-hands" as a vulgar English innovation. The old French *noblesse*, of whom the Legitimists are perhaps the only true representatives, do not make a practice of shaking hands, neither is the custom so common among the Republicans as among the Bonapartists, who, with Napoleon III. for their leader, have always affected English manners. In the "shake-hands," we see, I am inclined to think, brevity and heartiness combined—a characteristic salutation of nations that are energetic, full of business, rather matter-of-fact, and cordial without effusiveness.

And now, following the migration from the Euphrates valley eastwards, I have to notice one or two salutations from Hindostan and Ceylon.

From the Mohammedan, the fighting, ruling inhabitants of India comes, it would appear, our "sign-post" military salute: he raises his right hand to his forehead and makes the fingers touch it. This, it may be supposed, is a substitute on the part of a starched and sturdy soldier for a bow or prostration. The salute of the subject, passive Hindoo is different. In the presence of a Brahmin he raises his folded hands to his forehead, touching it with the balls of his thumbs—a much more comprehensive and submissive style of salutation—and utters at the same moment the word "prostration." In South India the inferior prostrates himself with extended arms, crying out, "The eight limbs together!" This is perhaps the most comprehensive and dramatic form in which an Oriental expresses his abject lack of independence.

In Ceylon, besides the usual Eastern wishes for good health and long life, both Singhalese and Tamil have a curious substitution for "good-by." It is, "I will go and come." Is this characteristic of the great pleasure which the Easterns find in hospitality and which the departing friend takes for granted? Or does it merely represent the kindred feeling that the guest confers an honour upon the host? This salutation reminds one of the French *au revoir;* though *au revoir* might be considered a slight impertinence if addressed in the Singhalese sense to your host as you leave his house.

The salutation of the Chinese, "Have you eaten your rice?" requires no comment. Their greetings are usually, however, most elaborate, and worthy of that paradise of competitive examination, embodied unnaturalness, and absolute subserviency to the powers that be. Their set phrases and postures are rigorously prescribed by an Academy of Compliments; the exact number of speeches and obeisances being calculated with the strictest accuracy. One gesture is as follows: "The saluting person clasps his hands together, holds them out, shakes them gently, bends forward, and says, 'Chin, chin';" that is to say, "Please, please," which is equivalent to "Thank you," and also to "Good-by," and is used for both *ave* and *vale.* The national primness comes out in all this elaboration; the national humbleness also appears in the rule—observed likewise in over-governed Japan and Siam—by which they avoid in salutation the first and second persons of the pronouns, whether personal or possessive, using at the same time depreciatory terms for themselves and complimentary epithets for the person addressed. Thus the saluter, if he be young, may style himself "the stupid younger brother;" if he be old, "the old stupid," "the old putrescence." A wife calls herself "a mean concubine;" a relative, in saluting his relatives, describes himself as "the tail of relationship." "My house" is "the tattered shed;" "my wife," "the stupid thorn," "the mountain (*i.e.* the uncultivated) wife;" "my opinion" is "the stupid opinion," "the venturesome saying;" "my son" is "the grass insect." The person saluted is, if respectable, "he beneath whose feet the speaker is," "he who rides in a carriage." A father is "the great old gentleman;" the emperor is "the sire of myriad years." "*Your* father" is "the honourable grey-beard," "the honourable severity;" "your mother' is "the good gentleness," "the good hall of longevity;" "your daughter," "the thousand pieces of gold." A minister is "balcony-under," *i.e.* he under whose gallery we wait.* All this abjectness is not unsuited to a country in which a primeval, patriarchal civilisation is blended mysteriously with such a primeval, patriarchal barbarism that life is considered of comparatively trivial consequence, "grass insects" are daily dropped over boat sides, and a wholesale decapitation is looked upon as part of a Mandarin's morning programme.

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* I am indebted to the kindness of Professor Legge, of Oxford, for a long list of Chinese salutations, from which the above extracts have been made.

The Japanese, whose verbal salutations have much in common with the Chinese, take off their slippers when they meet—a reminiscence, of course, of holy ground where mortal worshippers were not worthy to wear their shoes; and a practice most natural in a country where the Mikado is as much a god as a man. The salutation, "Do not hurt me," is another outcome of the despotism which has nowhere been so absolute for so many centuries as in China, Siam, and Japan.

The *farrago* of my *libellus* may excusably be concluded with a few fragmentary salutations which I have not fitted in with what has been already written. Certain islanders near the Philippines, I am told, take the foot of him they salute, and with it gently rub the face. This appears to be only a variation of the foot upon the head or neck; but the rubbing is curious. May we remember, in connection with it, "the grinding of the faces of the poor" which we read of in the prophet Isaiah? Perhaps, however, the movement is meant only to extend over a greater area the symbolical expression of submission. In New Guinea leaves of trees are placed on the heads of those who are saluted. This practice, with the converse one, which Mr. Spencer mentions, of the saluters themselves wearing the leaves or branches, may be accounted for as having originally demonstrated the absence of weapons in the hands of those so decorating themselves or others; but why this form of salutation should obtain specially in New Guinea, does not seem easy to explain. In some of the South Sea Islands it is held to be the height of politeness to fling a jar of water over the head of your friend. Obviously this can only be for purposes of grateful cooling, and though the salutation might seen suitable for all hot countries, it is clear, nevertheless, that such a custom could hardly prevail where clothing was not at the minimum. Has the desire to cool the saluted person anything to do with the salutation of certain African tribes, among whom he who salutes strips the other of his robe and ties it about his own waist? However it may be, this manner of greeting can exist only in savage countries, and where there is no chance of catarrh; but the origin of the custom lies, no doubt, in that of covering the face when in the presence of a superior being. The converse custom, likewise African, as well as Tahitean, of unclothing oneself, can easily be understood as an extreme form of taking off the shoes. Western nations content themselves with removing the hat, temporarily in the street (where the movement frequently degenerates into a mere touch), and permanently when entering a house. Perhaps when the hatless negro takes the comb out of his hair and then replaces it, he is actuated by a similar desire to show respect. On the other hand, in the cracking and snapping of fingers with which the members of certain negro tribes salute one another, we may reasonably discern the tendency to express joy by noise resulting from muscular action, just as the clapping of hands among ourselves is the usual token of approbation. The salutation of the Moor on horseback, when he meets a stranger, is strongly indicative of the suspiciousness engendered by centuries of almost ceaseless fighting, and reminds us that the Ishmaelitish tinge is strong in his blood. He makes for the stranger at the top of his speed, as if to ride him down; then suddenly pulls up, and fires his pistol over the stranger's head, thus paying him the compliment of recognising a friend instead of a foe.

The salutations of the aborigines of America do not exhibit many distinct peculiarities. The brief greeting, "Well," which Mr. Spencer refers to the Dacotah Indians, is characteristic of a tribe where "liberty, equality, and fraternity" seem to have rendered unnecessary all expressions of propitiation or servility. The "pipe of peace" has its local habitation naturally on a continent where tobacco was grown and smoked for centuries before the venture of Columbus. The sympathetic sighs and yells with which two tribes of North American Indians greet one another, after a deputation of the two eldest of each tribe have advanced to meet each other and to recount their stories of danger and loss, are not so strange a form of salutation when we consider the chronic bloodshed of the war-path and the trail. The "jumping up and down" of the Fuegians may be paralleled in Loango, and is, after all, only an animal and childlike manifestation of delight not at all unnatural in an unreserved and agile savage. The morning salute on the Orinoco, which Mr. Spencer quotes from Humboldt, "How have the mosquitoes treated you?" must be allowed to be at least excusable, since the miserable inhabitants of that district, so travellers declare, sleep with their bodies buried three or four inches deep in sand, the head alone protruding, and that covered with a handkerchief.

It is time, however, to bring this gossip to a conclusion, though the end comes rather in obedience to a sense of fitness than from a lack of material. But I fear that I myself may be saluted with an adaptation of Virgil's line:—

> Claudite jam rivos, pueri: sat prata biberunt.
> (Shut up the sluices, boys: the fields cry "Hold! Enough!")

The subject is not one that admits of an eloquent peroration. Speculation in reference to the origin and rationale of salutations is open to the charge of being often fanciful, and occasionally futile; and I may be told that from this charge my paper has not relieved it. But if any of my readers, who take an interest in this subject, will also take the trouble to transfigure my fancies into facts, "what in" my speculation "is dark" may yet by their help be "illumined."

Dinners in Literature.

AFTER Achilles in the *Iliad* has granted the request of the unhappy Priam in reference to the dead body of his son, he immediately suggests to the old man the propriety of taking some refreshment. Let us, he says, now remember our dinner. For this was a matter not forgotten by the fair-haired Niobe, even when all her twelve children lay dead in her house, slain by Apollo and Artemis. And Homer, if such a man there be, goes on to tell us how the swift-footed Greek at once rose up, and himself cut the throat of a white wether, and his companions flayed it, and got it ready in the proper fashion, and divided it cunningly, and pierced it with spits, and roasted it with circumspection, and did all those other things so well known to the student of the *Iliad*, as thought worthy of many more mentions than one by the author of that divine poem.

Not a few writers of eminence, both ancient and modern, have followed Homer's example in giving abundant details of what was called contemptuously, by Seneca—a man of extremely morose temper—"the science of the cook-shop." Nor is it certain, when we consider how much a dinner shares in the constitution of human happiness, that this philosopher was altogether wise in reviling the discipline of Apicius as the disease of his age, or that *la science de la gueule*—to borrow a phrase of Rabelais and Montaigne—deserves Columella's censure as the worship of the most degraded vice.

The good effects, moral and social, of a good dinner—not the least among the great and lasting triumphs of a civilised life—have been too often established to need any further evidence. What frantic enmities have been rung out, what everlasting friendships rung in, by that tocsin of the soul, the dinner bell! A suitably served repast can remove prejudice, and abate pride; it can reconcile misunderstandings, and discover amiability. Will not a steaming turkey turn away strife, and meditations of evil vanish before a Christmas plum-pudding? Nay, resentment ere this has beat a retreat before a humble Welsh rarebit; and a horrid feud, which not even the family solicitor could disperse, has melted like a morning mist in sunrise at the approach of a goose at Michaelmas. What might have been the result of a judicious present by her lover to Sophia Western of a dish of those eggs of roasted pullets, of which, according to Black George the Gamekeeper's evidence, she was so fond? Surely a corresponding sweetness of temper had followed the impartial distribution of those sweetmeats which Dr. Johnson advised the brewer's wife to give away of an evening. The advice itself shows the importance which the philosopher attached even to the minutiæ of what is so happily called "good living." What irony of fate has deprived us of that philosophical Cookery Book which women could not write, but the Doctor could, and in place of it has offered to us—*Irene!*

There is a phrase attributed to Voltaire—to whom, having written much, much is attributed—that the fate of nations often depends upon the digestion of a minister. A slight variation in a *carte de jour*, like a variation in the length of Cleopatra's nose, might have altered the circumstances of a world. The decisive battles of Borodino and Leipsic were lost to Napoleon by a fit of dyspepsia. How certainly, then, does it become a man's bounden duty to meditate on few matters so seriously as on his meals! What is more natural than that eating should reach the dignity of an art, and such an art as, like mathematics, demands the whole man! and what wonder is it to see so much in literature concerning eating from the earliest to the latest times! A reflection on the influence of food on the character of mankind diminishes our surprise at the boast of the subtle Ulysses, who is represented in the *Odyssey* declaring that no other mortal may compete with him—not, indeed, in the strength of his arm, or the acuteness of his intellect, but in making up a fire, and cutting up wood for burning, and jointing meat, and discharging generally the duties of a cook and a butler. The sacred historian has not thought it beneath him to describe the effect of a savoury dish in procuring the benediction of Isaac; nor, when we remember the intimate association between the heart and the stomach, will the conduct of the French novelist appear absurd, who introduces, in the most pathetic part of the story, a descant of his heroine upon the several courses of her dinner.

The idea that eating is a subject of humiliation, that it is but a makeshift to repair the imperfection of our nature, that it dulls the intelligence—notions buttressed up by a few stock quotations out of the Latin Grammar, such as "*fruges consumere nati,*" "*animum quoque prægravat una*"—has gone far to make dinner a subject unworthy of the novelist and the poet, and so, not rarely, produced inconvenient results. Thus, to take an instance in our nursery rhymes, an idle attempt has been made, in the ancient ballad, which bears some mystic reference in its opening lines, but nowhere else, to a sixpence and a pocketful of rye, absurdly to explain away the four-and-twenty blackbirds as black numerals baked into the glazed white face of an old dial, or as four-and-twenty hours; and to turn the whole song, by strained interpretations, into a nature myth. There is indeed no little difficulty in understanding the singing of the baked birds; but we are not, because of this subjective deficiency in our intelligence, justified in supposing that the ancient poet intended by his rhyme aught but a simple representation of a royal dinner of his place and period. The vastness of the dainty dish was doubtless introduced to add to our idea of sublimity in the sovereign, just as King Cyrus found an argument for Baal being a living God in the large quantity of his daily rations. As well may an allegorical meaning be assigned to Falstaff's feast in Shallow's house in Gloucestershire, and a figurative interpretation to the pigeons, the couple of short-legged hens, the joint of mutton, and the other sundry kickshaws, which William Cook provided.

Full many a three-volumed novel, unwisely neglected, on account of an apparent predominance of gastronomical detail, by the superficial reader, forms the subject of interest and astonishment to the philosopher. To him, pages in which keenness of appetite is more remarkable than keenness of wit—pages in which the author's puppets make up for saying little by eating much—reveal the inner mental characteristics of the company; and he can almost prophesy the actions of each by observing the particular *entrées* he prefers. If he notices, for instance, that the dishes are improperly prepared, he will at once form a conclusion adverse to the presence of preciseness and exactitude in the host. Nor in doing so is he without the authority of the sage of Bolt Court, who said, "Sir, if a man cannot get his dinner well dressed, he should be suspected of inaccuracy in other things." Where the unskilled reader sees only a tendency in the parties eating to enlarge the circumference of their bodies, the student of human nature will perceive subtle hints of the various anfractuosities of their minds. He will not be surprised at a fit of melancholy in him who feeds on hare, nor at a sanguine temperament in him who makes his meal of beef. He will be prepared for severity of demeanour in him who partakes of pie-crust, according to the authority of Dr. King: "Eat pie-crust, if you'd serious be;" and, following the same great authority, will introduce to the ladies' notice him who during dinner has shown a singular predilection for shell-fish. He will recognise the being with large discourse looking before and after in him who breakfasts as if uncertain of dinner, and dines as if reflecting he had not breakfasted. He will mark the weak stomach as the sure concomitant of the weak brain. He will be prepared for impetuosity of temper in him who subsists on animal out of all proportion to vegetable aliment, or, if in any proportion, in such as Falstaff's intolerable quantity of sack to his one halfpenny-worth of bread. He will perhaps expect to find good eating the parent of good sense. He will receive as an exquisite illustration of natural laws, the circumstance that, in one chapter of a fashionable novel, the young lady, the heroine, during her residence in the temperate zone of the family, will eat about equal proportions of meat and vegetables, of carbonaceous and nitrogenous matter. In another chapter he will find her transported to the arctic circle of Miss Monflather's seminary; and there, in accordance still with the laws of nature, she will be ready to devour the blubber and whale-oil of the Pole. Yet again, in a third chapter, he will meet with her in the tropical atmosphere of a zealous young curate, and there behold her dining, like Amina the delicate, on a few grains of rice, or an apple. Then indeed will her stomach be prouder than that of Arthur Clennam in *Little*

Dorrit, which awoke the indignation of Mr. F.'s aunt. She will disdain the familiar conjunctions of pork and pease-pudding, of bacon and beans, of mutton and capers. Only after repeated solicitations will she be induced to "try a little" of what some one with a pretty taste for the letter has called the "pernicious pasticcios of the pastrycook, or the complex combinations of the confectioner."

Not a few philosophers have endeavoured to show the intimate relation which subsists between the meat and the morality of nations. Some have gone so far as to consider the elevation of gastronomy to be that of the whole circle of arts and sciences, and regarded man as nothing more nor less than a sublime alembic.

Buckle, in his *History of Civilisation*, following Cabanis, considers food as one of the four physical agents most powerfully influencing the human race. The organisation of society and the differences in peoples are traceable, in his opinion, to a diversity of dinner. Men's manners and morality, their customs and condition, depend mainly, if he may be believed, on what they eat. The boldness of the Norseman and the timidity of the Bengalee are ascribed as justly due to their respective preferences for meat or vegetables, for carbonaceous or nitrogenous diet, imposed on them by the temperature of their climate. Slavery in India is the direct result of rice, in Egypt of dates, of maize in Mexico and Peru.

We all remember the mischievous effects of meat on Oliver Twist. When from the recesses of Mrs. Sowerberry's coal-cellar that boy blasphemed Mr. Bumble—"It is not madness," said that dignitary, after deep meditation, "it's meat!" Had the boy lived on gruel it had never happened. The congenital irritability of the English is perhaps owing to their consumption of animal food in a higher proportion than most other nations of Europe. "Beef," said Lord Sparkish, in Swift's *Polite Conversation*, "is man's meat." Europa is borne now, as formerly, by a bull. Beef conduces to courage. It was roast-beef, may be, that won the day at Blenheim and Ramillies, and potages and kickshaws that lost it at Agincourt and Poictiers. The French themselves say, *C'est la soupe que fait le soldat.* However that may be, the lightness of their cookery appears to have caused considerable lightness of heel in their dancing-masters. Greece was once famous for song. How has its poetry sunk since the inhabitants of the Morea substituted coffee for wine!

A good dinner is indeed necessary to make a good subject. Correct views in politics and right opinions in religion are no less dependent on our nutriment than animal intrepidity and amiability of disposition. The word Whig is derived, it is well known, from a word used in North England for sour milk; and the advancement of the Catholic faith was certainly contemplated by the monks of the Abbey of Fécamp when they consecrated each bottle of their famous Benedictine liqueur with the mystic letters A. M. D. G., without which none, it may be added, is genuine. Even architecture and natural philosophy were shown by Sinon to be intimately related to cookery; and none will be surprised at his placing the science by which the greatest sum of pleasure is afforded to our friends, in close juxtaposition to that of military strategics, whereby the extreme amount of annoyance is occasioned to our enemies. The professors of medicine and morality are about equally indebted to the cooks. Few, however, have borrowed from them for such an early period of life as Van Helmont, who demanded of them a mystic sop of bread boiled in beer as a substitution in infants' food for that natural milk of which the amiable Dr. Brouzet seems to have had so bad an opinion. Nor have philosophers been unwilling to apply to themselves in practice the principles they advocated in theory. Boswell's illustrious friend, for example, was equally solicitous to supply heat and repair waste in his corporeal system. Half-a-dozen large peaches, according to Mrs. Piozzi, before breakfast, counterbalanced a well-boiled leg of pork for dinner; the outside cut of a salt buttock of beef was accompanied by a liberal supply of chocolate, made with much cream or melted butter; nor could a veal pie swell the veins in his forehead with satisfaction unless it contained plenty of sugar and plums. It is said of him that he sought less for flavour than effect. His proposition that a man seldom thinks with more earnestness of anything than he does of his dinner, he certainly defended by his own example, in his admirable admixture, shown in the veal pie, his favourite dainty, of substances with and without nitrogen, mixed, it may be, with an exactitude of chemical combination, which would have been written down, doubtless, in that Cookery Book of his, composed on philosophical principles, could he have been, in the interests of humanity, induced to undertake it.

The ancient Hebrew writers say little about dinners; and what indeed could be expected from a people who seem to have eaten meat only on festivals? Their silly simplicity confounds the labours of Vatel and Francatelli, of Soyer and Carême. They inverted the science of cookery by regarding bread as the principal dish, and flesh or its juice as a mere accessory. Widely different from these were the dishes that adorned the tables of imperial Rome. Vedius Pollio, the friend of Augustus, was singularly delicate in his diet. His most pleasing *plat* was lampreys, which he fattened with disobedient slaves. Hadrian's favourite dish, says Spartianus, in the biography which he wrote of that emperor, was called Tetrapharmacum, from its consisting of four principal ingredients—to wit, sow's udder, peacock, pheasant, and the gammon of a wild boar in paste. These meats appear to have been mixed in some manner which the author has omitted to mention. For the wild-boar pasty there is indeed to be found more than one receipt in Apicius Cælius. The best, perhaps, is the following:—First boil the gammon with plenty of dry figs (in another receipt the exact number twenty-five is given) and three laurel leaves. (The use of these figs, it is said, made the flesh tender.) Then skin it, slice it superficially into dice, and fill it with honey. Knead flour with oil, and cover it with this paste. When the dough is cooked, take it from the oven, and serve.

Faute de grives on mange des merles is an old French proverb, and thrushes dressed in different ways are still devoured in France. Any person anxious to know how to cook them, will probably find his curiosity satisfied by the cookery books of Dubois or Carême. In England they are scarcely a common dish, and the index to Mrs. Beeton's Recipes may be consulted in vain. Formerly they were highly esteemed. The comestible thrush of the ancients was the smallest of its kind, known to us as the red-wing. It visits our coasts in severe winters, but is never fattened as at Rome.

Horace expresses an opinion that nothing is better than a fat thrush ; nothing fairer than an ample sow's udder. Martial agrees with Horace, and has composed a little poem, of which the burden is that, in the poet's judgment, the titbit among birds is a thrush ; but among quadrupeds a hare. On another occasion he tells us that he prefers a sucking-pig to any meat. The Spanish epigrammatist also observes that a crown of nard or roses may delight others, but he himself is chiefly delighted with a crown of thrushes. Such a present, to make his mistress know that he has not forgotten her, is suggested by Ovid to his pupil : *Missaque corona Te memorem dominæ testificere tuæ.* A subtlety of palate is hinted at in Persius, so exquisite as to be able to discriminate between the flavours of the male and female bird. Another poet tells us that to mix them with oysters disarranges the stomach, and is productive of bile. In a word, for once that the Roman authors speak of the music of these birds in the groves, they speak a dozen times of their merit on the table. They praise their savour rather than their song. They are agreeable in a poplar-tree, but more agreeable in a pasty. Lucullus, says Varro, built an aviary, containing a *salle à manger*, by which ingenious device he was enabled to eat thrushes cooked and contemplate them alive at one and the same opportunity. They, or rather their breasts, form a notable ingredient in the famous *Patina Apiciana*, or *plat* of Apicius, which also contained the inevitable udder, besides fish, fowl, and beccaficoes, and everything of the best. The relative merits, indeed, of beccaficoes, thrushes, mushrooms, and oysters were so difficult to determine, that Tiberius is said to have given a prize of some two thousand pounds to one Asellius Sabinus for an essay, in the form of a dialogue, on that subject.

Beccaficoes were eaten in England in the days of Henry II. Among the pious and dutiful sons of that king, who set their countrymen almost as fair an example of filial obedience as the sons of the first three Georges, Prince John was at least wise enough to know the best, perhaps the only, means to win the people's respect and love. He courted popularity, according to Sir William Scott, by a sumptuous repast. When it is remembered that his death was occasioned by a surfeit of peaches and new ale, it will probably be admitted that he put no great constraint upon himself in this matter. Be that as it may, it is recorded in *Ivanhoe* that he held high festival in Ashby Castle, where the tables "groaned," not indeed for the first or last time, under the quantity of "good cheer." The dishes were rendered as unlike their natural forms as possible, "as is done," says the author, "by the modern professors of the culinary art." He might have included the ancient ones. *Ingeniosa gula est*, and the traditional schoolboy will remember the aphy or anchovy which the cook of Nicomedes, King of Bithynia, produced for him from that vegetable on which the sober Cincinnatus was content to dine. More wonderful changes than these, however—transubstantiations instead of transformations—are known to sacred and profane literature. The story of the celebrated dinner of Numa Pompilius is told by Plutarch, who is troubled with a pagan scepticism about its truth. The king had invited his subjects to a plebeian meal of extreme frugality. Suddenly he lifted up his eyes, and said his familiar Goddess Egeria was present; whereupon the tables were forthwith filled with a variety of delicate food. This sudden change recalls that of St. Patrick, who, being a-hungered on a fast-day, helped himself furtively to a couple of pork chops. Then the saint's conscience smote him, and he cast the chops from him into a pail of water, with a prayer for forgiveness. His petition was probably heard, for the pieces of pork were immediately converted, by more than mortal means, into a couple of fat pike.

A change of flavour in fish and fowl was one of the curious features in the dinner given by Nasidienus. The pontifical dinner of Lentulus, on his election to the office of flamen (the abstemiousness of the clergy made a pontifical dinner proverbial at Rome, as that of the French priests has originated the *repas de chanoines*) is a famous dinner of antiquity. Posterity is indebted to the *Saturnalia* of Macrobius for a *menu* of the banquet. The names of many of the animals eaten have exercised much exegetical ingenuity to very little purpose. The peloris—"a sort of shell-fish" (Dict.)—still remains a mystery. The spondylus—"a sort of shell-fish" (Dict.)—is yet unknown. Of the balani—"a sort of shell-fish" (Dict.)—both white and black, we are told nothing, save that they probably derive their name from their resemblance to an acorn, by the laborious Forcellini. But though an exact knowledge of the ingredients of numerous *plats* has been thus removed from us, probably for ever, by the ruthless hand of Time, thus much of certainty remains. In the first course were served sea-urchins, oysters, thrushes on asparagus, and a fatted hen. Haunches of wild venison and beccaficoes formed a part of the second course, which has been sadly mutilated. The third was made grateful by a sow's udder, a wild boar's cheek, a ragout of fish, ducks, hares, boiled teal, capons, frumenty, and Picentian bread.

Juvenal occupies a whole Satire with considerations for cooking a single fish; and Martial has consecrated the chief portion of one of his books, called *Xenia*, to a poetic catalogue of subjects of diet. Not the least remarkable of these is a dish made of flamingo's tongues, reminding the reader of the *pâté* of tongues of singing birds composed by Clodius Æsopus, the actor. The tongue of the flamingo was one of the ingredients of Vitellius's celebrated *entrée* which he called his Shield of Minerva. Martial and Pliny were both admirers of *foie gras*—the latter pathetically alludes to it as the tenderest, moistest, and sweetest of livers; and the liver of a white goose fed on fat figs is mentioned by Horace as one of the delicacies of the table of Nasidienus. Many dishes, like Wordsworth's ideal woman, not too good for human nature's daily food, appear at that weird feast, but none of them equal in horror the blinded cuttle-fish in the *Rudens* of Plautus. Here is a dish that the famous cream sauce of the Marquis de Béchamel could hardly render palatable, although that courtier of the Grand Monarque boasted that with it a man might eat his own mother-in-law, and yet fail to discover her natural inherent bitterness. "I hate him worse than cold boiled veal," Macaulay said, or is reported to have said, of the modest Mr. Croker; but what is cold veal to a clammy cuttlefish? Surely of the two a man would prefer the Lacedæmonian black broth, which one, having tasted, observed he wondered not any more, seeing this was their life's chief nutriment, at the Spartan intrepidity in facing death. Pine-nuts (*pignons*) are also sung by Martial as a peculiar delicacy. These are probably a sort of pistachio. To translate the Latin term, as is commonly done, by "fir-cones" would be to follow the example of the *Journal des Débats*, which French *Times* once, if we may believe Archbishop Trench, spoke of *pommes de pin* as the conclusion of a Lord Mayor's feast, being led into the mistake by our use of pine-apple for *anana*, and then commented in good set terms on the grossness of the English appetite.

King's proposed dinner to Gaspar Barthius of a salcacaby, a dish of fenugreek, a wild sheep's head and appurtenance, with a suitable electuary, a ragout of capons' stones and some dormouse sausages, probably suggested to Smollett his dinner in the manner of the ancients in *Peregrine Pickle*, of which the concoction of the dishes was the cause of the dismissal of five cooks as incapable, while even of the sixth, compulsorily retained, it made the hair stand on end. The whole of this satire on Akenside is very nearly copied from the receipts of Apicius; from the boiled goose with its sauce of lovage, coriander, mint, rue, anchovies, and oil, to the *hypotrimma* of Hesychius, which Smollett describes as a mixture of vinegar, pickle, and honey boiled to proper consistence, with candied assafœtida; but it is composed in the cookery book of Apicius of many more ingredients, as lovage, pepper, dry mint, pine-nuts, raisins, boiled-down wine, sweet cheese, and oil. So in the famous salacaccabia, which so seriously discomposed the French marquis, many dainties are omitted which had assuredly rendered that miserable man's condition far worse. Its successor, the dormouse pasty, liquored with the syrup of white poppies—a soporiferous dainty no less effective than an owl pie—is a modification of the dish of dormice in Trimalchio's banquet in Petronius, where they are represented sprinkled with honey and white poppies' roasted seed, and set as an opposite dish to hot sausages on a silver gridiron, beneath which were damsons and pomegranate grains to represent black and live coals. In Trimalchio's banquet there are several dishes beside these sausages of which English society at the present day could partake without any feeling of disgust. But in Smollett's feast there is not probably a single dish but will excite more or less loathing. He has omitted from his ancient dinner all that might attract the appetite, as sedulously as, in the abusive sacrifices to the Lindian Hercules, the priests, according to Lactantius, omitted every word of good omen, lest the whole ceremony should be vitiated or made null and void.

Another dinner modelled apparently on that of the ancients, presents itself to the eyes of Sir Epicure Mammon in the *Alchemist.* Leaving his footboy by far the best fare, after our unlearned taste, in pheasants, calvered salmons, knots, godwits, and lampreys, he confines himself to dainties such as are, from the egg to the apples, almost as uninviting to us as those in the bill of fare of Smollett. Of these the least generally known are cockles boiled in silver shells, shrimps swimming in butter of dolphin's milk, carp tongues, camel's heels, barbels' beards, boiled dormice, oiled mushrooms, and sow's paps.

In Martial's dinner invitation to his friends, the sow's udder usually occupies a prominent place. According to Pliny it was in the primest condition when cut off immediately, or at the longest one day, after the sow had farrowed, before the young had derived any nourishment from it; it was of the worst quality when the animal miscarried. It was considered a delicacy when set on the table, as one author describes it, moist with the salt liquor of a tunny fish. The dish is frequently mentioned by the poets from Plautus downward. It occurs in the second course of Trimalchio's banquet *vis-à-vis* with a hare fitted with wings to resemble Pegasus, and smokes in the middle of the Doctor's table as described by Smollett. Its stuffing of minced pork, hog's brains, eggs, pepper, cloves, garlick, aniseed, rue, ginger, oil, wine, and pickle corresponds as usual very nearly with the receipt given in Cælius Apicius.

An inconvenient quantity of a food somewhat perhaps analogous to the sow's udder has been stigmatised by the first of French satirists.

In the list of the subjects which the Gastrolaters sacrifice to their ventripotent God on interlarded fish and other days, Rabelais has given us almost a complete catalogue of the eatables of his time, comprising some extraordinary dishes which are comparatively rare in cookery books either ancient or modern. Such, for instance, are the fishes which, in the English translation, are called sleeves, gracious lords, jegs, precks, botitoes, pallours, smys, and chevins; also the birds, if birds they be, named duckers, flemmings, squabbs, queests, and snytes. The dinner of these Gastrolaters has none of that discipline of cookery which amuses the reader of Molière. In the *Bourgeois Gentilhomme*, for instance, Dorante speaks of a dinner, which might have been given by a certain Damis, so distinguished is it by elegance and erudition. "To show you his science of good eating," says the Marquis to Dorimène, "he would have dilated on the bread baked by itself, with its sides of gold rendered more toothsome by crust all round crumpling tenderly under the tooth; on the wine, with its velvety juice armed with an acid not too commanding; on a loin of mutton garnished with parsley, or of Normandy veal, long, white, delicate, a very almond paste in the mouth; on a partridge made excellent by its wonderful aroma; and, for his masterpiece, on a soup *à bouillon perlé*, supported by a plump young turkey cantonned with young pigeons, and crowned with white onions married with chicory." In this description we recognise with delight that proper appreciation of delicate food which is the chief distinctive feature of a civilised life, and so highly necessary to all domestic happiness.

In Ben Jonson's masque of the *Metamorphosed Gipsies*, in which such specimens of Rommany slang abound as to render it hard to be understood without the aid of an expert, the captain of the gipsies, after examining the hand of King James, whom he compliments by calling a lucky bird, says that he should, by the lines in his palm,

Love a horse and a hound, but no part of a swine.

It is probable that the astute actor had heard of his sacred majesty's *menu* for Satan: Joint, loin of pork; *entrée*, a poll of ling; dessert, a pipe of tobacco. This erudite potentate, in his aversion to pig's flesh, shared a national peculiarity according to the author of *Waverley*, who, in his description of a Highland feast of MacIvor, mentions piles of beef and mutton, but nothing of pork. The chief feature worthy of record in this banquet, distinguished by a rude simplicity recalling that of the dinner of Penelope's suitors, was the central dish, a yearling lamb, named for some curious philological reason a "hog in har'st," which, roasted whole, stood on all fours with parsley in its mouth.

The same author has given the world a description of gipsy cookery in *Guy Mannering*. The big black caldron of Meg Merrilies, whom the Dominie conjectured to be a witch, contains something far superior, in an æsthetic point of view, to the ingredients of the hell-broth of the weird sisters on the blasted heath. Can the fillet of a fenny snake, or an adder's fork, be compared with a boiled fowl; the root of hemlock, whether digged in the dark or at midday, with a hare; or the nose of a Turk and a Tartar's lips with partridges and moor-game? Potatoes and leeks present a pleasing contrast to a tiger's chaudron and the liver of a Jew; and Dominie Sampson was doubtless pro-di-giously satisfied in drinking a warm cupful of brandy, in the place of, what he apparently expected, the cold blood of a baboon. The desperate fashion of witches' dinners, commonly to be met with, was probably set by such dishes as were assigned by classic writers to ladies of the type of Canidia and Erichtho. Pierre de Lancre, the good old magistrate of Bordeaux—who certainly may be credited with some knowledge of the ways of witches, seeing that he burnt over five hundred of them alive—gives such a description of the dinner—or Sabbath, as he calls it—of these unhappy night-hags, as might with the mere horror of it eclipse the labouring moon. Such *entrées* as can be mentioned are foaming toads, and the fat of gibbeted murderers gathered from the gallows-tree; beasts which have died a natural death, or what the Scotch call braxy; and the corpses of the lately buried torn out of their graves. But the *pièce de résistance* was a pasty of fetid odour composed of the powdered liver of an unbaptized infant, in a coffin of black millet crust. Salt, however, was never used—a circumstance from which Dominie Sampson, when fasting from all but sin, took heart, because it was appointed by God to season all sacrifices, and Christians are expressly required to have salt in themselves and peace with one another.

To remove the taste of the witches' banquet, the reader may return to that of Prince John, at Ashby Castle, in *Ivanhoe*. Delicacies from foreign parts and islands far away abounded at this feast. There were the rarest wines, foreign and domestic; and simnel bread, made of the finest wheat flour, and, being twice cooked, exceedingly light; and wastel bread, from which comes the French *gâteau*, a delicate kind of cake with which Madame Eglantine, the prioress, fed the small dogs she loved so dearly, and the richest of pastry. But above all there was a Karum pie, a Sibylline name to which unfortunately no note of elucidation or etymology is appended, made of beccaficoes and nightingales, which Athelstane, Thane of Coningsburgh, swallowed, to the laughter of the company, under the impression that they were larks and pigeons. Whether the worthy thane took Martial's advice and added pepper to the waxen beccaficoes or not, he could well afford to be laughed at, for he left nothing for his neighbours of these succulent dainties, on which Byron confesses, in *Beppo*, he liked to feed.

The dinners of all times have had competent historians. As Sir Walter Scott has furnished a sample of a feast in the days of King Henry II., so has Swift given a representation, sufficiently accurate, probably, of one in the days of Queen Anne. In that author's complete collection of polite and ingenious conversations, we have a sort of photograph of the breakfasts and dinners, "partaken of," to use a term suited to the occasion, by the *bon-ton* of society at the commencement of the eighteenth century. The former meal was simple enough, consisting only of tea, bread-and-butter and biscuit, though one of the party took a share of beefsteak, with two mugs of ale and a tankard of March beer as soon as he got out of bed; but the latter is remarkable for its picturesque profusion. Oysters, sirloin of beef, shoulder of veal, tongue, pigeon, black-pudding, cucumber, soup, chicken, fritters, venison pasty, hare, almond-pudding, ham, jelly, goose, rabbit, preserved oranges, partridge, cheese, and sturgeon, are all mentioned as ingredients of the feast, and appear to have been eaten in the order in which they are set down. The drink consisted of claret, cider, small beer, October ale, Burgundy, and tea. The consequences of this feast upon the guests are not mentioned by the Dean of St. Patrick's. Authors are not invariably so reticent. Gray, for instance, after relating the particulars of a dinner at which Dr. Chapman, the master of Magdalen College, Cambridge, distinguished himself, closes his account in the following sympathetic fashion:—"He has gone to his grave with five fine mackerel (large and full of roe) in his belly."

"*Tous ces braves gens*," says Taine, speaking of Fielding's principal characters, "*se battent bien, marchent bien, mangent bien, boivent mieux encore.*" Roast-beef descends into their powerful stomachs as by a law of nature into its proper place. That they were not averse to liquor may be gathered from the example of one out of many, Squire Western, who, in nine cases out of ten of his appearance, makes his entrance or his exit drunk. The reader may indeed well expect to meet with some guzzling in a work which the writer likened to a public ordinary, speaking of its contents as a bill of fare. The difficulty of finding traits of nature he compares to that of meeting with a Bayonne ham or Bologna sausage in the shops of the metropolis; and, while warning his reader that his entertainment depends less on the meat cooked than the author's cookery, offers to conduct him, after the approved fashion of cooks, from plain dishes of the country to the quintessence of sauces and spices, the affectations of the town. Squire Western would probably not so often have rendered his articulation indistinct had he not been so politely desirous to drink the health of his friends on all occasions.

The ill effects of this custom once caused a sanguine correspondent of the *World*, who was unwilling to waste on the security of health the succour of disease, to suggest that, in future, healths should be eaten, instead of, or at least as well as, drunk. There is, indeed, no reason to expect that our unselfish wishes for the salutary welfare of our friends would be less likely to be accomplished by our eating to them than by our drinking. No potent mystic spell to which we may trust for the fruition of our vows exists in Madeira more than in mutton, in beer more than in beef, in punch more than in pork. Less dangerous by far would it be for our own heads, and equally efficacious in fulfilling our desires for the health of others, if we ate the Queen and the Royal Family in a saddle of mutton, toasted the Bishop and Clergy in turtle, and testified our hopes of the future felicity of the bridesmaids at a wedding-breakfast by a mouthful of chicken *à la Marengo*, or a game-pie.

Some few dinners are mentioned by Dickens; but many more drinks, generally with the particulars appended of their composition. There is, for example, the can of flip, for which Solomon Daisy laid down his sixpence, in *Barnaby Rudge*. There are the Oxford nightcaps, quite celebrated for their strength and goodness, without which, according to Mrs. Nickleby, the young men at College never went to bed. And there is that sherry-cobbler, described in all its details, with which Mark Tapley made a new man in every particular worth mentioning of Martin Chuzzlewit. But for punch in all its varieties Dickens had evidently a predilection. He probably thought with a celebrated physician that in cases where wine and malt liquor are found too oppressive, the beverage of punch, in which the spirit, saccharine matter, and acids are thoroughly amalgamated, might prove a salutary substitute. In *Our Mutual Friend* the wind passing over the roof of the R. Wilfer family rushes off charged with a delicious whiff of rum; and in the same novel Mr. Wegg, one evening paying a visit to Mr. Venus's museum, finds its proprietor carousing on cobbler's punch, the composition of which so much depended upon individual gifts, and there being a feeling thrown into it, though the groundwork of the drink was gin in a Dutch bottle. Mr. Wegg is indignant at the idea of the possibility of his refusal to partake of this compound. Lemon is mentioned as one of its ingredients. While David Copperfield lived principally on Dora and coffee, his friend, Mr. Micawber, preferred punch, which, like time and tide, waits for no man. So on the occasion of David's memorable dinner-party, the melancholy of the Crushed One was awhile diverted by his being led to the lemons. A thing out of mind was then that ribald turncock, who had cut off his supply of water, amidst the fragrance of lemon-peel and sugar, and burning rum.

After Bob Sawyer's dinner-party a reeking jorum of rum punch is brewed in the largest mortar in his shop, and the various materials amalgamated with a pestle in a very apothecary-like manner. Mr. Pickwick himself, though a discreet man, is so fond of milk-punch that he drinks out of Bob Sawyer's case-bottle, taking it through the coach window three times before allowing Ben Allen a drop of it. And after the famous sporting party, in which Mr. Winkle for ever distinguished himself, many more than three glasses of cold punch out of a stone bottle brought Mr. Pickwick into the wheelbarrow, and from the wheelbarrow into the pound. It is somewhat curious that the "Household Edition" of Dickens's works has for its first two illustrations of the Pickwick Club, the scene last mentioned, in which the hero is awaking from intoxication in the wheelbarrow, and that in which, still under the influence of perhaps too much punch, he is discovered by the ladies of Mr. Wardle's family.

Among the less famous writers of the last twenty years, Mortimer Collins is certainly the most conscientious in giving, on every possible occasion, a list of the articles which the characters in his novels consume. In *Miranda, a Midsummer* (it is the author's own limitation) *Madness*, that saturnine man of letters, affecting the *gourmand enjoué*, introduces a very mysterious person, who is called the Troglodyte of the Island of Hawks, providing victuals for his guests, which are indeed worthy of precise and singular description. Stewed kid with oranges; certain wonderful purple fish which can only be caught, if the Troglodyte was not mistaken, or intentionally imposing on his company, in lakes formed out of the craters of extinct volcanoes; goats'-milk cheese, bananas in cream, and a brewage, still more wonderful than the purple fish, without a name, made of grapes, oranges, lemons, citrons, bananas, and cinnamon—these dainties are far indeed from every-day fare. But the Troglodyte not always confused his visitors with such an unaccustomed *carte*. A few pages beyond the last banquet, the dweller in the cave treats a lawyer to oysters with Chablis, clear turtle with old Madeira, a haunch of Exmoor mutton with Heidseck, and a grouse with Lafite. Other bills of fare, more or less complicated or unusual, are scattered through this novel, out of which Mr. Collins was probably no more able to keep them, than Mr. Dick to exclude from his memorials the ever unwelcome intervention of King Charles. But the particular work, in which beverages appear like the stars which stud the milky way, is the *Princess Clarice*. It is not easy to calculate how often that young lady, though described as a rational being, occupies herself with drinking, lazily or otherwise, as the case may be, something effervescent, what time her father is feasting on Montrachet, that "good river-side wine," and sardines. The quantity of drink they both consume would confound a Dane; the variety astonish a wine-merchant. Mention is made in the first half of the first volume alone of gin cocktails and old rye, of pick-me-ups and Maraschino, a glass of which is given to Clarice by her judicious father, to prepare her mind for the news of a burglary in his house; of Rœderer, and claret-cup with borage and wooderooffe, of ale and port. Nor must it be supposed that the eating does not proceed *pari passu* with the drinking in this novel. Four courses of the dinner at Great Middleton, eaten by the surgeon and Sir Clare, are described at length by the novelist, who would have described the rest in the same manner, were it not for his fear of the mighty bill of fare horrifying the critics, who, according to Mr. Mortimer Collins, are dyspeptic to a man. Yet in spite of all the gaudy glitter and crowd of meats at Great Middleton, as an exquisite piece of Limoges porcelain compared to the contents of a crockery-shop in the New Cut in Lambeth, is Tennyson's picture of the picnic in *Audley Court*, with its dusky loaf that smelt of home, its pasty of quail and pigeon, lark and leveret, and its prime flask of ancestral cider, compared to the Salian feast of the surgeon and Sir Clare.

A gigantic dinner, almost worthy of the mouth of Gargantua, is the dinner that Charles Lever has not disdained to introduce into *Charles O'Malley*—a dinner which the hero of that tale often remembered in his mountain bivouacs with their hard fare of "pickled cork-tree and pyroligneous aquafortis." The repast consisted of a turbot as big as the Waterloo shield, a sirloin which seemed cut from the sides of a rhinoceros, a sauce-boat that contained an oyster-bed, a turkey which would have formed the main army of a French dinner, flanked by a picket of ham, a detached squadron of chickens ambushed in greens, and potatoes piled like shot in an ordnance yard. The standard bearers of this host were massive decanters of port and sherry, and a large square half-gallon vessel of whisky.

This Brobdingnagian banquet may be compared with two Lilliputian entertainments, of which an account has been preserved by Sir Walter Scott. The first, a very temperate feast, occurs in *Red Gauntlet*.

Among the visitors who on one eventful morning came to Joe Crackenthorp's public-house, on the banks of the Solway, the reader may remember the Quaker, Joshua Geddes. He orders, we are told, a pint of ale, bread, butter, and some Dutch cheese. Not content with such meagre fare was that unfortunate victim of Themis, Peter Peebles, who on the same occasion, after asking in vain for a "plack pie," or a "souter's clod," whatever those delicacies may be, obtains by various solicitations a mutton pasty, a quart of barleybroo, something over a dram of brandy, and of sherry a gill.

Scott's second dinner, in which all good things are but creatures of the imagination, offers a sad contrast to such abundance as astonished Sancho at Camacho's wedding feast, and which pleasantly distinguishes the *Epulæ lautiores* of Bradwardine. In the *Bride of Lammermoor*, that faithful but somewhat tedious old butler, Caleb Balderstone, the ingenious serving-man who contrives to make the satisfaction of his own silly vanity pass for a dutiful regard to his master's honour—a vanity which he never hesitates to support by any number of lies—offers on a day the Lord of Ravenswood and his hungry guest the following fare:—Bannocks, the hinder end of a mutton ham, three times served already, and the heel of a ewe milk 'kebbuck,' all which, being translated, means flat cakes, the pickings of what was once a leg of mutton, and the rind of a cheese. As for wine, "there never was lack of wine at Wolf's Crag," says honest Caleb—"only two days since as much was drunk as would have floated a pinnace;" and as for ale, the awful thunder last week had a little turned it, so at last the revellers are forced to drink water; but such water as Balderstone undertakes to affirm cannot be met with anywhere in the wide world except in the Tower well.

These dinners of fiction may be finally compared with a dinner of fact—a neat and inexpensive dinner, given by a Scotch lady of equal economy and taste, who was under the dire necessity of asking a friend to dine at the beginning of this century. The authentic bill of fare is copied from a number of the *Monthly Review*. It consisted of seven *plats*, and included fish, joint, game, and sweets, not to mention sauce and vegetables.

	s.	*d.*
At top, 2 herrings	0	1
Middle, 1½ oz. melted butter	0	0½
Bottom, 3 mutton chops, cut thin	0	2
One side, 1 lb. small potatoes	0	0½
On the other side, pickled cabbage	0	0½
Fish removed, 2 larks, plenty of crumbs	0	1½
Mutton removed, French roll boiled for pudding . . .	0	0½
Parsley for garnish	0	0½
	0	7

Animal Music.

In the infancy of the race, men were accustomed to think of what we now call the lower animals as on a level with themselves in all kinds of intellectual and moral capacity. And children reflect this condition of mind by imagining their pet animals to be capable of understanding all their thoughts and wishes. The whole class of fables and children's stories illustrate this naïve condition of the early human fancy. The uncivilised man and the child find no difficulty in conceiving their familiar quadrupeds talking, behaving, and acting quite in a human fashion. As the race grew in intelligence it began to think of the lower creation as further removed from itself. Proud of its new attainments it arrogated to itself the exclusive possession of reflection, reason, and voluntary choice. A number of influences, some worthy, some unworthy, combined to make man thus project the lower animals further and further from his own plane of capacity and attainment. The final expression of this disposition was the philosophic doctrine of Descartes that animals are without soul and consciousness, their seemingly intelligent actions being simply the result of a nicely contrived piece of bodily mechanism.

It is not a little curious that modern science is doing much to upset this view of the animal world so flattering to man's self-conceit. Closer and wider observation of the habits of animals is bringing to light here and there indications of a degree of conscious intelligence which may well put to shame the so-called "rationality" of many members of our own species. And the new doctrine of Evolution, which regards all species as connected steps in one complex movement of organic development, has naturally tended to raise the intellectual and moral status of animals by suggesting that in them are to be found the germs of mental qualities previously supposed to be man's exclusive possession.

Among the attributes which science is thus extending to the lower animals is the artistic impulse. Man can no longer boast of being the sole artist. Mr. Darwin has recently taught us that certain birds display a very considerable amount of taste and skill in the matter of decorative colouring; and he argues that the appreciation of well-harmonised colours reaches a long way down in the animal scale.

With respect to music, it must of course always have been a matter of observation that the lower animals share in our love of song. The first human musicians doubtless noticed the similarity of their rude art to bird-song, even though it may not be true, as Lucretius supposed, that our plagiarist race obtained the clue to melody from these precocious little vocalists. But though animal music must always have been a matter of familiar observation, it is only of late that science has begun to trace out the exact relations of this sub-human music to our own highly developed art of tone.

If we look at the animal world as a whole, and judge by our own tastes and standards, we shall at first be struck with the unmusical character of its various sounds. How terrible, how lacerating to the ear of a musical man are the cries which occasionally issue from our Zoological Gardens! It cannot but strike one, too, how disagreeable to the human ear are most of the sounds of the higher animals. The cries and roars of the less familiar carnivora, as well as the utterances of our well-known quadrupeds, as the ass, the pig, the dog, &c., are for the most part harsh and unmusical. If we take a large view of the animal world we shall find that the number of musically-endowed species reduces itself to a very insignificant fraction.

It may perhaps be objected to this disparaging estimate of animal vocalisation as a whole, that we have no business to judge of it by a human standard. From the feline point of view, it may be said, the cries which make night hideous to an over-fatigued Londoner may be far more charming than the runs and trills of a Patti or a Nilsson. In fact, does not the misery which the dog manifests at the sound of certain musical instruments seem plainly to say that our music may sound decidedly wrong to the ears of another species?

To this objection we must here content ourselves with giving a provisional reply. We cannot be sure that animals would prefer their own cries to what we should call sweet and musical sounds, if they actually had a choice. The dog's distress at certain kinds of music does not necessarily prove that musical sounds as such are intrinsically disagreeable to its ear. It may be the very strangeness or the unusual intensity of such sounds which disturbs his canine serenity of mind. We must not hastily assume that the cries of animals which have another purpose besides that of giving pleasure (e.g. warning, appeal for aid, &c.), are intrinsically pleasing to their ears, any more than we need imagine that the shrieks of a cross child are sounds fitted to afford pleasure to the human ear. It is reasonable to suppose, till the contrary is proved, that the nervous organisation of the different species is fundamentally similar. Mr. Grant Allen has recently proved that, with regard to the sense of colour and the delight in colour, all animals endowed with vision manifest a striking degree of resemblance. We may assume, then, as a provisional hypothesis, that in the case of the ear also, animals are, to a great extent, so constituted as to derive pleasure from the same kind of stimulus. This hypothesis we shall seek to verify by showing that at least in a large majority of cases in which the animal sound distinctly aims at giving pleasure, there is an approximation to what we know as musical tone; and that even in many of the cries of animals which subserve some other purpose of utility, something like a germ of musical qualities may be discovered. In this way we shall try to vindicate the musical capabilities of animals without resorting to the fanciful hypothesis that their systems and standards are wholly unlike our own.

First of all, then, let us briefly enumerate the elements of what we call music, or more particularly melody or tune. The unit of melody is a single note or tone, that is, a certain duration of sound, of a definite pitch. This contrasts with a noise, which means a mixture of sounds of different pitch, and a continual irregular change of pitch. This unit of musical combination corresponds to a perfectly regular succession of equal atmospheric vibrations. The pleasure which accompanies it is supposed to be related to a steady and uniform stimulation of some one nervous fibre in the peculiar arrangement of terminal nervous appendages in the cochlea of the ear known as the organs of Corti. In proportion as sound approximates to such steady even tones it becomes musical.

It is to be added that all rich full notes or clangs, such as are produced by the human voice and by most musical instruments, are, strictly speaking, compound tones, consisting of a fundamental tone and certain upper tones. They consequently involve the excitation of a plurality of nervous fibres. The fuller and stronger the upper tones, the richer the whole note or clang.* The differences in the timbre of musical instruments, including the human and animal voices, have been found by Helmholtz to depend on differences in the number and strength of the upper tones.

Musical combination or succession of tones (for in dealing with animal music we need not trouble ourselves about simultaneous combination or harmony) consists in giving to the sequent elements a rhythmic and a melodic character. It is a fact of everyday observation that the ear takes pleasure in a simple time-arrangement of sounds based on some easily apprehended unit of duration. This pleasure of rhythm seems to belong to all sequent impressions. Thus the eye is gratified by regularity and equality in the successive movements of a dance.

Besides this relation of rhythmic order a musical succession of notes must have certain melodic relations, strictly so called. It has been found by Helmholtz that the most natural successions follow the order of the harmonics or upper-tones, which, as we have observed, enter into rich notes or clangs. That is to say, the most natural sequence is such as passes from the fundamental to one of the prominent upper tones—for example, to the octave above, the next natural, such as passes to a second note which possesses an upper tone in common with the first, e. g. to the fifth above. In such cases, according to Helmholtz, the ear is gratified by a vague sense of similarity in diversity, since the second note, in spite of its difference, retains an element of the first note. Over and above this the ear appears to derive pleasure from a succession of notes which are near one another in the scale; that is to say, which form a small interval as to pitch. By means of such steps (our smallest modern interval is a semitone) we are able to measure the several upward and downward movements of a melody.

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* The series of upper tones for a given note C, of which the octave above is represented by C′, and the octave above that by C″, is as follows: C′, G′, C″, E″, G″, B″ flat, C‴, &c.

Finally, it is to be observed that one essential of melody, according to our modern notions, is the presence of some ruling tone or key-note, which serves as a starting-point and a resting-place for the melody, and in reference to which the position of all the successive notes of the tune is estimated.

If now we take a careful survey of animal music we shall find that all these elements of human melody are to some extent represented. Thus we shall see that it makes use of discrete notes of definite pitch, of a wide variety of timbre, of time relations or rhythm, of melodic affinities, and even in a measure of tonality or key. This statement may, no doubt, appear an exaggeration to those of our readers who have never examined and analysed the music of the woods which has so often delighted their ears. We can only ask them to defer forming an opinion till they have the facts before them.

The lowest animals, says Mr. Darwin, that voluntarily produce sounds are insects and a few spiders. These utterances are generally confined to the male, and seem to have as their object the calling and charming of the female. In most cases the sound is effected by means of a stridulating organ, a curious apparatus attached to the back and sides of the insect, and having something in common with a violin and a pair of cymbals. The chirp of the cricket on the hearth and the grasshopper is a familiar example of such stridulating sounds. This insect-sound is a true note; and though not varying, it may be said to present in its simple rhythmical repetition a rude form of music.*

The musical capabilities of insects are illustrated by the high value set on the cicada by the ancient Greeks, who were accustomed to keep this little creature in a cage, as we keep birds, for the sake of its note. A pretty story told by Plutarch shows how greatly the note of the cicada was prized. On one occasion, during the Olympic Games, Terpander had played on the lyre with so much skill as to have enraptured his audience. All at once a string of his lyre snapped, and the musician, already flushed with the glow of success, suddenly found himself put *hors de combat* and disgraced. At this moment a cicada perched on his damaged instrument, and giving out the very note of the broken string, offered to supply its place. Its friendly services were joyfully accepted, and in this way the discomfiture and shame of the musician were averted.

Passing now to vertebrates we find traces of musical sound as low down as the amphibia. We have most of us heard the curious croak of the frog, although this sound is much commoner in some other countries than in our own. In the case of our own frogs this croak is too rough and harsh to be classed among properly musical sounds. Mr. Darwin, however, speaks of having heard frogs (*hylæ*) near Rio de Janeiro which emitted a decidedly pleasing sound. It is hardly necessary to add that this frog-note, in its simplicity, not to say monotony, is on a level with insect music. The rude character of the frog's cry corresponds with the want of a highly developed organ of vocalisation. For though the frog possesses a larynx, this is of an imperfect structure when compared with that of the higher vertebrates.

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* Mr. Flagg, in his *Birds and Seasons of New England*, gives the song of the diurnal green grasshopper as consisting of two notes, forming the good melodic interval of a fourth.

In the occasional note of insects and the lowest vertebrates we have the simplest and most rudimentary type of song. Among birds we may see this uniform monotonous repetition of a note gradually transforming itself into something more varied, more complex, and more melodious. From the wearisome sameness of a sparrow's chirp up to the elaborate song of the skylark or nightingale, there presents itself something like a complete evolution of vocal melody. The notes of singing birds all correspond to true tones, each species having its peculiarities of timbre answering to that of the human voice. Moreover, there is with all singing birds a clear approximation to a succession of discrete tones. Birds are, no doubt, very fond of sliding up and down by intervals hardly appreciable by the human ear, and this makes it very difficult to reduce their song to our musical notation. They are certainly accustomed to use intervals smaller than our semitone, for example, a fourth of a tone.* But on the whole their vocalisation tends to conform itself to our own diatonic scale made up of tones and semitones.

It cannot be said that birds have a very good ear for time. In many songs there is hardly anything deserving of the name of rhythm, so capricious and irregular are the sequences. And even in the case of the higher and more elaborate songs it is difficult to reduce the succession of notes to a time-order like that of our bar-system. Perhaps we ought not to be surprised at this, seeing that the pleasure of time involves complex intellectual actions. Nevertheless, there is clearly an adumbration of the simpler forms of rhythm in bird-song. Thus it is not uncommon to meet with notes which are held twice and three times as long as others, and so on—a fact which clearly implies the existence of a nascent sense of duration and power of comparison.

With respect to the melodic relations of notes bird-song shows a considerable degree of true artistic insight. We find each principle, that of continuous steps and that of harmonic intervals, clearly illustrated. As an example of smooth transition by equal or approximately equal intervals we may take the willow warbler, which, according to J. E. Harting (see *The Birds of Middlesex*), runs through ten consecutive notes from the C below the treble clef to the higher E of that clef. Again, the brown-headed *Timalia pileata* of India is said by Dr. Brehm, in his *Bird Life*, to sing five notes of the diatonic scale, namely, C, D, E, F, G.

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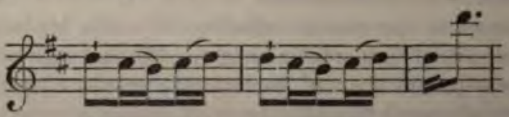
* This interval was, however, employed in certain forms of Greek music.

The harmonic affinities of notes are clearly perceived and selected by most singing birds. Thus among the commonest intervals are the fifth and fourth, both of which are marked by the presence of a common partial tone.* The octave, though a more closely related interval than either of these, appears less frequently than they do. The twelfth, too, which stands almost on a level with the octave in point of harmonic affinity, is to be met with occasionally.

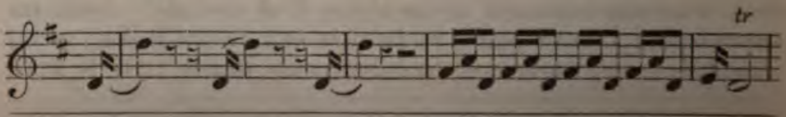
As to key, or tonality, birds may be said to recognise and embody this element of human melody, in so far as their song naturally falls in a certain key, and is always executed in one and the same key. On the other hand, these feathered musicians seem to have little or no notion of setting out from and returning to one particular note. They are wont to break off in the most capricious way at any point in their melody without the least sense of incongruity. Thus it cannot be said that birds show any clear appreciation of tonality. And this is not to be wondered at, seeing that such a perception presupposes considerable intellectual power, and that even in the case of human music the principle of tonality only becomes prominent when the art has reached a certain stage of development.

It is a noteworthy feature of bird-song that for the most part it does not wander freely from note to note, but confines itself to certain fixed groups of notes, which may be called elementary themes or motives. The song of the lark illustrates the absence of such recurring phrases; the song of the robin, the chaffinch, the thrush, the nightingale, and a host of others, is marked by their presence. A bird's rank in the feathered orchestra may be determined by the number and beauty of these recurring phrases. Measured in this way the nightingale is *facile princeps* among the visitants of our climate, though it is disputed whether the American mocking-bird is not superior by reason of its richer *répertoire* of subjects.

In order to show the reader what bird-song looks like when reduced to our familiar notation, we give one or two examples. The following is a theme of a warbling fly-catcher as given by Mr. Flagg in his *Birds and Seasons of New England*:—



A passage from the song of the nightingale, as given by W. Gardiner in *The Music of Nature*, is as follows:—



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* This can easily be calculated from the series given above.

This melody is curious as showing an apparent perception of the simple relations of notes which make up the common chord, and also as seeming to imply a nascent feeling for tonality. It may be questioned, however, whether the nightingale's song does actually coincide with this perfect sequence of notes. And generally it may be said that all such records of bird-song in our musical notation can only be regarded as rough and approximate representations of the actual sounds.

The richness of a bird's song depends of course on the compass of its voice. This varies exceedingly among birds. While, for example, some singers, as the yellowhammer, confine themselves to two or three consecutive notes of the scale, the nightingale has a range of several octaves.

The question has been much discussed whether the characteristic songs of different species of birds are reached instinctively or acquired by instruction. The evidence is decidedly in favour of the latter view. Every bird-trainer knows to how large an extent the song of birds can be modified by instruction and example. The parrot is by no means the only bird that can be taught new tunes. Not only so, if young birds are taken in time and placed where they will hear a different song from that of their own species, they will adopt this without ever having uttered their characteristic tune. Thus the Hon. Daines Barrington speaks of a goldfinch that sang exactly like a wren, in consequence of having been taken from its nest when only two or three days old and placed in a window looking out into a garden where a wren was accustomed to sing. He also succeeded in teaching a robin to sing in the style of the nightingale.* It need hardly be observed that in this process of education the compass of the bird's voice is greatly extended.

Singing birds are as a rule small and plain-looking. As brilliant plumage is commonly unaccompanied with superior vocal powers, the one kind of charm seems to take the place of the other. Why this should be so, whether from some principle of fair-play in the distribution of good things among birds, or from some other cause, may appear later on.

Generally speaking, as in the case of insects and amphibia, it is only the male bird that sings. Moreover, as the singing only takes place under natural circumstances in the breeding season, the idea is at once suggested that the song is a sort of serenade or mode of love-making. Much has been written about the object of bird-song, but it may now be taken as fairly certain that the male bird sings from two motives, the desire to charm the female, and the wish to outdo rival singers. It is this last motive apparently which incites birds when confined in cages to sing so vigorously all the year round. It may be supposed that under their new and artificial circumstances of life the motive of emulation becomes supreme, so that the production of sound of almost any kind suffices to stimulate their vocal energies.

It is to be expected that the exceptional musical powers of birds should rest on some superiority in the vocal organ. Birds have not at the upper opening of the trachea a larynx with vocal cords resembling that of the human species, which is possessed in some shape by all mammals. In place of this they possess an inferior larynx, an organ having vibrating membranes placed low down in the trachea at the point where it divides into the two bronchi. What is called the superior larynx in birds is in truth no musical instrument at all. This complex instrument is common to singing and non-singing birds, also to the male and female. In singing birds, however, it is of a superior structure, and supplied by a larger number of muscles. It is to be presumed, too, judging by the analogy of the human larynx, that the vocal organ of birds is better developed in the male than in the female.

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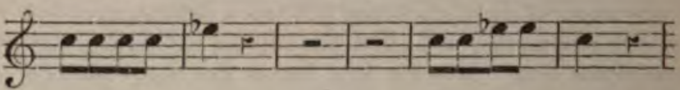
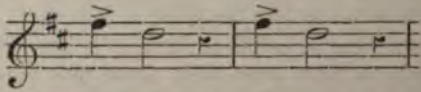
* See his interesting paper, *Experiments and Observations on the Singing of Birds*, in the Philosophical Transactions, 1773.

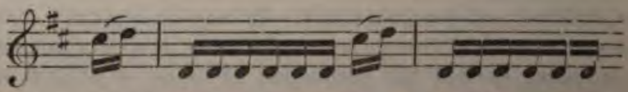
It is possible that many other birds besides those commonly known as songsters are capable of singing. Thus, for example, the story of the swan's delicious song is to some extent confirmed by observation. J. E. Harting assures us that one summer evening on Regent's Park Water he heard a swan sing the following simple pathetic motive :—



The difficulty of sharply marking off singing from non-singing birds is increased by the fact that what is known as the call of many birds is an approximation to a sequence of musical notes. Few people probably would be disposed to honour the silly call of the cuckoo by the name of song, yet this is certainly a good musical interval, namely, a major third.* It can be reproduced by sounding on a flute in the middle octave the notes F sharp and D, thus :—



Again, the final fall in the crowing of a cock, that least musical of sounds, is found to approximate to a musical fifth, the best melodic interval ; and it is possible that our ears might take delight in the note of this domestic chanticleer if it were only a little less harsh and of a somewhat sweeter quality. More curious even than the presence of this element of music in the crowing of the cock is the resemblance of his mate's cackle to a musical motive. It is thus rendered by W. Gardiner :—



And it is added by the same authority that this hen-motive has been adopted by Haydn as the basis of the Finale to his Twentieth Quartett.

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* The cooing of doves is also said to fall into this interval.

It appears from these examples that the rudiments of musical art are much more widely extended among birds than one would at first be disposed to think. It is, indeed, in the class of *Aves* that the musical powers of animals most conspicuously display themselves; compared with these the sounds of mammals appear from a musical point of view to be contemptible.

Recent observers, however, have shown that something worthy of the name of singing is to be met with among *Mammalia* outside our own species. The most unlooked-for instance of this is the performance of singing-mice, to which attention was recently called in *Nature* (November 8, 1877). It is there attested by two observers that these mice produce a species of song very like that of the canary, but having greater variety of note, some tones being much lower—like those of a bullfinch. It is suggested by one of the contributors of these facts, Mr. G. J. Romanes, that as the singing does not take place by day, except when the little creatures are disturbed, it is prompted by one of two feelings—contentment or fear.

The only other instance of singing among mammals that we have been able to meet with is that of the gibbon, mentioned by Mr. Darwin, the *Hylobates agilis*, which can emit a complete octave of musical notes. One would like to know whether other varieties among the Primates, which stand so near to man, are not capable of producing musical sounds. Indeed, when we reflect that a form of larynx with vocal cords is common to all mammals, it seems surprising that so few members of this group do actually sing.

On the other hand, it is to be observed that in the case of mammals, as in that of birds, there is an approximation to musical notes and to musical intervals in some of the calling sounds which appear at first decidedly unmusical. Thus, for instance, the bleating of sheep is distinctly an approach to a musical note. A horse's neigh, again, simulates the form of a descent of a musical scale. But what will the reader say to our bringing the braying of an ass under the category of musical combinations of sound? It is said, however, by a German naturalist, Schleiden, that this homely cadence moves in a true musical octave.*

When one comes on observations like these, one cannot help thinking that science seems to be putting a new meaning into the poet's pretty fancy:

> There's music in the sighing of a reed;
> There's music in the gushing of a rill;
> There's music in all things if men had ears.

Thus far we have been looking at the productive side of animal music. It is now necessary to glance for a moment at its receptive side.

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* Mentioned by A. E. Brehm in his *Illustrirtes Thierleben.*

The facts cited above show pretty clearly, what indeed hardly needs proof, that animals appreciate and enjoy the music they produce. It is certain that the songs of birds, as well as most other forms of musical sounds, have as their express object the charming of female ears. It is fairly certain, too, that the presence of a quasi-melodic element in many of the animal cries, *e.g.* the neighing of the horse, is to be accounted for by its being pleasurable to the ears of the particular animal's companions. One may even suppose that in many sounds, as the crowing of the cock, the individual that utters the music enjoys the result of its own performances.

The question naturally arises whether sensibility to the pleasurable character of musical sounds is not much more widely diffused among animals than would appear from the quantity of music which they produce. The fact that birds, when confined, are excited and stimulated to song by the sound of other birds or other musical sounds, seems to point to the presence of a wide and catholic musical sensibility. The many stories of the wonderful effects of music in taming wild animals, if there is any truth in them, would appear to show that species which are incapable of uttering anything like musical sounds are endowed with the corresponding musical sensibility. It is a well-attested fact, we believe, that the dolphin follows a ship in which music is performed. Brehm says that the horse is delighted with the note of a trumpet. And, according to the same authority, even the dog, which is apparently tormented by the notes of a soprano voice, remains undisturbed by those of a bass voice.

The facts of comparative anatomy would seem at first sight to support the hypothesis that sensibility to musical tone extends through a much larger number of species than those known to be musical. If we suppose, with Helmholtz and other eminent physiologists, that the cochlea of the ear, with its organs of Corti, is the seat of sensibility to tones of a certain pitch and to the melodic relations among them, we may argue that mammals, as a class in which the cochlea is much more highly developed than in birds, are endowed with the physiological basis of musical sensibility. If we reason in this way, indeed, we must argue that the whole class of reptiles, as well as the amphibia, which have a rudimentary cochlea much like that of birds, are possessed of a latent sensibility to tones and melody. But such reasoning as to the extent of a latent sensibility is of no value for our purposes. We are only concerned with the actual manifestations of the musical sense, and it is evident from what has just been said that these bear no discoverable relation to variations in the structure of the ear.

Nor is this all. According to Brehm the degree of musical sensibility to be found among animals would seem rather to vary inversely than directly with the degree of the development of the organ. Thus, according to him, the sweetest singers among birds have an ear very inferior to some non-singing birds, *e.g.* the owl. So, with respect to mammals, he thinks that a finely developed ear is accompanied with a low degree of musical sensibility.[*]

We thus see that the capacity to enjoy tones by no means progresses uniformly with the development of the ear, and (so far as this agrees with the other) with that of the nervous system as a whole. Speaking roughly and broadly, we may say, indeed, that the highest degrees of musical sensibility exist far up in the line of organic development, its lowest degrees far down. But when we follow its varietions in detail, we see that there is no clear relation between the degree of this sensibility and the rank of the particular species in the order of evolution.

There is, of course, a mode of sensibility which does depend on the structure of the ear, and which, accordingly, does advance regularly as the organ is developed. We mean the intellectual as distinguished from the emotional side of hearing. The more highly-developed the ear the finer will be the animal's discriminative sense of sounds as to their non-musical characters, such as intensity, direction, &c.

It is easy to understand how this mode of auditory sensibility would be promoted, as organic life progressed, both by exercise and, in a much higher degree, by the action of natural selection. For to distinguish carefully between sounds, to estimate correctly the direction of a sound, and to measure its distance, would clearly prove an advantage to the animal capable of these actions. That is to say, the finer the ear of the individual animal, the more likely would it be to secure food, to avoid danger, and to leave progeny behind it; and the finer the ear of any community of gregarious animals, the more likely would it be to survive by superior social cohesion.

On the other hand, it is difficult to see how musical sensibility would be greatly favoured by natural selection. It may be said, indeed, that the discriminative sensibility just spoken of would involve the elements of a sense of pitch. Thus, to distinguish noises as grave or acute, implies a nascent sense of pitch. Still more is this sensibility involved in the power of distinguishing animal voices and the different sounds of the same voice. For, as we have observed, every peculiarity of timbre is ultimately resolvable into differences of pitch in the constituent elements or partial tones, and the varied expression of different feelings is obviously marked, for the most part, by difference of pitch.[†] It is plain, however, that the sensibility to pitch thus developed would be exceedingly limited.[‡] The imperfect evolution of but a few nervous elements answering to sounds of particular pitch would probably suffice for this purpose. And at this stage of development there would not be much room for the peculiar pleasure resulting from a normal stimulation of distinct nervous elements.

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[*] He even argues that large-eared animals dislike tones, that is, have a painful sensibility but not a pleasurable sensibility to the effects of music. This statement wants further proof, for it is unreasonable to suppose that the one mode of feeling can exist without the other.

[†] Mr. Darwin tells us that monkeys, like human beings, express different feelings in different vocal tones.

[‡] Mr. Darwin, if we remember rightly, distinguishes only three kinds of expression in the bark of the dog. Difference of expression may be given by other

For the fuller development of musical sensibility something else is needed besides the action of natural selection. This could only be reached in close connection with a development of that productive musical power of which we have been speaking. While the lowest forms of this sensibility would doubtless grow out of the needs of social life, namely, the instinct of gregarious animals to give expression to their wants and desires, the higher forms would require in addition the action of quite another impulse, to which reference has already been made, namely, the desire of the male to attract and charm the female. Mr. Darwin has told us in his own interesting way how the power of producing musical tones was first exercised and developed as a mode of love-making. Animals learned to be musical not to benefit their individual selves, but to perpetuate their existence in their progeny. Indeed, one may almost say that song was to animals what music was to the first human discoverer of the art, as conceived in George Eliot's fine poem 'Jubal,' the instrument of attaining perpetuity of existence. Unlike the colour-sense, which, according to Mr. Grant Allen, grew out of the animal's sordid cravings for food and self-preservation, the tone-sense sprang from the most disinterested of animal impulses, the instinct to preserve its own species.

Let us for a moment try to conceive how this process may have been accomplished. We presuppose a certain amount of the power of vocalisation at different heights or pitches, the result of social needs, &c. We further assume, as the correlative of this, the existence of a nascent sensibility to differences of pitch, also a feeling of preference for certain kinds of timbre over others. The circumstances of wooing, with its eager rivalries, would serve to bring out the existing powers of vocalisation to their fullest. The more striking and attractive the sounds produced by a particular male, the more likely would it be to win his mate. Now a voice might be more impressive, either through its greater intensity, or through its more agreeable timbre, or finally through its greater variety of tone, or range of pitch. And thus the fortunate possessors of voices having these superior qualities would, other things being equal, outdo their rivals.

Now this triumph of rich-voiced individuals in the contests of love would have important after-results. If from generation to generation the females of a particular species continued to choose males with fine voices, there would be a gradual improvement of vocal powers generally, according to Mr. Darwin's well-known principle of sexual selection. By this

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characters of vocal sound besides pitch. Thus Brehm tells us that among birds a sharp short cry means fright, a slight abrupt cry, warning, and a low sound in the throat, pain.

means any natural superiorities of voice would tend to be preserved, and the average vocal capabilities of each succeeding generation increased.

Nor is this all. Along with this increased power of producing tones, there would go an increased sensibility to the pleasurable effects of tone. And this would be brought about in two different ways. In the first place the continual performances of the male singers would, by exercising the functions of the ear, tend to raise its sensibility. In the second place it is plain that superior vocal powers in the male would, as a rule, co-exist with superior auditory sensibility, for the movements of the voice are always guided by the effects on the ear. And thus sexual selection would tend to improve the musical ear as much as the musical voice.*

In this way, we think, might have been developed among all musical animals, including the ancestors of man, the power of producing and of appreciating purity of tone, richness of timbre, rhythm, and melody. Little by little, the vocal organs would attain the necessary complexity, flexibility, and means of adjustment, and little by little the ear would acquire the needed nervous elements and their connections.

Let us very briefly follow out this theory of the genesis of musical powers a little more in detail. It is easy to see how animals should come to make use of discrete notes or tones. When once the nervous elements of the ear were sufficiently developed, the production of a sustained, even tone (rather than a continuous change of tone), would be agreeable, and the male suitor would easily learn to hit on the particular vocal actions required. It may be added that the production of a sustained note would probably become the natural mode of exercising the voice when once the muscles had attained a certain amount of vigour. The acquisition of increased compass would probably be a very gradual process, as it would involve the growth of new nerve-elements. One may imagine, however, that as the vocal organ became more flexible and manageable, and a wider range of notes was resorted to, the ear would slowly but surely acquire a corresponding extension of sensitive elements.

With respect to rhythm, it seems certain that as soon as a succession of vocal tones was attempted, these would be uttered at regular intervals. For in this case the action would be greatly facilitated, being brought into a certain agreement with the regular movements of breathing. Such a simple rhythmic arrangement would, moreover, be found to be grateful to the ear, and in this way would be fixed and made habitual. The further evolution of rhythmic order, which, as we have seen, is hardly found in animal music, doubtless presupposes a higher development of the intellectual powers, more particularly the capability of comparing and measuring together, in respect of duration, successive groups of notes.

The case of the selection of melodic relations among sequent tones is more difficult. We may first suppose that the male singer varying his note to the utmost under the influence of strong emotional excitement, would every now and again hit on a true melodious interval, say, a fifth from C to the G above it, which seems to be one of the intervals first learnt. A vague sense of the element of similarity binding together the two tones would give a peculiar charm to this sequence and lead to its retention and selection.

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* The power of producing tones would not be transmitted by inheritance to the female, at least to the same extent as to the male, because it would be closely correlated with the sexual organisation of the male.

This process might very probably be aided by another influence. After the male bird had repeatedly performed a particular note, or clang, with its fundamental and upper tones, it is probable that central nervous connections would be formed between the fibres answering to these partial tones, both in the male and in the female, owing to which the transition from one of these to another would have a certain grateful smoothness for their ear. Similarly a transition from one clang to another having a partial tone in common with the first would sound natural and agreeable, owing to the nervous connections binding each of the fibres answering to the two fundamentals with the fibres answering to this common partial tone. And in this way melodic intervals would come to be preferred to non-melodic ones.*

But one may, perhaps, find yet another reason why melodic intervals should be selected as the song of birds developed. In the male bird, after repeated execution of a number of notes, nervous connections would be formed, not only between the auditory fibres which are simultaneously excited by a compound tone or clang, but also between the various sensory fibres and the vocal muscles concerned in the production of the tones corresponding to these fibres. That is to say, owing to the presence of certain organic connections the impression on the male bird's ear caused by a particular note would act as a stimulus to its vocal muscles to the reproduction of this note. The process may be supposed to be almost involuntary and reflex, like that which takes place when we turn our eye to an object that attracts it in the side part of the visual field.

When these complex connections have been formed, it is easy to see how the male bird would be led instinctively to select melodic intervals. Let us imagine such a bird beginning to sing. He utters, we will suppose, a comparatively low note, say the C of the treble clef. The result of this action is, as we have seen, the excitation of a number of auditory fibres corresponding to the octave C′, the twelfth G′, &c. We will suppose that the octave is the most prominent of these upper tones, so that the fibre answering to it is the one most energetically excited next to that answering to the fundamental. Now the excitation of this fibre will act as a stimulus to the vocal muscles to reproduce the corresponding tone. In this way the bird will naturally pass to this tone as its next fundamental. In a similar way it would be led to drop from a particular note to a lower one which has the first as an upper tone, and also to pass indirectly from one clang to a second which has a partial tone in common with it.

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* The first idea, that the pleasure of melodic sequence rests on a vague sense of a link of resemblance, is that adopted by Helmholtz. The second supposition, that such sequences may gratify the ear owing to the presence of nervous connections, is put forth, in an ingenious paper on animal music, by Mr. Xenos Clark, in the *American Naturalist* for April 1879.

It is to be added, however, that facility of vocal execution would help to determine the selection of melodic intervals. Thus, though the twelfth is a more natural interval than the fifth, the latter is probably preferred by birds as well as by man, because the execution of the wide leap of the twelfth is too difficult.

The liking for a succession of connected steps, or the scale movement, which, as we have seen, characterises bird-song as well as human melody, is determined probably, like the preference for melodic intervals, by conditions both in the ear and in the vocal organ. The ear as well as the eye is pleased by gradation, or a gentle mode of change in the character of the stimulation; and though it may prefer a succession of discrete tones to a continuous change of pitch it is very fond of movements by connected steps. The transition from one note to another closely resembling it in pitch would be felt by the ear to be smooth and grateful.

In addition to this it is not improbable that when the vocal organs were but imperfectly developed, there would be a tendency to slight alterations of pitch in the bird's notes. Indeed, one may frequently notice such slight oscillations, even in the tones of some of our best songsters. From this cause it would come to pass that the fibre answering to the impression of a particular note would become organically connected with the fibres concerned in the impressions of the contiguous notes above and below the first. And this being so, the transition from a note to an adjacent note would be rendered still more smooth and agreeable to the ear. Moreover, such a habit of slightly varying the pitch would obviously have a tendency in the male bird's vocal organ and its nervous connections to pass from the utterance of a particular note to that of the adjacent ones.

In this way one may, perhaps, understand how it is that animals, and more especially birds, have come to select combinations of tone closely resembling those of our own music. In truth the explanation of the genesis of animal music is at the same time the explanation of the early developments of song in the human race and its immediate predecessors. Primitive human melody was probably inferior to that of many birds. The higher development of melody is mainly determined by the growing desire for variety of sequence, a cause of which the operation may be traced even in bird-music.

It must not be forgotten, however, that the resemblance between animal sounds and human music is very vague in many cases, and even in the most striking instances is far from being complete. The nascent musical sense of animals seems to be complicated by a mingling of other and narrower tastes. Hence the curious differences in the timbre and quality of animal voices, many of which are positively unpleasant to the human ear. How these peculiar tastes arise is a problem which we cannot deal with here.* It may be worth mentioning, however, that, according to Brehm, a bird's song is sometimes imitative of the sounds of its inanimate environment. Thus he says that in the great sedge-warbler's utterances it is possible to distinguish the sounds of the rustling reeds, the murmuring waves, and even the croaking of the frog. It is possible that the instinct of imitation, which is certainly widely diffused among birds, may help to account for many of the characteristic differences of their singing.

We have still left untouched the question why musical skill is confined to so few classes of animals. And we must confess that this problem is not easily solved. One or two hints are all that can be offered by way of explanation.

It is easily understood that as the musical powers were first developed as a means of obtaining the acceptance of the female, they will not be brought into exercise where there are other and equally serviceable means of securing this end. Thus, for example, among those species of birds in which sexual preference seems determined by some superiority in visible appearance, such as a richer plumage, we naturally find the musical sense wanting. It is, however, exceedingly doubtful whether this consideration would wholly explain the limitation of musical powers among animals.

Another reflection suggests itself in connection with the fact emphasised by Brehm, that an acute sense of hearing seems to exclude musical sensibility. We are familiar with the truth that among men a vivid interest in the sensuous charm of colour or sound hinders close attention to the meaning of these impressions, or to the objects of which they are the signs. A military man, who is accustomed to look at landscape with an eye to its strategical possibilities, will tend to grow insensible to its æsthetic charm; while a landscape-painter, habitually attending to this, will overlook all suggestions of practical utility. It is possible that this antagonism of the emotional and the intellectual in our sensations extends far down in animal life. If so, we may partly understand how it is that with many of the higher animals the musical sensibility rests in abeyance. Where the circumstances of life make it supremely necessary for the animal to have a very acute discriminative sense of sounds, as in the case of the carnivora and their prey, the luxury of a musical sense may have to be dispensed with. That is to say, if the two are incompatible, and if the intellectual sense is of paramount utility for individual self-preservation, this will be secured by natural selection, to the exclusion of that action of sexual selection described above.

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* It is here assumed that the peculiar and distinguishing quality of a bird's voice is specially grateful to its auditory sensibility, and that consequently this sensibility varies among different species of animals. But this is not a necessary assumption. Supposing it to be desirable for purposes of recognition that each musical species should have a characteristic vocal colour, the ear of a particular species would, from the first, be accustomed, and so indifferent, to any elements of roughness or harshness in its vocalisation, without positively deriving pleasure from this feature.

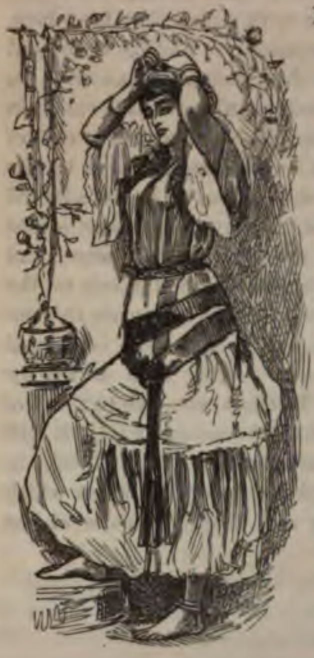
In speaking of the pleasure of tones as experienced by animals we have confined ourselves to the direct or sensuous element. It may be well to remark, in conclusion, that if the musical sense grows up in the way we have indicated, vocal tones would from the first contain a deeper *emotional* ingredient of pleasure. For by the action of the laws of association the particular sounds uttered by an animal would at any time tend to call up in the hearer faint pulsations of those feelings of which they have been the customary expression, or with which they have been conjoined. Thus so far as the first approximations to melody were used as the means of conveying from one individual animal to another its varying moods of joy and sorrow, this melody would always awaken in the hearer's mind reverberations of these emotions. And in the case of the higher developments of melody, which were brought about by the exigencies of courtship, the particular combination of tones adopted would, whenever heard by male or by female, resuscitate faint excitations of the mingled emotions of this romantic situation. Mr. Spencer and Mr. Darwin have referred the peculiar emotional effects of music on the human mind to such associations, the former laying stress on the employment of tones and their varieties as a means of general emotional expression, the latter dwelling on the use of singing as a device for charming and winning the object of love. To those who like to think of the human race as closely bound to the rest of the animal world, it will be a very grateful thought that of the pleasure which our ear drinks in from divine melody, and of the profound and mysterious emotions which this melody stirs within us, even the tiny and fragile warbler of the woods has its own appropriate experience.

JAMES SULLY.

Mademoiselle de Mersac.

CHAPTER XXV.

IN WHICH LÉON PLAYS THE PART OF BAYARD TO A LIMITED AUDIENCE.

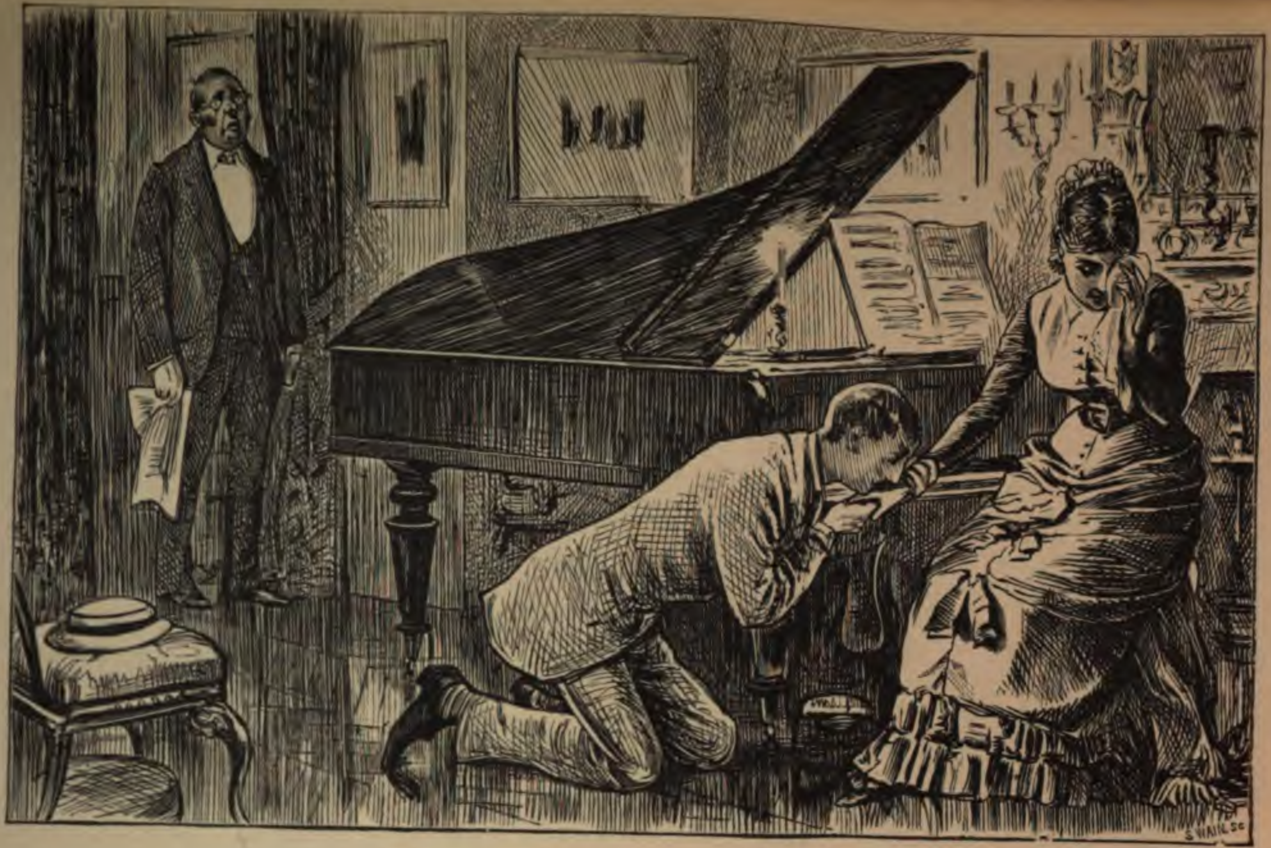


REPARATIONS for a prolonged absence from home—packing up of clothes, sorting and burning of papers, paying of outstanding bills, and all the other troublesome little duties which crop up thick and fast at such times—are not, in themselves, very enjoyable; but in so far as they serve to dull the pain of parting, they must be acknowledged to be blessings in disguise. Léon had his hands so full during the brief remaining period of his liberty, that neither he nor Jeanne had much leisure for reflection; and this was, perhaps, just as well for both of them.

The time, indeed, proved shorter even than the embryo soldier had anticipated; for on the very day after that on which M. de Fontvieille had divulged his intentions, he received orders from Tours to join his new regiment within a week; and thus a great deal of business had to be crowded into a very few hours, while not a little had to be neglected altogether.

Pierre Cauvin, an honest but obstinate and punctilious old person, did not help much to expedite matters. He insisted upon it that he must have categorical instructions from his young master upon a variety of points which might easily have been left to his own discretion; where difficulties did not already exist he managed to create them; and it was owing to his representations that Léon's last day was spent far away from home, upon the stud-farm at Koléah, inspecting horses, and authorising the sale of all such as were in a fit condition to fetch their proper value.

It was not until after nightfall that Léon, dusty and weary, rode into the stable-yard of the Campagne de Mersac. Jeanne saw him arrive from the window of her bedroom, where she had been busy, all the after-



"'*Cré nom de nom!*" EJACULATED THE ASTOUNDED HUSBAND.

noon, over the hopeless task of compressing every article of necessity and luxury she could think of into the modest limits of a soldier's kit. She saw him dismount, and hastily wash his face and hands at the pump, while a groom brushed him down; and then, to her great disappointment, a fresh horse was led out, and he swung himself into the saddle, and rode away again. After a few minutes a scrap of paper was brought to her, on which he had scribbled : "No time to come in. One or two more things that I must do. Back in an hour, I hope."

"Poor boy!" murmured Jeanne, "he will tire himself out." And then she went downstairs, dragged out the most comfortable arm-chair she could find on to the verandah, and placed a table beside it, with cigars and ice and wine, ready for his return. She would doubtless have done as much had she been aware of the nature of her brother's errand; but she would have done it with a somewhat heavier heart; and it was probably because he was aware of this that Léon had thoughtfully abstained from mentioning that one of the few precious hours still at his disposition was to be devoted to Madame de Trémonville.

The scirocco had blown itself out now, and had ended with a short, sharp shower, a welcome herald of the longed-for autumnal rains. Filmy wreaths of wind-driven cloud were sailing high beneath the stars, a grateful smell of moisture was rising from the parched earth, and the outlines of all distant objects were clear against the sky, as Léon cantered over the hills towards Mustapha. There were lights in the drawing-room of the villa before which he drew rein at length; and the servant who answered his ring informed him that madame was alone, and would receive. Madame, who was seated at the piano, did not rise upon the entrance of her admirer.

"Ah, it is you," said she, smiling and nodding at him. "And so you are really going to the war, and you have come to bid me good-by. Do you know that is very pretty of you?"

And, striking a few chords, she began to sing, half mockingly—

Beau chevalier, qui partez pour la guerre,
Qu'allez vous faire
Si loin d'ici?
Voyez-vous pas que la nuit est profonde,
Et que le monde
N'est que souci?

But as Léon put a very grave face upon it, she broke off, took him by both hands, and forcing him gently on to a footstool at her feet, looked straight into his eyes, with a gaze that might have troubled an older man, sighing ever so slightly the while.

"So then it is all over," she murmured. "Go, Monsieur le Marquis, go, and forget your friends. We, on our side, shall try to forget you too. That is what you wish, is it not?"

"*I* wish you to forget me, madame!" ejaculated Léon, reproachfully. "You cannot be speaking seriously."

"If you cared about the matter at all, you would not be in such a hurry to go away," returned Madame de Trémonville, averting her head.

"I am not in a hurry. I have remained here so long already that I am ashamed of myself. If I go now at last, it is because no honourable man could act otherwise. It is because——"

"Ah, bah!" interrupted the lady, with a sudden change of mood. "Spare me the rest of the speech, I have heard it so often! I see you coming with your patriotic hymns—'Mourir pour la patrie,'—'Aux armes, citoyens! All that is very well for the cafés-chantants, but it has gone out of fashion in drawing-rooms, let me tell you."

"I have heard you sing the air yourself, madame," remarked Léon, rather hurt.

"In July last? Very likely. It was more or less of a novelty then, and we had an army which was going to march to Berlin, *tambour battant.* Now that every man in the country has been shouting, every woman screeching, every little boy whistling, and every dog barking the Marseillaise incessantly for three months, I am beginning to grow a little tired of it; and instead of the army, which exists no longer, we have the undisciplined, mutinous rabble which you are so eager to join. I wish you joy of your comrades."

"Such as they are, they have taken up arms against the invader."

"And they show their contempt for him by turning their backs upon him whenever he appears. Do not scowl at me, it is not polite. I know that there are brave men, and men of family amongst this *canaille;* but, for any good they are likely to do, they might as well have remained at home. The game was lost long ago; and it is time that we stopped playing, and paid the stakes. By the way, there was a rumour in the town to-day that Bazaine had capitulated to the Prince Frederick-Charles."

"Impossible!"

"Not in the least—nor even improbable. For my part, I hope the news may be true. It will bring us nearer to the end."

This was more than Léon could endure. Many things had combined to make him doubt, of late, whether Madame de Trémonville were quite the ideal being he had once imagined her; but he had never, until now, believed her capable of rejoicing over the misfortunes of her country.

"Madame," said he, getting up with a tragic air which nearly upset the gravity of his entertainer, "I hope that you do not mean what you say; but whether you do or not, I cannot stay here to listen to such words. You spoke just now of my forgetting you. That I shall never do; but I wish to have nothing but what is agreeable associated with you in my memory; and for that reason I shall now, with your permission, bid you good-by."

Madame de Trémonville's answer to this dignified address was of a practical and effective kind. She started to her feet, laid a tiny, dimpled hand on each of Léon's broad shoulders, and compelled him to subside again on to the footstool from which he had just arisen, like a Jack-in-the-box. She did not choose that Léon should go away in a huff, for two reasons: firstly, because she was greedy of admiration, and would almost as soon have parted with one of her diamonds as with the dullest of her adorers; secondly, because she had wit enough to see that, in those days, it behoved wise people to have friends in all parties. Who could tell what future might lie hidden behind the mists of the present? Henri V. might be reigning, by the grace of God, in France before the year was out; and then the Marquis de Mersac might have a nice little appointment, or possibly a big one, to offer to any one who should have been fortunate enough to gain his good opinion.

"Sit down, my brave knight," said she, in a tone of soft raillery, "and do not quarrel with a poor, ignorant woman, who knows very little about battles and politics. The Seigneur de Bayard, whom you resemble in many points, would never have permitted himself to speak so roughly to a lady. But he has been dead these four hundred years; and since his time we have forgotten much, and also learnt some few things—amongst others, that it is a crime to sacrifice life uselessly. I am as good a patriot as another—as M. Gambetta, for instance, or yourself—but it is not forbidden, while loving one's country, to love also—what am I saying?—to feel some anxiety about the safety of one's friends."

"Oh, madame! do you mean—can you mean?——"

"What? That I should be sorry if you were to meet with Bayard's fate? I don't say no."

Léon was seated a bare three inches above the level of the ground, his long legs gathered up uncomfortably before him, and his nose resting on his knees. It was neither an easy nor a graceful attitude, and it occurred to him to change it.

A moment later, the unsuspecting M. de Trémonville, hurrying into the room in search of some papers, was privileged to behold—through his spectacles—a highly effective tableau. His wife, seated upon a music-stool, was holding a lace-bordered pocket-handkerchief to her eyes with her left hand, while her right was passively receiving the ardent kisses of an exceedingly handsome young man who knelt before her.

"*'Cré nom de nom!*" ejaculated the astounded husband, forgetful of acquired good breeding, and falling back, in his surprise, upon the simple expletives of his youth.

Léon scrambled to his feet, looking very sheepish, and, truth to tell, wishing most devoutly in his heart that he had never come to the villa at all; and Madame de Trémonville burst into a peal of uncontrollable laughter. The situation was, perhaps, not so entirely novel a one to her as to cause her any special embarrassment.

The more she laughed, the blacker grew the countenances of the two men, both of whom might, indeed, be excused for failing to appreciate the joke.

"When you have quite conquered your merriment, madame," said

M. de Trémonville in a tone of suppressed fury, "you will perhaps offer me some explanation of your conduct. As for Monsieur le Marquis——"

"I am ready to give you any satisfaction you may demand, monsieur," said poor Léon, dolefully.

Madame de Trémonville's gaiety redoubled. "A duel!" she cried, clapping her hands ecstatically. "Charming! perfect! Ah, Baptiste! how many times have I not entreated you to take a few lessons in fencing, and to practise with a pistol, from time to time, in the garden? Something has always told me that you were destined to have an affair, and now you see that I was right."

"Duelling is contrary to my principles," replied M. de Trémonville, who had turned a trifle pale; "also I decline to risk my life for the sake of one so worthless as you. Your perfidy, madame, is equalled only by your effrontery."

"Hush! hush! my poor Baptiste. Those who have not the courage to fight should not use insulting language. Pick up your papers and go back to your study; you will never learn to be a man of the world. After your absurd behaviour you deserve no explanation, nevertheless you shall have one. When you came in, M. de Mersac—who leaves for France to-morrow morning—was only bidding me adieu in the style of the middle ages, a period of history which he especially admires, and which, I must admit, had the advantage of ours in point of courtesy. Let this be a lesson to you, Baptiste, not to judge by first appearances, and to refrain from vulgar expressions of astonishment at the sight of anything that you do not understand."

"In that case," answered M. de Trémonville, accepting this lame explanation with somewhat suspicious readiness, "I can only offer my excuses to you and to monsieur. Monsieur le Marquis, permit me to express to you my unfeigned regret——"

"Enough! enough!" interrupted Madame de Trémonville, unceremoniously. "They are accepted—your excuses. You have spoilt a pretty little piece of acting; but we forgive you, and will detain you no longer." And, as the door closed upon the mystified husband, she gave way to another outburst of mirth.

"What a ridiculous incident!" she exclaimed. "It has killed romance for the remainder of the evening, that is certain. With the best will in the world I could not begin again where I left off. What shall we do now to amuse ourselves? Shall I sing to you, or shall we have a game of écarté? Or would you like to take a walk round the garden? I am dying for a mouthful of fresh air."

But Léon replied gravely that he must resist all these temptations. He had promised to return home within an hour, and had already considerably over-stayed his time. In truth, the scene in which he had just taken part had disconcerted him not a little. He was not sure that he had been any less ridiculous than M. de Trémonville, or even that he had been any less laughed at.

"Adieu, madame," said he, in melancholy accents; and he contrived to infuse a tinge of reproach into his tone.

"Adieu, monsieur," she replied carelessly, executing a flourish upon the piano.

She never raised her eyes from the keys until Léon had reached the door; then she jumped up, ran after him, and laid her hand upon his arm.

"Can you leave me like that?" she cried. "Have you nothing more to say to me?"

"Nothing that you would care to hear, madame," answered Léon, hesitatingly.

"Who knows? But you are right, perhaps, to keep silence if you desire to be remembered. You will always live in my memory now as the most discreet young man I have ever met. Let me only give you a little forecast of your fate—it will not take a minute—and then you shall go in peace."

She took up a pack of cards which lay on the table as she spoke, and began rapidly dealing them out.

"A long journey—danger—honour and success," she muttered. "Ah! there is the king of spades, which spoils all. Ace of hearts, that is better—a crisis; but you will come out of it safely—two of diamonds—two of clubs——" The jewels on her plump white hands flashed as she deftly shifted the cards hither and thither; the lines about her mouth deepened; an anxious frown gathered on her well-powdered brow. Madame de Trémonville had next to no conscience, and very little religion; but as a set-off, she had a rich store of misdirected faith.

"Things might be worse for you," she announced at length, quite seriously; "but you will have troubles and dangers to pass through, and it is well to be prepared against every emergency. Take this, and wear it always round your neck; it is an Arab amulet, which a General, who is dead now, gave me years ago. They say it is a protection against mortal wounds. For the rest, I will pray the blessed Virgin and your patron Saint to watch over you. Now go; I permit you to kiss my hand."

The next minute she was back at the piano, and had resumed her ordinary light manner.

"Beau chevalier, qui partez pour la guerre," she sang again—

Beau chevalier, qui partez pour la guerre,
Qu'allez vous faire
Si loin de nous?
J'en vais pleurer, moi qui me laissais dire,
Que mon sourire
Etait si doux.

The refrain hung in Léon's head long after he had ridden away in the starlight, and had recovered from the bewilderment into which he had been thrown by this fantastic farewell. It was the last he ever heard of Madame de Trémonville.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE LAST EVENING.

WHILE Léon was spending his valuable time in the edifying manner described in the last chapter, Jeanne was waiting for him on the verandah with such patience as she could command. Her long day's work was finished; her back was aching with stooping over trunks and folding up clothes; her eyes were tired and heavy; and to sit thus idly in the still night air would have been perhaps the most sensible thing she could have done, if inaction were, what it unfortunately is not, synonymous with rest.

So lovely and quiet a night might have brought her peace, had she been in a mood susceptible to external influences. All the world around her lay wrapped in a dreamy silence, enhanced, rather than broken, by the snoring croak of the frogs in the pool hard by; the wind had dropped to a fitful breeze, which, every now and again, wafted faint aromatic odours to her from the dewy shrubs; the luminous southern stars looked calmly down upon her from their immeasurable height—

As a little thing beholding
Man his long career unfolding.

But Jeanne had no ears just then for the soothing voices of Nature, nor could she derive any of the comfort which some people profess to feel from a philosophic contemplation of her own insignificance. On the contrary, her mind was so filled and harassed with thoughts of herself and of those dearest to her—with doubts, and fears, and anxieties—that she could hardly have said, without an effort, whether the night were starry or clouded.

How, indeed, could it have been otherwise with her, seeing that she had reached, and knew she had reached, the term of a period in her existence, the end of a long stage in her journey through the world, the last words of the first chapter of her life? Soon she must turn over the leaf; and who could tell what the next page might reveal? A dismal tale of anxiety and disappointment very likely, or, worse still, the brief, black-bordered record of a misfortune too terrible to be named as yet, even in thought. Jeanne shuddered, and turned resolutely away from the mental picture which rose before her. "What is the use of tormenting oneself about troubles which do not exist? The present is bad enough; I will not think any more about the future," she determined, very sensibly. Immediately after which she went back to her gloomy forecasts.

The mind is like a ship; it must be under way before it can be steered into this or that channel. Let it lie idle, and it will drift hither and thither, at the mercy of any chance current, and refuse to answer the helm. Jeanne, who was out of health, out of spirits, and very tired, had lost all self-control for the time; and what with the horrors conjured up by her imagination, what with the irritability which prolonged waiting for anybody or anything always engenders, had soon fretted herself into a condition of nervousness in which all conceivable calamities seemed probable, and good fortune a thing past hoping for.

When at last Léon arrived, he was startled and shocked by the glimpse of his sister's face which he caught as he stepped out on to the verandah; it looked so sad and wan and drawn.

"Why, Jeanne," said he, laying his hand gently upon her shoulder, "what is the matter? You have been over-fatiguing yourself."

She turned her head, and looked up at him with pitiful eyes. She tried to speak, but the words would not come. Her lips quivered, and presently two tears brimmed over from her eyelids and rolled slowly down her pale cheeks. Léon was down on his knees beside her chair, and had his arms round her in a minute.

"What is it, Jeanne? What is it, *ma sœur?*" he exclaimed. "Who has been troubling you?"

Perhaps his heart had already answered the question. He was rather selfish, as most young men are, but he had a conscience, which is likewise one of the attributes of youth; and it may very likely have smitten him, just then, with a remorseful memory of the long period during which he had avoided and neglected the sister who had sacrificed so much for him, and whom he was now about to part with, perhaps for ever.

"Tell me all about it, Jeanne," he whispered, kissing her forehead. It was the first time for many months that he had spoken to her in that tone, and Jeanne was quite upset by it. She threw her arms round her brother's neck, hid her face on his shoulder, and sobbed like any child.

"Love me a little, Léon," she murmured; "you are all I have in the world."

"Jeanne, Jeanne! you know I love you! Something has come between us lately; it has been all my fault, I know. It has been ever since that accursed night when I lost the money. I fancied you despised me—you would have been quite right if you had, Heaven knows! And then Saint-Luc——"

"No," interrupted Jeanne, hastily; "if anybody has been to blame, it is I. I have been unhappy and anxious, and that has often made my manner disagreeable, though indeed I have never wished it to be so. Let us forget what has passed. We are good friends now, are we not? and we will never be anything else again. I am sorry I should have treated you to a scene on your last night, dear," she added, straightening herself in her chair, and drying her eyes. "I think it must be the heat that makes me so silly, and takes away all my courage and strength. Now sit down in that arm-chair that is waiting for you, and tell me the news from the farm. Have you sold all the colts, and is Pierre as dissatisfied as usual with the price you have got for them? What bargains he will drive for us, and what a bad name we shall get in the country while we are away!"

Jeanne was always a little shy after having displayed emotion, even before her brother; and Léon, who understood her, accepted the change of subject.

"I have disposed of nearly everything that has four legs to stand upon," he answered cheerfully, "and I have told Pierre he must get rid of the cripples upon the best terms he can obtain. I don't choose to leave my farm ready stocked for the Arabs to plunder."

"Do you think there will be an insurrection, then?"

"I hope there will not; but one never can tell. What is certain is that, if the Arabs do rise now, or a short time hence, they will overrun the whole province, for we have no troops to send against them. I mean to have everything valuable sent away even from this house as soon as you are gone, though I hardly think they will get as near the town as this."

"What are you going to do with the ponies, Léon? I wish you would sell them."

"The ponies I bought from Saint-Luc, do you mean? I was thinking of sending them to stables in Algiers."

"Don't do that; what is the use of going to such an expense? I should be so glad if you would get rid of them."

"Well, you see, it is not a very good time for selling ponies," said Léon, stroking his chin thoughtfully. "The Government is buying up every sort and kind of horse, sound and unsound, but they have a certain standard of size unfortunately, and nobody else has any money to spend. And then there is that scrape on the shoulder that Caïd got the day you let him down."

"I did not let him down," interrupted Jeanne, indignantly. "I never let a horse down in my life."

"Well, the day he *came* down. It has not done him an atom of harm, still purchasers will look at these things. Why do you want to sell the ponies?"

"Oh, it does not much matter. But you know I never liked driving them."

"Jeanne," said Léon suddenly, "if I ask you a question, will you answer me truly?"

"Yes."

"Then do you particularly dislike Saint-Luc?"

"No," answered Jeanne, raising her grave eyes to her brother's for a moment and then dropping them again. "I do not particularly dislike him."

"Because, if you did——"

"If I did?"

"I mean, if there were really any danger of your being unhappy as his wife—only I am certain that he would make any woman happy.

And now that he has distinguished himself so much, his wife will have every reason to be proud of him. I told you, did I not, that he has been thanked by the Government for his services?"

"Did you? I do not remember. I have never supposed him to be anything but a brave man."

"I can't quite make you out, Jeanne. You always speak of him with a sort of aversion, and he himself has noticed it. He is for ever harping upon the subject in his letters, and I don't know how to answer him, except by saying, what I believe is the truth, that it is not him whom you hate, but men in general."

"Not all men," said Jeanne, smiling.

"No; I know there is one unworthy exception; and I daresay you are fond of M. de Fontvieille, and the Curé, and one or two other relics of antiquity; but when it comes to *young* men—ah, that is another affair! I declare that I cannot call to mind a single one whom you have not positively detested, except Mr. Barrington; and I believe you only made friends with him because he was an Englishman. You are not like other girls, you dear old Jeanne; you will never be in love with anybody."

"I do not love M. de Saint-Luc, and he knows it," said Jeanne. "He has no right to complain of me."

"I don't know," said Léon, musingly. "It seems a little strange that you should never have written him a line, nor even sent him a message, after all he has been through. Not that he does complain, only I fancy he is rather hurt about it."

"If I had known that he expected me to write, I would have written," answered Jeanne, indifferently. "I can easily send him a line or two, from time to time, in future, though I hardly know what I am to say to him. Now we will waste no more of our last evening in discussing the subject."

"But, Jeanne," persisted Léon, "I want to know one thing—do you really, of your own free-will, wish to marry Saint-Luc?"

"I don't know exactly what you mean by my own free-will; nobody forces me into marrying him. You know how the engagement came about; everybody wished it, and it seemed desirable in more ways than one."

"Yes," acquiesced Léon, with a sigh; "it seemed desirable, but there have been changes since then. Do you know, Jeanne, I am afraid you would never have consented to the arrangement if I had not lost that money."

Jeanne remained silent.

"What a selfish wretch I have been!" exclaimed the young man, with a genuine access of penitence. "Happily the mischief is not irreparable. Now that our poor Duchess has been taken from us, there is no longer any need for our keeping this house, and before I leave, I will write instructions to have the whole of my property in Algeria sold. The moment is not very propitious; but no matter! I shall always realise enough to pay Saint-Luc, and keep a sufficient amount of capital to live upon; and perhaps, when the war is over, we may come back to Africa and make a fresh start. In any case, my good, kind Jeanne, you are free; and the interest of your own fortune will more than meet your expenses, wherever you may be. I will explain everything to Saint-Luc when I see him."

Jeanne rose slowly from her chair, and, bending over her brother, kissed him on the forehead. Then she took both his hands, and, drawing back a little, surveyed him, with a proud, happy light shining through her moist eyes, while he, on his side, smiled back at her, rejoicing in his heart that he was able once more to look his sister in the face without an effort.

"Do you forgive me?" he asked at length.

"Forgive you! It is I who ought to ask for forgiveness. I have been wronging you all this time, Léon. I have thought—but it does not matter what I have thought; I know now that you are still my own generous, foolish Léon, and that you are ready to ruin yourself rather than let me run any risk of unhappiness. If our dear father were alive, he would not be ashamed of his son."

There is every reason to suppose that these flattering words found a ready echo in the breast of the person to whom they were addressed. Léon was always prone to estimate himself at the value set upon him by others, and although he had just accused himself of selfishness, he had only used the term in a retrospective sense.

"Nonsense, *ma sœur*," he answered lightly; "I simply do my duty." But he probably remembered, at the same time, that this is more than most people can say with truth.

Jeanne went on, without noticing his interpolation—"You must not think, though, that I am less a de Mersac than you. What I have to do is quite plain to me, and I intend to do it. And therefore, my dear Léon, you will do me the pleasure to keep the land that belongs to you, and to take no message from me to M. de Saint-Luc, except that, after this, I shall write to him once a month."

"I tell you, Jeanne, my mind is made up; and when I say that my mind is made up——"

"You very often proceed to change it. Do not look angry; obstinacy is a vice, not a virtue, and you need not dispute me my possession of it. If you will think a little, you will see how inconvenient and absurd it would be to alter our plans now; and indeed, as you say, it is so very unlikely that I shall ever fall in love with anybody, that I might as well marry M. de Saint-Luc as another. If you and I could always live alone together, it might be different; but that is out of the question. Some day you yourself will marry, and then what is to become of me?"

"Do you suppose that I will ever let you have any other home than mine? I promise you that my wife, whoever she may prove to be, will be made to understand, from the first, that her entrance into the family is to make no difference in your position. But the fact is that I shall certainly not marry for a great many years, and perhaps never. The women of our time," continued Léon, with the solemnity of a man of varied experiences, "are not to my taste. They are artificial, hypocritical, worldly and heartless (you will understand that I do not speak of you —you are exceptional), and honest men are no match for them. They conceal their private lives by means of a pretence of religious fervour just as they cover their faces with white and red paint; and who is to tell what is beneath either? I, unfortunately, am very easily deceived; and for that reason I am resolved never to marry a pretty or fashionable lady. No; my wife, if ever I have one, will be a plain, sensible person, not very young, who will accept her position quietly, and not disturb you in the least. But upon the whole, I think I would rather live and die a bachelor. After all, there is barely one woman in a hundred whom one can trust."

Without inquiring into the cause of this sweeping condemnation of her sex, Jeanne expressed a conviction that time would modify it. "In the course of a few years you will undoubtedly meet the one woman out of a hundred," she said; "and though I know you would always make me welcome, still I should not like to be third in the household, and upon your wedding-day I should find myself obliged to choose between two alternatives—marriage and the convent. Probably I am better fitted for the former, and therefore I ought to be very glad that I have the chance of taking M. de Saint-Luc, who has proved that he is really fond of me, and whom I do not dislike—indeed, I sometimes almost like him."

"It is no use, Jeanne," answered Léon. "You say all this because you wish me to keep my money; but I have made up my mind that, having lost, I will pay; and you need not give yourself the trouble to argue the point any more, for I warn you beforehand that you will fail."

It will scarcely, however, surprise the reader to learn that, after another half hour of discussion, he had so far yielded as to promise that he would neither issue immediate instructions for the sale of his property, nor take any steps towards breaking off his sister's engagement. Jeanne, on her side, agreed to leave the question of her marriage open for the present. There was a kind of tacit understanding between the two young people that nothing definite was to be settled until after the conclusion of peace. Very likely both of them felt, though neither may have actually faced the thought, that it was needless to form plans which powder and shot might dispose of at any moment.

So they settled it between them in the starlight, and were contented with themselves and with one another. It may have been observed that, in the unselfish contest, the interests and wishes ot M. de Saint-Luc had not received much attention; but he, like the poet in Schiller's song, had been guilty of the unpardonable fault of absence at the critical moment, and could not, therefore, expect to be remembered. To be sure, the poet's consolation of substituting heavenly for earthly joys remained open to him.

CHAPTER XXVII.

FAREWELL TO ALGIERS.

THE idlers of Algiers—Christian, Mussulman, and Hebrew—were collected together upon the wharves, watching, with languid curiosity, a sight which for them had no longer the charm of novelty—that of a huge, slab-sided transport slowly moving through the harbour's mouth. While a faint farewell cheer rose from the decks of the outward-bound ship, and was answered by a still fainter echo from those on shore, the port-admiral's eight-oared boat was brought alongside of the quay, and out of it stepped the admiral himself, in full fig. He had been bidding adieu to some friends who were leaving for France, and had brought back with him a young lady whom a similar errand had taken on board the transport. The bystanders were much impressed by the majestic beauty of this pale lady, who stepped lightly on shore with the admiral's assistance, bowed gracefully to the gentlemen in attendance, and, entering the carriage which was waiting for her, was presently whirled away in a thick cloud of dust.

"A brave girl," remarked the admiral to one of his subordinates, taking off his cocked hat, and rubbing his head as he looked after her. "I wish there were more like her. Not but what, at such a time, a little more display of feeling would not have been amiss; but war makes the best of us hard-hearted. Come home to breakfast with me, and we will drink her health, and a safe return to the young marquis."

"Did you remark that tall young woman who has just driven away?" asked one of the loafers of his neighbour. "That is the sister of one de Mersac, a so-called marquis, who has engaged himself as a volunteer, and is going to get himself massacred over yonder. They tell me she encouraged him to leave, though he is her only brother, and she has no other relations."

"The citoyenne has deserved well of the country," responded loafer number two, lifting his broad-leaved felt hat with a pompous gesture.

"Pooh! she belongs to a breed which deserves nothing of the country but the guillotine. For my part, I should have respected her more as a woman if she could have spared a few tears for her brother, who will not lead a life of amusement, I promise you, while she is driving about in her well-cushioned carriage. But that is how they are made, these aristocrats—*ça n'a pas de cœur.*"

These frank criticisms would hardly have disturbed Jeanne's composure if she could have overheard them. To be accused of insensibility was no new experience to her, nor was it her habit to trouble herself much about the judgment of outsiders, if only Léon did not misunderstand her. In truth, emotion with her seldom took the form of weeping; and though we have already more than once seen her affected in this way, it will have been observed that such exhibitions took place only in the strictest privacy, and were indeed attributable in part to shaken health, and in part, also, to the fact that, after all, she had lachrymal glands, like the rest of the world.

Now, while her little horses trotted up the slopes of Mustapha, she looked out upon the well-known landscape with dry eyes, though her head was beginning to feel heavy, and there was a dull, gnawing pain at her heart. After a time she turned, and entered into conversation with the groom who sat behind her, asking him a great many questions about his horses, and giving him such minute instructions as to their treatment that he, too, albeit a faithful servant and profound admirer of his mistress, ended by joining in the general verdict, and wondered within himself how she could have the heart to occupy herself with such small details so soon. But, in truth, she was talking mechanically, and sometimes almost at random, being anxious chiefly to escape from her own thoughts, and being secretly a little frightened at the prospect of re-entering her silent, lonely home.

It was well for her that, when she reached it, M. de Fontvieille met her upon the threshold, holding his hat in one hand and an open letter in the other.

"Mademoiselle," said he, after, with his antiquated courtesy, he had assisted her to alight, and had offered her a trembling old arm to lead her into the house, "how long does a young lady require to pack up her clothes for a journey?"

"That depends. A week, perhaps, if it were necessary to get things done in a hurry; but I would rather have a fortnight, there are so many little matters to be seen to. You have heard from England again?"

"*Tiens, tiens, tiens!* a fortnight! And I who have telegraphed to this poor M. Ashley to say that you will join him at Marseilles in four days' time!"

"Impossible! I could never be ready. Are you so anxious, then, to get rid of me, monsieur?"

"Heaven forbid! But it seems that your uncle has already set out to meet you, and I imagined that it would not amuse him to wait very long at Marseilles—especially as they are in a state of revolution, or something very like it, there. However, I will telegraph again to say that you will require a week to make your preparations. I do not think we could reasonably ask for a longer delay than that."

"No, do not telegraph," said Jeanne, with a short sigh. "Fanchette can put up all that I need in twenty-four hours. What does it signify, when all is said and done?"

"Why, little enough, indeed," answered M. de Fontvieille, brightening up. "I have always been an advocate for getting necessary partings over as quickly as possible. What must be, must; and it is less painful to look back upon sorrow than to look forward to it. Yesterday, if you will believe me, I was so much upset by the idea of having to bid adieu to our dear Léon, that I was compelled more than once to have recourse to a calming medicine. To-day, on the contrary, I am, so to speak, at ease, and have already begun to anticipate the happy day when we shall all be re-united. It is thus that we are constituted, we weak mortals."

"What does it signify?" repeated Jeanne, dreamily, thinking to herself that nothing signified much now.

After all, the time allowed her proved sufficient for all needful purposes, though short enough to keep her incessantly occupied both in body and mind, and she was dimly conscious that it was best so. Sitting on the deck of a mail-steamer, on the third day, and looking back at the rapidly receding shore, with its dazzling white buildings, its green woods and background of snow-capped heights, she could scarcely bring herself to believe in the reality of the swift current of events which had swept her life clean out of its old channel, and was bearing it away towards a vague future, and half expected to wake presently with a start, and find herself in her bedroom at El Biar. So, at least, she said to herself, and would gladly have kept up the fond illusion, had not the outward and visible signs of actuality been too plain to be ignored.

For the great steamer was trembling in every plank with the throbbing of her shaft; the crew, a hybrid gang, such as man all Mediterranean vessels, were shouting to one another in an unintelligible jargon; the passengers were pacing the decks with that energy which a landsman always displays as soon as he gets afloat in calm weather; the air was full of the fresh, salt smell of the sea; and here was Monsieur le Capitaine, a spick-and-span gentleman in naval uniform, come to ask, with his best bow, whether mademoiselle had all that she required. Last, not least, M. de Fontvieille, arrayed in a wonderful travelling costume, which had not seen the light for some ten years, was leaning over the bulwarks, and scanning the coast through an ancient pair of field-glasses.

The old gentleman had insisted upon accompanying Jeanne as far as Marseilles, despite her assurances that she was perfectly well able to take care of herself, declaring that poor dear Madame de Breuil would never have sanctioned such a proceeding as a young lady's undertaking a voyage alone, and that, for himself, the change would do him good. So he had unearthed the garments afore-mentioned, had packed up his necessaries in a handsome carpet-bag, worked for him many years before by the late Madame de Fontvieille, and bearing the inscription "*Bon voyage*," in yellow letters upon a blue worsted ground, and was now enjoying himself immensely in the society of a few fellow-passengers with whom he had already fraternised.

"Depend upon it, monsieur," Jeanne heard him saying, "there is nothing like travel to open a man's mind and develop his self-reliance. I, who am an old campaigner, so to speak, can make myself at home where you please in five minutes. To be sure, such a voyage as we are now embarked upon is but a bagatelle in these days—a mere promenade of eight-and-forty hours, nothing more; but when I was young, it was another affair! Then a man made his will, and took leave of his friends before he stepped on board ship. I myself—I who speak to you—have been tossed about for a whole week in the Gulf of Lyons, and driven back into port at the end of it. And glad to get there too, *parbleu!* Now we have changed all that. With our magnificent vessels and our steam-power we have converted the sea from a rough master into an obedient servant, whom I smile at, but salute for old acquaintance' sake."

However, his obedient servant, supplemented by a brisk nor'-wester, got the upper hand of him before nightfall, and drove him discomfited into his cabin, where he remained until the bare hills of Provence were well in sight. Jeanne, who had escaped sea-sickness, forbore to remark upon his wobegone aspect when he staggered up to the bench where she was seated, and magnanimously allowed him to condole with her upon miseries which she had not endured.

"We have had a shocking passage," said he. "You must have suffered horribly, my poor child; but never mind!—it is nearly over now. Heaven be praised! we shall soon be in a comfortable hotel, and then you will only have railway journeys to look forward to. They may say what they like, but the sea is a vile thing—there is no pleasure to be got out of it at all. I, alas! must face it again in a few days' time, but there! we will not think of that. To-night we will dine well—*cras ingens iterabimus æquor*, as Virgil says."

And having delivered himself of this recondite quotation with the assured air of a man who has his classics at his fingers' ends, M. de Fontvieille pulled a small looking-glass out of his pocket, and began to examine his features in it anxiously.

"Do I look pale?" he asked. "Have I the appearance of a bad sailor? I hope not; for I am desirous of making a favourable impression upon your uncle; and I know what these English are; they have a contempt for everybody who is not amphibious. It would be a mark of good taste on the part of Mr. Ashley if he were to abstain from coming to meet us when we land; but we must not expect too much of an Englishman."

In the sequel, however, Mr. Ashley vindicated the national character for delicacy—at least, he did not come out in a boat to receive his niece, nor was he to be discovered in the custom-house, where the travellers were detained for a considerable time before their luggage was delivered to them. But when, in due course of time, they drew up before the door of the Hôtel du Louvre, and M. de Fontvieille inquired whether an English gentleman of the name of Achelay were staying there, a tall, stout, white-whiskered personage advanced through the *porte-cochère*, remarking, "Oh! Mossoo Ashley, *c'est moi.* How are you? Glad to see you."

M. de Fontvieille skipped nimbly out of the *fiacre*, swept the pavement with his hat, and poured forth a glib oration expressive of his pleasure at meeting Mr. Ashley, and his gratitude to that gentleman for having undertaken so long a journey on Jeanne's behalf.

"*Pas de tout*, I'm sure," replied the person addressed. "Delighted to have been of any use—delighted."

He did not seem specially delighted. He was a dull, heavy-looking man, whose expression, so far as he can be said to have had any expression, appeared to imply that he would be very much obliged if the new-comers would kindly get their polite speeches over as soon as they could, and go away. "How do, Jane?" he continued, holding out a big, fat hand to his niece. "Long time since we've met, isn't it?"

"I don't think we have ever met before," answered Jeanne with her grave smile.

The porter, the head-waiter, the landlord, and a little crowd of underlings were all gazing at the strange lady with that admiring homage which no Frenchman ever fails to render to beauty; but Mr. Ashley's half-closed eyes perceived only that the young woman was remarkably tall.

"Ah, well, no; I suppose not. No, to be sure," he answered. "I knew your mother though," he added, after a momentary pause, as though that were pretty much the same thing.

Nobody knowing exactly what to say next, a rather awkward silence ensued, which was broken at length by a yawn from Turco, who had been lying concealed in the *fiacre*, and who now judged it time to make his entry in a leisurely, dignified fashion. Mr. Ashley brightened perceptibly at the sight of him.

"What a magnificent dog!" he exclaimed. "Is that yours?"

"Yes," answered Jeanne. "I had not time to write and ask whether you would allow me to bring him to England; but I thought I would let him come as far as this upon the chance. If he would be a trouble to you, I can easily send him back with M. de Fontvieille."

"Trouble? Lord bless your soul, no!" responded Mr. Ashley, with more cordiality than he had hitherto displayed. "No dog ever was a trouble to me. I've got lots of 'em at home. Well, Jowler!"

This last familiar apostrophe was directed at Turco, who now raised his solemn eyes, instituted investigations of an olfactory nature, and apparently finding them satisfactory, thrust his huge muzzle into the speaker's hand. Dogs are more cosmopolitan in their sympathies than humans.

After another prolonged pause, Mr. Ashley, who had been frowning at his boots and whistling an inaudible tune, looked up, as with a sudden happy inspiration, remarking, "I dare say you'd like to go upstairs now, and change your things—and that," and seemed very much relieved when Jeanne answered, "If you please." He was a dull, methodical man, who meant well towards his neighbours in a general way, but disliked strangers, by reason of the mental suffering which he had to undergo in order to find something suitable to say to them. Later in the day, M. de Fontvieille, speaking under the mellow influence of a good dinner and a bottle of Heidsieck monopole, described him as a *brave campagnard*. Jeanne, more prudent, but less lenient, committed herself to no articulate judgment upon her uncle, but mentally set him down as a *lourdaud*.

Nevertheless, she did what she could to be gracious to him, exerting herself to set him at his ease, and thanking him very prettily for having travelled so far to meet her. To which he replied, "Oh, it doesn't matter," with an evident sense of hard usage strong upon him. "I shouldn't have minded the trip a bit, if it hadn't been for the pheasants," he was so good as to explain; "but your aunt thought it wouldn't have done for you to travel all by yourself—and no more it would, of course. And I dare say we shall manage to get home before the week is out—that is, if you can stand a few longish days in the train."

Jeanne answered that she was quite prepared to perform the whole distance without a break, if necessary; whereat her uncle's features assumed an expression of cheerfulness and approval.

"Oh, I shouldn't think for a moment of asking you to do that," said he; "only some ladies, you know, want to stop for the night at every ten miles, and then grumble because the journey takes such a long time, you know."

Jeanne signified that she was not one of these unreasonable persons; and Mr. Ashley immediately produced a *Bradshaw*, and began to sigh and rub his forehead over its intricacies.

Poor M. de Fontvieille, who had perforce to pass three days in Marseilles, and had counted upon whiling them away with such amusements as the sad circumstances of the time allowed of, was rather dismayed when he heard that he was to be left in solitude the next morning. However, he put a good face upon it, and maintained a cheerful demeanour up to the last moment. Not until Jeanne had already taken her place in the railway-carriage, and Mr. Ashley was preparing to follow her, did the old gentleman permit his natural feelings to obtain a temporary mastery over him. Then, with two tears trickling down his withered cheeks, he approached the burly Englishman, and standing upon tiptoe in order to grasp him impressively by both elbows, delivered himself of a brief exordium which he had prepared beforehand.

"Monsieur, I confide to your care one who is more dear to me than my life. I do not ask you to treat her with kindness—that would be to insult you, who have so generously offered her an asylum when those of her own family have held aloof. I surrender her to you without fear, but not without a pang; for I am an old man, monsieur, and my time must be near at hand. That is why I will venture to beg of you, although we are of different faiths, to join your prayers to mine that I may not be long separated from those whom I love."

"Certainly—certainly; I will, I'm sure, with pleasure—and Mrs. Ashley too; and we'll take the greatest care of Jane. Don't be agitated—pray don't!" pleaded Mr. Ashley, in an agony of terror lest this demonstrative Frenchman should proceed to embrace him *coram populo*. "I think, if you'll excuse me a minute, I'll just run and buy a paper," he added, almost shaking off his interlocutor; and with that, fairly took to his heels.

M. de Fontvieille was quite satisfied. He had not understood a word of the Englishman's hurried speech, but he had detected in it, as he thought, signs of sympathetic emotion. "*C'est un bon cœur*," he murmured, as he hoisted himself up upon the carriage step to say his last words to Jeanne.

"Dear mademoiselle—my dear child—I had a hundred things to speak of to you, but I do not feel that I have the strength; and, after all, you have no need of advice from me. You know better than I what is right, and you never fail to do it. Do not forget your old friend, who loves you. Here is a small souvenir—it is only a sapphire ring—of no great value—you know I am a miser as regards my jewels; but they will all come to you soon. Write to me when you can find the time; I shall be very lonely without you, and our poor Léon. Adieu, mademoiselle—adieu, my dear Jeanne!"

And then Mr. Ashley came running back with his newspaper, and was pushed into his place by the guard. The door was slammed, the train began to move, and the course of Jeanne's life took a fresh departure. Her last glimpse of old associations showed her M. de Fontvieille dissolved in tears upon the platform, waving a straw hat with one hand and a pocket-handkerchief with the other, while the railway officials, the gendarmes, and the porters grouped around him looked on with respectful interest.

THE

NHILL MAGAZINE.

DECEMBER, [illegible]

Mademoiselle de M[illegible]

CHAPTER [illegible]

M[illegible]LEY, peeping cautiously from behind the [illegible] of his newspaper, [illegible] This discovery, [illegible] with a vague [illegible] that the [illegible] called for some [illegible] of a sympathetic [illegible] him to [illegible] mark: — "There [illegible]

"[illegible]" said [illegible] are what [illegible] [illegible] you [illegible]

And if there were no partings, don't you know?" continued Mr. Ashley, struggling manfully to say something original, "if there weren't any partings, there would be no meetings."

This evidently struck him as being well put, for, after a pause, he repeated:

"If there were no partings, there would be no meetings; we must remember that."

Jeanne bent her head slightly, and gave him a little faint smile. She had already recognised in her uncle a worthy, but inferior species of being, with whom it was wholly unnecessary to converse, and whose nature fitted him rather to obey than to command.

Her own nature, as we are aware, was of the opposite kind; and so Mr. Ashley, who had the ready instinct of a dull man, soon discovered. Before the day was at an end, he and his niece had found their respective levels with regard to one another, and were quite comfortable together. He was greatly impressed by Jeanne's quiet repose of manner, by the calmness with which she utterly declined to be hurried or flustered when the time came for them to change carriages, and by the matter-of-course way in which she ordered one of the railway officials to fetch some water for Turco before she would consent to continue her journey. At the frontier, where, during those troublous times, it was customary to make a prodigious fuss over passports, and where he was thrown into a fever of mingled indignation and alarm by a frowning individual who required him to prove his identity, he finally surrendered all semblance of authority into the hands of his charge, who made things smooth without any difficulty at all.

"I can't make head or tail of these foreigners—never could," he remarked apologetically, as he sank back, with a sigh of exhaustion, upon the cushions of the railway-carriage. "You'd better do the talking, Jane; you know how to manage 'em."

So from that time forth the command of the expedition was taken up by Mademoiselle de Mersac, vice Mr. Ashley, superseded. That same evening the travellers reached Geneva, and the next day journeyed on to Bâle, and the next to Cologne, and so northwards. Mr. Ashley, relieved of the responsibility of searching time-tables, making calculations in foreign coin, and speaking tongues only partially known to him, was in high good-humour, and declared several times that he had never enjoyed a trip more in his life. He conceived a high estimate of his niece's character and abilities; the only thing that vexed him about her being the unfortunate accident of her nationality, which was fatal to a free interchange of ideas upon the absorbing events of the day. The papers at that time were full of the proclamations and manifestoes of the young dictator of Tours, for whose windy utterances Mr. Ashley nourished a truly noble and British contempt, which, of course, he was obliged under the circumstances to suppress as best he could. From time to time, to be sure, being charged as it were to bursting point with bottled-up wrath, he was fain to break out into the commencement of a diatribe against "that fellow Gombetter;" but it must be recorded to his credit that he never failed to cut short his sentence with a profuse apology, and an explanation that his disparaging remarks had no reference to the French people.

"Plucky fellows, and good soldiers when they are well led," he was kind enough to say. "Our old allies in the Crimea, too; we haven't forgotten that in England, I assure you." After which he would generally fall foul of King William's pious telegrams, that being a subject upon which he felt himself at liberty to use as strong language as he pleased.

As far as Jeanne was concerned, he might have spoken for or against her country without scruple. Her own private anxieties and sorrows were too much in her mind just then to permit of her taking any great interest in public affairs; still less could she have brought herself to care what the opinion of this or that individual Englishman might be upon them. Her one desire was to reach England, where she hoped she would find a letter from Léon awaiting her arrival. The journey was not an enjoyable one to her, whatever it may have been to her companion, and she was glad to get to the end of it.

Landing on Dover pier, on a murky November afternoon, after a long passage through thick weather from Ostend, Jeanne took her first survey of her mother's native land, and did not find it specially attractive to the eye. But she had not much time to spend in forming impressions, for Mr. Ashley, who had rushed off to the bookstall as soon as he had set foot on land, came hurrying back, loaded with newspapers, and brimming over with the latest intelligence.

"Here's a pretty kettle of fish!" he cried, as he scrambled into his place. "Russia's been tearing up the Treaty of Paris! I always knew how it would be. And, oh! here's a bit of good news for you, Jane. Your people have licked the Bavarians somewhere. Like to see the *Telegraph?* They've got a long account of it all."

The winter evening closed in. Dover, Ashford, Tunbridge, were soon left behind. Mr. Ashley denounced Prince Gortschakoff, and declared his conviction that the Gladstone Ministry was trifling with the honour of the country. Jeanne was still deep in the details of the battle of Coulmiers—an undoubted victory for the French arms at last—when the train came to a standstill at Sevenoaks, and her uncle, throwing open the door, exclaimed:

"By Jove! here we are already! Jump out, Jane; this is our station."

Jeanne obeyed this invitation by stepping down in her leisurely, deliberate way on to the platform. A servant relieved her of her shawls and umbrellas; and in a few minutes she found herself seated by her uncle's side in a mail-phaeton, being whirled along the muddy lanes at the full speed of a pair of gigantic horses.

Bless us and save us, how these brutes do pull!" gasped Mr. Ashley.

"It's enough to drag a man's arms out of their sockets. How were they going as you came along, Simpson?"

"Ran away the 'ole distance, sir," answered the man from behind. "Couldn't have stopped 'em in the first two miles, not if it had ha' bin ever so! Took 'em to Caterham and back, with the ladies, yesterday too, sir. I never see such 'osses for work!"

"Ah!" grunted Mr. Ashley, evidently not ill-pleased. "They won't run away with *me*, I can tell them."

They managed to keep him pretty well occupied though, and left him little breath, save for such interjectional remarks as: "Your Algerian horses don't run quite to this size, eh, Jane?" or, "Precious dark night, ain't it?" or, "That's Westerham," or, "That's Brasted," as the twinkling lights of some town or hamlet showed through the gloom.

A short three-quarters of an hour brought them to a park-gate, which somebody, running out from the lodge hard by, flung open to admit them. Presently came another gate, a gravel sweep, flanked by evergreens, and then Jeanne made out, as well as the darkness would allow her, a low, irregularly-built, white house.

"Welcome to Holmhurst!" cried Mr. Ashley, who had assumed a certain bluff, British heartiness of manner since he had been once more upon his native soil. "Here, catch hold of the reins, Simpson. Why the dickens don't somebody come to open the door? Oh! here's Mrs. Ashley."

The front door had been thrown open, letting out a stream of ruddy light into the clinging mist outside, and through it hurried a tall, grey-haired lady, who was talking volubly to nobody in particular as she walked, and who clutched hastily at her cap which had somehow fallen on to the extreme back of her head. Just as she reached the threshold, she dropped her shawl, which she kicked impatiently away into an adjacent puddle, whence it was rescued by Simpson, who shook it and delivered it up to an imperturbable butler.

"Well, John," began this impetuous lady, bestowing a hasty embrace upon her husband, and speaking in a hurried monotone, as though it were absolutely essential that she should crowd as many words into one sentence as most people do into five; "so here you are back again, safe and sound. No return of gout?—no cold? That's right! And this is Jeanne. How do you do, my dear?—so delighted to see you—not that I do see you. Come in and get warm, you must be frozen. Did you have a rough passage? Have you had any tea? Will you have anything now, or wait till dinner? We dine in half an hour—that is, we ought, only this new cook is so dreadfully unpunctual. Have you much trouble with your servants in Algiers? Here they are beyond everything—no satisfying them, and no getting them to do their work! Not you, Jarvis" (this to the butler), "you know I don't mean you. Come into the library, my dear, and be introduced to your cousins. Je devrais parler français, mais ça m'est devenu tant difficile—faute d'habitude. Vous m'excuserez—je veux dire, tu m'excuseras——"

Jeanne stemmed this torrent of words by remarking:

"I am quite accustomed to speak English, madame."

"Yes, to be sure—of course—you speak it much better than I do French, I have no doubt. What *has* become of my shawl?—never mind! This is Helen, and this is Blanche."

Mrs. Ashley, while continuing her remarks, had led the way into a large, comfortable-looking room, lined with bookcases, and furnished with an abundance of chintz-covered sofas and armchairs. Two fair-haired, blue-eyed girls rose to greet the new-comer. Jeanne, who had all a Frenchwoman's admiration for pink and white colouring, thought them excessively pretty, and noted, with a certain sense of relief, that they lacked their mother's conversational powers; for when one of them had observed, "You must be dreadfully cold!" and the other had added, "How tired you must be!" they seemed to think that they had said all that the occasion required, and relapsed into a smiling silence.

Meanwhile, Mrs. Ashley, who had not allowed her tongue to rest from the trifling consideration that nobody was listening to her, was concluding a long sentence by a name, the sound of which brought a sudden flush into Jeanne's pale cheeks.

"Miss Barrington—Jeanne, let me introduce you to Miss Barrington, who is anxious to make your acquaintance."

Miss Barrington had been a beauty once upon a time. She was now a somewhat remarkable-looking old woman. Her abundant white hair, her sharp black eyes, her over-hanging eyebrows, and her shrewd, thin face, made up a whole which formed a striking contrast to the Ashley family, whose comely countenances could not boast of one clearly-drawn feature amongst them.

"How do you do?" said she, holding out her hand, and laying down the tatting upon which she had been engaged. "I have heard all about you from my nephew. There is a letter for you somewhere. I thought I would just mention the fact, because Mrs. Ashley has, of course, forgotten all about it, and she is just as likely as not to throw it into the fire, if you don't claim it."

"Oh, no!" protested Mrs. Ashley, "I should never have done that—I shouldn't, indeed. I know my memory is treacherous, but I am always so very particular about letters, and really I can't remember to have burnt an unopened one more than once in my life, and that turned out to be only an invitation to dinner, so that it really did not signify much, though the people did make a ridiculous fuss about it. Jeanne's letter is on her dressing table, where I put it with my own hands. Will you come upstairs now, my dear, and see your room?"

Jeanne followed her aunt, willingly enough, upstairs to the prettily-furnished bedroom which had been prepared for her. A bright fire was burning cheerfully in the grate, and a maid was busy unpacking her clothes. On the pin-cushion, transfixed by a huge, black-headed pin, was the wished-for letter, with its familiar French stamps and its many postmarks.

"There!" cried Mrs. Ashley, pointing triumphantly to this evidence of her care, "I pinned it down myself, so that there should be no risk of its being swept away. I know you will be anxious to read it, for I can guess from whom it comes," she added meaningly, patting Jeanne on the shoulder, and turning round to nod and smile before she bustled out of the room.

So Jeanne, left to herself at last, sank into an armchair before the pleasant warmth and blaze of the coal fire (the first she had ever seen, by the way), and settled herself to enjoy her letter, which was not from M. de Saint-Luc at all, as worthy Mrs. Ashley had assumed it to be, but from Léon.

The lad wrote in high spirits. He had joined his regiment, and had received a lieutenant's commission forthwith. He might have had his troop but for native modesty; for in those days commissions fluttered about in the air, right and left, and were often caught by less competent hands than his He was full of enthusiasm for the army, for his comrades; above all, for his old friend and Colonel. An action was said to be imminent, and he was about to be sent to the front—Coulmiers and victory before him, if he had known it. That—or another fate—thought his sister, with a long sigh, as she dropped the letter. "You are not to be anxious if you get no news of me for some time," Léon had added in a postscript. Just so we can all remember, when we had the toothache in our childish days, being recommended "not to think about it."

Jeanne thought about it till she found that she had barely left herself time to perform her evening toilette; and then, changing her dress with what expedition she could, swept down the shallow oak stairs to the library, where Mr. Ashley, erect upon the hearthrug, with his nose in the air and his coat-tails gathered up under his arms, was holding forth to a respectful feminine audience, much as you may see a Cochin-China cock in the farm-yard crowing mellifluously to the admiration of his surrounding brood.

"Much of a muchness, the whole lot of 'em," Jeanne heard him saying; "but if you talk of lying, I must say that fellow Gombetter can give Gortschakoff pounds!"

After which, becoming aware of the presence of his niece, he fell to poking the fire with a good deal of needless noise, and remarked that the weather was really remarkably cold for the time of year.

Miss Barrington, with more tact, continued the subject.

"If I had to govern a nation," said she, "I think I should go in for a course of unscrupulous veracity, just to see how it would act. Bismarck is the only public man I know of who habitually tells the truth, and the consequence is that nobody can make him out. I remember once, some years ago, making a resolution to steer clear of fibs in my own small sphere; but it didn't do. As far as I can remember, I only kept it up for about a fortnight."

Miss Barrington's remarks were listened to with that respectful deference which, in this country, can be commanded by wealth alone. When she had done one of the young ladies exclaimed:

"Oh! but, Miss Barrington, you never do tell fibs."

The old lady's eyes twinkled. "Don't I, my dear?" returned she. "How do you know? Do you suppose such hardened old sinners as I are easily detected? Helen Ashley is my god-daughter," she continued explanatorily, addressing herself to Jeanne; "that is why she takes such a favourable view of my character."

And Jeanne noticed, with some surprise, that at this apparently innocent speech her uncle bit his nails and frowned, and Mrs. Ashley wriggled uneasily upon her chair, while a fine rich pink overspread the cheeks, forehead, and ears of the fair Helen.

The announcement of dinner put an end to a rather uncomfortable period of silence. Mr. Ashley gave his arm to Miss Barrington, and the rest of the party trooped out of the room after him.

Jeanne, scanning the spacious dining-room with the eager eyes of an explorer in unknown lands, received a favourable impression of English luxury. She had read, in I know not what book of "Notes upon Great Britain," that the saturnine nature of the inhabitants of these islands is nowhere more vividly exemplified than in the aspect of that particular room in which their happiest moments are supposed to be passed. The writer, whose ideas may possibly have been formed in that gloomy part of London to which, for some inscrutable reason, foreigners chiefly resort, had drawn a graphic picture of a funereal apartment, furnished with a long table, a dozen or more horse-hair chairs, a mahogany sideboard, a sarcophagus to keep the decanters in, a portrait in oil of the master of the house, and a print representing the coronation of Queen Victoria. "There," he had concluded, "you have the scene of those social banquets so dear to Englishmen. Admit that a man must drink a great deal of port wine before he can feel gay amidst such surroundings." The dining-room at Holmhurst by no means answered to this description. It was such a room as may be seen in scores of country houses of the less pretentious order—a room neither venerable in the way of old oak panelling, antlers, family portraits, and high-backed chairs, nor pseudo-venerable in one of the abominable theatrical styles affected by modern upholsterers, and dubbed "Early English," "Elizabethan," "Jacobean," or what not—yet with a certain attractiveness of its own. The Turkey carpet, a little worn and faded in places; the plain, solid furniture, dating apparently from the commencement of the present century, and likely to see the end of it; the fire that blazed in the ample grate, the fine damask table-cloth, the glittering silver, and the mellow, shaded light of the tall lamps—all these details of the picture which met Jeanne's eye made up a sufficiently pleasant whole; and each and all of them seemed to wear a smile of quiet, conscious self-respect and prosperity, not unlike that which commonly illumined the features of their master about the dinner-hour.

The repast itself, to be sure, did not prove quite up to the Campagne de Mersac standard—being, indeed, of the kind usually set before her employers, in this favoured land, by a good plain cook with a kitchen-maid under her; but such as the food was, there was plenty of it; and the wine—if that had been a point within Jeanne's powers of criticism—was excellent. A portly butler, assisted by a hobbledehoy in livery, handed the plates, and doled out half glasses of sherry from time to time. Miss Barrington had a special claret jug at her elbow, and helped herself.

Mr. Ashley swallowed his soup, making a good deal of noise over it, and related the chief incidents of his journey, dwelling with some bitterness upon the senseless suspicion with which he had been met at the frontier.

"As if any fool couldn't see that I was an Englishman!" cried the worthy gentleman, reasonably enough. "I believe, upon my conscience, they'd have clapped me into jail if Jane, there, hadn't come to the rescue and made it all right," he added, nodding in a friendly manner at his niece.

"If people would only take the trouble to learn modern languages when they were young," remarked Mrs. Ashley, addressing herself, as usual, to space; "but, of course, in our time one's education was neglected as far as that sort of thing went. Nowadays it is different. We girls did learn French, German and Italian; and the same master, I remember, taught us all three; but boys, of course—modern languages being an extra, and in play-hours and all—you couldn't expect it, could you? unless they had a special turn that way, as some have. Our eldest boy, Jack, took up German for his examination at the Staff College at Sandhurst the other day, and got I don't know how many marks—such a good thing! Not that it is likely to be of much use to him, as far as I can see; and being such a long time away from his regiment and his brother officers, has been very tiresome for him; and then there was all the hard work, and a good deal of expense in one way and another—still, of course, one is glad to think he has passed."

No one ever dreamt of paying any attention to Mrs. Ashley's interminable semi-soliloquies. Her daughters talked through them without scruple, neither meaning offence nor giving any. By way of entertaining their guest, they confined their remarks entirely to the subject of Algeria, about which country they asked one well-meant, silly question after another, while Jeanne, bored but patient, answered to the best of her ability; and Mr. Ashley and Miss Barrington talked politics; and the dinner progressed through its prescribed courses.

When it was all over, the ladies betook themselves to the drawing-room, where the younger of the two sisters seated herself at the piano, while the elder warbled English ballads in a thin, faint voice, starting a trifle flat, and consistently remaining so up to the last note of her performance. Mrs. Ashley took up the *Queen*, and read occasional inaudible extracts from that voluminous journal, and Miss Barrington returned to her tatting. After what Jeanne had heard before dinner, it would perhaps have evinced something more than mortal powers of self-control if she had abstained from seating herself beside the latter lady.

"You said Mr. Barrington was your nephew, did you not?" she asked, proceeding straight to the point, with her usual directness.

"Yes. What did you think of him?"

Miss Barrington had a gruff voice, like a man's, and had cultivated a natural abruptness of manner, having found that the quickest and surest means of coming to an understanding with her fellow-creatures.

Jeanne thought the question rather in bad taste, and did not much like the tone in which it was delivered. She replied, however, without embarrassment, that she had found Mr. Barrington very amiable.

"Amiable!" echoed the old lady. "What a very odd description of him! But I suppose you use the word in its French sense, *aimable*—loveable—eh? A good many people have found him that, by all accounts. Indeed, I am very fond of him myself, though he is a selfish rascal at heart, as most men are. He showed me a picture he had done of you; it was not flattered."

Jeanne laughed. "Is he—at home now?" she asked, after a short pause.

"No," answered the old lady, looking up from her tatting, "he is not; he is away paying visits in different parts of the country."

Miss Barrington's keen black eyes had found out many a secret in their time by mere force of tacit interrogation; but they failed to extract any information from the beautiful, pale face upon which they were now fastened.

"I am sorry for that," observed Jeanne, calmly. "Mr. Barrington was a great deal at our house while he was in Algiers, and I should have liked to have met him again."

Was she sorry? She was saying to herself that she was glad—that she was intensely relieved. And yet there was a dull sort of pain about her heart, suspiciously like disappointment.

"He will return home before Christmas, I have no doubt, and then you will be able to renew your acquaintance with him," said Miss Barrington, drily, and with that she changed the subject.

After a time, Mr. Ashley came in from the dining-room, rubbing his eyes and yawning. The clock on the mantelpiece struck ten, and one of the girls rang the bell. Suddenly Mrs. Ashley scrambled up from her low chair, made a futile grab at her cap, which had fallen on to the back of her head again, and hurried across the room to Jeanne.

"Nous allons faire la prière," said she. "Si vous avez des scrupules——"

The servants came in, in a long line, while she was speaking. Mr. Ashley was turning over the leaves of a large, gilt-edged Bible, and adjusting his spectacles. For a moment Jeanne was seized with that queer, bewildering sensation—to which no one is a stranger—of having been in the same place, and under precisely similar circumstances, before.

Then she remembered the description Léon had given of life at Holmhurst upon his return to Algiers, and how he had claimed to have earned the good opinion of his relations by his repudiation of bigotry. With that reminiscence before her, she hastened to reassure her aunt, and the ceremony proceeded.

It is to be feared, however, that Jeanne's heart was not in her devotions that evening, and that she might just as well have retired for any good she got from them; for while Mr. Ashley was offering up a somewhat hasty, but comprehensive supplication for the welfare of all mankind, one, at least, of those who should have been supporting him in his modest demands was many miles away, in the cool dining-room of the Campagne de Mersac. The sun was streaming through the open windows; the wind was scattering the almond blossoms outside; the shrill voices of Madame de Breuil's visitors rose and fell in the adjoining *salon;* a handsome, bright-eyed lad was sitting on a corner of the table swinging his long legs, chattering about England and Paris, and waxing enthusiastic in his praise of a certain Englishman named Barrington whom he had brought to Africa with him. All this took place long, long ago—eight months or so, in point of fact—and many people and many things had had time to die since then, hope and joy among the rest. "If only I were dead too!" sighed poor Jeanne, upon her knees.

"Amen," says Mr. Ashley briskly, shutting up his book. And so one more day is at an end, and everybody may go to bed; and those who can't sleep must bear their own burden, and hope to be a little more tired tomorrow night.

CHAPTER XXIX.

IN WHICH JEANNE TAKES A WALK.

MR. ASHLEY, who was a thorough-going Conservative in practice as well as in principle, clung to the observance of many old customs in his household from no other motive than an inherent dislike of change. It was by his orders that the great bell at the top of the house was rung, for some two or three minutes, every morning as the clock struck eight, rousing the slumbering echoes, setting the dogs in the stable-yard barking, and causing visitors to begin the day with bad words. In Mr. Ashley's father's time, or in his grandfather's, this untimely clamour had probably had its justification as a summons to the first meal of the day; it survived now, without any justification at all, much as the curfew still continues to toll the knell of parting day in certain remote villages.

The dull, grey light was just stealing through Jeanne's window-curtains, on the morning after her arrival at Holmhurst, when she was startled by this prolonged din; but as it was clearly out of the question that she could now be in time to present herself at any rite or meeting which it might herald, she wisely turned round and fell asleep again, having, indeed, had but a small part of her fair share of rest during the night. About an hour later she was again aroused by that peculiarly irritating rat-a-tat-tat at her door of which the knuckles of English servants possess the secret, and a maid came in with a bath and cans of water, and Mrs. Hashley's love, and would she please 'ave her breakfuss in her room or downstairs?

Having received this young person's assurances that there was no 'urry, Jeanne answered that she would go downstairs as soon as she was dressed, and succeeded eventually in reaching the dining-room just as Miss Barrington was leaving it.

"Good-morning," said that lady. "You ain't very early people in your part of the world, I see."

"I am very sorry. Have I kept them waiting?" asked Jeanne, apprehensively.

"Dear me, no! Punctuality is the soul of business; but if you haven't any business to do, what's the use of being punctual? The only reason why I stay in this house is that I can do exactly as I like in it. They don't keep things hot for you though, and therefore I make a point of being in the dining-room at half-past nine."

Mrs. Ashley rose from behind her urn and teacups to extend a hand holding a large piece of buttered toast to her niece. Becoming aware, by a slight hesitation on Jeanne's part, of this obstacle in the way of a friendly greeting, she hastily got rid of it by thrusting it into the open mouth of Turco, who stood gravely beside her, and who promptly deposited it on the carpet, being unused to such cavalier manners.

"Eat it up, there's a dear dog!" said Mrs. Ashley, soothingly. "What a splendid fellow he is! So glad to have him here, we are all devoted to dogs. I hope you slept well, my dear. We didn't wait, you see—we never do; I find it is the only plan. Tea or coffee? Your uncle has gone out hunting; he started hours ago. They meet beyond Westerham to-day—or was it Edenbridge? I often say to him that he is getting too old to rush all over the county to these far meets, only it makes him angry to be told so; but really, you know, to have a twenty-mile ride home, after it is all over, is too much; and the result of it is that he comes in tired out, and falls asleep after dinner, which is so bad. What shall we do to amuse you to-day? You will find us very humdrum people, I'm afraid; but at all events our life will be a change from what you have been accustomed to, and that is always something. Helen, my dear, you must look after your cousin. What are you going to do this morning?"

"Blanche and I were going down to the village to buy some things," answered the elder of the two girls; "but that is of no consequence. Unfortunately," she continued, turning to Jeanne with a little apologetic laugh, "there is nothing interesting to be seen in our neighbourhood—no cathedrals, or show places, or anything of that kind. When strangers come to stay with us, we generally drive them up to the common to look at the view, only at this time of year there hardly ever *is* any view because of the fog. Still, if you would care about going there on the chance——"

"I would rather walk to the village with you," said Jeanne. "Is that the village, beyond those trees?"

"Oh, no," answered Helen; "that is the keeper's cottage at Broadridge, where Mr. Barrington lives. You knew Mr. Barrington in Algiers, didn't you?"

"Isn't he nice? Isn't he amusing? Didn't you like him very much?" chimed in Blanche, the younger sister, who was a trifle given to enthusiasm.

Jeanne said she had thought Mr. Barrington charming, and returned to her breakfast, not feeling inclined to pursue the subject further at that moment.

She recurred to it, however, of her own accord an hour later, when she and her cousins were walking briskly across the park, escorted by some half-dozen dogs of all sizes.

"Mr. Barrington is your nearest neighbour; I suppose you see him very often?" she remarked interrogatively.

"Some of us do, don't we, Helen?" said Blanche.

At which her sister smiled demurely, and retorted, "How silly you are, Blanche!"

"Why silly?" Jeanne inquired, looking down, from her superior height, at the fresh-coloured young woman at her side, with perhaps the faintest tinge of unconscious disdain in her eyes.

The dimples in Miss Ashley's cheeks became more perceptible. She was a rather pretty girl—sufficiently so to be considered a beauty by her brothers and sisters, who, like the members of many other large families, had, from their youth up, formed a sort of mutual-admiration league. "Blanche is always teasing me about Mr. Barrington," she explained. "It is all nonsense, and I wish she would not do it, because it sets people talking, and you have no idea what a gossiping neighbourhood this is. We are great friends—nothing more. I think it is very hard that one mayn't have a friend without everybody making disagreeable remarks about it, don't you?"

To judge by her face, she did not feel the hardship very keenly; and possibly that may have been why Jeanne did not judge it necessary to respond to her appeal for sympathy.

"After all, Helen," said Blanche, picking up a fir-cone, and throwing it for the dogs to scamper after, "it is not very odd that people should notice your friendships, because, you know, your friends always *do* propose to you, sooner or later."

"Nonsense, my dear child," replied the elder sister, speaking in that patronising tone which is the prerogative of superior age and experience; "Mr. Barrington has never done anything of the kind."

"Oh, I know that," cried the other innocently. "Of course, if he had——." She broke off with an embarrassed laugh, and resumed hurriedly, "I wish he would, and that you would accept him. It would be such fun to have him for a brother-in-law."

"Blanche," said Helen, with some severity, "you allow your tongue to run away with you. I don't know what Jeanne will think of us."

The second Miss Ashley resembled the elder as a bad photograph resembles its original. She had the same colouring, only less brilliant; the same features, but less refined; her hands were redder and her feet larger than her sister's. Providence seemed to have destined her to play the part of second fiddle, which part, for that matter, she accepted cheerfully enough. She had as yet had no proposals, and no "friends," in her acceptation of the term, nor did she expect any so long as the beauty of the family should remain unmarried. Her humble estimate of her own merits had hitherto been entirely concurred in by others; and Jeanne, who, during the above brief dialogue, had made up her mind that she liked her younger cousin the best of the two, was probably the very first person who had arrived at such a conclusion. But Jeanne was perhaps hardly a fair judge, being susceptible of the passion of jealousy in common with poor humanity at large.

Such faint predisposition as she may have had in Miss Ashley's favour was certainly not increased by the latter's next remarks. "I hope you understand, Jeanne, that Blanche is only talking nonsense. Mr. Barrington is really nothing but a very old friend of mine, and we all like him very much. Everybody does, I think. Did not you, when you knew him in Algiers? But perhaps you were too much taken up with *somebody else* to pay much attention to him. Do tell me what M. de Saint-Luc is like; I want so much to hear all about him. Is he young and good-looking? And is he tall or short?—dark or fair? You don't mind my asking, *do* you?"

Jeanne did mind very much, but could hardly say so in so many words. The tone of her reply, however, showed unequivocally enough that the subject was not one upon which she was inclined to be communicative.

"M. de Saint-Luc is tall and dark. I believe he is considered handsome. I have not asked his age, but he is not a very young man," she answered. "Do you have a great deal of rain here in winter?"

The Miss Ashleys, upon comparing notes later in the day, agreed that their French cousin was extremely reserved, and not over and above friendly.

Broadridge is a tiny, old-fashioned village which has preserved much of the picturesqueness of a by-gone day, chiefly by reason of the æsthetic proclivities of the lord of the manor, to whom the desolating inroads of modern sanitary reform have ever been as a red rag to a bull. Drainage is all very well, he says; and he has nothing to urge against cleanliness, except that he does not believe in the possibility of enforcing it; but he protests against the removal of thatched roofs and diamond-paned windows; and any cottager who takes it into his head to tear down creepers, upon the plea that his dwelling needs more light, may count upon being entered in Mr. Barrington's black books. Externally, therefore, the village leaves little to be desired. Jeanne was enchanted with it.

"What a lovely little place!" she exclaimed. "The labourers in England cannot be so badly off as people pretend, if they all have such homes as these to live in."

"Yes, it is rather pretty, in a way," acquiesced Helen, dubiously; "but it is a dull, sleepy little hole. There is only one shop in it, and they keep nothing there except string and tallow-candles and brandy-balls, and things of that kind, which nobody can want. We can't get so much as a bit of ribbon or a hair-pin nearer than Westerham; it is very inconvenient."

"But it would be much worse to have a common, ugly town at your gates," said Jeanne.

"That is what Mr. Barrington always tells us," remarked Blanche. Whereupon Jeanne began to speak of something else. She might have spared herself the trouble; for as for excluding Barrington's name from the conversation, it would have been as easy to exclude one of the parts of speech. His sayings and doings, his feats, his fancies and his jokes, formed themes for perpetual comment and admiration—not upon this occasion only, but every day and all day; and Mr. and Mrs. Ashley were not less prone to expatiate upon them than their daughters. No sooner did one member of the family desist from singing the praises of this fortunate gentleman, than another was sure to take up the strain, insomuch that even Jeanne used occasionally to wish that they would discuss somebody else for a little. Not, indeed, that she was weary of the subject itself, but that there was a certain sense of proprietorship in their treatment of it which annoyed her, though she hardly knew why. Miss Barrington, devoted though she was to her nephew, used to say that, after spending a week at Holmhurst, she could have borne with equanimity, not to say pleasure, to see Harry ducked in the village horsepond.

"You, who know my nephew, must be rather amused at the way in which he is spoken of here," she remarked, one day, to Jeanne. "I often wonder what sort of monster a man such as they describe would be. Three grains of Marcus Aurelius to three of Shakspeare, six of Solomon and two of the infant Samuel, with a dash of Joe Miller, by way of flavouring. The whole to be well shaken, and swallowed with closed eyes. What a nauseous draught! Unprejudiced people, like yourself, for instance, are aware that the poor man has done nothing to be so travestied, but is in reality a very pleasant sort of fellow, with considerably more of the goose than of the swan in his composition."

Jeanne answered, not very truthfully, that she had hardly known Mr. Barrington well enough to have been able to form a judgment of his character, but that no doubt he had as many faults as other people. She would have given a good deal to have been able to question Miss

Barrington as to the real state of his relations with Helen Ashley, but pride kept her silent, and the old lady did not volunteer any information.

When Jeanne had been long enough at Holmhurst to have become accustomed to its daily ways, and had so far taken her place as part and parcel of the establishment that she was allowed to employ her time much as she liked, that her aunt and cousins no longer thought it necessary to provide amusement for her, and that Mr. Ashley had given up opening the door for her when she left the room—when, I say, our heroine had been about a week under her uncle's roof, it occurred to her, one misty, chilly afternoon, that she would like to walk across the park, and take a look at Mr. Barrington's home. There was nothing to prevent her from gratifying her curiosity, for only a park paling divided the modest Holmhurst property from its more pretentious neighbour, and this paling was crossed, at a point that Jeanne knew of, by a stile, beyond which a faintly-marked footpath stretched away, across the undulating expanse, till it lost itself in a belt of trees. The girls had more than once offered to walk with Jeanne along this path, which, they said, led past the windows of Broadridge Court, and over which, as being a short cut to many places, they and their friends enjoyed, by courtesy, a right of way; but she had hitherto excused herself from any such expedition, having a foolish repugnance to making her first acquaintance with the place in Helen's company. Now, however, all the other inmates of the house had gone out on different errands, and the occasion appeared favourable to her for a long ramble, with no other society than that of the faithful Turco and of her own thoughts.

It was one of those still, grey days of early winter, the peculiar property of our climate, which to some people are unspeakably depressing, but move others with a certain charm of peaceful melancholy. In the morning a heavy mist had hung over all the country; but this had partially cleared off now, leaving only drops of moisture upon every blade of grass and bare twig. The outline of the chalk hills in the distance was blurred and faint; but here and there, upon the ploughed fields and pasture lands which trended upwards towards them, fell a glint of pale light, testifying that somewhere, far above layers upon layers of woolly clouds, the sun was shining. The last yellow leaves of the year were dropping from the oaks and elms, and came fluttering to the ground, one by one, as Jeanne passed on her way beneath the branches. The heavy, humid air was motionless and silent—so silent that Jeanne, as she walked, could hear distinctly the tramp, tramp of a man's footsteps on the further side of the paling. She paused for an instant, as the sound became louder and nearer, and half thought of turning back, for she did not wish to meet any one; but remembering that, whoever the pedestrian might be, he could hardly be of her acquaintance, she resumed her march, and was within a couple of yards of the stile at the moment when Barrington, reaching it from the other side, dropped his arms upon its topmost rail, and so stood face to face with her.

For once, it was Jeanne who was the less self-possessed of the two. A low involuntary cry escaped her, and she felt herself trembling from head to foot.

Barrington started and flushed a little, but recovered himself instantly. He took off his hat, smiled, and said, "How do you do?" in such an easy, matter-of-course tone that a far less proud person than Mademoiselle de Mersac must have been stung into emulating his *sang-froid*.

She drew nearer to him at once, held out her hand, and answered, "How do you do? You startled me by appearing so suddenly. You are the last person in the world whom I should have expected to meet."

"Well, I live here, you know," observed Barrington.

"Yes, but I thought you were away."

"I came back last night," he said.

"Oh."

A long pause. The situation was becoming a trifle ludicrous. Jeanne, who habitually looked at things in their truer and more serious aspect, and was, in a manner, above noticing small absurdities, was conscious only of the tumult of mingled love and joy, and pain and bitter humiliation, which was swelling within her, and of the necessity for keeping any of these emotions from showing itself in her face; but Barrington, though he, on his side, was experiencing much the same sensations in a somewhat less degree, and had never in his life felt more indisposed towards real mirth, was yet alive to the comic element which lurks in almost every conceivable human position, and, upon the faintest provocation, would have burst out laughing.

Happily, he was preserved from thus disgracing himself. Jeanne broke the silence at last, and spoke with so successful an assumption of calm friendliness that she drove a pin into his self-love; and in pangs of that description Mr. Barrington had never, from his childhood, been able to see anything laughable.

"I am very glad to meet you again," said she. "I was afraid that perhaps you would not return before I had gone away. Have you been quite well since you left Algiers?"

"I have been tolerably well, thank you," answered Barrington, making the admission with some reluctance. In truth, he was the picture of health, as he always was.

"You were going to walk through the park?" he resumed presently. "Perhaps you will allow me to act as guide to you."

Jeanne would have liked to say that she had walked far enough, and must return home; but fearing the construction that he might place upon such a speech, answered simply, "Thank you, if you will be so kind;" and, stepping over the stile, allowed her finger-tips to rest for a moment upon the hand which Barrington held out to help her across.

They paced silently side by side for a few minutes over the fallen leaves. Then Barrington remarked, "It is so strange to see you in England!"

"You did not seem much surprised to see me," said Jeanne.

"No, because I knew you were here."

"Did you? Ah, through Miss Barrington, I suppose. I don't think she expected you home quite so soon as this."

"I did not myself expect to be home before Christmas, if then. I was staying with some people in the Midlands when I got my aunt's letter, and the next day I made a start southwards."

The inference was obvious, but Jeanne ignored it; indeed, she could scarcely have done otherwise.

"I am not at all disappointed in England," she observed, just by way of steering the conversation into a less difficult channel.

"Are you not? And yet most people would tell you that you could hardly have chosen a worse time of year for seeing the country. For my own part, I rather like the fall of the leaf. There is a subdued softness of colouring about our rainy landscapes at this season which you don't meet with anywhere else; and sometimes one gets some wonderful cloud effects towards sunset. Besides, when one always feels sad oneself, there is a sort of pleasure in seeing Nature sad too."

Barrington sighed as he spoke, and looked dismal enough. Jeanne, glancing at him for a moment, believed, with a pang that was not altogether painful, that the man was really unhappy. As, indeed, why should she not, seeing that, at the time, he sincerely believed it himself. It is not given to every one—perhaps, if the truth were known, it is given only to a very few—to realise what love and hate, joy and sorrow, are. Men, like Barrington, who are in the habit of analysing their emotions, and dwelling upon them with a certain satisfaction, usually feel less deeply than their neighbours, though, of course, they would be the last to acknowledge it. He thought he loved Jeanne de Mersac as dearly as ever man had loved woman since the world began; he did, in fact, love her with all the warmth of which his nature was capable, and it was not his fault if he could do no more.

"I am sorry that you feel sad," said Jeanne, hurriedly. Then, fearing to continue the subject, she added, almost in the same breath, "I have never seen your house yet. Is that it, beyond the trees?"

"Yes, that's the house," answered Barrington. "You will see it better presently. It isn't much to look at now-a-days. Once upon a time—three centuries ago, or thereabouts—it must have been a fine place; but it has had many owners, and a deal of rough treatment; and now nobody would imagine, from the appearance of it, that it dates from the reign of Queen Elizabeth. First one wing of it was burnt down, and never rebuilt—that was in the beginning of the last century. Then the Barrington of those days—being, I should imagine, under the influence of drink—took it into his head to knock out all the old mullioned windows, and replace them by the hideous oblong apertures that you see. His successor, not wishing to be outdone in originality, added a Greek portico with six massive stuccoed pillars to the building. That you do not see, because I have made so bold as to remove it. I am not sure whether my grandfather made matters better or worse by throwing out those two bays. They must have looked frightful at first, but now that the colour of the brick has toned down and that the creepers have covered them, they are not altogether objectionable; and, of course, so far as the interior is concerned, they are an improvement."

"I think it is a beautiful old house," said Jeanne. And so, indeed, thought most people, Barrington among the rest. He affected, however, to have but a poor opinion of it, as being his own.

"Old it is—at least, rather old," he said; "but it is hardly to be called beautiful. I am fond of it myself, but that has nothing to do with its intrinsic merits. Even looked at from without, there is not much to be said for it; and when you have inspected the inside, as I hope you will do some day, you will probably agree with me that it is too hideous for anything. Do you remember my telling you about it, one day, in Algiers?"

"Yes," said Jeanne, "I remember."

"How I wish those days could come back!" sighed Barrington. "I little thought then——"

He broke off to give Jeanne the opportunity of inquiring what it was that had been so far from his thoughts; but as she did not see fit to gratify him in this way, he was fain to resume—

"It is just as well that one can never in the least guess what the future is likely to be. If I had known then under what circumstances I was to meet you in England, I should certainly never have wished for the opportunity of showing you my poor house."

"Nor should I have wished to see it," said Jeanne.

"You did wish to see it, then, at the time?"

"I thought I should like it; but I was not so anxious for the pleasure that I should have desired it if I had known that I should only come to England because of our dear Madame de Breuil's death and of this miserable war."

"Oh, the war; I wasn't thinking of the war," said Barrington, rather chapfallen.

"No?"

"No, I was thinking of—well, you know I told you plainly in my letter what my feeling was about your engagement."

"What do you call *roses trémières* in English?" asked Jeanne, pausing before a fine specimen of that flower, for they had now passed through a wicket-gate, and were in the old-fashioned garden which surrounds Broadridge Court.

"I'm sure I don't know—that is, of course, I do know—hollyhocks. And I apologise for having ventured to speak as if I were one of your friends," answered Barrington, with his nose very much in the air.

"You said once that you wished me to consider you as my friend, and I have always done so," returned Jeanne, gravely; "but there are many things that it is best not to talk of, even to one's friends."

"If friendship means anything at all," said Barrington, decidedly, and a little sulkily, "it means confidence."

"And what," inquired Jeanne, "do you wish me to confide to you?"

This query implied rather more than Barrington was prepared to reveal, upon the spur of the moment. He assumed a less injured air, however, and answered—

"Well, for one thing, I wish to know when you are to be married?"

"There is no date fixed," replied Jeanne, with perfect composure. "How could there be, when everything is so uncertain? But I suppose my marriage will take place soon after peace is signed, if it ever——"

"If it ever *what?*"

"I was going to say, if it ever takes place at all. You must understand that, in these times, it is not possible to feel quite sure about anything."

"Would you feel happier if you were sure?" asked Barrington, wheeling suddenly round, and looking her full in the face.

A natural shade of resentment, called forth by this unwarrantable persecution, enabled Jeanne to respond with the greater appearance of indifference.

"If I were not satisfied," said she, "I should scarcely be inclined to talk about it. Unless you have some more questions to ask, I will say good-bye now, for it is getting late."

"Won't you come into the house?" asked Barrington, imploringly.

"Some other time, if you will allow me. It is too late now."

"I have not offended you, have I?"

"Not in the least. I am not easily offended. But I do not like being out after dark, and it is so cold and damp this evening. Good-bye."

"Good-bye," said Barrington, taking off his hat, and holding the gate open for her.

He did not offer to escort her across the park, but stood looking after her receding figure till it was lost in the gathering gloom. Then he went straight into the house and into his luxurious study, where a gentleman in a brown velveteen coat and muddy gaiters was dozing before the fire.

"Leigh, old man," said he, "it is all over with me. I have seen her again."

"Oh, have you?"

"I have; and, what's more, I mean to marry her."

"Oh, do you?"

"Yes, I do."

"And what about t'other girl?"

"You have a disgustingly vulgar way of putting things, Leigh. I have never proposed to 't'other girl,' as you call her, and I never shall."

"I wish to goodness," said Mr. Leigh, getting up and stretching himself, "that you would propose to them both, and that they would both refuse you. It would do you all the good in the world."

CHAPTER XXX.

JEANNE GAINS A NEW FRIEND.

MR. ASHLEY, returning home late from hunting, found a note awaiting him, which he carried down with him to the library, before dinner, and held in his hand as he stood in his favourite attitude upon the hearth-rug.

"Here's a bit of news for you a'l," said he, tapping the open sheet with his blunt forefinger; "Barrington's back."

Each member of his small audience, except Jeanne, promptly responded, "Oh!" The latter, in the course of her recent studies of the English language, as spoken in the land of its origin, had already had occasion to notice the important part played by this compendious monosyllable in our conversation, and the infinity of meanings which, by variety of inflection, it can be made to bear.

"Came back last night, he tells me," Mr. Ashley went on; "and he says, if we'll have him, he should like to come up and dine to-morrow night, so as to have a talk with me about those dogs, you know. Of course we shall be very pleased to see him, and I've written to tell him to bring a friend he has staying with him too. Only, you know," continued the practical Mr. Ashley, "it isn't much use his coming up to look at the pups at that time of night. Odd that he should have chosen such an hour."

"Very," said Miss Barrington, drily.

Helen looked conscious, Blanche laughed, and a gradual smile dawned upon Mr. Ashley's lips, and spread itself over his bucolic features. These good people thought they knew pretty well what had induced Mr. Barrington to offer himself as their guest; and Jeanne, perceiving their thoughts, felt a sudden, sharp pang, of which she was so ashamed that she hastened to stifle it under a forced access of high spirits. She talked a great deal more than usual throughout the evening, and made a point of laughing heartily at her uncle's ponderous jokes, insomuch that Miss Barrington, for one, immediately detected the spurious nature of her gaiety, and began to wonder what it might be intended to conceal.

In truth, Jeanne, reserved and self-possessed though she was, was no great adept in the art of concealment. It had never been her habit to practise small social hypocrisies, and probably no amount of training would ever have made her into anything but a deplorable actress. But if simulated emotion were not one of her strong points, she had, by way of counterpoise, a fine supply of natural composure wherewith to clothe that which she really felt; and of this fact Mr. Barrington was somewhat painfully reminded when he made his entrance, on the following evening, at the dinner-hour.

He had driven his old friend and schoolfellow, Leigh, over from Broadridge in a dog-cart, and had beguiled the way by descanting upon the awkwardness and difficulty of his position—he being, as he alleged, desperately in love with one of the ladies whom he was about to meet, while he more than hinted that another was no less desperately enamoured of himself. He had even gone so far as to express some contrition for his past conduct towards the latter, and to blame himself for having excited hopes which could now never be realised.

"I really am a most unfortunate beggar," he had sighed. "I suppose it is my confounded impulsiveness that is always getting me into trouble. How I am to escape from this house to-night without putting my foot into it somehow, is more than I can imagine."

Whereupon Mr. Leigh had replied by pertinently inquiring why the deuce he was going there then.

And now, behold, not only did Mademoiselle de Mersac, after a few words of friendly, unembarrassed greeting, turn away to listen to Mrs. Ashley's rambling account of the village clothing-club, but even Helen, being moved by some impulse of coquetry or curiosity, must needs devote her small conversational powers to the entertainment of the stranger; so that the irresistible Barrington had to fall back, with as good a grace as might be, upon his Aunt Susan.

That lady made things pleasant for him by asking what had brought him home a good three weeks before his time; and getting no satisfactory answer to this question, went on to remark, in a loud and resolute voice, that it wasn't the slightest use trying to hoodwink *her*, and that when people were so very mysterious about their movements, one might be tolerably sure, as a general thing, that they had something to be ashamed of.

"I have always a great deal to be ashamed of," Barrington answered. To which his aunt rejoined, tartly, "So I should think."

Barrington, who did not consider himself rich enough to be able to view with indifference the opinions of a well-dowered maiden aunt, felt that he was not beginning the evening happily.

Nor were the Fates any kinder to him at the dinner-table. It was in the natural course of things that he should be placed next to his hostess; but what he had not bargained for was that Helen should occupy the seat upon his other hand, and that Jeanne, upon the opposite side of the table, should be monopolised by Mr. Leigh, with whom—to use that favoured gentleman's own phrase—she "got on like a house on fire."

Mr. Leigh was a good-natured, well-to-do bachelor, living, for the most part, in clubs and among men, yet not insensible to the charms of female loveliness when chance threw such blessings in his path; a man with a large acquaintance and many friends, with good looks, good health, a fair amount of information, and a sufficiency of small talk. He amused Jeanne, and took some pains to achieve this result, for he had been much struck by the attractiveness of her person and carriage. Barrington was not jealous of his friend. He knew that Leigh was not a marrying man, and was, besides, too self-satisfied—or, as he would have put it, too philosophical—to give way easily to such a weakness. At the same time, he had not come to Holmhurst that evening to introduce Jeanne to a new acquaintance; and so it fell out that he gave some offence to his right-hand neighbour by an unusual taciturnity and absence of mind. As for Mrs. Ashley, who sat on his left, she was not accustomed to being either answered or listened to, and did not, therefore, notice anything strange in the manner of her prospective son-in-law.

But, of course, in due time Barrington got the opportunity he desired. Later in the evening, after the ladies had withdrawn, he slipped away from the dining-table, over which Mr. Ashley and Leigh, assisted by memory and imagination, were complacently hunting every county in England, and entering the drawing-room simultaneously with the butler and the tea-tray, steered straight for the sofa where Jeanne was seated alone. He had based his calculations upon a long experience of the changeless customs of Holmhurst, and these were fully justified by the event. Helen and Blanche were at the grand-piano, producing subdued discord; Aunt Susan was bending over her tatting and warming her toes before the fire; and Mrs. Ashley, with her cap hanging by a single hair-pin, was nodding drowsily over the advertisement sheet of the *Times*, keeping up a dropping fire of inaudible comments the while upon the family events recorded therein. The Holmhurst drawing-room has no lack of space, and Jeanne was, for all needful purposes, alone in it.

"At last!" ejaculated Barrington, with a sigh of satisfaction, as he sank down upon the cushions beside her.

Very likely the words may have found an echo in Jeanne's heart; but, if so, they remained there, and did not rise to her lips.

"You do not follow the English habit of drinking wine after your dinner?" said she, inquiringly.

"As a general thing, I do," answered Barrington. "It is a very agreeable and sensible sort of habit, I think; only there are occasions, every now and then, when one may employ one's time even more agreeably by abandoning it."

Jeanne smiled. She had made up her mind to avoid Mr. Barrington; but it was impossible for her to carry out her resolution at this moment without making it more apparent than she desired to do; and why, she thought, should she not enjoy the happiness of sitting beside him and hearing his voice, since the situation was none of her seeking?

"Have you been painting a great deal since I saw you last?" she asked.

"No; scarcely at all," answered Barrington. "For a long time I could not bear the sight of paint or brushes, because they reminded me so of Algiers; and then, when I did take them up again, I hadn't the patience to finish anything I had begun."

"You were always a little impatient, I think," observed Jeanne.

"*Do* you?" returned Barrington, wonderingly. "Well now, that is really a very odd thing. I don't think I ever was told before that I was impatient. On the contrary, I have always been considered so particularly even-tempered and easy-going. When could I have shown any signs of impatience before you, I wonder?"

"I dare say I could give you several instances if I were to think about it," answered Jeanne, laughing. "Have you forgotten that evening at Fort Napoléon, when you were so very much annoyed because I kept you sitting out in front of the hotel for half-an-hour?"

"Excuse me, it was not half-an-hour, but a good two hours. And being kept waiting did not annoy me in the least—if I was annoyed. Oh, dear me! what a long time ago it seems!"

"Yes, a long time."

"How I wish those days were back again! How I wish I had not left Algiers when I did! I found my sister perfectly well, by-the-bye, when I reached London. That is to say, that I didn't find her at all, because she had gone off to Brighton for change of air. They galvanised her, or electrified her, or something, and she hopped out of bed as brisk as a bee."

"You must have been very glad."

"Glad? Well, yes, of course one was glad in one way; but it was rather exasperating to have been dragged, post-haste, all the way from Africa for no reason at all. And do you know," continued Barrington, lowering his voice, and speaking more gravely, "I can't help thinking sometimes that, if I had remained in Algiers, things might have turned out differently?"

"What things?" Jeanne asked. But she knew very well what he meant.

Barrington paused: he was always pausing at critical moments. And just now his pause happened to coincide with a general silence, for Helen had either reached the end of her stock of ballads, or did not care about wasting her voice upon so unappreciative an audience; or it may well be that the spectacle of her cousin's prolonged *tête-à-tête* with Mr. Barrington was not quite an agreeable one to her. She glanced across the room at the pair—at Jeanne, in her black dress, reclining in a corner of the sofa, and fanning herself gently—at Barrington, with his elbows resting on his knees, and his chin on his hands, looking eagerly into his companion's face—Helen, I say, glanced at this *tableau*, and her pink cheeks became pinker, and a flash shot from her pale blue eyes, and she slammed down the piano with a noise that made Miss Barrington start round in her chair.

"My dear child," said the old lady, reprovingly, "if you particularly wish to see me jump out of my skin, by all means get a paper bag, and blow it out, and bang it close to my ear; but don't destroy your father's property."

"I beg your pardon," said poor Helen, meekly. And then the two gentlemen came in from the dining-room, and Mrs. Ashley woke up and felt for her cap.

Leigh, one of the most good-natured of men, took in the situation at a glance, and advancing towards the two daughters of the house, began doing his best to entertain them. But, in spite of this considerate conduct on the part of his friend, Barrington's chance for that evening was lost. Mr. Ashley, in high good humour after his dinner and his bottle of claret, thought fit to plant himself directly in front of his niece.

"Why, Jane," cried he, "what's all this I hear of you from Barrington? He tells me you are one of the best horsewomen he ever saw. God bless my soul! why didn't you say so before? I could have given you a mount, and introduced you to fox-hunting, the finest sport in the whole world, and I don't care who denies it! My girls, you see, are not much use in the saddle, so I haven't got what you could call a regular lady's horse in my stable; but if you think you could manage one of mine——"

"Mademoiselle de Mersac could manage any horse," said Barrington. "She has broken in many an Arab colt before now, and that is more than some men whom I know could do."

"You don't tell me so!" exclaimed Mr. Ashley, much impressed. "Well, there's the Mammoth, she might have him."

"The Mammoth wouldn't do at all," said Barrington, decisively. "I don't mean to say that Mademoiselle de Mersac couldn't ride him, but he pulls like a steam-engine, and he has the paces of a dray-horse—begging your pardon, Mr. Ashley. No; what I was thinking of was that little chestnut mare of mine. She is fretful and fidgety with a man on her back, but a lady, with a light hand, could do anything with her."

Mr. Ashley looked grave. "We mustn't break Jane's neck," he said. "That mare of yours wants riding, Barrington."

"Exactly so," replied Barrington, "and Mademoiselle de Mersac can ride. Otherwise, you may be sure, that I should never have proposed such a mount to her. I wish you would do me the honour to try the mare," he continued, turning to Jeanne.

"Well, if you think it's all right, Barrington, I don't know why she shouldn't. It'll be something for you to tell your French friends, Jane, that you have ridden to hounds in England," said Mr. Ashley, who really felt that the distinction thus earned would be no slight one.

"I should like a ride very much, but I would rather not hunt," answered Jeanne, being in some uncertainty as to how far ladies were permitted to dispense with a chaperon in England.

"You'll be as safe on the mare as you are on this sofa," said Barrington, misinterpreting her reluctance.

"*I'll* take care of you," added Mr. Ashley, reassuringly.

And then Leigh, who had basely deserted his post to listen to the discussion, chimed in with, "Do come, mademoiselle."

All this was rather hard upon Helen, who did not hunt, and who had hitherto been accustomed to receive the ready homage of all male visitors to Holmhurst. Possibly Jeanne may have noticed the gathering clouds upon her cousin's brow; at all events she rose from her sofa, and saying, "Thank you, but I do not wish it," crossed the room, and seated herself beside Miss Barrington.

Miss Barrington's sharp black eyes rested upon her neighbour with a look of admiration not unmingled with respect. This wrinkled old woman, who had been beautiful once, and might have married well over and over again had she been so minded, liked nothing better than to see men, as she said, "kept in their proper place." The girls of the present day, she often complained, had neither the power nor the will to do this, seeking husbands instead of allowing themselves to be sought, and thereby utterly failing in their duty to their sex. So, when Jeanne, in her cool, imperial manner, said, "I do not wish it," Miss Barrington's heart warmed to her.

There are so many ways of saying "I do not wish it." The words, which, coming from most people, would have sounded ungracious, and from many simply ridiculous, did not appear either the one or the other as they fell from Jeanne's lips, which were curved into a faint, grave smile as she spoke. She had not the slightest intention of putting anyone in his proper place, but was merely expressing her determination in her customary unambiguous way; and so she was understood by the three men, who made no attempt to pursue the subject further. Upon Miss Barrington's mind, however, the little scene produced a more lasting impression. From that hour Jeanne became to her an interesting study, and she resolved to see more of this strange girl, who seemed to find as much attraction in the vicinity of an old lady as in that of two wealthy and handsome young men.

"Good-night. I think, when we know each other better, we shall be very good friends," she said to Jeanne, rather to the latter's wonderment, after Barrington and Leigh had taken their departure, and the usual ceremony of family prayers had been gone through, and Mr. Ashley was yawning loudly.

It was thus that Jeanne gained a friend who was destined to exercise some little influence upon the future course of her life. Miss Barrington plumed herself upon being a woman of the world. In her youth she had been a beauty; afterwards, when her good looks had faded away, she had become an heiress; and she had seen a great deal of men and women, and had long since, so she said, discovered what the human race was worth. She did not expect much of her fellow-creatures, she would often aver—certainly nothing resembling chivalry or heroism—no, nor even common honesty. In reality, however, she was far from holding the opinions she laid claim to, but was a shrewd, kind-hearted, impulsive old soul, who was often swindled and often deceived, who was full of strong likings and antipathies, who was prone to form sudden prejudices and fancies, and tenacious of them when formed. She had taken a fancy now to this beautiful, stately French girl, and thenceforth she seized every opportunity of drawing her out, and endeavouring to discover her tastes and habits.

Jeanne, for her part, was always willing to spend half an hour or so in listening to the chat of the old lady, whom she liked because she was so quaint, so original and plain-spoken, so very unlike the Ashleys. Or was it, perhaps, in some degree because her name was Barrington, and because she was the aunt of her nephew?

Life in Brittany.

I AM not a traveller or a tourist, but a resident, and I don't sit down to write an article, a journal, or a book; I only feel that I must give expression to my feelings, and therefore I talk on paper.

This life is still new to me; it possesses all the attractions of surprise. The day will come when I shall find it difficult to describe common things around me, because they will appear so common that they will seem to be unworthy of notice. Yet, after all, these common things make up life; and it is precisely these common things which English people want to know, so I write them down while I can appreciate and realise them.

I cannot see the sea as I write, because my window looks into the garden, and at the end of the garden there is an artificial bank with a raised walk on the top of it, constructed partly to keep back the waves at high tides, and partly for the sake of the walk, which (placed on the top) gives a good view of the sea. But I am so near to the sea that, whenever I like I open the garden-door, and emerge ready for a plunge into it; only I look out for tides, because at low water there is a quarter of a mile of mud between me and the briny deep. When the tide comes in, it not only covers the mud but runs up over the beautiful sand which lies outside my garden-gate, where like a merman I can roll and bask and comb my hair (by-the-bye, I doubt whether there ever were any mer-*mans*, and whether they ever had long hair, but let that pass). Mine is an inner bay; outside roll the waves of the Bay of Biscay. My sea "*à moi*," borders on a "*parc aux huîtres*," or (as it is written on the boards which mark its boundaries), "*parc à huitres*," belonging to the French Government, which is kept up as a feeder for all the rivers, estuaries, and other possible spots where oysters can be sown by a paternal government.

I went to inspect this "*parc* " a day or two ago, and now consider myself quite learned in the matter of oysters, so I will put down what I learned. Of course I saw it at low water, for the whole affair is down in the deep at high water.

First there are a series of walls about two feet high and eighteen inches broad, which appear to be constructed to keep the peace among the oysters, or in other words to prevent currents and storms disturbing their tranquil lives. Inside these walls are a series of little houses, constructed rapidly, by putting together—much as soldiers stack their muskets—half-a-dozen rather narrow tiles thickly covered with lime.

These tiles receive the milk or spat of the older oysters, which, adhering to them, remains and grows into the oysters which some day are to be carried away as seed, or as future mothers in a future bed. I saw oysters at all stages of their growth; tiny little specks of this year, babies a year old, young people of two years, and others ready for eating or deporting, of three, four, and five years' growth. As a rule, they are not eaten until they are three years old, but dredgers would not reject those of two years, although at that age they would be small. Oysters are quiet people, and only ask to be left alone. They never move from the spot upon which they are deposited, yet like all other quiet people they have very unquiet enemies, which not only disturb their lives, but even destroy them. One of these enemies is sought for with great eagerness by the guardian of the "*parc*," as it is most deadly, and devastates his beds. It is a small whelk (called luskina Bigourneau) in a spiral shell, which fastens on and bores a hole through the shell until it reaches the oyster, upon which it feeds until there is no more oyster left. I saw many of the shells of the unfortunates which had been thus penetrated and devoured, and I saw several of the little whelks which had killed them. They did not appear to possess any weapons, or to be anything but little innocents; such is the deceptive character of the outside appearance both of men and fishes.

Some fifty or eighty women work daily at low tide amongst these oysters, yet the bed is not well cultivated. It yields a profit, if you calculate the market value of the oysters exported, but it would yield a far larger profit if properly worked, as doubtless it would be worked by a private individual; by which it appears that governmental control is not always the most profitable.

Now come inside my garden. First look at my pleasure-garden. It is elaborately laid out with lawns and fountains and beds, but like all other ideal plans, it has yielded to the necessities of actual French life. The lawns have been utilised for the growth of hay for the horses and cows. The fountain was once supplied by a cistern on the roof of the kitchen, but it leaked and made the house damp, so it was removed, and the pipes, taps, and empty fountain give an expression to an idea rather than a reality. All round the fountain are beds with pear-trees as sentinels, looking continually into the empty reservoir. Pear and apple-trees stand also marshalled round all the walks, and flowers grow in happy disorder, sometimes in the beds, sometimes in the paths; while the strawberries have crept up into the lawns and sprinkle the hay for the horses and cows.

It is, perhaps, difficult to understand the plan of this my flower-garden, but it is like a courtyard of an ancient castle enclosed within an earthern rampart upon which there is a broad walk.

My kitchen-garden is very large indeed, and contains such a wealth of strawberries and asparagus as I have never before beheld. Day after day we send twenty-five or thirty pounds' weight to market, and yet we eat them ourselves all day long, and give them in great quantities to our neighbours. I could linger long over these gardens, but, as I want to keep you in good humour, so that you may love this Brittany of ours with its picturesque scenery and still more picturesque inhabitants, I pass on.

A few days ago, under press of circumstances, and because I could not secure our regular marketer, I sent my *garçon* Thoma to the city ten miles away with a large basket of strawberries for sale. He left here about four o'clock in the morning, arrived at the town before the market-hour, sold his strawberries, and ought to have been back here about 10 A.M. Instead of which, Thoma, who is a sailor and jack-of-all-trades, who wears a sort of sailor's guernsey and talks a *patois* between French and Breton, got into temptation and fell.

Drink did it all. Drink lays low the greater part of our poor Bretons. One sees more people helplessly drunk or maudlin drunk here far away from towns in these rural abodes, than even in England; only they are for the most part quiet: they neither swear nor fight.

Poor Thoma kicked quite over the traces. Perhaps he had felt too much of the Englishman's yoke; perhaps he had done enough work for a month or more. At any rate, he drank, then engaged himself to marry a dirty little ugly woman who did his washing (that is, when he did not do it himself), and finally he bolted with all my strawberry money, and I have not seen him since. I am grieved, not on account of the money, for I owed him as much in wages, but because, now my poor Thoma is gone, I have no sailor for my boat, no one so utterly droll, or so beautifully picturesque to look at and laugh. For Thoma was the most slippery sailor, the most idle fellow in the world. He never did half-a-day's work while I had him. He waited till my back was turned and then left spade, vessel, rope, or barrow without attempting even to put tools away. Only in one way was he ever working happily, and that was the way he knew was wrong. Under such circumstances he would display an energy worthy of a better cause. Once he went with me to buy a little pleasure yacht, but before meeting the owner he agreed with me that he would only give his opinion in sly winks. We went on board with the owner, who pointed out the various good points of his vessel, constantly appealing to Thoma for confirmation and always being backed up by my *garçon*, but when the owner for an instant turned his back, Thoma screwed up his face into all sorts of contortions and managed to convey to me his disapproval of the purchase.

Our other servant is also an experiment, and a failure. The servant difficulty not only exists here as elsewhere, but it is aggravated by the independence of the people and their exceedingly dirty habits. Very few country girls care to go out to service, in fact, scarcely any at all. Here in the country we are driven into the towns for servants. The women work on the land as hard or harder than the men; moreover, they prefer their independent life to service; they like better to dig, or hoe, or weed, or get together the seaweed for manure, in dirty clothes and sabots, than to submit to the neatness and respectability of domestic life.

They are also in demand for wives. The peasants marry when mere boys, without any apparent means of living, trusting to Providence, and at worst content with black rye bread and a lick of greasy soup. Our Jacquette is a "*jeune fille*," which is the French euphemistic expression for an old maid. She will never see fifty-five again, if she be not quite sixty; yet, when I asked if she were "*veuve*," I was told she is a "*jeune fille*." She is honest as daylight, which is more than I can say for most Bretons, who are pilferers, not robbers, at least in these parts. She is economical to a fault; wastes nothing, almost eats nothing; keeps the men on soup made of greasy water and bits of bread, and puts even water used in cooking into the universal soup. Yesterday she sent in the peas with a lot of green-looking water, which one of our party, disliking, took into the kitchen to pour away; Jacquette requested as a favour that it might be put into her own particular plate of soup, and it was. But Jacquette never washes, or, if she does wash, she does not conquer her dirt. She is dirty in person and dirty in cooking our food. She is a bad cook, and smokes everything she cooks. She potters about all day, yet does not even keep the rooms clean. Upon the ladies falls almost all the household work. Why then do we keep Jacquette? First and foremost because we cannot get a better; next, because we like her very much for her good qualities; and lastly, because when once we told her to go in a week, the dear old thing was so meek, so patient, so enduring that we almost wept for her, and kept her on. Just now I hear her shrill voice talking to little Marie, the farmer's daughter, in the kitchen. Marie goes just where she likes, and does just what she likes. She is an only child, not three years old. Her little brother Jean died just as we were moving in. Marie is very pretty, but also very dirty. She wanders about in sunshine and storm, early and late, with her father, mother, or grandmother. She pulls up plants, treads down seeds, walks knee-deep in manure; and, no matter how clean she may start, she makes herself into a little pig in half an hour. The ladies make a great pet of Marie, for we have no little ones here. Marie knows her power, talks French, plays at bo-peep with us, has rather an awe of monsieur and his great pipe; but still, even with him, pops round the corner and cries "coocoo." Yesterday, madame was playing with her some time, then turned her out into the garden, shut the door, and went upstairs, thinking all below snug and safe. In an hour or less she went down to her *salon* again, and found Marie seated amidst all her knicknacks and books, which she had removed from the tables on to the floor, and made into a heap of unutterable confusion. Ere a word could be spoken, Marie burst into a scream. She knew that she was naughty, and no reproach could be levelled at her because of her noise. However, she was put out in disgrace, well scolded by Jacquette, and presently came in very prettily to say, "*Pardonnez-moi, madame; pardonnez-moi.*" (Jacquette has just passed my window, in an old close-fitting nightcap, with a patched petticoat and dirty face.)

Marie can look just like a pretty Dutch doll, when she is washed and dressed. She wears long clothes, just like her mother, only longer, with a tight-fitting square skull-cap embroidered with gold. Under such circumstances the little lady is proud enough, I can tell you. She has a droll way too of referring to her dead brother, who was younger than herself. If she does not like her food, she requests that it may be given to Jean. Yesterday she declared that Jean had moved the articles in madame's room. Poor little Jean (if he had lived) would, I fear, have experienced what most younger brothers experience from their elder sisters—a great deal of bullying.

I hear Jean's step; he is going in to dinner; it is twelve o'clock. Poor Jean! he is a dying man. He is in a consumption, and will not live another year. He is one of the best specimens of a Breton farmer; yet hardly a fair specimen, as he speaks French, has been in the army, served in Algeria, got taken prisoner by the Germans, and is most intelligent. He attributes his sickness to ill-treatment in the army, and to German prisons. Really they do treat their soldiers in France in a most brutal way. If such things occurred in England, all the press would ring with them; Parliament would be set aflame, dinner-tables discuss them. This poor fellow (in a galloping decline) is in the territorial reserve, which made it incumbent on him to go to our town, and pass fifteen days in barracks. He is so ill that he got a medical certificate, upon which he relied to get excused, and he was excused, but not until he had spent two days in barracks, almost without food, and sleeping on the floor. He went in on Thursday noon, and never got any food till Friday night; and he says this was so with all the others, and is generally so in the French army. Jean is about thirty years of age, has a nice wife, and little Marie is his daughter. He has land of his own, but lets it, preferring to farm, at a rental of 10*l.* a year, the eight acres which belong to this chateau. All that I have said of Jean will show that I am not anxious to run down the Breton farmer; so now, if I say a little more, you must take it as arising from a great desire to tell you the whole truth about our life in Brittany. Jean is, in two respects, a typical man; a fair representative of his class. He is greedy of money, and he does not mind little acts of dishonesty in order to gain the money he covets. By the nature of his tenancy, he holds half the stables, half the coach-houses, half the various out-buildings. He will now and then make a mistake about the hay, and give some of mine to his own horse; he will, if he can, help himself to a little out of my gardens. When he goes to market for me, he takes something of his own at the same time, so as to 'mix up matters, and make calculation or detection of petty thefts difficult. This I know, because I have several times been to market myself, and always brought home more money than Jean is pleased to give me.

Yvonne, Jean's wife, is a well-built woman, large, muscular, of the Breton type, and fairly good-looking. She is pleasant of speech and can talk French well. She seems to me the nicest person of the family, but time may modify this opinion, and if it does I will let you know. Yvonne works in the fields with her husband, but has special care of the cows, which she takes out in the morning and brings in at night. For these cows she gathers grass, tares, weeds, and varieties of all sorts. She milks, churns, carries the butter to market, and does that part of the farming which is the realisation of all the rest. I say realisation of all the rest, but I mean that it is the end of the machine, out of which comes the fully made coin or cash. Off eight acres of land there can be little of produce to sell; all is consumed by four cows and one horse. Therefore what these four cows produce is the net result of the farm, and it is sufficient to enable Jean, Yvonne, Marie, and a disagreeable mother-in-law to live well, to pay their rent of 10*l.* a year, and to save annually another 10*l.* Living well with a Breton farmer means black-rye bread, galettes of buckwheat flour, "*crêpes*" of buckwheat flour, vegetables, soup with lumps of bread and a skim of grease, and a piece of meat when they kill a pig or go out to a wedding. It seems to agree with them well, as they look healthy and work well, at least when working for themselves.

You know now our household. Come with me next, and let me introduce you to our neighbours. Strictly speaking, neighbours we have none, unless the guardian of the oyster-beds and Jean, and a widow who lives in a hovel at the end of the gardens, are counted as such. But by neighbours one generally means those gentry who live round about; of these I desire to speak now. Monsieur le B—— is young, and a bachelor. He lives in a pretty little house near the village. We pass his house whenever we drive into the town, and whenever we pass it we admire it, because it looks so snug amidst its roses and dahlias (yes, dahlias bloom here in June). Once or twice we met a young man near the gate, who took off his hat, and never replaced it until we had passed. Of course we reciprocated his politeness, although we did not know who he was, until one day he walked up to me and introduced himself as Monsieur le B——, and stated that he had come to me to tell me that the neighbours were rather astonished that I did not call upon them, and had expressed a wish to know us. I thanked him heartily, but told him that it was not the custom in England to call upon people until they had first called upon you; to which he replied that the custom of France was for new comers to call first, which custom he felt it his duty to make known to me as a stranger. He offered also to go with us and introduce us to the houses of those upon whom we ought to call. His offer was accepted, and next day we travelled in company to our next neighbour, who is also the leading member of our society, the Comte de K——, who is married to an American lady. I desire to represent to you these Breton gentlemen exactly as they are, not as romance on the one hand, or ridicule on the other, might paint them. Some people [illegible] the world with an English "bee in their bonnet," nothing pleases them if it differs from the English idea, and yet when in England they are dissatisfied with the English. I am a cosmopolitan, and have lived in divers lands, so I admire what is good and dislike what is bad, without any reference to English customs. Behold, then, Monsieur le Comte de K——. He is in manner a perfect gentleman; in dress careless—not slovenly, but content with a country cut and comfortable clothes. He speaks a few words of English, which he has picked up from his wife, but he says that he cannot understand my accent, being accustomed to the American. He is a busy man; not that he holds any office, but he farms his own land, besides doing a smart business in sardine fishery, and in a sort of carrying trade with vessels of small tonnage. His house is on the sea-shore, so that he can overlook his marine business as well as his farm. It is, when viewed from a distance, picturesque; but when viewed close it is something, as regards repair, like a Turkish building, and that means tumbling down, because the Turks build but never repair. Pleasant, courteous, friendly, is Le Comte. His house is rough in the exterior, and does not possess the ordinary comforts of an English third-rate house within; but the *salon* is spacious and well-furnished. Madame was once a Presbyterian, but has jumped from that denomination into extreme Ultramontanism, in which now she revels both in tongue and person. I fancy she overleaps them all who were "to the manner born," and that she rather bores them, as she most certainly bores me with her fervid vertism. The Comte was one of the officers of the Pope's foreign legion, and was taken prisoner at the siege of Rome, and all our Breton nobles here were in the Pope's army either in Rome or France, so that their loyalty to Ultramontanism may not be questioned, yet madame goes beyond them all. She has, however, fallen into congenial company in her married life—if, indeed, she was converted after marriage, of which fact I am not certain. She is a pleasant lady, with a little family of a rather mongrel character, but, so far as I know, very nice and good. Pray don't think I mean anything disparaging by mongrel, but it is the only word which expresses well a cross-breed. The Count is very fond of sea-fishing, but rarely indulges his taste, because he says he has so much to do. By this you will perceive that he is hardly a fair type of the Breton gentleman, having, as it were, taken to commerce, whereas the others content themselves with the smaller economies, or rather smaller trade of growing things for the market, and turning a penny on their land; for here our gardens are really "market gardens," out of which we take as much as we want, and send the rest to market. We are not ashamed to sell the produce of our gardens, not even the best and highest of us, for we are none of us rich enough here to do the grand seigneur. I must pause in my account of the Breton squires to describe the successor of poor droll Thoma. He is quite as funny as Thoma, and perhaps better—you can't think how I laugh inwardly and outwardly too, sometimes, at this funny little Breton mariner. He is an ancient mariner. His age is perhaps fifty-five; his hair long, and streaming in the wind; his stature about five feet four inches; his face thin; his feet either in sabots or bare; his nose always moist; his hearing hard; his understanding deficient; his pipe a weeny little thing two inches long; his dress Breton. Yesterday was a very windy day, but I would go out in the yacht. Patient Daniel did not approve of attempting to get out of a land and rock enclosed bay with a fierce head wind, but patient Daniel went at the bidding of the fierce Englishman. Patient Daniel suggested two reefs in the mainsail, which were duly tied up, and then he hoisted the sails in a mournful sort of way, as if we were a doomed crew. Up went the anchor with only the jib on her, and round she flew like a top, heading for the shore. We could not bring her about, so up went the mainsail, and then she flew like a gull at the rocks. More than once it looked as if she must strike, but patient Daniel and the fierce Anglais, and a brave lady who was on board, pulled at the ropes, tacked, put out the sweeps, and after two hours of skin-tearing work got out into the open sea. There the wind blew half a gale, and fishing was out of the question; but there Daniel lit up his little pipe, tucked up his little legs, and exposed his little bare feet as he hugged the tiller and luffed at every fierce gust. Mild were Daniel's oaths as the vessel drifted in stays. *Sacré!* and a few muttered words were but a mild "French-soup" edition of the language of the British tar. Now you see Daniel as he was yesterday. As he is to-day you may see him if you will. He has to dig a bit of ground for cabbages, but he won't do it. He finds a hundred other things to do, so as not to do that. I have my eye on him, but it is no good. Just now I went down the garden to have a look, but my bird had flown. It was low water, and yesterday we lost the anchor of the little *canot*, or small rowing boat which we use to get aboard and ashore. So Daniel was out in the sea with bare legs feeling about for it. I was determined to bring him back, so tucked up breeks and went in with him. We found it, of course, with my help, very quickly, and now, while I am writing, Daniel should be at that piece of digging. I will just go out and see, and bring you word when I come back. Not a bit of it. There is not a single spadeful turned, and Daniel is not even in sight. These Bretons are Irish, I am sure—so droll—so lazy.

Our next visit was paid to the Comte de T——, a nobleman of very ancient descent, young, pleasant, with a pretty Norman wife, a sportsman, an ex-pontifical dragoon. His house is new or newish, but the grounds, although extensive, are nothing worth, from an English point of view. The *salon* looks out upon fine level lawns, which, according to our Breton ideas, look better knee-deep in grass, bring more in, and cost less in labour than our English close-cut sward. As for sporting, there is none in summer; so Le Comte de T—— must find it difficult to fill up his time; but I have learned in America that there is a very clever way of *doing nothing very slowly*, so as never to feel tired of doing it, and such is the fashion also here. Certainly the Comte was judge, manager, and everything of a local race or race-meeting not long since, but race-meetings are rare here. After the races the Maire and other local celebrities of the second rank got up a grand wrestling match, for which this part of France is famous. It was held at a large village some four miles away from us. I went of course. On my arrival at the field of battle the fun had commenced. Within an immense circle, in the middle of which were the judges, were two young athletes struggling and tugging one another's vests, as if the grand idea was to denude the adversary. I suppose they struggled for more than half an hour; but, as one of the wrestlers was very agile and stuck his head right into the other man's stomach, thus keeping him far away, there was no fair throw, and they had to be parted without any result. Many times they went down, but nothing counts here except a fair throw upon the flat of the back, so that both shoulder-blades touch the ground. This was not wrestling such as the people delight in, but soon they had their pleasure. A strong tall man jumped into the ring, took the prize out of the judge's hand, and, hat in hand, walked round, defying all present. Another jumped into the ring, threw down his hat as gage of battle, and to it they went with a will, in fact wrestling as it ought to be. Within two minutes there was a close, a springing out of muscles, a toss in the air, and the losing man was lying flat on his back.

A sort of double visit was next paid to an old nobleman and his sons, one residing with him and one at a solitary farm cut out of the native woods. This man is more than "peculiar." He is the product of the soil of France and of the French laws. Monsieur de P——, representative of one of the old French noblesse, did live in the family château, which is no great things, surrounded by his family. His father was brother to one of the bishops of Quimper, and all the family are what they call here "blanc," which means devoted to the priests and the Roman church. There are of course many whose devotion to Rome is purely political or controversial, but such is not the case with Monsieur de P——, nor do I think it is so with his sons.

Monsieur de P—— is a perfect specimen of a perfect French gentleman. His manners are not constrained, but they are perfect. His intellect has been cultivated, and his religion is both simple and fervent. When his family grew up, he parted his property amongst them, so as to give the family seat to the eldest son, without subjecting them or himself to the French laws of subdivision. He must have been rich, for all the family have land. After this act he built a little Canadian shanty upon land which he had given to his youngest son, and now he lives a sort of semi-monastic life with that son. For amusement and profit he has flooded, by means of the tide, his low-lying meadows for the cultivation of fish for the Paris market. These meadows he stocked from the sea, so that now they are held without any need of the introduction of fresh fish, and he says the thing pays fairly well. The tide flows in and out, being regulated by flood-gates. When I called, the old man was at home. He received me as a nobleman, and would not be seated until I had taken the chair of honour, beneath a niche in which was a statue of the Blessed Virgin. The room was small, warmed by a stove, panelled with unpainted wood, and the furniture consisted of a rough table and a few chairs. The conversation was easy, as Monsieur de P—— seemed perfectly acquainted with England as well as other lands, and my hour passed away agreeably enough. When we parted he escorted me to the outer gate bareheaded. I need only add that the sons agree perfectly well in the religious opinions of the father, and that Catholicism assumes in their case its very loveliest type. They yield a willing obedience to all the behests of the Church, yet suffer under no oppression from the clergy; and all this arises because they are content to live in the half-light of intellect, the unquestioning obedience, the willing submission which is possible in an individual or in a family, but which produces either slavery or revolution when imposed upon a nation composed of lively thinkers and logical minds.

Let me now descend in the social scale and describe the Maire of the Commune, or rather his establishment, for I have not yet seen the man himself. To him I paid a visit, without consulting my adviser, who, after taking me to the *élite* of society, did not recommend any further visits. To me, however, it appeared the right thing to take notice of an official who represents the votes of the people amongst whom I desire to reside in peace.

I went on a Sunday afternoon to the wing of an ancient château, which having survived the revolution had been converted into a farm house (*maison bourgeoise*). The outside appearance of this wing is imposing, it looks ancient and spacious; but the inside is small and very inconvenient on account of the extreme narrowness of the building. It is, in fact, only one room deep, which, when one allows for the rooms necessarily devoted to farm purposes and farm servants, leaves but a few rooms at the disposal of the family. The *salon* into which we were shown is also the family bedroom; the bed being placed in an alcove. Madame was at home, gracious, pleasant, and pleased with our attention. She caused some wine and biscuits to be placed before us, and afterwards conducted us through the gardens, which, like the house, have a faded look, being badly kept. Verily there lurks in France some spell which perpetuates divisions of rank despite the most revolutionary laws, despite all that can be said or sung of *liberté, fraternité, et égalité*. This family, this house, these grounds, smell of the ancient noblesse, but they are used humbly as by one who knows that he is not one of them. He is rich, very rich, honoured, sufficiently powerful, but he never presumes to be more than an honest farmer.

One relic of the *good* old times, still preserved in perfect repair in the gardens, tells how absolutely necessary were the great changes of 1792.

It is a "*colombier*," a pigeon-house of gigantic dimensions, as large in fact as a church tower, which would accommodate some thousands of pigeons, which were allowed to devour the crops of the poor tenants in order to garnish the table of the "*seigneur*." I fancy that the more closely you examine the traces of the past, the more you learn of French life present and past, the more you will feel inclined to condone even the atrocities of the Revolution, for surely the only possible way to deliver the peasants from their servility, their hunger, and their terrors, was to tear up and root out the selfish noblesse, which seems to have known no pity and to have fed upon the very vitals of the people. One may detest and abhor Danton Marat, Robespierre, and yet acknowledge that their work has given France a new and vigorous life which without their work it could never have known. I say this because the ideas still cherished by the existing noblesse are so ultramontane, so unsocial, so utterly opposed to all progress, that I feel certain they would go back upon the old paths if they had not been reduced to an impotence which makes them objects of pity rather than centres of reaction.

Curiously enough, the man of all others to justify the Revolution was the Rector of the Parish, upon whom I called alone. He is, I believe—indeed he must be—the very incarnation of Roman theories, being the priest of a society so devoted to the Pope; but, like other frail mortals, he does not always see the full meaning of his own expressions. He was telling me of the additions and repairs which had been effected in the fabric of the church since his coming to the place, and said that the parish used to be served from a monastery at a distance, which sucked up all the parochial revenues and allowed the church to fall into ruins; "but now," said he, "the parish is separated and there is a resident priest, which I believe is the very best thing for any parish. You see," he added, "it had to be separated when there were no parochial funds left, for the Revolution took away all the endowments!" Thus he proved that the Revolution had established a resident ministry and repaired the ecclesiastical buildings.

It was Sunday, also, when I called on the rector, between the services, when I knew I should find him at home. He was seated at dinner with his curate and two young women dressed as simple peasants, to whom he introduced me as his sisters. His history is that of most Breton priests. He is the son of a peasant, was brought up in a seminary, and on getting a parish of his own he brought his father, mother, and sisters to live in the clergy house. The father was a drunkard of the very worst sort, who passed all his time at the village drinking shops, to the scandal of the priest and church, so he had to be put away into a distant village, where he died about a year ago. The mother and sisters still live with the rector. They wear the dress of ordinary peasants, with caps, collars, and all, without any concealment or pretence whatsoever. You will say that it is as it should be, but there is another side to that question, if you will consider it well. Even Madame the Countess de K——, the red-hot convert of whom I have already spoken, says there is one thing against the Roman Church, and that one thing is the priests are not gentlemen. Don't sum up the question with a pshaw! that means that the rector cannot put his legs under the mahogany of the squire and be his companion. It may mean that with the noblesse, but it means something far more serious with the people.

There is a deep-seated dislike to the priests even amongst these superstitious and apparently devout Bretons. What is it founded upon? I asked myself this question—I asked the people themselves, and when I got to the root of the matter, I found it arises from the deep-seated love of money peculiar to the French peasant. This passion for cash is offended, hurt, and roused to opposition by the continual demands of the priests for money. To realise how the matter works, take the case of our rector. He is paid by the government, I believe 1,100 francs, or 44*l.* a year. This 1,100 francs is subject to a deduction for various taxes, national and diocesan, of 300 francs, leaving the stipend of the rector at 36*l.* a year. I admit that he could live on this sum as an anchorite, as one of the peasants, but, however much the clergy may preach the loveliness of poverty, I never yet knew one who courted it for himself. I don't say they ask more than is reasonable, but I do say they ask to live as educated men live, as men live who have acquired by education habits and ideas which separate them from peasant life and from the grossness of the manners and diet of the poor. The rector here does as other rectors, curés, and clergy do, he asks for more. At certain seasons he goes round for his tithes, which are voluntary, and from an unwilling peasantry he collects a decent income. He told me himself that people hated giving and hence hated the priests. I could have told him how bitterly his own people had spoken to me about priests in general and himself in particular, although they said he was a decent man, and had no other fault to find with him but his love of money—a love of money which I found so moderate that I believe his whole income with all these additions does not touch 100*l.* a year. In very fact, he is a nice man, with a pleasant manner, and he works as hard as a peasant at his services, fearing even to go out to sea with me in my boat, lest people should say he was absent from his parish and his duties.

There is also a deep-rooted suspicion of the priests seated in the minds of the people. My friend and neighbour, an old tar with a pension, a little government office and a cute French head, amused me exceedingly the other day by his own version of parochial money matters. Of course I am repeating the word of an uneducated man, a boatswain, or perhaps quartermaster—yet his glib tongue did but give expression to the ideas which almost all the peasants entertain, although they cannot easily express them.

He said:—"Pierre Denez is a born fool, so they chose him for churchwarden. Pierre was very devoted to his duties, but took special charge of the offertories, because the rector told him that all the money must be carefully taken care of till Easter, when it must be divided into four parts—one part for the Pope, one for the bishop, one for the poor, and one for the priest. Pierre got together a goodly sum, and when the day came for the division he gave himself up to his work with great diligence. Into four parts all the moneys were divided, and then Pierre asked what was to be done with them? To which the rector replied, 'I will take care of them all.' Then said Pierre, 'He took all the four parts and put them into his own pocket, and what was the good of all my trouble when the rector pocketed the whole lot at the end of the journey.' Pierre resigned his office. Thus it is," said my *marin*, "with these priests; even a fool like Pierre can see through them." Now you, reader, and I, know or feel assured that the rector very faithfully fulfilled his trust and forwarded the respective amounts to head-quarters, but the suspicions of the people were aroused and cannot be set at rest. Whence do they all arise? Why this objection to a decent payment of the priests? Not only on account of the love of money of the peasants, but also because the priest himself is a peasant, and they cannot understand why he should want a better income than they have themselves, or why his mother and sisters should sit at wine and dessert while they themselves eat black bread. Religion does not give them a reason, and of the effects of education they are ignorant.

If my readers will be patient enough to follow me in my description of "Life in Brittany," I do not expect that *any* of them will choose Brittany as their permanent home, notwithstanding its many advantages. One great fact stares one in the face. It always rains here. Never a month, scarcely a day goes by without rain; and such rain! Soaking, all-wetting rain. Side roads are water lanes three parts of the year, and it is only owing to the magnificent condition and great expenditure upon the departmental roads that one can get about at all. If we were dependent upon the roads made by the Communes, we should be shut in nine months at least out of twelve.

Another great drawback to English people would be found in the joint occupation of houses, stables, barns, and out-buildings, which is the rule of this country. Gentlemen living in châteaux get weary of farming, and let out their land, with the right to use a certain portion of the stables and all other buildings, to a peasant farmer. This arrangement seems to work well enough with Breton gentlemen, who know the ways and habits of the people, but it is simply unendurable to an Englishman. Your whole premises are slovenly. You have nothing to yourself. You lose your stores of hay, oats, &c., for the Breton peasant is a peculator. You lose your privacy; there is a continual intermeddling with your affairs and servants. This state of things is aggravated when the château has been deserted, and the master has been long in Paris or elsewhere.

It is really wonderful how many beautiful houses have been deserted by their owners in this beautiful Brittany. Have they been washed out by the rain? or sucked out by the love of Frenchmen for large towns and social life? Be that as it may, here you may see houses full of furniture which remind one of that celebrated tale about a wedding breakfast shut up for fifty years because some accident befell the bridegroom on the day of the wedding. I went to see the Château de Fenaurum the other day. It is a splendid building, containing some thirty rooms, situated in a park, with ancient out-buildings, and gardens, and orchards. It is now to let for a mere trifle; and this is its history. Twenty years ago the son of an old soldier of France inherited the property, with new ideas. He pulled down the old mansion (which is said to have been better than his modern house) and built, at immense cost, the present château. For five years he lived there, then suddenly shut it up and left the country. Shut up it has remained for fifteen long years, except that, until six years ago, his brother-in-law and sister used to pay a visit of some weeks in the summer time. Six years ago the said brother-in-law came as usual, and left after the fashion of the owner of the castle. He hung his coat, his change of raiment, his boots, in short, all his clothes upon pegs in his bedroom ready for him when he came in to dress, but he never did come in to dress; and there they hang still, and there I saw them, all eaten by moth, as if they had been placed there only half an hour before. The whole house is in the same state; settees, chairs, pictures, all gradually subsiding into dust; beds, blankets, sheets, all in place and all eaten up by moth, so that all is spoilt and useless. The outbuildings are let away to a farmer as usual, and who would like to face the reparations, refurnishing, and renewing of a castle like that!

The great attraction of Brittany is "the peasantry," and no wonder, for they are quite *sui generis*, quite different from all other populations. They combine the sombre, taciturn nature of the Spaniard with the droll, wild life of the Irish. It is difficult to understand how the same people can be silent and noisy—reserved and running over with jollity. Yet so it is. There must be a strain of tiger in a population which could amuse itself as lately as 1847 in cutting the life out of friends with a whip made after this fashion:—Lash, eighteen feet long, swelling at a little distance from the handle to the thickness of a man's arm, from whence it tapered to a twisted and strongly knotted end, made more like a knife by the help of a mixture of glue. This plaything was fixed upon a strong, stiff stick, and often not only cut a man into steaks, but sometimes cut out the life of him at a single stroke. Yet a local historian gives an account of a fête which he attended in 1847, at which the chief attraction was a contest between twelve men, six on a side, with these deadly weapons. The smack of these whips made, he says, much more noise than a gun shot; they could be heard at the distance of two and a half miles, and when several smack their whips in concert the so terrible that one must either run away or stop up one's ears.

These twelve men were ranged opposite one another at a distance almost corresponding to the length of the lashes of their whips. They stood up, having for protection in the shape of dress only short felt breeches, and shirts made of stout sailcloth. Like all Breton peasants of the old style, their hair hung down their backs in long tresses, but was cut straight across the forehead after the fashion of Gainsborough's "Blue Boy." They wore no hats or head-covering. The left arm was naked, but the right arm, which held the whip, was protected from the fist to the neck by an armlet or shield of thick leather. The sides were distinguished by the colour of the tuft of their whips, the one being white, the other red.

These men thus standing face to face were there to be wounded almost to death for the glory thereof, and also for the prize, which consisted of half-a-dozen striped pocket-handkerchiefs and a pound of tobacco. The signal given by an old peasant, the combatants put themselves into the attitude of defiance, the whip raised, while the lash was held in the left hand. "Strike," said the same voice, and the twelve cables were let loose in an instant, but no smack was heard as they met, twisted, and struggled in mid-air.

Those most renowned quickly disengaged their lashes and dealt the second and dreadful blow upon the persons of their antagonists, opening up long seams of livid or bleeding flesh; on the third stroke all the faces except two were seamed and flowing with blood. These two were the leaders—one tall, the other short; one heavy, the other light; one all flesh, the other, although only five feet high, all nerves and sinews. An outsider would have backed the giant, but the boys of Pipriac knew too well the prowess of the dwarf to risk their money against him.

The combat now raged with fury; men disdained to parry, they were only eager to strike. The sound was that of a volley of musketry. The lashes soften into tow, but harden again and glue themselves together with blood. The faces are no longer human; the long hair hangs down in front, bathed in perspiration and blood. But not one blow has fallen on either champion. They have reserved themselves; they have guarded and parried, knowing that upon them the issue of the fight did depend. But now the tall man has hit home. A long, blue, spiral mark, which here and there squirts blood, twists round the left arm of the little Joseph, and makes him stagger with pain. He recovers himself; launches his whip at his foe, and but six inches intervened between its deadly point and the face of Joseph the great. Animated by his first success, Kaer stepped forward and bent his whole strength to the blow which he aimed at Josille. The little man never parried the blow, but pirouetted as it were; while, without any effort, he threw out his lash softly. The blow of Kaer missed; but when Josille sharply drew back his lash, the whole face of Kaer was cut in half—a gigantic gap opened up the very bones. These two stood alone in the lists; the rest had made a truce, and were engaged in attending to their grievous wounds.

Kaer, blinded by the shock, put his armlet of leather before his face and paused. Josille, so far from profiting by the occasion and pressing his advantage, coolly took out his pocket-handkerchief and loudly blew his nose, to the great amusement of his backers, who thought it an excellent joke. The laughter made Kaer mad, threw him out of his *sang-froid*, and made him wild. He struck, stamped, and made wonderful points; but Josille was calm; and at the end of ten minutes the giant, covered with wounds, his shirt cut into ribbons, his mouth foaming, his eyes blinded, fell heavily upon his knees. "Don't give in!" cried some voices still; but the effort to rise was vain. Josille, apparently incapable of pity, like a true Breton peasant, again blew his nose, and prepared to give the falling man his *coup de grâce*.

A shiver ran through the crowd; but Josille was better than he seemed, for instead of cutting the poor flesh, he dextrously drew the whip out of the hands of the victim, and folded his arms upon his breast. Kaer shut his eyes, and laid his burning head upon the sand. The whites were proclaimed the victors. Each subaltern had a pocket-handkerchief worth sixpence, and Josille the pound of tobacco. I know not whether any of these scenes are enacted now, but this account is so recent that it throws light upon the Breton peasant as I find him.

As to the dress of the agricultural people, it is picturesque—so picturesque, indeed, that when some foolish servant is penetrated with the Parisian mode, and adopts it, she looks like a crow among birds of plumage. Yet I am sorry to say that the dress is changing. Our old men wear sabots, gaiters, large, loose, baggy breeches fastened under the knee, with jacket and vest; the hair is long like that of a woman, and a broad, flat felt hat completes the costume. Our young men have taken to trousers, but still retain the vest embroidered round the neck, and the loose, flowing jacket, mostly made of cloth of a dark blue colour, and embroidered behind with a representation of the Holy Sacrament; this back embroidery is dying out, as also the custom of wearing flowing locks. Our women wear short skirts, made of very thick material, plaited round the waist, more like a Scotch kilt than anything else; over the skirt they wear an embroidered cloth jacket, or vest with sleeves, and over that another without sleeves, cut square and low in front to display their white, nicely starched chemisette; to the chemisette is attached an enormous collar which reaches beyond the shoulders, and is a marvel of the arts of starching and ironing. This, with the great coiffe of the county, differing in each commune, completes the costume. Of course, there are varieties of head-dress, some loose and flowing, others close-fitting, some in colours, some embroidered, and this gives to any assemblage a very varied and pleasing appearance; but the description of these matters is beyond the reach of my pen.

The home of the Breton peasant is quite peculiar, and differs from anything I have seen elsewhere. An old stable, a cow-shed, any old outhouse does as well as any other building for his purposes, and is always used when it may be had; but whether the house be built of stone or wood or mud, its exterior is almost always the same. It has a central door and two little windows about eighteen inches square; within, the floor is of mud, literally mud; for as Brittany is a very wet place, the mud floors are almost always damp, and often contain miniature lakes or pools of water.

I recollect one day, when out fishing, calling in at one of these shanties where they kept an *auberge*, and finding it difficult to place my feet on dry land. Being inclined for a chat I asked mine host how he, who, from the valuable furniture he possessed, I took to be a man decently well off, could bear to live in such a pigsty. He replied that he always wore *sabots*, which could not be wet through, and as to sleeping in such a place, what did it matter to him; when once safely shut up in his *lit clos* (or wonderful Breton cupboard arranged as a bed) he did not care if the sea were to come in to the floor. The poorest shanties have their bedstead and *armoire*, mostly of fine grained wood, and beautifully carved. This particular *auberge* had its whole side filled up with the family sleeping arrangements, all constructed in one single piece of furniture. A sort of tall, beautifully carved cupboard extended the whole length of the wall, which contained a bed at either end and an upright clock in the middle—a clock like the kitchen clock of our ancestors. During the daytime the bedding is invisible, as also, I suppose, during the night, for it is reached through two little sliding doors, having little dwarf pillars for the admission of air. The doors are only opened to admit or give egress to the tenants. Day and night they are kept shut, so that you may go into such a room (as I have done) at midnight without seeing man, woman, or child, until the little doors slide back, and a whole family of heads peep out from within what may be called a night parlour. Add to this *lit clos* an *armoire* (a cupboard with large folding-doors), a few pots and pans, a form or two and a table, and you have a complete inventory of a Breton house, whether it be occupied by a farmer or a labourer. A year ago I went to see a château which was to be let. It belonged to a rich peasant farmer who, when he bought the estate, moved straight into the stable, and I saw him there with cows, horses, pigs, and servants, only divided from his dwelling-room by a slight wooden partition. I put the servants with the cattle, because it was literally so arranged; one man slept in a little box bedstead in a stable with ten cows, an arrangement which my farmer said was necessary, in case they broke loose in the night.

As the Breton peasant lives in a sort of primitive way amidst the cattle, so he thinks and acts in a primitive way also. His ideas are few, and those few descend to him from his ancestors. I suppose that, with the exception of the crying abuses arising from priestly power, supported by the State in the Middle Ages, and priestly misconduct in accordance with the very rude life of those ages, the religion of Brittany remains much as it was in the days of St. Louis.

Farmer Jean has just returned from a pilgrimage of three weeks to

Lourdes, which numbered 1,500 Bretons, nearly all of the peasantry. He must have spent a good deal of money—what with the railway and the hotels! It seems odd to speak of railways and hotels in connection with pilgrimages, and, in very fact, it is odd, for one naturally expects that the enlargement of view, the new ideas arising from the first, and the luxury suggested by the last, would be the most effectual agents in arresting mediæval customs; and so they will be in time, but for the moment they are caught at and made to serve the turn of those who live and thrive on this strange and antique superstition. Many a temporary expedient to revive a dying dream does but make more sure the final awakening.

My *bonne*, Françoise, has also been on her pilgrimage, and has experienced a real miracle, worked upon herself, to which I can give the whole weight of my disinterested testimony.

Françoise was quite noted as a drinker—she had almost fallen into the ruck of life, and was considered irredeemable, when all of a sudden, she took off her shoes and stockings, and started for a particular saint's abode to get cured of her drunkenness. Barefooted she went, and barefooted she returned, cured and in her right mind. For six months she tasted no fermented drinks, but solaced herself with vinegar and water. At the end of six months she went again barefooted to return thanks to the *bon Dieu* for her miracle. She lives now in our house, and is as sober as a judge (ought to be), and as lively as a cricket. This miracle I can attest, and *if it lasts* it will indeed be a miracle, and a proof of the power of means to an end, even although the means should only prove to be the action of the mind upon itself. What man cannot do alone, he can do with the help of a little well-acted fiction, with the *dramatis personæ* and final tableau all duly arranged in the mind beforehand. Françoise thinks that she has her familiar devil, who thwarts her at all points and strives to make her swear. Yesterday she attempted to light a candle with a burning stick, and several times failed. She accused her devil with his villany, but at last she lighted the candle and exclaimed, "Ah, I have conquered, and you did not make me swear"; but as she placed the candle on the table it went out, and she mournfully remarked, "No, he has conquered after all." All these ideas are common to our Breton folk.

These people do not look dirty. Their dress is always decent, and on fête-days it is beautiful as well as costly. Yet I believe that a Breton peasant never washes once in his life. I never saw any washing apparatus in any of their rooms, nor did I ever see one of them washing in a tub, or at a stream, or at the well. None can have better opportunities of observation than I have. Opposite my window is the well, the one water-supply of a settlement; to it all must come for water, yet I never saw one wash anything but clothes at or about it. Really and truly they are and must be as dirty as the pigs who live and sleep at their bed-sides. In all my dealings with them, I give them a wide berth, especially the children, and experience fully justifies my caution.

Winter in Brittany is a terrible time, a time of incessant rain, of roads so bad as to be practically impassable, of long gloomy days without sunshine. I cannot recommend Brittany for a winter home, for home in its English sense there is none. The houses are not constructed for cosiness. Rooms communicate one with another so as to be full of doors. There are no really comfortable lounges or easy-chairs, no fire-places which suggest slippers and a nice book, no bed-rooms where an invalid's chamber could be made almost more bright than the general sitting room. Bed-rooms are, even in grand houses, mostly mere cupboards. It is true that in a very large château you will find one or two rooms intended as state-rooms, and furnished as boudoirs with an alcove for the bed, but these are rare, and the furniture even of these is stilty, showy, and offers no repose. No man must speak against French beds. They at least are perfect; England stands in this respect with regard to France as a savage, barbarous country. I speak not of form of bedstead. I rail not against ancient four-post, tester, or canopy I speak of thick, soft, downy mattresses piled thickly upon a *sommier* or frame-work with springs. I know that in some English houses, and in most English hotels a faint imitation of these French beds exists, but how far behind the originals are these faint copies! English people stint the mattresses, they stint also the material with which they are stuffed, and worse still, they have a perfectly incurable habit of pressing their wool or horse-hair or flock as hard as they can until it is like sleeping on a board; on the contrary, all is loose in a real French bed, so loose that it can be opened and re-made at home annually, instead of waiting for years and years as in an English house, and then taking an expensive journey to Maple and Co., or Heal and Co., who do it by steam in their wonderful mills.

In winter the Breton peasant shows himself more truly as he is than at any other time of the year, for he has a house whose floor is something between a puddle and a pigsty; he has clothes which are almost always damp if not wringing wet; he has no sort of home comfort, and seems to seek none. Many of these men are not only comparatively but absolutely rich. For instance, Jean, our farmer, is worth at least 20,000 francs, or 800*l.*, no mean sum for a working-man even in England, yet his one desire is to increase his store, and he never dreams of procuring any winter comforts. His is not at all a special case, although he is dying in a rapid consumption. Two years ago the doctor told him that he must give up exposing himself to cold and damp or he would soon die; yet he has not given up, and as a consequence he is dying. A few days ago I heard that he was very ill in bed, spitting blood, so I paid him a visit and found him very bad indeed. His room was wet as wet could be; it had no curtains, the front door was wide open, the fire a few hot coals of wood, which were kept there to be blown into a flame when needed for cooking or farm purposes. He had no medicine, no special food, but was living like the others on black rye bread and buckwheat galettes or pancakes. I told him how ill I thought him in the presence of his wife, and in the night he alarmed her by vomiting blood, so that she came to me in the morning crying, and asking what she ought to do for him. I told her to get him warmth, meat, soup, and other comforts, and she went just as far as this: she bought two pounds' weight of *white* bread. When this white bread came home, her mother (Jean's mother-in-law), who lives with them, went into a passion and sulked all day long, as she declared that it was wild extravagance. You must know that for days I had sent him soup, meat, and pastry from my own table, partly because I felt that he must have help at once, and partly because I could not bear to see the man dying before my eyes from sheer want, for he could not eat the ordinary coarse food, and took nothing at all. They received all my gifts almost without thanks, and never stirred hand or foot to get anything for themselves until the day when Yvonne bought the white bread. Well, on that day when her mother was raging, she came crying into the kitchen, and told my *bonne* how she was tried. The *bonne* told me at once, and protested that I ought not to keep on sending food to a rich man, who was a miser and surrounded by two miserly women, when real poor might be stretching out their hands for help. I replied that I had never refused to help any real poor yet, and that I intended to continue my help to Jean, notwithstanding his miserly behaviour, as I could not see a man die of want while I had enough. But I told her to scold Yvonne well, and to tell her that she ought to do her duty by her husband, and if necessary turn her mother out of the house, especially as she was a rich woman and well able to keep a home of her own. Now mark Yvonne's reply. "Ah, I can't do that, because my husband may soon die, and then I shall want my mother's help." Mark, I say, this reply,—its utter selfishness, and say is there any real depth, any real worth in such characters as these? I think not.

The weather changed and Jean has for a little moment got better, but he cannot live many months; already he has been out in the rain, and in a few days will be in bed vomiting blood again. When very bad indeed, his wife besought me, as I was going to the doctor ten miles away myself, to ask for some remedy to stop the blood-spitting of Jean. I did so, and explained also the condition of the house and family. The doctor, who is a very clever fellow, told me that he knew them all well, and that there would be a very evil day for Yvonne soon. I said, "Will the man die very soon?" "Yes!" said he, "but that is not the evil day I mean; there will be a far more unhappy day for her when she comes to me after he is buried to *pay my bill.*"

Isaac Disraeli and Bolton Corney.

THERE has, perhaps, never been an English writer who attained an astonishing literary reputation with such consummate ease as Isaac Disraeli. To read the encomiums of his illustrious son contained in the preface to his collected works, and even the compliments paid to him by a host of contemporaries, it might be imagined that, instead of being a mere bookmaker of altogether second-rate abilities, he was the first Englishman who had brought genius to bear upon subjects of literature. The fact really is, that literary criticism and literary research were somewhat out of fashion in this country when Isaac Disraeli began to publish, and that thus his small achievements gained an altogether disproportionate amount of praise. At the present day, the little articles which make up the volumes known as the *Curiosities of Literature*, *Amenities of Literature*, and so forth, would hardly find acceptance in a third-rate magazine; yet, when they first appeared, something more than half a century ago, they were accounted marvels of erudition. Byron, Scott, Moore, Southey, and Bulwer were proud to applaud them; while even bibliographers and critics like Dr. Dibdin, Mr. John Wilson Croker, and Mr. S. W. Singer raised their tuneful notes in praise of Isaac Disraeli. Lord Lytton (the elder) in his salad days was not ashamed to speak of him as "the Horace Walpole of Literature." It is probable that Mr. Bulwer—as he was when he wrote this phrase—intended his words for a compliment, but it may be open to question whether Isaac Disraeli regarded them in that light. His own opinion of Walpole was of the lowest. He describes him as "one of the Pucks of Literature," and with a fine irony praises his "new views and bold deductions," his "deep and tender sentiment"—perhaps the most utterly absurd subjects for applause which he could have selected; and his "charming lucubrations"—which is probably the oddest description of the arid and commonplace "Anecdotes of Painting" that the most perverse ingenuity could have devised. Probably before the close of his life Lord Lytton, whose mind was always growing, saw reason to modify his opinions and to accredit Isaac Disraeli with fewer and less exalted qualities.

The veteran man of letters was not, however, allowed to enjoy his honours wholly without the intrusion of the critics. More than once it was hinted that his vaunted discoveries were no discoveries at all; that the substance of some of his most effective and most popular works might be found in books within the reach of every student; and that, when wholly original, he was not unfrequently curiously incorrect. As a rule, however, the attacks were made in such a fashion as to render the task of answering them either easy in the extreme or altogether unnecessary. Mr. Bolton Corney was an exception to the rule. He was a scholar and a gentleman, a man of wit and a man of the world, and he had the advantage of knowing thoroughly some subjects of which Isaac Disraeli possessed only a feeble smattering. Thus, for example, the latter was once sufficiently ill-advised to write on the Bayeux Tapestry. His article betrayed its writer—it was flimsy, weak, and superficial in the extreme. Those who read it, and who knew anything about the subject, could hardly believe that the author had even seen the tapestry he professed to describe, and, as a matter of fact, it is believed that he never did. Nevertheless, he talks in a marvellously confident way about that remarkable piece of work, sneers elaborately at its rude drawing and absurd colouring, and makes some curiously rash statements on questions of fact and matters of detail. Mr. Bolton Corney, on the other hand, had made the Bayeux Tapestry a subject of careful and elaborate study for many years. His work upon it is even now a standard authority; and he was thus able, to use the phrase of a contemporary critic, to "turn Mr. Disraeli inside out" when he had to deal with this subject. So with other matters. The whole controversy is contained in a series of pamphlets long out of print, but preserved in the British Museum, and affording some of the most amusing reading upon which any man of literary tastes is likely to alight. Even the title-pages are comic; and, when one turns the page and comes upon the pamphlets themselves, their typographical eccentricities are a source of perennial delight. Mr. Bolton Corney must have taxed the resources of his printing office in no ordinary fashion. He fairly revels in the variety of his typography. Black letter and italic; small capitals and large; upper case and lower case; notes of admiration and inverted commas in profusion diversify every page, and impart a pleasing variety to its effect upon the eye. It is, indeed, surprising how keen a sarcasm becomes when it is printed in small capitals; how biting a satire may be made when it is repeated for the thirtieth time; how brilliant a jest when all the varieties of type are used in a single sentence to enforce it; and how infinitely the force of a stroke of wit is increased when it is followed by three notes of exclamation in a parenthesis. Mr. Bolton Corney, it may be admitted, lays himself open to a certain amount of animadversion in this respect; but Mr. Disraeli, though he indulges somewhat less in typographical eccentricities, outdoes him in personal abuse. His pamphlets, indeed, possess no inconsiderable interest from a literary point of view, but they are also noteworthy as specimens of a happily extinct species of literary controversy. The flowers of eloquence with which his pages are adorned form a *florilegium* of no ordinary beauty. He has, for example, no hesitation whatever in talking about "the malice of his critic," and "the baseness of his vulgarity." He tells his reader that "it is a long time since he declined to hold a branglement (*sic*) with a blockhead." On the next page he declares that Mr. Bolton Corney is "a most un-knightly chevalier, stuffed out by some contrivance for the nonce, so that the fellow appears larger than nature made him. You see," he goes on, "by the carle's coarse-grained hands what work he has been used to; the ribald might be formidable in a leather jerkin handling a pike-staff, but he is somewhat grotesque in the tilt." Elsewhere we hear of Mr. Bolton Corney's "impudence and disingenuousness;" we find him spoken of as a "pig in a drawing room," and described as a "literary yahoo." These are, it is to be presumed, some of those amenities of literature of which Mr. Disraeli speaks in another place; but, on the other hand, it must be confessed that Mr. Bolton Corney contrives to give his adversary many a shrewd nip. His first pamphlet has for title:—"*Curiosities of Literature*, by I. Disraeli, Esq., Doctor of Civil Law of the University of Oxford; a Fellow of the Society of Antiquaries of London. Illustrated by Bolton Corney, Esq., Honorary Professor of Criticism in the République des Lettres, and Member of the Society of English Bibliophiles." The second edition bears on the title-page the announcement that the work has been "revised and acuminated," the acumination consisting mainly in a more frequent and more sarcastic repetition of the unfortunate Mr. Disraeli's titles and distinctions. Appended to the edition is a reprint of the third pamphlet of the series, entitled "*Ideas on Criticism, deduced from the practice of a veteran, and adapted to the meanest capacity*." This last is a retort upon Mr. Disraeli's reply to Mr. Bolton Corney's first pamphlet, a little work on large paper, entitled the *Illustrator Illustrated*, and it is by no means the least amusing of the series.

Mr. Bolton Corney's charges against Mr. Disraeli are thirty in number; some grave, some commonplace; one or two hypercritical, and as many thoroughly trivial. The gist of the accusation is, as a rule, first, that the author of the *Curiosities of Literature* is not original; secondly, that he is superficial and incorrect; and, thirdly, that he appropriates the work of his predecessors even whilst reviling them, and gives, as the results of his unaided researches, matter which other writers had already published. The first count of this portentous indictment is headed as follows (the italics are Mr. Bolton Corney's):—"The *Original* MS. of the Code of Justinian *discovered* by I. Disraeli, Esq., D.C.L., and F.S.A.," and the charge is based upon the following paragraph from the first edition of the *Curiosities*:—

> The original manuscript of Justinian's Code was discovered by the Pisans accidentally when they took a city in Calabria; that vast code of laws had been in a manner unknown from the time of that Emperor. This curious book was brought to Pisa, and, when Pisa was taken by the Florentines, was transferred to Florence, where it is still preserved.[*]

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[*] It is not a little singular that Alexandre Dumas in his pseudo-history, *Gaule et France*, has fallen into precisely the same blunder with Isaac Disraeli. At page 340 he enumerates, amongst the benefits conferred upon France in the reign of Louis VII., the discovery of the Code of Justinian and its establishment in France as the

In later editions of the *Curiosities* this most astounding statement is modified. That of 1858, for example, mentions (vol. i. pp. 20–21) the manuscript as that of Justinian's *Pandects*, but the word "original" is still retained. Mr. Bolton Corney's comments fill four octavo pages. Their substance is that the MS. referred to was not of the Code as stated by Mr. Disraeli, but of the Pandects; that, though undoubtedly the MS. was of great antiquity, it was by no means the "original;" and that, so far from the Code having been "unknown" in any manner, "the Roman law had, according to Sir James Mackintosh, never lost its authority in the countries which formed the Western Empire"—all which the reader will probably consider to be a sufficiently grave number of charges to bring against a single paragraph of six lines. Mr. Disraeli's answer is somewhat more than sufficiently vague. Having no case, he devotes his energies to personal abuse of his accuser. He lays "profound ignorance" to the charge of Mr. Bolton Corney at the outset, and he accuses him of pretending to a wide and accurate acquaintance with the Civil law. Both charges, it needs hardly to be said, are wholly beside the mark, and, even if true, would prove nothing more than that Mr. Disraeli failed to appreciate the real drift of the charge he had to answer. Mr. Bolton Corney accuses him of writing "clotted nonsense" upon a subject of which he is profoundly ignorant. It is obviously no answer to such a charge to say that Mr. Bolton Corney pretends to a knowledge which he does not possess. Nor is Mr. Disraeli more happy when he comes to the charge itself. He is forced to admit that he did not know what were the contents of the manuscript he professed to describe; and, as he leaves the quotation from Sir James Mackintosh unanswered, it may be taken for granted that he felt the impossibility of defending his wild assertions about the Roman law. By way, however, of a little revenge he coolly insinuates that his critic is ignorant of the difference between the Justinian and the Gregorian Codes—by which he does not materially improve his own position—and he winds up his defence by a pitiful complaint that Mr. Bolton Corney had "expressed his comments in a tone and spirit which could not be endured in gentlemanlike society." In view of the phrases which Mr. Disraeli permits himself to use with respect to his opponent, this pathetic complaint of want of taste has, to say the least, a rather amusing effect. According to Mr. Disraeli it is permissible in "gentlemanlike society" to call your opponent a "pig," a "carle," or a "yahoo;" but it is wholly against the laws of the same society to hint that a D.C.L. of the University of Oxford—honorary or otherwise—

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written law. "Here," says M. Quérard (*Supercheries Littéraires*, tom. i. col. 1136), "are two errors: the first relating to the discovery of the Code of Justinian, the second relative to its establishment in France." The Code of Justinian has never been lost. M. Dumas confounded the Code of Justinian with the Florentine Pandects, the manuscript of which was really recovered at the capture of Amalfi by the Pisans, in 1130, during the quarrels of Pope Innocent II. and the Antipope Anaclet II.

ought to know at least so much about the Roman law as twenty minutes with an encyclopædia would teach him.

The next charge against the author of the *Curiosities* is not very important, but it is interesting as being characteristic alike of the culprit and of his accuser. Isaac Disraeli, as his greater son has told us, came home from the Continent saturated with the theories of Voltaire and Rousseau, and naturally lost no opportunity of sneering at the Church, the clergy, and even the Christian religion. When, therefore, he has to describe the Bayeux Tapestry he speaks of Odon, Bishop of Bayeux, as bearing a "mace" at the battle of Hastings "for the purpose that when he despatched his antagonist he might not spill blood, but only break his bones." On this statement he adds the profound and valuable reflection that "religion has its quibbles as well as law." The whole matter is so trite and so silly that one can hardly imagine any human being finding it a matter of interest, still less, any two people quarrelling over it. Mr. Bolton Corney had, however, as has already been mentioned, made the Bayeux Tapestry a matter of especial study, and was, of course, keenly alive to any blunders which his opponents might make with regard to it. When, therefore, he finds Mr. Disraeli not merely making a mistake as to facts, but tagging to his blunder a reflection worthy of a schoolboy's theme, he attacks his adversary without mercy. No time is wasted in preliminaries. He charges Mr. Disraeli with ignorance; expresses strong doubts as to whether he has seen the tapestry at all; and points out that the Bishop wears no armour, but simply carries a staff—not a mace—as a symbol of authority; from which he draws the conclusion that the Bishop took no active part in the battle, but simply confined himself to encouraging the soldiers. Seeing that more than one mediæval Bishop fought vigorously, there is perhaps nothing very extraordinary in Mr. Disraeli's error, though for the sake of his own reputation it would have been better had he refrained from emphasising it by a trite and trumpery sneer at religion. In reply, Mr. Disraeli, finding it impossible to deny that he has blundered, sneers, by way of revenge, at "the rude and coarse materials" of the Bayeux Tapestry, and with delightful self-complacency declares that his childish remark is "an idea pregnant with a whole volume: it is seed which will not germinate in the stubble of his (Mr. Bolton Corney's) mind."

Passing over one or two somewhat trivial accusations against Mr. Disraeli—if, indeed, any can be considered trivial which impugn the trustworthiness of a public instructor—we come upon a graver charge. It is stated in the *Curiosities* that "Cervantes composed the most agreeable book in the Spanish language during his captivity in Barbary"—a plain and direct statement which Mr. Bolton Corney proceeds to traverse by showing, upon irrefragable evidence, that between the release of Cervantes from his captivity amongst the Moors and the publication of *Don Quixote* a period of no less than five-and-twenty years elapsed. It is sufficiently obvious that the story is a pure invention;

but Mr. Bolton Corney goes further than merely proving its character. He traces it to its source, which is nothing more recondite than that repertory of anecdotes, good, bad, and indifferent, known as the *Ménagiana*. In that book, upon which the author of the *Curiosities* drew with remarkable liberality, happy in the confidence that the great mass of his readers were never likely to have heard of it, the following sentence may be found:—"J'ay ouï dire que Michel de Cervantes, auteur de ce roman de Dom Quixote, était manchot et qu'il auoit composé ce livre étant captif en Barbarie." Mr. Bolton Corney's comment is amusing:—"In 1791 appeared anonymously a volume entitled *Curiosities of Literature*; it was chiefly compiled from the French 'ana,' and contained the fiction on Cervantes." Mr. Disraeli's reply is not less amusing or less characteristic. He has literally not one word to say in his own defence; he cannot deny that he got the story from the *Ménagiana*, or that he printed it without taking the smallest pains to investigate its truth. Having no case, as usual, he contents himself with abusing his critic. The reader is treated with a long diatribe against Mr. Bolton Corney, seasoned with *gros sel*. There is plenty about "petty tricks" and "artful suppressions"—phrases which most readers will think more applicable to the plagiarist than to the critic who detects him; but of the charge itself, all that Mr. Disraeli can find to say is, that "Cervantes gave freedom to his genius during his captivity;" which is, perhaps, the lamest defence of a palpably stupid story ever invented. It is, perhaps, the best proof of the justice of Mr. Bolton Corney's criticism to find that in the later editions of the *Curiosities* this fable is expunged.

Unfortunately, as much cannot be said for the next charge. In the first volume of the edition of the *Curiosities* published in 1858, "with a Memoir and Notes by the Right Hon. Benjamin Disraeli" (the present Earl of Beaconsfield), pp. 194–5, will be found the following paragraph:—

> Philip III. was gravely seated by the fireside: the fire-maker of the Court had kindled so great a quantity of wood that the monarch was nearly suffocated with heat, and his *grandeur* would not suffer him to rise from the chair; the *domestics* could not *presume* to enter the apartment, because it (? what) was against the *etiquette*. At length the Marquis de Potat appeared, and the King ordered him to damp the fire; but *he* excused himself, alleging that he was forbidden by the *etiquette* to perform such a function, for which the Duke d'Ussada (*sic*) ought to be called upon, as it was his business. The Duke was gone out; the *fire* burnt fiercer, and the *King* endured it rather than derogate from his *dignity*. But his blood was heated to such a degree that an erysipelas of the head appeared the next day, which, succeeded by a violent fever, carried him off in 1621, in the twenty-fourth year of his reign.

Except for the last word, which in the early editions of the *Curiosities* is given as "age," this paragraph—slipshod style, grammatical and other blunders, italics and all—is identical with that of the first edition of this well-known book. The result is that this ineffably stupid story has become one of the stock illustrations of English authorcraft, used about as often as Lord Macaulay's wearisome "New Zealander" and "every schoolboy." Yet it is not for want of correction that the tale has retained its present shape. Mr. Bolton Corney points out that when Philip III. of Spain died he was in his forty-third year, and not, as Mr. Disraeli had said, in his twenty-fourth; that though it is well established that he died from erysipelas, there is not a shadow of foundation for the story which Mr. Disraeli tells; and that, as a matter of fact, the story itself is due, not to Spanish history, but to the liveliness of certain French memoir writers. Mr. Disraeli's reply is of a piece with the rest of his pamphlet. He cannot deny that he has blundered in the matter of the king's age; but he refers to that not very recondite source, *L'Art de Vérifier les Dates*, as his authority for the story. It is given in that book, by the way, in a very different form from that of Mr. Disraeli, and if he had really gone to it for information he could not possibly have fallen into error about the king's age. The evidence clearly seems to prove that the story came from a French source, and that the reference to *L'Art de Vérifier les Dates* was an afterthought. The conclusion of his reply on this point is certainly sufficiently amusing, when we bear in mind those amenities of his preface to which reference has already been made.

> I am at a loss to comprehend (he says) how this mole, who is very capable to grub, thus hardily ventured to a positive denial of this anecdote of Spanish etiquette. His criticism is nonsense; and, unhappily for him, the style in which it is expressed is even more remarkable than usual for its vulgar arrogance and thoroughly ungentlemanlike style.

The eighteenth count of this lengthy indictment is a very telling one. Mr. Disraeli, professing to quote from a manuscript in the Ashmolean Museum, gives a copy of a summons to Stowe to attend a meeting of the Antiquarian Society. This document he promises to "preserve with all its verbal ærugo." As originally given by Mr. Disraeli the summons runs thus:—

> SOCIETY OF ANTIQUARIES.
>
> To Mr. Stowe.
>
> The place appointed for a Conference upon the question followinge ys at Mr. Garter's House, on Frydaye the 11th of this November, 1598, being Al Sowle's day, at 11 of the clocke in the afternoon, where your oppinioun in wrytinge or otherwise is expected. The question is: "Of the Antiquitie, Etimologie, and Priviledges, of Parishes in Englande."

It is, perhaps, hardly necessary to point out that there is something very much out of joint in this summons. "Al Sowle's day" is the 2nd and not the 11th of November; and by "11 of the clocke in the afternoon" Mr. Garter King-at-Arms, and all good antiquarians of 1598, would naturally be in their beds. The solution of the mystery is, however, not very remote; and Mr. Bolton Corney not unnaturally triumphs over his antagonist in pointing out that Mr. Disraeli really never saw the original summons to Stowe at all, and that his talk about the "verbal ærugo" is a mere flourish. What he really did was to copy from another antiquary, and to do so without intelligence. Thomas Hearne had published this identical letter in 1720, and, unfortunately for Mr. Isaac Disraeli, had printed it in black-letter—that common trap for the unwary. The result is that the date and hour of the meeting are printed by Hearne thus—ii; and Mr. Disraeli innocently copied what he found and blundered in the copying. To make matters worse, Hearne does not give the year at all; and this Mr. Disraeli supplies by guess, giving, as a matter of course, the wrong year. Had he referred to his favourite *Art de Vérifier les Dates* he could scarcely have made the mistake. It is hardly necessary to say that Mr. Disraeli was compelled to admit that he had made a mistake "in transcribing from the black-letter," thus admitting the gravest part of the charge against him; nor is it necessary to add, that he makes bitter complaint of Mr. Bolton Corney's "silly facetiousness and vulgar insolence." In the later editions of the *Curiosities*, however, the mistakes are corrected, though Mr. Disraeli never had the candour to withdraw the statement of his having consulted the Ashmolean manuscript.

A minute analysis of the remaining counts of Mr. Bolton Corney's indictment of Mr. Isaac Disraeli would, perhaps, be somewhat tedious; but a few points may be thought worthy of attention. We have seen how the author of the *Curiosities* comments upon his opponent's "silly facetiousness." Mr. Bolton Corney, by anticipation, dwells upon the senile humour of Mr. Disraeli, who, in relating the discovery of the law of gravitation, mentions that it was due to the fall of an apple, which "struck him (Newton) a smart blow on the head," and surprised him "by the force of its stroke." How any such childish anecdote can be called a "curiosity of literature"—unless, indeed, its appearance in a book of criticism can be so considered—has never yet been explained. Mr. Disraeli himself appears to have shared the opinion of his critics; for the story has long disappeared from the *Curiosities*, though not until it had done yeoman's service in manuals of popular science and similar works. For the story itself, Mr. Bolton Corney has done quite enough, when he shows, by a host of authorities, that in its main incident it is at least doubtful, and that the circumstances with which Mr. Disraeli has embellished it were wholly fictitious. To such a charge it is no answer—as Mr. Disraeli seems to have supposed—to say that the story is "a family tradition," or that "some inverted commas have dropped in the later editions of the *Curiosities of Literature*," whilst the coarse personal abuse of Mr. Bolton Corney hardly benefits its author. Again: Mr. Disraeli asserts that "Collins burnt his Odes at the door of his publisher." On this point Mr. Bolton Corney shows that, although it is quite true that a portion of the impression of Collins's Odes was burned by the indignant author, the event happened not through the poet's "misery," but because of his anger at the popular neglect, and some considerable time after his accession to fortune. The "door of the publisher" is a pure invention of Mr. Disraeli, and is worthy of no attention whatever. Finally, in more than one place Mr. Disraeli puts himself forward as in some sense the "discoverer" of Oldys, the antiquarian, and constantly refers to his manuscripts. Mr. Bolton Corney is, however, able to show that in truth Mr. Disraeli knew little, if anything, of Oldys at first hand, but was really indebted for what knowledge he possessed to Grose's confessedly imperfect and valueless book. Mr. Disraeli's only answer to this charge is a little raillery of the heaviest type.

The sting of Mr. Bolton Corney's pamphlet lies in its tail. The penultimate chapter, which is written in a strain of acute and even brilliant sarcasm, is entitled "Masterly Imitators," and gives a tolerably clear idea of the way in which the greater part of the *Curiosities* was composed. Mr. Bolton Corney assorts the Disraelitic method under three heads—"Transcription, Translation, and Conversion." Under the first he gives a passage from Gilpin, side by side with a passage from the *Curiosities*, from which we are to suppose that the "inverted commas have dropped out." The two passages are all but identical, the only difference being such a change of one or two words as might readily happen in copying. A second specimen of the same kind of thing is even more audaciously impudent. In the *Journal* of Sir Simonds d'Ewes, which was published by Nichols the antiquary in 1793, appears a short passage relating to the Duke of Buckingham. This passage Mr. Disraeli coolly appropriates, modernising the spelling, and announcing that he had "discovered" it in the "*unpublished*" (*sic*) life of Sir Symonds d'Ewes (*sic*). Of Mr. Disraeli's knack of translating, Mr. Bolton Corney gives two specimens, which plainly prove not merely that the illustrious *littérateur* was not above stealing wherever *il trouvait son bon*, but that he was also not above following the gipsy precedent, and disfiguring the child he stole. The specimen of "conversion" which follows is of the same character, and shows Mr. Disraeli, in a curiously unenviable light, as a plagiarist of the first water.

The last chapter is an attack upon literary *camaraderie*—a kind of thing which is unfortunately not yet wholly extinct. The form which it took in Mr. Disraeli's case consisted mainly in a number of highly laudatory paragraphs addressed to him by certain more or less well-known men of letters of the day, and repaid by him in kind. Mr. Disraeli's reply to this attack is amusingly characteristic. He makes no attempt to answer the really grave charges brought against him, but, as usual, he befogs the whole matter with a cloud of abuse. The chapters, he says, "consist merely of impertinence addressed not only to myself, but to many distinguished literary characters, couched in language characteristic of a petty and envious mind." What this has to do with the accusation that Mr. Disraeli had "borrowed" by wholesale from the French collectors of "ana" and writers of memoirs is not easy to see, but the reply seems to have satisfied its author. He then goes on to taunt Mr. Bolton Corney with certain literary work, which he assumes to have been a failure, and he concludes by saying: "We know how Ritson would have treated Corney; borrowing the thunder of Milton, as he once did, he would have told him that he did

'ABOMINATE THE CENSURE OF RASCALS.'"

With this vigorous denunciation, in all its emphasis of type, Mr. Disraeli quits the field of controversy, boasting that he has not left his critic "a leg to stand on." Strangely enough, Mr. Bolton Corney refused to admit himself defeated, and altogether declined to regard Mr. Disraeli's answer as final. He therefore published the pamphlet *Ideas on Criticism*, to which reference has already been made. In it he sarcastically enumerates the various principles by which Mr. Disraeli may be assumed to have been governed in the controversy. The performance is remarkably clever and really excellent reading. Its style may best be guessed from one characteristic extract:—

> Idea xxv. It is consolatory to believe that "every work must be judged by its design." And now, Mr. Disraeli, I shall epitomise the rules of controversy, as deduced from your latest work—the *Illustrator Illustrated.* You may ascribe the meanest motives to your opponent, without the shadow of authority; you may misstate facts with reckless effrontery; you may introduce falsified and fictitious quotations; you may have recourse to the most contemptible evasion; you may abuse with all the virulence of a charlatan who has been unexpectedly deprived of his mask—if the *design* of your work is '*to assert the dignity of your station.*'"

These last words are a quotation from Mr. Disraeli, and they may almost be held to justify the savage quotation from Porson, with which this pamphlet and the controversy are alike brought to an end. "It is not," said the great Grecian, and after him Mr. Bolton Corney—"it is not in the power of thought to conceive, or words to express, the contempt I have for you, Mr. Isaac Disraeli."

The Four Southern Headlands of Devon.

AT the extreme south of Devonshire, cut off from the rest of the county by the diverging streams of the Avon and the Dart, there remains a very pastoral and quiet district, little affected by outward changes, and dreaming still in much the same unsophisticated way that it did a century ago. Kingsbridge is the metropolis of this country, and rules the two hundreds into which it is divided—Coleridge on the east, Stanborough on the west. Kingsbridge Haven, with its myriad creeks, looking on the map like a posy of which the sea-exit is the handle, shoots its silver creeks northward, eastward, and westward, a lovely sylvan lake at high tide, and at low tide a shiny flat of acrid odours. Outside all this rural quietude runs a rocky coast, fretted into shapes now grandiose, now grotesque, but always strangely out of keeping with the soft landscape within; and four great promontories, vast bulwarks thrown far out into the Channel, give character and decision to the outline of the county. These four promontories, the Start, the Prawle, Bolt Head, and Bolt Tail, combine to offer to the eyes of coastguards and fishermen as much bold and varied cliff scenery as is to be found in any one part of our English coast. Yet to the ordinary traveller their very names are hardly known; except by the pedestrian they can scarcely be reached, and in the guide-books of the county no definite description of any one of them is given, perhaps because they lie so far out of the beaten track that the compilers themselves of these guides failed to discover them. Indeed, there is no other way to make their acquaintance than to settle down in one of the villages of the district, after being leisurely taken thither by coach or carriage, and from that point to make radiations to the coast on foot, for the Start, which is closest to civilised life, is twelve miles from the nearest railway-station, while the Bolt Tail is at least eighteen.

The Start, with its long tongue of rock, a warted and horrent tongue like that of some primæval dragon, closes the coast of Devon on the south-east. After the seven miles southward curve of shingle which takes its name of Start Bay from the great point, the latter pushes very suddenly out into the sea due east, and so from all the coast to the north of it forms a very remarkable object, a long dark line upon the southern horizon. It is no less singular in appearance when we reach it. Very narrow, but to the stumbling pedestrian almost interminably long, the Start bends very slowly to the sea, and is almost as convenient a promontory for walking upon as a deeply-notched saw might be. At short intervals, groups of broken and wildly-fantastic rock divide the tongue of high, steep land into stations, from the summits or sides of each of which the traveller, almost hung in air, has a wide view over the sea to the north, east, and south, the rugged bridge that brought him thither alone connecting him with the mainland. On a bright and windy day the view from such a somewhat perilous altitude is most fascinating. The dark point at our feet, shelving to north and south like a steep roof, only serves to emphasise by its sombre colour the luminous wilderness of sea. To east and south, past the lighthouse below us, and over the skerries beyond it, is sheer sea, nothing but sea over three parts of the horizon. To the north, from Dartmouth Harbour down to our very feet, is the great sweep of Start Bay, a gleaming arc of shingle, broken here and there by a low green promontory that scarcely finds the water's edge, and under each such cape nestles a fishing village clustered in an amiable disorder. Inland, the blue line of Dartmoor lies like a cloud upon the north-western sky, those peaks that we see being Heytor and Rippon Tor. The only road to the Start is a high footway leading from the hamlet of Torcross southward along the cliffs, a walk deeply embowered with clematis and brambles, and gradually rising from the flat marsh-lands of Beason to the general level of the point. Just where the high path turns east, we look down upon the pretty hamlet of Hallsands, to which there runs no definite path by land, so much more sensible does it seem to its hardy population of fishermen to take the wide road of the sea than to trouble themselves to cut out a lane up the umbrageous wall of cliff above them. Slapton Ley, the most curious point of landscape in all this neighbourhood, a great freshwater lake divided from the tides of Start Bay only by a raised beach three miles long, is hidden from us on our rocky eyrie by the headland of Torcross, but beyond it, and clearly facing us, we see Blackpool, where, in 1403, after its more successful raids upon Tenby and Plymouth, the French squadron landed, only to be repulsed by the prompt Devonian women, who, sallying out of many a thatched cottage heavy with house-leek and ivy, smote those invaders hip and thigh, slew their captain, and boldly bade them depart the way they came, an indignity revenged three centuries later by the burning of Teignmouth. The Start is essentially a promontory formed for distant views; the ground on which the traveller rests is too confined to retain his attention. There is no temptation to throw oneself at full length and bask in the wind-swept odour of the thyme, scorching in the sun, or to brood upon the pink blossom of the thrift. Such a course might send the dreamer rolling down either steep incline on to the surf-beaten juts of rock below. It is rather a place for observation than for meditation; society must needs be futile here, where the din of wind and wave fills the ear for ever. It is a place where those who have their "eyeballs vexed and tired, may feast them upon the wideness of the sea," and watch with infinite composure the courses of all the ships that with their various burdens of anxiety or regret move up or down the channel that is the high road between our world and the West. The clusters of rock that gather along the backbone of the point, at intervals of a dozen yards or so, seem more like cromlechs than any chance arrangement of natural structure; the light grass that grows elsewhere finds no home in their precipitous crannies and dwarf cliffs, but their surface is richly dyed with the smooth orange lichen and the tufted moss of a blanched green colour that compose so much of the harmony of effect in all this country. If Polwhele is to be trusted, there once were to be seen remnants of a temple to the Syrian Astoreth upon the Start Point, and standing on that fantastic headland, with the cry of the sea around me, it seemed not hard to recall in fancy the time, long past, when the Phœnicians may have gathered there from their tin-works at the day appointed for the Wailing for Adonis, and while they mingled their cries with those of the ocean, were dreaming of the wizard head then floating into the haven of Byblos. At least I cannot think a rock so grim and tortured unapt to witness the mysteries of a worship devoted to the winds and sea; and I, at least, know no spot on the English coast that seems to partake so little of the conventional character of cliff or shore. The Lizard itself seems commonplace beside it, and until the lighthouse flashes out at sun-down, recalling the wanderer briskly to modern life and modern ways, the Start is almost unearthly in its oddness.

From the Start, that sees so much of the ocean, even the prominent neighbouring headlands are concealed by a high corn-field that rises on the south-west. But by crossing this, as may well be done in the late autumn, the pedestrian suddenly gains a superb view in an entirely different direction. Before him, across the bay, he sees the Prawle, and far beyond it the grander double buttress of Bolt Head. He may proceed at once to the Prawle if he has time and patience; the distance is only four miles as the crow flies, but the best of walkers will do well to give three hours to the transit. There is no path whatever until we reach the mill and sandy cove of Lannacombe, and after this the briars and the brooklets have much more than their share of the adventure. The traveller who has started from any known centre of local civilisation is likely to be tired out before he reaches his destination, and for a first visit, at least, the best way is by land. A long walk through the lanes of South Devon is not an exciting excursion, and requires for its thorough appreciation a cheerful spirit and the Wordsworthian "quiet eye." Between hedges ten feet high the traveller rises swiftly to no view, and descends apparently for no reason but to give a delicate streamlet occasion to gush out of a ferny wall and cross the road in a limpid and serpentine confusion. But the hedges are a study in themselves, with their foxgloves and mulleins, their fairy pennons of ferns, the odorous garlands of their honeysuckles waving high up among the hazels. And if the view be shut out, so much the better; with an unwearied gaze we catch the line of azure sea cutting across the hedgerows at the summit of a decline, and lean on each gate to enjoy the trim-framed landscape of old farm-buildings, golden with lichen, embowered in a delicious land of orchards, with the soft outlines of the folding hills beyond.

This strange warm air of Devonshire seems kindred to a certain vein of poetic genius. In it were early fashioned the two most eccentric and most luxurious of our poets, the creators of *Kubla Khan* and of *The Broken Heart*. It gave its warmth to the bright spirit of Carew, and loosened Herrick's tongue to voluptuous melody. I find more of South Devon in these four than in the South Devon poet *par excellence*, William Browne, whose *Britannia's Pastorals*, though Ben Jonson loved them, seem to me scarcely less tedious and topographical than the later effusions of Carrington. It is rather on the wayward and indolent side of genius that these glowing villages and soft sequestered valleys seem to find their utterance; and there is especially one view, over a certain gate, which all travellers must pass on their way to the Prawle, which will be to me for ever inseparably connected with the idea of S. T. Coleridge; breaking the soft, faint outline of the hills, dividing rhythmically to left and right, the church of St. Sylvester, in Chivelstone, stands huge against the sky, starting from the middle distance, with a cluster of lichened cottages clinging about its feet. No other house is to be seen, until far away on the lofty horizon the eye just catches the steeple of Malborough. The scene is at once without form and vividly distinct, weak and brilliant, equally unique in what it possesses and in what it lacks. Except this one strange and unexpected view at Chivelstone, there is little to interest the visitor on the road to the Prawle. As we approach the sea, the hedges become lower, the land more barren and open. The large village of East Prawle, the most southerly inhabited place in the county, is as ugly and slatternly as any Scotch fishing hamlet. But just beyond the inn, the lanes descend towards the sea, and the sober headland comes slowly into view. Following the guidance of a meandering rivulet, which has taken advantage of the existence of a steep lane to adopt it as its watercourse, we arrive at a meadow, sloping gently to the beach. On our right hand, the extreme south point of Devonshire rises in a rounded bluff of no great altitude, a broad and solitary headland, covered with wild thyme and grass. I find a strange legend that records that, in the Middle Ages, pilgrims from Scandinavia to the Holy Land were wont to break their voyage in a little cove beside the Prawle. Had Mr. William Morris known of this, I think his wanderers in the "Rose-Garland" would have rested there before they sailed out so vaguely towards the Earthly Paradise. If they landed anywhere near the Prawle, it must have been, however, on the further, or western side, for the reefs are unbroken from the point as far east as Lannacombe: long flakes of dark rock, one against the other, with pools and shallow channels laid bare at low tide, over which the broad leaves of brown seaweed lie so thickly as to exclude all light. Turn these aside and a beautiful view is presented; each pool is thickly paved with a coloured mosaic of sea-anemones, *crassicornis* of every shade, from the warmest orange to the coldest lilac, spreading their banded disks to the damp face of the sea-weed, and intertwining lazily their distended tentacles. Touch one of the passive masses, and in a few moments he will have turned his beauty, if not to ashes, at least to a heap of dirt and gravel. In pools where *crassicornis* sports his coarse magnificence, we find room for little else; but in the channels where he has not taken up his abode, the delicate *sagartias* make themselves at home, and I myself have found, in twenty minutes' search, *nivea*, with its quaker body and swan-white plumes; the creamy *sphyrodeta troglodytes*, with his black and grey disk just protruded from a cranny; the gorgeous *bellis*, with its flash of scarlet, and a pencilled variety of *miniata*. Other pools, again, are wholly given up to *gemmacea*, either expanded, with its soft, translucent green and rose-colour, or tightly buttoned up with its six rows of neat pearl buttons. I have an hereditary fondness for the sound of all this botanical Latinity, which clings to me after more serious scientific knowledge has slipped away; nor could I ever persuade myself to exchange for it those quaint coinages of *wartlet*, *pimplet*, or *opelet*, with which my father afterwards attempted to make his actinological philosophy less harsh and crabbed to the vulgar.

The Prawle does not appear so evenly rounded when we scale the height, for there we find the gneiss broken into crags, and drawn, as if violently bent, towards the west. The final rock is insulated at low water, and a boat, in very smooth weather, may creep under its eaves, between it and the mainland. The pedestrian who clambers over to the old signal-house at Hurter's Top, and so gains the coastguard track, will have a marvellous pleasure if the wind be fresh and the sun bright. The next cape, westward from the Prawle, would be the finest headland on the coast were it built upon a larger scale. Confine your vision closely to the form of its precipitous sides, vaulted back, and sharp, tumultuous point, and it is of a rare sublimity. Below it curves a little bay of pure sand, the only breach in many miles of rocky wall. Here it must have been that the Norwegian dromonds pushed their thin prows into the shore; it might hold, with circumspection and in fair weather, one such casual visitor. One can but wonder whether, if a pilgrim of the eleventh century climbed the hog's back above the cove, and gazed westward over such a radiant sea as every fine morning brings, he would be moved to any delight at the soft violet reticulation on the misty buttress of Bolt Head, at the blue line of the long down by Malborough, or by the brick-coloured lichen burning through the wild thyme at his feet. If not, we have one great pleasure more than he, the satisfaction that the daily beauty of common things brings with it.

Bolt Head, alone of the four promontories I write of, is in some sort a recognised sight that people go a-touring to see. But the notoriety it enjoys is very innocent and local. It forms the end of a favourite promenade of two miles from the little town of Salcombe; parties occasionally take the steamer from Kingsbridge and picnic in Starall Bottom. But the casual visitor is almost as sure of solitude through a long day as he is at Prawle. Bolt Head is unquestionably finer than its eastern neighbour, it forms a loftier and more imposing pile; architecturally, it is much grander. Salcombe, the acquaintance of which every traveller to Bolt Head is bound to make, is a fascinating little seaport town, snugly ensconced under the lee of a hill, and built at the point where all the radiating creeks of Kingsbridge Harbour meet to join the sea. It is well worth everybody's while to take the ferry over the harbour and climb to Portlemouth village. Here, on a little table-land projecting from the hill-side, we get the finest view in all this district, if only the tide be high. The harbour winds at our feet, the seven creeks divided from each other by rounded grassy promontories; the church and streets of Kingsbridge nestle in the northern distance; opposite us, giving light and character to the hill-side, stands the white town of Salcombe, while the narrow harbour widens to the south and closes in the noble outline of Bolt Head. In Portlemouth churchyard the visitor may search, with better luck, I hope, than I did, for the epitaph of a curious criminal, a servant-maid who poisoned her master and was burned for it at Exeter in 1782, the punishment being thereafter abolished.

They told me in Salcombe that only very lately has the town had a cemetery, for it has no parish church. The dead were taken to Malborough, near the Bolt Tail, a very high point; and I could not help imagining, as I walked to Malborough, what a dreary addition it must have been to the slow and painful pageantry of death, to toil, perhaps rain or storm, four tedious miles up into this exposed and dismal village. The body died in the soft air, among the ripening lemons, blossoming aloes, and half-tropic luxuries of the sea-side town, and could no more rest among them than the spirit could—

When thou from hence away art passed,
  Every night and all,
To Whinny-muir thou comest at last,
  And Christ receive thy saule.

On sunny days a pleasanter fancy might possess the mind of the bereaved, for Malborough Church is the highest point for miles and miles, a beacon from all the parishes round; and those left behind, and scattered here and there, might rejoice that they all could see the resting-place of their dead, as separated lovers feel less lonely upon moonlight nights.

The fertility and warmth of the soil at Salcombe have long been known to botanists. As early as 1774 "a remarkable Alloe in full blow" attracted public attention to the out-of-the-way Devonshire seaport; it was exhibited "to the Inspection of the Curious" at a shilling a head, but to the quality at half-a-crown. Such sights are no longer rare enough to be worth so much money, and the visitor who is tall or insinuating may catch sight of splendid agaves in flower, lemons and citrons starring with ripe colour frames unprotected from the air, and olives and myrtles in the open corners of the gardens. Miss S. P. Fox, the historian of *Kingsbridge and its Surroundings*, whose painstaking volume reflects the manifest pleasure that its compilation gave her, gives a mass of very curious data on this subject, and, indeed, it is quite obvious that Salcombe is remarkably proud of its floral attainments. It otherwise preserves its identity mainly by its character as an excellent harbour of refuge, and by its local trade, which its isolated position, as the chief town of a district with no railway station, has made considerable. But for us its only interest remains that it is the ante-chamber to Bolt Head. The road to the latter skirts the winding shore for more than a mile, the blue waters being never quite out of sight through a trellis of greenery. The ruins of Fort Charles, down by the edge of the sea, recall to us a not uninteresting episode in the wars of the Commonwealth, since this fortress, manned and defended by Sir Edmund Fortesque and Sir Christopher Lucknor, was the last place in Devonshire to surrender to the arms of Fairfax. The Parliamentary besiegers could obtain no position on the west side of the harbour, and their batteries were therefore erected on the opposite shore, at Rickham. Every other garrison in Devon yielded, but Salcombe continued its stubborn defence for fifty days, and only capitulated at last, on May 7, 1646, on very honourable terms. The sturdy Royalist commander stipulated that he should be allowed to march to his own house with the pomp of war, and so the villages all the way to Fallowpit, ten miles off, were startled by the apparition of a defeated garrison tramping along with drums beating and colours flying, and singing, in the face of all these pestilent Roundheads, "the sweetness, mercy, majesty, and glory of their king."

Half way down the face of the cliff at Bolt Head there runs a path, called Courtenay Walk, made by the Earl of Devon for the delectation of visitors. The entrance to this path is hedged about with some of those hortatory inscriptions that put the wilful pedestrian out of temper by recalling to him the presence of society which he would fain forget. But he soon loses this uncomfortable impression, as the walk descends a little through a wilderness of honeysuckle and wild rose, until suddenly the sea opens beyond and below him. The view of the harbour mouth at his feet, with perhaps a schooner warping out to sea, and the gentle outlines of Peartree Point undulating upwards till they culminate in the Prawle, is an exceedingly bold and stimulating one. From so great a height the water below, shot through with sunlight, flashes like a beryl-stone, while the distant surface of the sea changes with every movement of the wind from deep purple to turquoise blue, from pearly grey to the very quintessence of pure white light. We turn a sharp corner, and find ourselves in face of another and still grander promontory, and this latter, separated from the headland we are on by the gully called Starall Bottom, is the veritable Bolt Head. At the little ruined cottage in the declivity the road ceases, and visitors usually go no further; as a matter of fact, however, if they pause here they have not been upon Bolt Head. A tiring climb of twenty minutes through the pathless furze-bushes brings the more enterprising traveller to the summit of the real cape, and the extended view that lies before him, with the fine insulated rock of Mew Stone in the foreground, soon convinces him that he has reached his destination. If he has time to rest quietly and survey the scene, its loveliness will soon become peopled with active life. A shoal of porpoises may pass him in a gambolling procession, and he may see the otter plunge off a low rock after his prey. The crags will be lined with gulls, skuas, and cormorants; the gannet will throw its heavy white body, with a pounce, on to an unlucky fish, and the graceful terns dart hither and thither with their ear-piercing cry. An inquisitive rabbit will scamper up to look at him, lift its ears, twinkle its nose, and scurry off in a semicircle; and as he lies basking in the sun, drinking in health and quiet of spirit with all the warm odours of the herbage, he will rejoice to realise that there are still nooks in this overworn country of ours where the birds and beasts live their own lives undisturbed.

The meaning of the word Bolt seems unexplained. Perhaps it is connected with the Icelandic *bol* (*boli*), a bull; at all events, the *t* seems to be merely a euphonic termination, for the whole manor between Bolt Head and Bolt Tail is named Bolbury. It is a desolate country, sparsely peopled, open to the storms from the south and west, and possessing none of the sweet attractiveness of South Devon scenery. To walk from Bolt Head to Bolt Tail when the wind sets at all hard from the west is a feat to be performed only with circumspection and patience. The wind blows through and through the thickest garments; to take one's bearings or glance at one's map it is needful to pull up behind some crag, and secure a footing, even under such protection, with considerable care. The sound of the waves below is utterly drowned in the shrilling and piping wind that fills the ears. A large proportion of the walk skirts land that it has been impossible to use, and which has been given over to twisted thorn-bushes and stunted furze; in places a little more protected a poor sort of corn or grass is cultivated. Seawards the view is majestic; the immense arc of waters, troubled in the wind, and flashing with multitudinous "white horses," is broken only, in very clear weather, by the atom of Eddystone Lighthouse. The iron-bound coast below standing deep in the snowy surf that boils and surges, rising and falling in rhythmic motion, now half disappears in a shower of glistening spray, now lays its blackness naked to the air; and all the time the wind, before which the very gulls and petrels veer in manifest discomfort, rings and shrieks around, playing upon the stalks of the harsh grass as on some shrill stringed instrument. Lie with closed eyelids, your face towards the sky, pillowing your head on one of the elastic tufts of thrift, and the wind will touch your forehead so like a hand that you will start in surprise, and scarcely have power to regain your feet in the teeth of the breeze. The quieter and more reasonable mode of reaching Bolt Tail is by land, from Kingsbridge or Salcombe to Malborough, and then as due west as possible for three or four miles through a land as sleepy and forgotten as any in the three kingdoms. The traveller must use his compass, or he will never find his way through these muffled and serpentine lanes, so narrow that the ferns almost touch one another at the top, and the last shoots of the brambles do positively get entangled. It is a country full of streams, clear shoots of spring coolness starting at every turn out of little mossy caverns in the wayside, keeping the ponds and tiny golden pebbles in an eternal agitation by the precipitating of their waters. Here and there among the apple-orchards a hamlet or a cluster of farm-buildings peeps out in all its beautiful decay, a mere cluster of ivy and cotoniaster, old thatch and immemorial house-leek. The men, women, and children are all away at work, and the humanity of the place is represented by a dog that barks with the pleasure of hearing a footstep, a group of stately geese, or a long row of pigeons preening their delicate necks on the ridge of an ancient barn. At last the bright line of Bigbury Bay comes into view, and we hastily descend towards the seaside village of Hope. Just before we reach it, a path to the left attracts us upwards, and rising into full view of the sea, we ascend the outer portion of Bolt Tail.

The headland is not a very lofty one, but it projects far into the sea. The extreme knot of rock which is Bolt Tail is partly separated from the mass of the headland by a valley running north and south. The view is entirely different from what we have enjoyed from the three former capes. Bolt Tail commands Bigbury Bay and the whole west coast of the country, as the Start commands Start Bay and the east coast. The furthest of all the headlands in view is Rame Head in Cornwall, and the breach in the coast directly above it is Cowsand Bay leading to Plymouth Harbour. Wembury Point and Stoke Point come next, enclosing between them the mouth of the river Yealm; then Kingston Head, covering the estuary of the Erme. Right in front stands Burrey Island, a fine mass standing out to sea in front of the Avon River; from its crags Turner contemplated the Bolt Tail with delight through a summer afternoon. Close to us, the curious object a few hundred yards from the shore, like two children's bricks set on end and tilted against one another, is Thurlestone Rock, with Thurlestone Church upon the cliff behind it, and closer still, almost at our feet, is the picturesque village of Hope. It was here that, in 1772, occurred the wreck of the *Chantiloupe*, a vessel bound for the West Indies, an incident the horrors of which have lived through a century in popular tradition. The vessel ran on to the rocks in Bigbury Bay, and, hopelessly disabled, broke to pieces in Hope Cove. Those were days when wrecking was practised in all its worst excess, and tortured with the fear of being murdered, a wealthy lady of the name of Burke put on her richest dresses, and awaited the final shock with her necklaces about her bosom and her hands covered with jewellery. It is supposed that she was related to the famous Edmund Burke, for as soon as the wreck of the *Chantiloupe* was known in London, he came down and stayed in the neighbourhood, stating that a relative of his was, he feared, on board. Most probably he never heard what her fate was. By a strange coincidence she was almost the only person thrown on shore alive, but so far from being protected by her magnificence, it attracted to her all the wreckers, who fought with one another as they tore the jewels from her neck, and cut off her fingers to secure the rings upon her swollen hands. Her body was buried in the sand, and found there with blood upon the ears and mutilated hands. The murderers could not be traced, and so the unhappy lady was buried unavenged; but tradition says that "all the men that were in it came to a bad end." *The Dreadful Alarm to the Inhabitants of Kingsbridge*, written by Henry Kingston, a Devonshire Quaker in 1700, contains some very curious particulars respecting the practice of wrecking in Bigbury Bay, but he tells no story so terrible as this of the *Chantiloupe*.

The folding lines around the mouth of the Avon remind us that our little holiday tour is over. Our modest ambition was bounded by the estuaries of the Dart and the Avon, and now we have traversed enough of the coast-line to command them both. Beyond Burrey Island we see the fishermen's boats slipping up to Aunemey and to Aweton Gifford, to meet the sweet waters of the river fresh from the copses of Loddiswell and Woodleigh. To follow them, even in imagination, would take us too far from the Four Southern Headlands of Devonshire.

E. W. G.

The History of Haconby.

It has often seemed to me that Hume and Macaulay must have been the boldest and most self-confident persons who ever lived. Each of them essayed to write a History of England. The idea is simply appalling in its vastness. Mr. Green, a far more modest person, contents himself with writing a *Short History of the English People.* Even that task, however, appears to the ordinary mind a sufficiently weighty one; but what then shall we say of the men who attempted to write Histories of the World? For my own part, being a person of narrower views and more limited horizon, I find myself rather overwhelmed at the awesome proportions which must be assumed even by the simple annals of Haconby. Indeed, I do not propose to attack any such wide subject in detail in the present paper, but merely to point out how vast is the field for study and research in the little corner of England which I have chosen as the scene of my labours. For years it has been my ambition to chronicle in full the history of Haconby; but as I see no chance of inducing any enterprising publisher to accept the manuscript of my proposed work, in twenty volumes octavo, I must be content with indicating to the readers of the CORNHILL MAGAZINE the line of argument which I would pursue if favouring circumstances were ever to render possible the happy completion of my *magnum opus.*

You naturally ask me, "Where is Haconby?" I frankly answer you, "It is nowhere." At least, I have no intention of telling you the whereabouts of the real village which answers to my representative history; and, therefore, it is quite useless for you to turn it up in an Ordnance Survey map, or to convict me of gross inaccuracy in misplacing it in the county of York. Haconby shall be, for our present purpose, a small fishing-town somewhere more or less in the neighbourhood of Flamborough Head, and it shall correspond to no real place whatsoever, in any part of the United Kingdom. For all that I wish to show you is the interest which attaches to every English town or village, be it where it may; an interest which every one of you, my prospective readers, may feel in your own pet summer resort or country quarters just as thoroughly as I feel it in the unknown original of my fictitious Haconby.

When I first began to inquire about the origin and history of my favourite little town, the earliest question which occurred to me was that respecting the mode in which the surrounding country had first taken shape beneath the waters of the ocean, and been subsequently raised to its present condition as dry land. For though this question seems to many to be quite unconnected with the history of a town or country, it is yet the one upon which the whole after-development of its annals really depends. Here, a rugged granite rock has invited the erection of a mediæval castle, the nucleus of a flourishing modern city; there, the abundance of wood and water in a nestling tertiary valley has induced the peaceful monks to found an abbey on a navigable stream, which long afterwards forms the centre of some great commercial town. In this place, the coal accumulated by decaying tree-ferns on the delta of some primæval Amazon or Nile has determined, a thousand centuries later, the gathering together of a teeming industrial population above its beds; in that place, the thirsty chalk, covered only by a thin growth of stunted grass, has condemned the bare uplands to become the sparsely inhabited pasturage for straggling flocks of sheep. The soft clay, deposited in the depths of some early sea, gives rise in one county or department to vast potteries of common earthenware; the finer siliceous beds of a neighbouring tract afford freer scope for the delicate art of a Palissy or a Wedgwood. Everywhere we see one age so linked to another that if we would understand the whole history of even a single village we must go back to the very earliest period at which its underlying rocks began to coagulate beneath the waters of the all-producing ocean.

Now, the most ancient part of Haconby was formed as a soft blue mud at the bottom of a lias sea. This mud collected slowly in the hollows of the bed, being washed in by the currents, and then confined by the rising undulations on either side. The waters about were full of varied life, many remains of which may be found embedded in the softer layers of mud even to this day. The most numerous creatures were seemingly certain small ammonites, about half-an-inch in diameter, which you can still dig out of the East Cliff by the dozen, beautifully cast in a shiny compound of copper. But then we must not forget that the hard shells of the ammonites would enable them to be preserved in the encrusting mud, while animals with soft bodies and no external shell would rapidly decay, leaving no memorial behind them. Besides these small ammonites, one or two larger species, as big as a soup-plate, also swam about in the lias seas, and their impressions may likewise be found in the East Cliff. The old folks of the village call them "St. Hilda's snakes," and tell the ancient legend of how they were petrified by the prayers of the Abbess of Whitby. But rarer remains are those of the great saurians, huge sea lizards or crocodiles, of strange shapes and hideous aspect, with murderous-looking jaws and monstrous goggle eyes. Their bones or entire skeletons occur but sparingly in the cliffs at Haconby, though they are found with tolerable frequency both at Whitby and at Lyme Regis, in Dorset, where the same beds of blue mud once more crop out at the other end of their diagonal course across central England. But as we are chiefly concerned here with Haconby above sea and not with Haconby under water, we must pass on from the consideration of its lias cliffs to the later stages [illegible] development of its *locus in quo*.

What became of Haconby in the interval between the blue mud and the chalk, history cannot at present inform us. There is no oolite and no wealden here capping the lias; but the white cliffs lie right above the soft clay, without the interposition of the strata which elsewhere mark the existence of a vast intervening period. We can only say, therefore, that at some time, ages after that with which we have just been dealing, the spot where Haconby now stands was covered by the teeming expanse of the cretaceous sea. In this sea, numbers of little jelly-like creatures swam about, as they swim about to the present day, in the deeper portions of the modern Atlantic. Their tiny shells, formed chiefly of lime, collect on the bottom as the animals die, and there compose a soft white slime, which gradually hardens into what we know as chalk. Every fragment of the chalk, seen under a microscope, consists of these little shells, either whole or mutilated; and from the days when the Haconby West Cliff was deposited, to the year of grace 1879, the same minute creatures have gone on inhabiting the deeper parts of the ocean, and forming chalk beds with their skeletons in unbroken succession. Thus the portion of the earth's crust on which our little fishing village now stands must have undergone a considerable depression between the age of the comparatively shoal-water lias creatures and the age of the deep-sea chalk-forming globigerinæ. And, of course, the chalk which the latter unconsciously built up lies on the top of the earlier lias.

There is another point of interest about the chalk, however, which cannot be passed over even in this rapid review of "the causes which led to the existence of Haconby"—to adopt the style which historians usually employ in the title of their first chapter. The little town had once a flourishing trade in gun-flints, which was of course entirely ruined by the invention of percussion-caps; and conservative fishermen on the beach will tell you even now that the country will never regain its ancient glories till we abandon our modern heresies of breechloaders, pin-fires, and ironclads, and return once more to the trusty flintlock and the wooden walls of old England. Now, where did the flint come from? From the chalk beds, of course; but, again, how did it get there? Well, in the same sea where swam the globigerinæ, whose calcareous shells have made the white cliffs of perfidious Albion, there swam also an almost equally numerous clan of humbly-organised creatures, with a somewhat different outer coat consisting of siliceous materials. These little animals died in due course of nature, like their neighbours the globigerinæ; and the shells of both fell together into the soft mud at the sea bottom. But as the flinty substance has a natural attraction for all particles of its own sort, which unite together to form a crystalline mass, it happens that the siliceous shells, or rather their broken constituents, slowly moved together through the still plastic chalk-mud, just as the sugar in currant-jelly (to use Mr. Herbert Spencer's familiar illustration) often collects into little crystalline lumps, through the attraction of like particles diffused among the semi-liquid compound. That is why the flint runs in veins or nodules through its white bed, and why it assumes the same appearance as if it had been forced in molten streams into the interstices of a yielding substance. When the flint was formed, the chalk still remained a soft and plastic slime, like that which our dredges bring up to-day from the lowest depths of the Atlantic basin; and the flinty particles which it enclosed gradually gathered together wherever a centre of attraction happened to collect the scattered siliceous matter in its neighbourhood.

At length the period arrived when Haconby was to rise above the level of the sea, and assume for the first time its proud position as *terra firma*. I need hardly say that this change in its circumstances took place at a later period than that of the cretaceous system; or else we could have had no chalk at Haconby. A long narrow line of eruptive igneous rocks, running north-westward from a point a little beyond the town, marks the centre of the elevating influence by which the surrounding country was raised from the bed of the German Ocean. We need not suppose, like the earlier geologists, that this upheaval took place by any sudden convulsion of nature; it is far more probable that the land rose slowly by gradual lateral pressure, in the same way as many parts of the earth are now rising, inch by inch, in so leisurely a manner that whole years are needed for the safe establishment of the fact. On either side of this central eruptive range the chalk wolds fall away to the river valleys; while the few later deposits, being almost all composed of gravel or mud from fresh-water lakes or streams, and occupying the present hollows of the older strata, show clearly that they have been formed at a date subsequent to the elevation of the plain above sea-level. Thus we may conclude that the site of Haconby became dry land at some period later than the chalk, but earlier than the tertiary epoch. It may, of course, have suffered more than one depression of level at a later date; but of these we have at least no certain record.

When the cliffs were first raised to their present height, the centre of elevation lay in such a direction that the East Cliff now rises somewhat higher than its western neighbour; and thus the lias is exposed in the former place, topped by a white cap of chalk, while the chalk alone rises above the beach in the latter. No doubt, in the earliest days of its existence as dry land, the spot where Haconby now stands lay at a little distance inland, and the surrounding plains stretched in a comparative level on every side. In the technical language of geologists (which we all detest), it formed "a plain of marine denudation." But as the waves from outside, in the gulf which has now widened into the German Ocean, beat upon its edge, cliffs were gradually formed, at first very low, but rising higher and higher as the elevation proceeded from year to year. Meanwhile the rainfall on its surface was beginning to produce very marked inequalities of level. It so happened that the softest chalk of the neighbourhood lay in a belt stretching back from the spot where the village is now built; were it otherwise, there could have been no

Haconby, for the town owes its origin, as we shall see hereafter, to the little river Line, which here falls into the sea.* The Wolds, now so undulating in their contour, must at first have presented a fairly level surface of chalk; but as the water fell upon the face of the newly-formed land, it began to flow off in the slight depressions which must here and there occur even in the flattest ground. Most of the drainage cut itself channels through the chalk toward the future valley of the Ouse, near York; but some of it ran off from the neighbouring oolite hills toward the Esk at Whitby; and some made minor streamlets and dales for itself into the sea direct. Now, the soft belt of chalk behind Haconby naturally gave rise to one of these lesser rivers, the Line; and thus we are brought a little closer to the real origin of our modern town.

The young Line, a nascent streamlet, collected all the waters of a little hollow on the Wolds, and poured them at once into the sea. But as it did so it carried away, atom by atom, through trickling hills, the soft chalk of the neighbouring slopes, and thus formed very slowly a distinct valley through their midst. On either side of the river itself and its tiny tributaries the hills rise to exactly equal heights, and stretch away in a moderately level undulating surface, whose summits mark the original "plain of marine denudation." But as we look at them we can easily see that the valley, so to speak, has formed the hills, and not the hills the valley; that the diversity of surface is entirely due to the eating away of the primitive plain by the river and the rainfall.

Nor is this all. The Line in its lower course has cut through the whole thickness of the chalk bed, and reached the underlying lias. Thus the open part of the valley, near its mouth, consists entirely of blue clay, on which trees flourish greatly; while the upper part consists only of chalk covered, as usual, by a thin soil, supporting no vegetation more important than grass or heather. Gravel-beds of later date, deposited by the river, cover the lias in the lower portion. And now we can clearly see how the previous geological history of the country has necessarily shaped the whole later annals of Haconby. The essential facts about the site of my little fishing-village are simply these: that it consists of a small open lias valley, well-wooded and fertile, backed up by high wolds of comparatively barren chalk, and formed itself by the debouchment of a short river, navigable for two or three miles from the sea by very small vessels. From these simple facts all its subsequent or human history follows as a matter of course. Our annalists are too apt to compose their chronicles as though the whole story were entirely dependent upon men and women alone. They neglect altogether the far more important previous question of physical circumstances and natural position. How can we pretend to write a history of England if we omit the primordial facts that iron is found at Birmingham and Wolverhampton, but not in Essex and Hants; or that the Thames flows by London eastward, while the Mersey opens straight to the west, and conveys the cotton of America direct into the very midst of the rich Manchester coalfield?

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* I need hardly warn the reader once more that he will find no river of this name in Yorkshire, though several others with names formed from the same Keltic root occur in that and neighbouring counties. While keeping true to general principles, I have been careful to avoid making Haconby a recognisable place.

But my business is to sketch rapidly the history of Haconby, not to find fault with histories of England. I hope to show you in the sequel how deeply these peculiarities of position have affected the destinies of the little town—how the price and excellence of the mutton depend largely upon the neighbouring Wolds; how the buildings and antiquities are the necessary result of the various races who could not fail to inhabit the neighbourhood; and how the very name of Haconby is a sort of foregone conclusion from the position of the little river. At least, had you described the site of the town, and then told me that its name was Penrith or Doddington, I think I could have said at once that you must be mistaken. Scandinavians, not Welsh or English, *must* have been the final possessors of Haconby.

Few historical allusions with regard to Haconby occur in the great geological record between the period of its elevation into dry land, and the first arrival of human inhabitants upon its lonely shores. Only a few river-shells mark its condition during the tertiary period, though bones of the rhinoceros and the mammoth, belonging to a still later age, may occasionally be found in beds of superficial gravel near the sea. During the latter part of this long epoch, we may suppose that the general appearance of the shore and the Wolds did not very widely differ from that which it presents at the present day. Then, as now, the German Ocean roared in winter against the white cliffs, and undermined the soft beds of lias with its breakers. Then, as now, the high chalk moors were covered only with scanty herbage, and the little river ran through a fringe of woodland to the sea. But man had not yet made his home among the dales of the east coast, and a dense forest clad the whole of the open valley, while strange wild beasts roamed over the country, and made their homes in the jungle by the seashore. At first their forms were widely different from those of any living creatures in any part of our known world, but as time went on they began to approximate more and more closely in type to the animals which now inhabit the equatorial zone; and by the period when the superficial gravel, which I have mentioned was deposited, the fauna was simply that of our own tropics, with necessary alterations to suit a more northern habitat. Besides the mammoth and the rhinoceros, primitive horses, bison, and deer roamed over the broad uplands; wolverines sought their prey among the forests of the lias valley; ancestral bears and lions prowled about the jungle, and hyænas made night hideous along the tangled banks of the Line. Even the hippopotamus raised his huge back among the reeds and sedges of the swampy river.

Meanwhile, man had been slowly growing up among the tropical forests of the vast European and Asiatic continent, of which Great Britain still formed a continuous part—for the sea had not yet severed the cliffs of Dover from their white sisters at Cape Blancnez. Where exactly he first made his appearance, or what were the causes which led to his evolution, we need hardly attempt to decide in treating of so humble a theme as the history of Haconby. We may take it for granted that men at length existed, and that they made their way into Britain, and finally into the valley of the Line, from the south-east. More than that, it would be both hazardous and needless for us to guess.

These earliest human inhabitants of Haconby, who have left their rude weapons among the river gravel or on the hardened floor of the seaward caves in which they dwelt, were black-skinned savages, lower in development than the lowest races of mankind now in existence. Their features probably resembled those of the Australian black-fellows; but they had larger and coarser jaws, in which their great canine teeth were widely placed, so as to allow room in each row to receive the projecting fangs of the opposite set. Their foreheads, too, were apparently low and brutal-looking, while they planted their feet less firmly, and stood less erect than even the naked Andaman Islanders of our own day. Altogether a more sorry set of colonists than those who first took possession of Haconby you could hardly wish to see.

Entering the peninsula of Britain at its broad south-eastern isthmus, the primitive black men pushed their way along the coast of the German Ocean, then a gulf like the Baltic in our own day, and fed themselves as they went with mussels and periwinkles, or with the flesh of animals which they killed with their simple weapons. They had no implements of iron or copper; nothing but rude knives and spear-heads of flint. Even these were not ground and polished like the beautifully finished greenstone hatchets from the West Indies which may be seen in any of our museums, but were mere rough-hewn ends of flint, chipped by a few dexterous side-blows into the rude semblance of a knife. Anything more simple in the way of man's handicraft can scarcely be conceived, so much so that many inexperienced people who see for the first time the weapons from the Haconby caverns refuse to believe that they are really products of human art. But those who have compared them with others found in like situations elsewhere cannot doubt for a moment that they do veritably bear the genuine impress of the hand of man.

The black-fellows crept cautiously along the shore, we may be sure; for the forests of the interior were thickly stocked with savage wild beasts—lions, bears, wolverines, and other natural enemies of our race. But generation after generation, as their numbers increased, fresh colonies must have set out northward and westward, a family or two at a time, in search of the caves in which they found safety from the attacks of their forestine foes. Crossing the low-lying tertiary jungle-lands, where Essex and the East Anglian counties now stand, and passing through the like country of the fen district and the Humber valley, they reached at length the Yorkshire Wolds and the mouth of the Line. The caverns of the West Cliff, which they dug out by means of horn splinters, offered a capital shelter for a little knot of families, and the black-fellows settled down quietly at Haconby as their home. The wooded valley of the little stream and the open moorland in the rear supplied them with game in abundance—elk, urus, bison, and red-deer; and here they lived for a vast and unknown number of centuries, chipping the flints of the cliff for their spears and arrows, gnawing the bones of animals and flinging away the remnants on the floor of their caves, decorating themselves with drilled ammonites and fossil sea-urchins from the neighbouring shore, and fishing in the Line with rude hooks of bone, almost too obvious, one would say, to deceive even the most unsophisticated of primæval trout. On the floor of their rock-shelters one may find to the present day these relics of their industry, matted together by earth and water, but still testifying clearly to the mode of life led by the earliest colonists. I have spent many a pleasant summer day in digging out the remains and examining their contents.

When first the black-fellows reached Haconby the climate of northern England was far more severe than it is in our own time. The animals which then roamed over the Wolds, though belonging to types now essentially tropical, were adapted by their covering of hair to an almost Arctic winter. The warm tertiary period, with its luxuriant fauna and flora, was now over, and our hemisphere was passing through one of its intermittent chilly cycles. From the time when the black-fellows settled in the caverns by the Line the climate grew colder and colder from year to year. The great glacial age had already set in; the polar ice was creeping slowly southward, and driving the wild animals before it towards the equatorial zone. In each successive winter the snow lay deeper and deeper upon the Wolds, while the glaciers extended lower and lower down among the valleys of the distant Pennine chain. The ice was pushing not only the lions, bears, and mammoths, but also the poor black-fellows, out of northern Europe.* Whether the Haconby colony moved southward before the steady advance of winter, whether it reached some warmer land and there exterminated the earlier settlers, or was exterminated by them, or whether it died out for want of food and through sheer freezing to death, we cannot now discover. But at least an age succeeded during which Britain ceased to be a home for human beings. Huge glaciers spread over all the higher mountain ranges, while perpetual snow covered the low-lying lands. For many centuries the black-fellows had dwelt unmolested in their caves; for many centuries more England became a desolate and uninhabited country, like the ice-bound continent which now stretches around the southern pole. Thus another gap once more occurs in the fragmentary annals of early Haconby.

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* I adopt as most probable the modern theory that palæolithic man was really inter-glacial if not pre-glacial.

It is probable that many changes of temperature took place during this great ice age; and men may perhaps have occupied the valley several times in succession, to be driven back again time after time, at intervals of some ten thousand years, by the returning cycle of cold. But of all these changes we have little direct evidence, and we can only say that man seems first to have dwelt here while the glacial period was beginning, and to have been dispossessed when it reached its greatest height.

As the ice came, so it went. Receding slowly northward once more, when the altered position of the earth brought our hemisphere under the renewed action of direct sunlight, the snow melted more and more with every summer, while the glaciers shortened from season to season, until at last they finally disappeared. They have left their marks, however, on every Welsh or Scotch hill-side, ice-scratches on the solid granite rock, worn like a millstone, and those heaps of boulder refuse known to Swiss mountaineers as moraines. As the snow cleared off the ground, man returned again to northern Europe. Following close upon the receding icefields, fresh colonies pushed on into the now habitable forests, and fixed their homes in the vacant valleys. The land which they entered remained the same, indeed, in general features, but vast changes had come over its inhabitants. The lion, the bear, the rhinoceros, and the mammoth were gone, and man could now hold undisputed sway over the woodlands around.

The new generation of men who took up their abode in Haconby, and who raised the huge mounds, or *hows*, on the Wold in the rear, were a very different race from the black-fellows of the ancient caves. Man had been developing and improving in his southern haunts during the long ages while the ice had been covering the mountain tops of Wales and Scotland, and while the primitive race had been dwelling unimproved in northern climes. The people who now settled on the banks of the Line were more like Lapps or Esquimaux than like Australian natives. Their skin was a lighter yellowish brown; their features were broader and more civilised in look; their jaws had less of the savage canine character; and they walked with firmer step, like acknowledged lords of the creation. They had learnt many new arts during the long interval of absence. They had tamed the dog and brought him back with them to their new homes. They had ceased merely to chip their flint weapons, and had acquired the practice of grinding them into far more finished shapes. They had discovered the manufacture of pottery, and they could make pretty bowls and pipkins with ornamental designs. Further, they had advanced so far in religious ideas that they buried their dead chieftains in tombs, and placed beside the corpse a few simple articles which the spirit might need in the other world.

The yellow men of this second, or polished stone age, lived for an unknown length of time beside the banks of the Line. The chief records of their existence are to be found in the great burial barrows which they raised upon the Wolds. Many of these have been opened—some, alas! have been destroyed by Vandals in the outer shape of English squires—and they show a gradual and steady progress in civilisation from the time of the second settlement till the date of the British invasion. The yellow men were content at first with weapons of ground flint and other ornamental stones; but at a later period they learnt the art of making bronze, and implements of that material are found in all their newest tombs, often mixed with the more ancient stone hatchets. The men of the second stone and bronze ages did not live, like their predecessors, by hunting alone. They kept in a domesticated state oxen, sheep, goats, and pigs. They cultivated wheat and barley, and they crushed the grains into a coarse meal. Moreover, they probably wore rough linen clothing instead of or in addition to the skins of animals, which the black-fellows of the earliest age used to sew rudely together with needles of drilled bone.

The later yellow men, who used bronze, and who built the biggest of all the tumuli, had advanced to a much higher degree of civilisation than is indicated by these facts. They made better and handsomer pottery; they bartered with more eastern nations for gold, and glass beads, and amber from the Baltic; and they were much more exclusively pastoral and agricultural than their ancestors of the polished stone period. But in all three cases we can see very clearly why the valley of the Line was chosen by the successive inhabitants for their homes rather than the open wold behind. It offered them all wood and water, warmth and shelter, fish from the river, and game from the forest. It supplied soft material on the hill-side, in which the black-fellows might excavate their caves, and flint from which they might chip their flake-knives. It afforded timber to the yellow men for their wattled huts, and pasturage on the fertile lowland for their flocks and herds. In short, to them all, as to their successors in later days, it was one of the sites evidently predestined by nature for the habitation of man.

At last, however, the days of the yellow men were numbered. The white Aryan race of Central Asia, growing too numerous for its native tableland, began to send out colonies southward and westward in search of more fruitful homes. One great colony, which spoke the Sanskrit language, poured over the Himalayas into India, and founded the Hindu kingdoms and the Brahmanical religion. Another body, some of whom we call the Kelts, entered the vast peninsula of Europe, and began to usurp the land of the yellow men, whom they gradually drove into the coldest and most inhospitable regions, such as Lapland, Finland, the Basque country, and Wales. A branch of this Keltic horde crossed over the narrow seas into the island of Britain—for the former peninsula had long since been severed from the mainland by the eating away of its south-eastern isthmus—and became the Ancient Britons of history books, and the Welsh of our own day. We have no record of the struggle by *which* they dispossessed the yellow men whom they found in the country:

we only know that they soon spread over almost the whole island, leaving a small remnant of the primitive inhabitants in the southern half of Wales, where, under the name of Silures, they lingered on till the time of the Roman invasion, and probably much later. Indeed, we can hardly doubt that their blood has mingled to some extent with that of the Kelts throughout the whole of Britain, and that most modern Englishmen, through intermarriage with Keltic families, preserve some remote trace of either the Euskarian or the Turanian nationality.

When the Welshmen took South Britain, they took Haconby as part of their territory. Welshmen, I say, because the few Keltic names still preserved in the district belong to the Cymric and not to the Gaelic dialect. But no persons who have ever lived at Haconby have left fewer memorials of their presence than these same rude Welsh. Except for the name of the river Line, which means *smooth* in Keltic, and half-a-dozen similar titles affixed to hills or other natural features in the neighbourhood, we might almost have doubted whether a Welsh colony ever inhabited Haconby. There are no remains of the "Ancient British" period, except a great earthwork on the Wolds, and none of their coins or other relics have ever been picked up. Even when the Romans conquered Britain for a while, and reduced the Welshmen to a temporary and sullen obedience, the valley of the Line lay too remote from their great centres to preserve many traces of their occupation. A few silver coins of Severus, it is true, were discovered many years since in a pot under the foundations of a house in Silver Street—and local gossip, ignoring the real derivation of the name from the Viking chieftain Sölvar, attributes its origin to this trivial circumstance. A copper piece or so of later emperors has also been dug out from the ruins of the old Welsh earthwork, and I have been fortunate enough to secure them for my own little private museum. But Haconby lay too much on one side of the great Roman road, which led from the provincial capital at York to Gateshead on the Tyne, to attract much attention; for the road avoided the wolds and moors, and kept a straight and level course through the low-lying valley. Probably a great landowner had a villa of his own in the pleasant little seaward dale of the Line, which villa the English invaders afterwards burnt as unholy; but no local antiquary has yet succeeded in discovering any of its encaustic tiles or marble mosaics. As for the mass of the people, they remained good barbarous Welshmen as before, paying taxes and rendering labour as serfs, but not even learning the language of their conquerors, and living their old life as fishermen and cultivators after their old fashion.

Towards the end of the Roman occupation, I suppose the people of Haconby, like the other Britons, got Christianised; but upon this point I have nothing but conjecture and universal belief to go upon.

Once more, however, Haconby is doomed to a change of masters. The peaceful Welshmen, who fished with their coracles in the sea by the mouth of the Line, found themselves involved in trouble not very long after the Romans had withdrawn from the country. Fancy India deserted by the English, and you can form some idea of Britain deserted by its Italian administrators. A race of hardy pirates, sailing in formidable long-ships, began to swoop down upon the defenceless coast from the north-east. These heathen Englishmen, who now came to treat the Christian Welsh as the earlier Welshmen had treated the yellow Euskarians, were also offshoots of the Aryan family. But they had long forgotten their common origin, and they despised the Welsh as Christian landsmen and ex-slaves of the decadent Roman. Reduced to helplessness by the long Italian domination, the Briton was no match for the English sailor; his light coracle dared not face the English keels. At first the invaders only established themselves in the islands off the Kentish shore; but soon they conquered Kent itself, and then the south coast, Essex, and East Anglia. One great body landed at the mouth of the Humber, and settled down on the level tertiary flats of Holderness and among the chalk combes of the Wolds. To their kingdom of Deifyr—Latinised into Deira—Haconby belonged. They were true Anglians, these men of the Yorkshire kingdom; that is to say, Englishmen of the English, not Saxons like the conquerors of the south coast, nor Jutes like the Kentish colonists and the men of Wight. The land which they seized as their own had been the most civilised of all Roman Britain, comprising as it did the great low-lying valley of the Ouse, the widest open river-plain in our whole island. So it is no wonder that it grew at once into the most powerful of the seven or eight kingdoms into which England—as the conquerors called their strip of south-eastern Britain—was then divided.

They did not kill off all the Welshmen whom they found in the country, as I at least suppose. It is true Mr. Freeman, truculent Teuton that he is, would have us believe that every Briton throughout the whole land was slaughtered as mercilessly as the *Chronicle* tells us Ælla and Cissa slaughtered the Britons of Anderida or Pevensey. Mr. Freeman, in short, would secure the purity of our Teutonic blood at the expense of our ancestors' good fame. But for my part, the mere fact that every hill and river about Haconby bears a Keltic name is sufficient proof to me that many Welshmen, or at least Welshwomen, must have been spared as slaves by the English invaders. How else could the new-comers have learnt the Welsh words for the streams and wolds around them? In spite of Mr. Freeman's wrath and scorn, I shall continue humbly to believe that many a Christian Welsh slave lived on as a tiller of the Haconby valley for his heathen English lords long after the colonisation, and that many a Welshwoman became the mother of half-caste children whose dark-haired descendants still live by the thousand in our midst. The ground for this belief I hope to detail at some future time.

Be this as it may, however, an English colony was certainly settled at Haconby, and they gave it the English name of Brantwarabyrig, or the Bury of the men of Brant—just as Canterbury, or Cantwarabyrig, is the town of the men of Kent. This word *Brant* I take to be the earlier Keltic name of the town, though the president of the Haconby Archæological Society—a local antiquary of much note, and as formidable a person in his way as Mr. Freeman himself—has strenuously combated my view in a learned pamphlet, wherein he maintains that the name is really Ibero-Phœnician and occurs in forty-seven other sites, from Cornwall to Cape Coast Castle inclusive. Into this abstruse question I must decline to enter here, and content myself with informing you that the word Brantwarabyrig itself has come down to us through the pages of the great historian Bæda—the "Venerable Bede," as our ancestors called him a century since, much as though the monk of Jarrow had been a modern Anglican archdeacon. Haconby, of course, is a far later Danish name; and the change is one with which we shall have to deal further on. Bæda's notice is the first distinct mention of our town in human history—which shows us very instructively how short a way back human history goes. The first fifteen volumes of my unpublished *Chronicles of Haconby* are concluded before we reach the period at which Bæda saw the light.

How Deifyr and the neighbouring principality of Beornric coalesced into the kingdom of Northumbria: how its king Eadwine was converted to the Christian faith, and all his folk after him: how the heathens struggled hard to beat down the new creed, but all in vain: how Rome and Iona fought for the supremacy in the young Church, and how Rome won the day: all these things, which also Bæda tells us, belong to the history of England rather than to that of Haconby, and have been better described by others than I can describe them to you. Nor shall I detail in full the old writer's story of the rise of the great abbey at Haconby itself—or rather, I should say, at Brantwarabyrig—founded by a prince of the Northumbrian royal family, and long a mixed community of nuns and monks. This part of my subject is familiar already to many of us; and I must hasten on to the last great event in the early annals of Haconby, if I am ever to conclude even this hurried sketch.

For three centuries Englishmen had lived and laboured in the valley of the Line. For more than two of these, the rude wooden Christian Abbey had looked down upon the cultivated dale at its feet. But at last a new and terrible plague began to burst upon the quiet and peaceful Englishmen of Brantwarabyrig. New pirates swarmed over the German Ocean, as the heathen English had swarmed three hundred years before. Heathens again, Teutons, all but English too, the fresh roamers came from the self-same land whence the Jutes and Saxons had set sail for the conquest of Britain. They ravaged all the English coasts, north, south, east, and west; but most of all, they turned against the nearest shores to Denmark, those of Northumbria. The Danes became the terror of the good folk in Brantwarabyrig; and many a vain attempt the townsmen made to procure aid from York, from Lincoln, from the great West-Saxon overlord in the south. But every effort was useless. Roads were few and bad; organisation there was none; the West-Saxon kings, in breaking the separate independence of the lesser principalities, had broken down the sole chance of defence. There was nothing worth calling an army; only a rude levy of the freemen. Every town and every valley had to fight for itself single-handed while it could, and to make what terms it might on its own account when resistance became impossible.

The Danes were not long in discovering the pleasant little dale of Brantwarabyrig. A Viking chief named Haco, with a following of rough heathens, made a descent upon the town one stormy autumn day, about the middle of the ninth century. He drew up his vessels into the Line, landed his pirates before the levy could be got together, fell upon the men in their houses or shops, and massacred half the population before sundown. In the evening, as the monks and nuns cowered in their chapel, Haco set on fire the wooden building and burnt it to the ground, for your Dane hated shavelings more even than he hated all other Christians. Then the band took up their quarters on the river, annexed the town as their own, made slaves of the women and children, and gave the name of their leader to the new colony. Henceforth, Brantwarabyrig bears the name of Haconby, just as neighbouring towns commemorate the deeds of Grim at Grimsby, and of Harold at Harroby. So, also, in somewhat later days, another Haco left his memorials in Normandy at Haconville and Hacqueville.* These strange verbal relics often tell of historical facts which otherwise would have been buried in utter oblivion.

The rest of my story I shall not tell—it must wait till the twenty volumes are published in full. The twelve Danish lawmen who ruled in Haconby even till Domesday was compiled; the accurate account in that great survey of all the pigs, ploughs, villains, and cottars in the parish; the building of the Norman abbey, whose ruins now face the sea on the East Cliff; the erection of the slender Early Pointed church; the part played by the town through the Middle Ages and the modern period, down to the disfranchisement of the borough for gross bribery and corruption at the time of the last Reform Act: all these facts I must pass over as too lengthy for present narration. I have done enough if I have suggested to you in a general way what I regard as the proper method for studying the History of Haconby.

And now—as the preachers say—one word before I close, with regard to this method itself. Many people will think that my chronicle of Haconby is a queer jumble of geology, archæology, and ordinary history. Whenever I go down to occupy my favourite lodgings in Silver Street for a summer holiday, I take constant walks with my friends the local geologist, the local antiquarian, and the local attorney. I observe, if I ever chance to speak with interest about the abbey or the church to my friend the geologist, he evidently regards me as insomuch an unscientific and crotchety person; if I show curiosity before my friend the antiquarian with respect to the dip of the strata beneath the West Cliff, he clearly considers me as foolishly rambling; and if I diverge from the charter of Edward I. with my friend the attorney, to examine the marks of river action on the mouth of the valley, he obviously regards my pursuit as childish and ridiculous. But it seems to me, in my simplicity, that all these kinds of knowledge are equally important in giving us a correct picture of the world in which we live; and that we cannot rightly understand any one part of our surroundings without taking into consideration both the other parts and the previous conditions of the whole. Every English village contains as many, or nearly as many, points of interest as Haconby; and any one who takes the trouble to fill in the details to the plan here sketched out will find himself amply rewarded. For though all my facts are fictitious, I hope that all my principles are approximately true.

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* Here, and in many other instances, I owe my acknowledgments once for all to Mr. Isaac Taylor's admirable little volume on *Words and Places*.

G. A.

Shakspere's Fools.*

THERE is an increasing tendency at the present day to study the works of any great author in connection with his life and its surroundings, and this method of criticism has of late been applied, most successfully, to Shakspere. We are no longer content to think of characters merely in connection with the drama or story in which they play their parts; but we look upon them as parts of their author's life-work, reflecting his inner nature at different times and under varying circumstances. It is the object of this paper to apply this mode of treatment, in part at least, to Shakspere's Fools or Clowns. That they differ both in conception and execution no one can dispute, and it might seem at first sight as if this difference were merely owing to the exigencies of the plot or story in question; but a more careful study of these characters will show that there must be something far deeper than this, that the Fools reflect the mind of their great originator at different stages, and that Shakspere could no more have given us Lear's Fool when he first began to write plays than he would have introduced characters like Speed and Launce into the works of his maturer genius.

The traditions of the drama, young as it then was, added to his natural inclination, had induced Shakspere from the very first to make the Clowns or Fools important characters. He saw that tragedy and comedy are not separate and distinct, but run into and overlap each other, and that the humour which is the foreground of the one becomes the background of the other; whilst tragedy, with more serious and solemn elements in the front, has its background of humour more or less ghastly or ironical. He saw, too, that the ludicrous is often strangely allied to the sorrowful, that true humour has always a dash of pathos combined with it, and that the spring of laughter is generally very near to the fountain of tears; touch the one, and, by a slight transition, the other may be evoked. It has been well said that "man is the only animal that laughs and weeps, for he is the only animal that is struck with the difference between things as they are and things as they ought to be." Shakspere saw all this and more; he saw that man's best wisdom is often folly, that folly may show sparks of sense, and that many a truth may be uttered in jest. How could all this be better expressed than by a Fool, a half-witted jester, sometimes more than half-witted, and using his folly "but as a stalking horse" behind which to shoot his wit?

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* The substance of a paper read before the New Shakspere Society on February 14, 1879.

We need not here inquire as to the origin of the Fool in the English drama. I feel convinced that he was to some extent the descendant of the Vice in the old Moralities. But, besides this parentage, the Fool was to a great extent drawn from real life—from those professional jesters who were to be found in every great household in the middle ages, and who were certainly not extinct in Shakspere's time.

In my arguments and illustrations I cannot possibly confine myself to the true professional jesters that Shakspere has given us. About Lear's Fool, Touchstone, Feste, and the Fool in *All's Well that Ends Well*, there can be no doubt; they never wore aught but motley, and we never think of any one of them without his cap and bells and bauble. These, however, were all the retainers of some prince or great personage; and when there was no such character in the play, or when it was not convenient or suitable to link the jester to one of great social position, Shakspere did not scruple to give the Fool's part to an ordinary domestic servant. So we have the two Dromios, Speed, and Launce, the Clown in *Measure for Measure*, and Launcelot in the *Merchant of Venice*, though the latter, after he leaves his first master the Jew, attains to something like his proper position and dignity, since Bassanio orders him a livery "more guarded than his fellows';"—if not motley, certainly something very like it. But, whilst extending the title of Fool to such servants as Launce and Launcelot, I would not grant it generally to the country clowns introduced into some of the plays, and who, though ludicrous enough, are not important characters, and do not fill the place of the professional jester.

As Shakspere developed in mind and art, he showed this development in depicting his Fools as much as in aught else. He gave more character and individuality to them, and bestowed more pains on minor touches. He made them more necessary to the plot or story, and thus linked them more closely to the greater creations of his genius. He made them more philosophic, and at the same time more tender and pathetic—in short, more thoroughly human—giving to one at least an intensity of tragic pathos never equalled before or since.

He began with "mirth and youthful jollity," reckless good humour and abounding animal spirits, a love of fun and broad jesting almost boyish in its nature; he then took little or no thought for the deeper mysteries of life, or of the links that bind wit and humour to our higher nature. Later on this boyish mirth was chastened; it became clearer and brighter, but more human, more hearty, more manly in short; throwing out arms on every side, and embracing the whole of this complex existence of ours. Then when "a damp fell o'er his path," irony in its truest sense took the place of youthful merriment and manly humour; laughter became to him part of life's tragedy, and at times even added horror to it. It needed the peace and repose of the later years to bring back some of the early joyousness which peeps out once and again as the end draws nigh, especially in *A Winter's Tale;* and it is pleasant and profitable for us to know that, after all the sadness of life's dreariest and darkest hours, the light of honest, hearty mirth may shine again. "There's pippins and cheese to come."

In several of the early plays there are characters which by a very slight effort might be included amongst the Fools. Such a one is Costard in *Love's Labour's Lost;* but he is by no means such a fool as he looks, and manages in the end to outwit that most magnificent of euphuists, Don Adrian Armado. Costard, too, has little or nothing in common with the professional or household jester. In the *Comedy of Errors* the twin Dromios are nearer to the mark—they at any rate are servants; but their position as such outweighs anything they do as the jesters of the piece. What can be said of the servants in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona* will apply in some measure to these also.

No one will dispute that the two Dromios are very early work, and that much of the fun they arouse is due almost entirely to the oddity of the situations in which they are placed. Unlike Launce and the later Fools, they frequently talk in verse, and quite as much amusement is got out of the beatings they receive as from aught they say. Of the two, Dromio of Syracuse is much the more humorous, and he far oftener talks in prose than does his brother; and, as is the case also in the *Two Gentlemen of Verona*, the sharper Fool is servant to the simpler and more straightforward master. It is from him, and not from the Ephesian, that we get anything like real humour; and the description of the kitchen-wench, which prepares us for the more humorous and somewhat more refined catalogue of charms in the case of Launce's beloved, is given to the Syracusan. He has, too, a greater power of enjoying the game of cross purposes which all are engaged in; and, above all, he takes his thrashing with a better grace. In short, Dromio of Syracuse corresponds to Launce, and Dromio of Ephesus to Speed, but the twins are inferior to their successors.

Speed and Launce are the characters that may be taken as the representative Fools of the first period. In the play these clownish servants serve their purpose far better than a professional jester, who must have been a retainer of the Duke's, for we need the pair to reflect and contrast with their masters. And a well-matched couple they are, though wanting the striking individuality of the later Fools. They pair off with their masters and make the contrast all the more marked; Speed has much more of the professed wit about him, and contrasts with his simple-minded master, just as the duller, more kindly, more foolish Launce is a foil for the shrewdness of Proteus. They differ as wit and humour differ; Launce is the prototype of his greater successors just by reason of his greater powers as a humourist.

It is in the comic part of this play, though not one of the very earliest, that we see what Mr. Furnivall has so aptly designated Shakspere's "young-manishness;" a pleasure in the mere play of wit, a love of fun pure and simple, comical surprises and grotesque incidents: for instance, how we laugh at the sharp-witted Speed kept hard at work spelling out the catalogue of the charms of Launce's sweetheart, whilst his master is kept waiting, and he thereby earns a thrashing! There is more of wit than humour in Speed's reasons for knowing Valentine to be in love:—"To wreathe your arms like a malecontent; to relish a love-song like a robin redbreast; to walk alone, like one that had the pestilence; . . . to watch like one that fears robbing; to speak puling like a beggar at Hallowmas." He can turn and twist words and ideas; but his wit is, after all, only skin deep. There is far greater depth in the character of Launce, dull-witted though he is at times; he is kindly and tries to do his best, even when he loses the pet dog that was sent to Sylvia, and substitutes his own cross-grained nondescript cur. One cannot help fancying that he chuckles quietly over Crab's delinquencies; and he certainly loved the dog, or he would have drowned it long before. What a picture Launce gives us of him—a dog that could part from all his friends without shedding a tear, when a Jew would have wept at the parting! This is all very excellent fooling, but it is not humour of the highest order. Neither of these worthies has any refinement or fine feeling; many of their jokes are coarse, and it is the sense of high animal spirits that makes all so enjoyable.

Neither Speed nor Launce has anything to do with the working out of the story, and, except for the hearty laughter they afford us, they might be omitted, and others put in their place. The only artistic reason for their existence is, that they may serve as contrasts to their masters, and so make up a quartette; the contrast between each master and man having some slight resemblance to that between Don Quixote and his trusty squire.

But we must leave these earlier productions, and pass into a somewhat loftier region. Youth, with its joys and sorrows, has passed away; manhood takes up the tale, and the heart rebounds to a steadier strength. The fun and merriment are still there, though somewhat chastened and subdued; there are broader views of life, and consequently more of real humour, and that humour more life-like, more truly human. Launcelot is the first figure that meets us; very like his namesake of the past, but yet a different being.

The points of similarity between Launce and Launcelot are both numerous and striking; they both have a trick of soliloquising, and picture to themselves an imaginary scene, with actors and dialogue; but whilst Launce recalls the parting from his family, and the lamentations of his afflicted relatives, Launcelot invents an argument between his conscience and the foul fiend, and at the end reconciles himself to conscience by considering Shylock as "the very devil incarnal." The imaginative power, at any rate, is greater in Launcelot's case. Both of these worthies dwell on their somewhat peculiar relations with their parents; and though Launcelot does banter his "sand-blind" father, it is done not unkindly. They both, like wiser people than themselves, have a weakness for long words, and make sad havoc of them, and, "for a tricksy word, defy the matter." But Launcelot is not a mere reproduction of his namesake—he has marked characteristics of his own, his self-importance being one of the most striking. Like Touchstone, though far inferior to him, he sets up for a man of judgment—one whose opinion is worth having; and his banter of Jessica shows off his superior knowledge and attainments. His self-sufficiency is admirably shown by the way in which he tries to make jokes; and, when he fails or misses the point, he takes no notice of the failure, but feels almost as grand as if he had succeeded. I think, too, we ought to notice a change in Launcelot's manner after he has served Bassanio and been to Belmont. He looks on the "livery more guarded than his fellows'" as a mark of distinction, and is proud of his share of motley. His increased importance in his own eyes is shown in the scene where, after advising Jessica "to be of good cheer," for truly she is damned, he imitates the self-sufficiency of Lorenzo, who in his way is almost as conceited as the Fool. Perhaps Launcelot has wit enough to see this, and his obsequious manner hides real sarcasm.

The part played by Launcelot in the drama is not very important; still he is there for a purpose. His interview with his father throws into darker shade the relation between Jessica and Shylock; even the Fool has some love for his father, and asks for his blessing, whilst Jessica looks on her home as Hell. Launcelot, too, helps us to understand the evil nature of the Jew, grasping and mean in his own house as on the Rialto; and by his affection for Jessica we are induced to think the better of her, as well as of him. He is somewhat greedy and selfish, though even Shylock has to confess that "the patch is kind enough, but a huge feeder." He has none of the poetic characteristics of Touchstone or Feste; but he has marked individuality, and the little part he plays is necessary, though but slightly, to the development of other characters in the story.

So far we have had no mingling of the tender or pathetic with the witty or humorous elements of the Fool's character; such a union was to come at a later period, when a higher stage of development had been reached. It is worthy of notice, also, that after this the Fools give up soliloquising, and are brought into closer contact with the other characters. As we advance, it becomes more and more difficult to separate them from their surroundings; they are fitted into their places more closely, and become an essential part of the life-drama.

We have now come to the period of the great comedies; the broader fun of the early plays has been left far behind, and the gloom of the tragic period is as yet in the distance. Shakspere had come into possession of all his powers, had a clearer insight into human life, but as yet was not troubling himself greatly about the problems of existence and the riddle of good and evil. Between Launcelot and Touchstone there is a wide interval, but that interval is partly bridged over by the nameless Fool in *All's Well that Ends Well.*

There seems to be every probability that this play as we now have it is a new version of *Love's Labour's Won*, mentioned by Meres in 1598. Probably the new play was written about 1602–3, and the older one ten years previously. Much of what the Fool says looks like early work, but here and there we see traces of a later and more perfect style. He does not serve any marked purpose in the play save to brighten the somewhat gloomy story; his place might almost be filled by any other Clown, and many of his witticisms in their broadness and absurdity remind us of the sayings of Launcelot. His boast of the one answer, "Oh, Lord, sir!" which is to serve every purpose, and his jesting with Parolles are assuredly early in tone; but there are bits where he is more philosophic and quite as much knave as Fool:—

"*Clown.*—I am a woodland fellow, sir, that always loved a great fire, and the master I speak of ever keeps a good fire. I am for the house with the narrow gate which I take to be too little for pomp to enter; some that humble themselves may; but the many will be too chill and tender, and they'll be for the flowery way that leads to the broad gate and the great fire."

All this is suggestive of Touchstone, and the last sentence reminds us of the "primrose way to the everlasting bonfire" and "the flowery path of dalliance." He can sing, too, like Feste, though to a somewhat different tune; and he has considerable sarcastic power; the prince he can serve has "a fisnomy more hotter in France than here," though "he has an English name." He thinks, too, that one good woman in ten would be a proportion to be thankful for. Like Touchstone he loves the court, and longs to show off his good breeding there; for "if God have lent a man any manners, he may easily put it off at court." But what attracts us most is his mistress's affection for him since he recalls the memory of her husband: "My lord that's gone made himself much sport out of him; by his authority he remains here." And it must not be forgotten that the whole moral of the play may be summed up in the Fool's words, "That man should be at woman's command, and yet no harm done." But, beyond this, he has no marked link with the plot, and we may conclude that he represents the earlier Fool with many more highly-finished touches added after, and he serves to link Launcelot to Feste and Touchstone.

As You Like It and *Twelfth Night* bring us to the mid-time, the very central point of Shakspere's work. Written, as these plays probably were, about the same time, they show great similarity of treatment; but, even amid the sylvan sunshine of *As You Like It*, we can see the first signs of the cloud that was, for a while at least, to overshadow the poet's life. These plays present us with two Fools alike in their superiority to what has gone before, but differing greatly in other points. On one point at least they agree—viz. that a fool is better than a wise man.

In conception and execution, as regards his connection with the story and his marked individuality as shown by every word he utters, Touchstone is far in advance of any Fool that precedes him. About his importance in the story there can be no doubt; and *As You Like It*, with Touchstone omitted, would be only one degree less ridiculous than *Hamlet* with the hero's part left out.

One always thinks of Touchstone as a middle-aged man, with serious face and solemn manner; his cynicism and irony hide traces of a kindly nature, and his affection for his mistress redeems him from any charge of hardness or want of feeling, "material fool" though he be. "He'll go along o'er the wide world with me," says Celia; and he consents to do so, though he grumbles as he goes. "Ay! now am I in Arden; the more fool I: when I was at home, I was in a better place; but travellers must be content." He has no real love of a country life for its own sake, but much prefers the court; it is all very well for country folk, "in respect of itself it is a good life;" but for a man of good breeding who could flatter a lady, pursue a quarrel to the very verge of a duel, and undo three tailors, why the court is the only fit place. His affection for Celia must have been very real, and it is this which links him to his greater brother in *King Lear;* even his love for Audrey, which seems at times only a fantastic humour, may have been deeper than he cared to show. That he knew his privileges, "to have as large a charter as the wind," and availed himself of them, is very certain, else we should scarcely have so many sarcastic allusions to topics of the day: the manners of the age, the absurd rules about quarrels and duels, the would-be wise philosophers of the day, the affectation of melancholy creeping into society in Shakspere's own time—all are satirised by him, nothing escapes his notice. And he has wit enough to know that men take him for a greater Fool than he is; I fancy he does not care to be patronised, and at times feels his position keenly; there is a tinge of melancholy amounting almost to pathos in his reply to the Duke's commendation, "he is very swift and sententious;" "according to the fool's bolt," he replies, "and such dulcet diseases." The fool's bolt is soon shot, and he must be a Fool to the end.

His chief importance in the play is to serve as a reflex to Jaques and to burlesque his melancholy. One great charm of it is that Jaques never sees this; never sees that he is often quite as ridiculous as the Fool lying in the sun, and railing at Lady Fortune in "good set terms." When Touchstone tries to jeer the shepherd into discontent with his lot in life, is it not much the same as when Jaques endeavours to convert Rosalind and Orlando to melancholy? As a philosopher and a satirist, in his unconscious parody of Jaques, and his childlike affection for Celia, he is throughout one of the most important characters in the play. "Is not this a rare fellow, my lord? He's as good at anything, and yet a fool."

How indignant must Shakspere have been at any actor who dared to meddle with such a part; and I am convinced we have an evidence of such wrath in Hamlet's advice to the players. Shakspere's *Hamlet* was most probably written not long after *As You Like It*, and some such *injury* may have been very present to him at the time. "Let those that play your Clowns speak no more than is set down for them." The introduction of "gag" into such a part as Touchstone's would necessarily be a far more serious offence than in the case of any previous Fool; "villanous," indeed, and showing "a most pitiful ambition in the fool that uses it."

Even Shakspere could not always equal himself, and so we need not be surprised that Feste in some points falls short of Touchstone; not that he ever comes into rivalry with him. If Touchstone be the Fool as Philosopher, Feste is the Fool as Poet. If the latter be inferior in philosophic and sarcastic power, he is assuredly the greatest of all as a musician. Feste has less reasoning power, is more of a natural fool than Touchstone; there is a similar difference to that between Sir Toby and Sir Andrew. According to the view of the latter, Touchstone does it "with a better grace," but Feste does it "more natural." The Countess, Malvolio, and Maria in their conversation all show that Feste is "a natural born Fool." But we must not underrate his wisdom; he can see through the Duke's melancholy; he gives sharp hits to the Countess, his mistress, who is "the more fool to mourn" for her brother's soul "being in heaven," and, after an encounter with him, Viola is constrained to say:—

> This fellow is wise enough to play the fool,
> And to do that well craves a kind of wit.

When the much-abused Malvolio is in the dungeon the Clown enters thoroughly into the plot, and plays the part of the parson with such vigour as to call for the most marked commendation from Sir Toby: he has wit enough to see what a fool they make of Malvolio, and, like Touchstone, can burlesque the logicians of the day. "That, that is, is; so I being Master Parson am Master Parson; for what is 'that' but 'that,' and 'is' but 'is'?" He certainly is very fond of money, but it is the liking of a child rather than the greed of a miser; even in his most barefaced begging he laughs at himself, and we laugh rather than reprove. But, after all, nothing endears him to us so much as his songs. There must have been in his nature an undercurrent of sweetness and poetic fervour that could make him choose such a song as "Come away, come away, Death," with all its mournful sadness and fitness for the Duke's melancholy; or that other joyous lyric that declares "Youth's a stuff will not endure."

It has been said that Shakspere's songs are not flowers planted at random here and there, but that each is fitted for its place, and not to be plucked without losing some of the beauty and sweetness. In a similar way, also, the songs are fitted to the nature of those who sing them, and we may fairly judge the Fool by the songs he sings—"Silly sooth," and "dallying with the innocence of love like the old age." And he is quite as good at a merry song or a catch; and could roar out his, "Hold thy peace, thou knave!" as well as the best, on the night when they made "the welkin dance" and roused the night-owl in a catch that would "draw three souls out of one weaver." What a trio they are—the humourist, the fool, and the philosopher! for Sir Toby is the humourist, Sir Andrew is the fool, and the Fool is the philosopher.

But besides marked individuality of character, and, under the guise of folly, a shrewd yet tender nature, Feste has also a very important part to play in the drama; without him the story would suffer, and we should know less of the other characters. He makes a third to that precious pair Sir Toby and Sir Andrew, and at times we wonder which is the greatest fool. He helps to show us the overweening self-conceit of Malvolio, who is so "sick of self-love" that he is jealous even of a Fool; and thus the truth of Feste's aphorism is proved—"those wits that think they have thee (wit) do very oft prove fools." He assists in giving Malvolio his well-merited punishment, and stands generally in somewhat the same artistic relation to him that Touchstone holds to Jaques. He helps us to appreciate the characters of Olivia and Viola, and even lets out the secret of Maria's weakness for Sir Toby. Our interest in him never flags, and at the last he sings the epilogue. Some critics have said that this song has no connection with the play or the characters. That I deny; it is the most philosophic Clown's song on record, and tells the history of man's life from the "little tiny boy," till he is laid on his bed; "by swaggering could I never thrive"—so, doubtless, Malvolio must admit; "with toss-pots still had drunken heads"—Sir Toby will agree to this. Men and women, even a Clown can see, are always the same though "a great while ago the world began." If Shakspere had not attached some importance to this song, he would scarcely have given us an echo of it under such altered circumstances in *King Lear*. If Touchstone be linked to Lear's Fool by his affection for his mistress, Feste has his link also in the philosophic song.

So far the gloom had been only like a passing cloud on a summer's day; but with the third period of Shakspere's development we come to the great tragedies, and the cloud seems to envelop the whole of the horizon; Shakspere's laughter is now tragic and terrible as well as pathetic. The innermost secrets of man's being, his overmastering passions and their consequences, the evil which in this world is ever at war with good—these and the like subjects engrossed his attention. Yet the humour somehow does not disappear, but remains to give reality to the most solemn pictures of human life, and to add fresh horror to scenes of the most tragic interest. Most of the great tragedies have humorous scenes and characters, but not in all do we find a Fool. Yet the part is often played by other characters, as by the Gravediggers in *Hamlet*, and even by the Porter in *Macbeth*.

Amongst the Fools of Shakspere, I would always include Yorick, though he never appears upon the scene. The way in which he is described shows clearly that if Shakspere had given us a Fool as a living character in *Hamlet*, he would have been one of the later group. Hamlet's loving memory shows him to have been no ordinary jester, but a man not only of "infinite jest" but also of some refinement and tender feelings. We can scarcely imagine Hamlet as a child kissing a Fool like Launce or Launcelot, or even riding on his back. No! if Yorick had been represented on the stage he would have been, of a certainty, not unlike Touchstone, though with individual characteristics of his own, since he once "poured a flagon of Rhenish" on the head of the old Grave-digger.

No one can read or listen to that elegy on Yorick without feeling the exquisite tenderness and pathos of it all; it thrills us again and again, and we know not why. Possibly the elegy was a personal matter, and was Shakspere's regretful remembrance of Tarleton, the most famous jester of his day. In the first quarto of *Hamlet* it is said that Yorick has been buried "this twelve year;" now if Shakspere's *Hamlet* were written about 1600 or 1601, twelve years back bring us to 1588–9, the time of Tarleton's death. Why should Shakspere have chosen a jester, if not for some such reason? Of course this is all a matter of supposition, but it is pleasant to imagine that the lines which have charmed us so often had such a meaning.

Whilst noticing these minor characters, it would not be well to overlook the fact that the Clown in *Antony and Cleopatra* is a veritable Fool, and, though he appears but once, is of considerable importance. The pathos of that last tragic scene is heightened by his presence. There is a ghastly irony in his advice that the "worm is not to be trusted but in the keeping of wise people, for indeed there is no goodness in the worm;" and, again, that they are to give it nothing, "for it is not worth the feeding." There is bitter satire, also, if unconscious, and most appropriate force in what he says of women:—"I know that a woman is a dish for the gods if the devil dress her not. But truly these same whoreson devils do the gods great harm in their women; for in every ten that they make, the devils mar five." Was not Cleopatra herself a dish fit for the gods, and had not the devil dressed her, and marred her, too, in the dressing? This, as I take it, is thoroughly tragic humour, and is as characteristic of Shakspere's third period as anything said even by Lear's Fool.

With reference to Lear's Fool words are more than ordinarily inadequate to express or realise our feelings. That from every point of view he is the greatest of Shakspere's Fools both in conception and execution, all will admit. Here we reach the climax; to go further is impossible. Whether we consider his marked individuality, the pathetic yet tragic interest that clings to him throughout, or his position in and connection with the play, we are convinced that he has no equal. Mr. Hudson says that our estimate of the drama as a whole depends very much on the interest we take in the Fool, and this is scarcely an exaggeration; he is in great measure the key to the play. As with the play as a whole, so with this character, we feel the truth, the majesty, the terror of it all, but we fail in giving it expression. "The secrets of Nature have not more gift of taciturnity." The Fool is no mere jester, no clown to make merry at another's bidding; he is a half-mad, half-inspired child of Nature, giving up his heart, nay, his life itself, in a love that was very precious. The infinite tenderness of the Fool is perhaps his most marked characteristic; his whole being was centred in his master and in one of his mistresses, and with their loss he made shipwreck of his life.

In happier times he might have been as merry and light-hearted a jester as Yorick, and set the table in a roar with his jests and flashes of merriment; but it was not to be. The loss of his young mistress had chilled his heart—"Since my young lady's going into France the fool hath much pined away;" and Lear loves him for this, though he will not have it named. Neither Lear nor the Fool ever name Cordelia to each other, and this shows that their hearts are too full for speech. There is a slight though subtle link between the Fool and his young mistress throughout, from this first introduction to the last despairing cry of Lear, "and my poor fool is hanged," as he holds in a last embrace the lifeless body of his daughter. But the Fool forgets, for a time, his sorrow in his endeavour to do something, however little, for his master. He rouses himself, tries by caustic sarcasm to rouse the King also; for from the first he seems to discover by instinct the incipient madness, and would fain charm it away, even by his very bitterness. "Faithful among the faithless," he clings to Lear, and can value fidelity in others, though he seems at times to scoff at it. His jests, his snatches of song, his every word, have a pathos that is most pitiful, and amid the dark scenes of the play are like "rockets in a midnight sky."

I think that the Fool's intellectual powers, slightly balanced, as they were at the first, grow weaker; and as the end draws nigh, his madness or mental aberration becomes more apparent, and he declares that "this cold night will turn us all to Fools or madmen." Strange it is, too, amid the howling of the tempest, to hear the far-off echo of Feste's song:—

With hey, ho, the wind and the rain.

But amid much that is tragic and pathetic, there is naught more so than the scene where the mad King arraigns a joint-stool as Goneril, and commands that most "learned justicer," Edgar, and the "sapient" Fool to act as assessors. Edgar's tears flow freely, and, instead of criticising, we can only cry "the pity on't." Even the Fool seems to know that all is lost. What little wit he has ever had is forsaking him, and life ebbs low. "I'll go to bed at noon" is his last despairing cry, and we see him no more. What became of him? We are left to guess. Perhaps he died of a broken heart; and when Lear says, "And my poor fool is hanged," he is looking on the lifeless body of Cordelia in his arms, and mingling recollections of her with dim memories of that one other human being who had loved him through all, and for whom one part in his heart was sorry yet. The mystery of life was too much for the Fool, and all that as left for him was "to go to bed at noon."

There is nothing like this in all the wide compass of human literature; and the only thing that even recalls it, or suggests a comparison, is the picture of Dagonet, Arthur's Fool, in the *Last Tournament.* Like his great prototype, he was faithful to the last; and when Arthur returned that dark night to find that Guinevere had fled—

> About his feet
> A voice clung sobbing till he questioned it,
> "What art thou?" And the voice about his feet
> Sent up an answer, sobbing, "I am thy Fool,
> And I shall never make thee smile again."

We have now reached the climax; beyond this even Shakspere could not go; he would not repeat himself, and there was no possibility of excelling Touchstone or Lear's "poor boy." Not that he was done with wit and humour in combination with philosophy and pathos, but that they took different forms. Once again, before the end, his mirth was bright and unclouded; and in the later plays, with much that is great and noble, and which shows the deepest insight into life, there is cheerful, honest laughter. But, with the exception of Trinculo, we have no professional jesters. He reminds us somewhat of the Fools in the early comedies; he soliloquises, plays on words, and affects to despise Caliban, but his chief dramatic purpose is to make two for a pair with Stephano; and his single philosophic remark is, that "Misery acquaints a man with strange bedfellows." We must not forget, too, that to an Elizabethan audience Caliban would seem to fill the Fool's place, and by his strange antics please "the groundlings." Trinculo, then, is of so little importance, that he scarcely interferes with the course of my arguments.

Of all the humorous figures in the later plays, Autolycus is the one that most fitly plays the fool. We often hear of what Shakspere's characters might have said or done when off the stage; and it is no great stretch of imagination to suppose that, before we make his acquaintance, Autolycus, amongst other callings, honest or otherwise, may have been a jester. Certainly his songs and witticisms would have found favour in any court; and he, like Touchstone, loved the court, and affected the manners thereof. As Professor Dowden says, when Shakspere conceived him one spring morning as the daffodils began to peer, there might seem to be a return to the light-heartedness of youth. But, instead of a Fool in the guise of a professional jester, we have the most delightful of rogues, who simply plays the fool. In the early plays, the humorous and pathetic characters are kept quite separate. Each has a marked sphere of action allotted to him, beyond which he never passes. But in the later periods the various characters are combined; wise men play the fool, whilst fools talk and act like wise men. Humour and pathos run together, and the result is a picture more true to nature than was the first. So, after showing the possibilities of the Fool's part in Touchstone and Lear's Fool, Shakspere discarded the character and gave the part to a rogue, combining the elements of folly and knavery so closely that we can no longer separate them. Is not this more natural, and nearer to real life? Does not the man who plays the fool for us in society often prove rather slippery? I think this is what Shakspere felt and acted on; and as we laugh at the jests of Autolycus and condone his snappings up of "unconsidered trifles," we know that some such character might meet us any day and cheat us before our eyes. We get to like the rogue so well that we end by taking his part, and rejoicing at the success of his schemes. How is it possible for any one to find fault with a "merry heart" that "goes all the day" laughing and singing as it goes, whom "Fortune will not suffer to be honest?" Touchstone and Lear's Fool may be more pathetic, more philosophic, and greater in poetic intensity; but they are not more true to human nature than this prince of knaves and fools.

A goodly figure this to close the procession, which began with the twin Dromios and Launce, and which includes a host of worthies, who are as dear to us as all the heroes of old romance.

As they pass by, one by one, they serve not only to amuse us and arrest our attention, to move alike smiles and tears, but they also serve to show that Shakspere's laughter is as truly human as aught else in him; that tragedy becomes more tragic when the humour of everyday life surrounds it; and that even these minor characters, as they have been called, reflect each varying phase of thought in the growth of their author's genius. The joyous and, at times, boisterous merriment of youth, the steadier mirth of manhood, the bitter irony of disappointment, and the wild laugh of despair, all are presented by the Fools.

J. NEWBY HETHERINGTON.

Teaching Grandmother.

GRANDMOTHER dear, you do not know; you have lived the old-world life,
Under the twittering eaves of home, sheltered from storm and strife;
Rocking cradles, and covering jams, knitting socks for baby feet,
Or piecing together lavender bags for keeping the linen sweet:
Daughter, wife, and mother in turn, and each with a blameless breast,
Then saying your prayers when the nightfall came, and quietly dropping to rest.

You must not think, Granny, I speak in scorn, for yours have been well-spent days,
And none ever paced with more faithful feet the dutiful ancient ways.
Grandfather's gone, but while he lived you clung to him close and true,
And mother's heart, like her eyes, I know, came to her straight from you.
If the good old times, at the good old pace, in the good old grooves would run,
One could not do better, I'm sure of that, than do as you all have done.

But the world has wondrously changed, Granny, since the days when you were young;
It thinks quite different thoughts from then, and speaks with a different tongue.
The fences are broken, the cords are snapped, that tethered man's heart to home;
He ranges free as the wind or the wave, and changes his shore like the foam.
He drives his furrows through fallow seas, he reaps what the breakers sow,
And the flash of his iron flail is seen mid the barns of the barren snow.

He has lassoed the lightning and led it home, he has yoked it unto his need,
And made it answer the rein and trudge as straight as the steer or steed.
He has bridled the torrents and made them tame, he has bitted the champing tide,
It toils as his drudge and turns the wheels that spin for his use and pride.

He handles the planets and weighs their dust, he mounts on the comet's car,
And he lifts the veil of the sun, and stares in the eyes of the uttermost star.

'Tis not the same world you knew, Granny; its fetters have fallen off;
The lowliest now may rise and rule where the proud used to sit and scoff.
No need to boast of a scutcheoned stock, claim rights from an ancient wrong;
All are born with a silver spoon in their mouths whose gums are sound and strong.
And I mean to be rich and great, Granny; I mean it with heart and soul:
At my feet is the ball, I will roll it on, till it spins through the golden goal.

Out on the thought that my copious life should trickle in trivial days,
Myself but a lonelier sort of beast, watching the cattle graze,
Scanning the year's monotonous change, or gaping at wind and rain,
And hanging with meek solicitous eyes on the whims of a creaking vane;
Wretched if ewes drop single lambs, blest so is oilcake cheap,
And growing old in a tedious round of worry, surfeit, and sleep.

You dear old Granny, how sweet your smile, and how soft your silvery hair!
But all has moved on while you sate still in your cap and easy-chair.
The torch of knowledge is lit for all, it flashes from hand to hand;
The alien tongues of the earth converse, and whisper from strand to strand.
The very churches are changed and boast new hymns, new rites, new truth;
Men worship a wiser and greater God than the half-known God of your youth.

What! marry Connie and set up house, and dwell where my fathers dwelt,
Giving the homely feasts they gave, and kneeling where they knelt?
She is pretty, and good, and void I am sure of vanity, greed, or guile;
But she has not travelled nor seen the world, and is lacking in air and style.
Women now are as wise and strong as men, and vie with men in renown;
The wife that will help to build my fame was not bred near a country town.

What a notion! to figure at parish boards, and wrangle o'er cess and rate,
I, who mean to sit for the county yet, and vote on an Empire's fate;
To take the chair at the Farmers' Feasts, and tickle their bumpkin ears,
Who must shake a senate before I die, and waken a people's cheers!
In the olden days was no choice, so sons to the roof of their fathers clave:
But now! 'twere to perish before one's time, and to sleep in a living grave.

I see that you do not understand. How should you? Your memory clings
To the simple music of silenced days and the skirts of vanishing things.
Your fancy wanders round ruined haunts, and dwells upon oft-told tales;
Your eyes discern not the widening dawn, nor your ears catch the rising gales.
But live on, Granny, till I come back, and then perhaps you will own
The dear old Past is an empty nest, and the Present the brood that is flown.

Grandmother's Teaching.

And so, my dear, you're come back [at last? I always fancied you would.
Well, you see the old home of your childhood's days is standing where it stood.
The roses still clamber from porch to roof, the elder is white at the gate,
And over the long smooth gravel path the peacock still struts in state.
On the gabled lodge, as of old, in the sun, the pigeons sit and coo,
And our hearts, my dear, are no whit more changed, but have kept still warm for you.

You'll find little altered, unless it be me, and that since my last attack;
But so that you only give me time, I can walk to the church and back.
You bade me not die till you returned, and so you see I lived on:
I'm glad that I did now you've really come, but it's almost time I was gone.
I suppose that there isn't room for us all, and the old should depart the first.
That's but as it should be. What is sad, is to bury the dead you've nursed.

Won't you take something at once, my dear? Not even a glass of whey?
The dappled Alderney calved last week, and the baking is fresh to-day.
Have you lost your appetite too in town, or is it you've grown over-nice?
If you'd rather have biscuits and cowslip wine, they'll bring them up in a trice.
But what am I saying? Your coming down has set me all in a maze:
I forgot that you travelled down by train; I was thinking of coaching days.

There, sit you down, and give me your hand, and tell me about it all,
From the day that you left us, keen to go, to the pride that had a fall.
And all went well at the first? So it does, when we're young and puffed with hope;
But the foot of the hill is quicker reached the easier seems the slope.
And men thronged round you, and women too? Yes, that I can understand.
When there's gold in the palm, the greedy world is eager to grasp the hand.

I heard them tell of your smart town house, but I always shook my head.
One doesn't grow rich in a year and a day, in the time of my youth 'twas said.
Men do not reap in the spring, my dear, nor are granaries filled in May,
Save it be with the harvest of former years, stored up for a rainy day.
The seasons will keep their own true time, you can hurry nor furrow nor sod:
It's honest labour and steadfast thrift that alone are blest by God.

You say you were honest. I trust you were, nor do I judge you, my dear:
I have old-fashioned ways, and it's quite enough to keep one's own conscience clear.
But still the commandment, "Thou shalt not steal," though a simple and ancient rule,
Was not made for complex cunning to baulk, nor for any new age to befool;
And if my growing rich unto others brought but penury, chill, and grief,
I should feel, though I never had filched with my hands, I was only a craftier thief.

That isn't the way they look at it there? All worshipped the rising sun?
Most of all the fine lady, in pride of purse you fancied your heart had won.

I don't want to hear of her beauty or birth: I reckon her foul and low;
Far better a steadfast cottage wench than grand loves that come and go.
To cleave to their husbands through weal, through woe, is all women have to do:
In growing as clever as men they seem to have matched them in fickleness too.

But there's one in whose heart has your image still dwelt through many an absent day,
As the scent of a flower will haunt a closed room, though the flower be taken away.
Connie's not quite so young as she was, no doubt, but faithfulness never grows old;
And were beauty the only fuel of love, the warmest hearth soon would grow cold.
Once you thought that she had not travelled, and knew neither the world nor life:
Not to roam, but to deem her own hearth the whole world, that's what a man wants in a wife.

I'm sure you'd be happy with Connie, at least if your own heart's in the right place.
She will bring you nor power, nor station, nor wealth, but she never will bring you disgrace.
They say that the moon, though she moves round the sun, never turns to him morning or night
But one face of her sphere, and it must be because she's so true a satellite;
And Connie, if into your orbit once drawn by the sacrament sanctioned above,
Would revolve round you constantly, only to show the one-sided aspect of love.

You will never grow rich by the land, I own; but if Connie and you should wed,
It will feed your children and household too, as it you and your fathers fed.
The seasons have been unkindly of late; there's a wonderful cut of hay,
But the showers have washed all the goodness out, till it's scarcely worth carting away.
There's a fairish promise of barley straw, but the ears look rusty and slim:
I suppose God intends to remind us thus that something depends on Him

God neither progresses nor changes, dear, as I once heard you rashly say:
Men's schools and philosophies come and go, but His word doth not pass away.
We worship Him here as we did of old, with simple and reverent rite:
In the morning we pray Him to bless our work, to forgive our transgressions at night.
To keep His commandments, to fear His name, and what should be done, to do,—
That's the beginning of wisdom still; I suspect 'tis the end of it too.

You must see the new-fangled machines at work, that harrow, and thresh, and reap;
They're wonderful quick, there's no mistake, and they say in the end they're cheap.
But they make such a clatter, and seem to bring the rule of the town to the fields:
There's something more precious in country life than the balance of wealth it yields.
But that seems going; I'm sure I hope that I shall be gone before:
Better poor sweet silence of rural toil than the factory's opulent roar.

They're a mighty saving of labour, though; so at least I hear them tell,
Making fewer hands and fewer mouths, but fewer hearts as well:
They sweep up so close that there's nothing left for widows and bairns to glean;
If machines are growing like men, man seems to be growing a half machine.
There's no friendliness left; the only tie is the wage upon Saturday nights:
Right used to mean duty; you'll find that now there's no duty, but only rights.

Still stick to your duty, my dear, and then things cannot go much amiss.
What made folks happy in bygone times, will make them happy in this.
There's little that's called amusement, here; but why should the old joys pall?
Has the blackbird ceased to sing loud in spring? Has the cuckoo forgotten to call?
Are bleating voices no longer heard when the cherry-blossoms swarm?
And have home, and children, and fireside lost one gleam of their ancient charm?

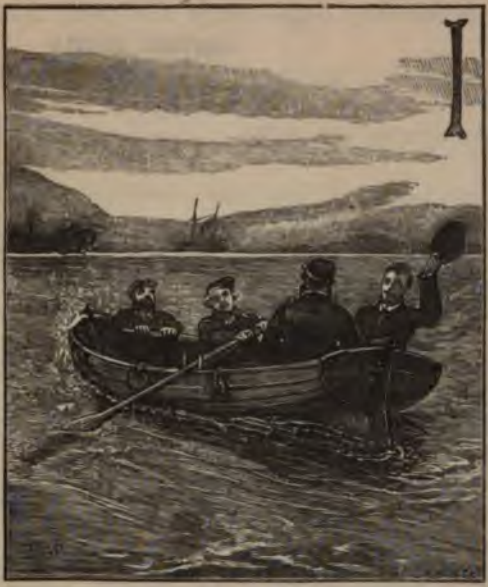
Come, let us go round; to the farmyard first, with its litter of fresh-strewn straw,
Past the ash-tree dell, round whose branching tops the young rooks wheel and caw;
Through the ten-acre mead that was mown the first, and looks well for aftermath,
Then round by the beans—I shall tire by then,—and home up the garden path,
Where the peonies hang their blushing heads, where the larkspur laughs from its stalk—
With my stick and your arm I can manage. But see! There, Connie comes up the walk.

ALFRED AUSTIN.

White Wings: A Yachting Romance.

CHAPTER XVII.

VILLANY ABROAD.



IT is near mid-day; two late people are sitting at breakfast; the skylight overhead has been lifted, and the cool sea-air fills the saloon.

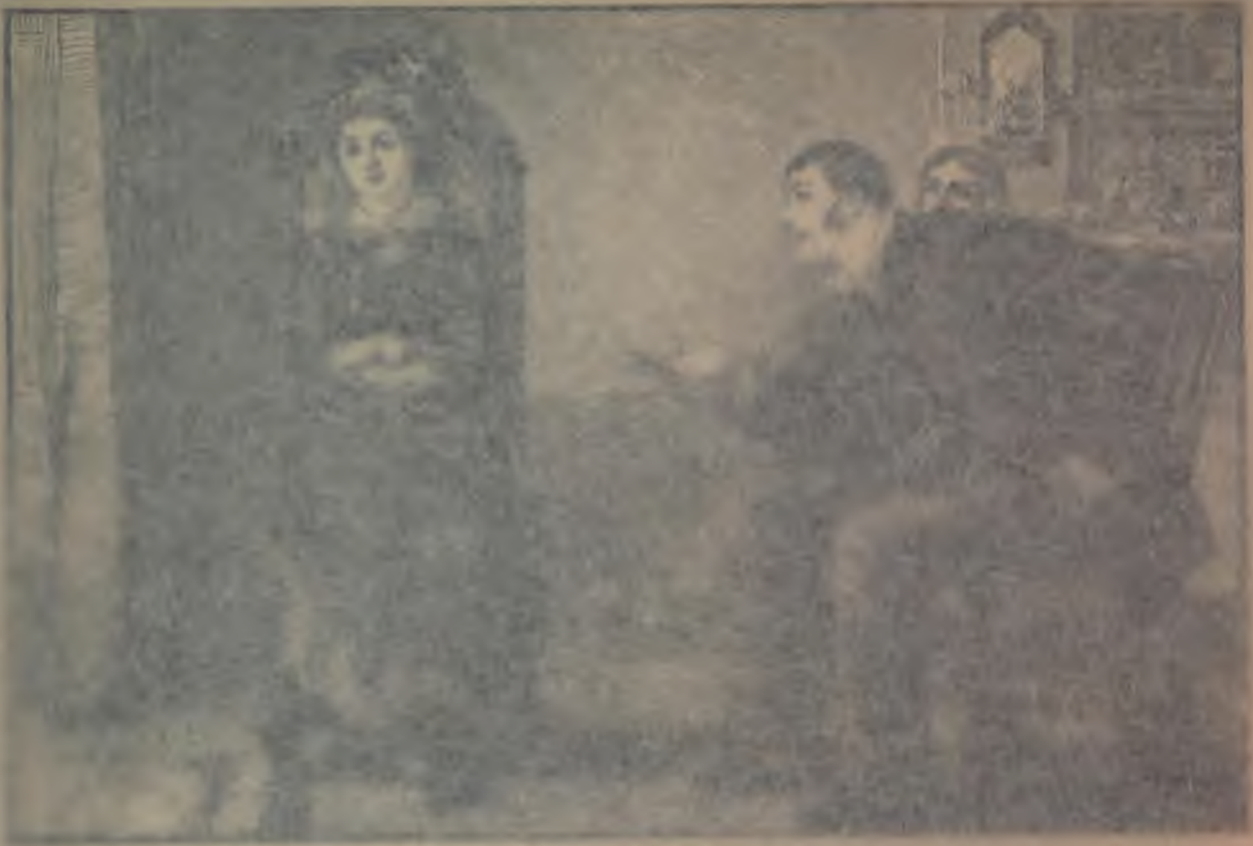
"Dead calm again," says Angus Sutherland, for he can see the rose-red ensign hanging limp from the mizen-mast, a blaze of colour against the still blue.

There is no doubt that the *White Dove* is quite motionless; and that a perfect silence reigns around her. That is why we can hear so distinctly—through the open skylight—the gentle footsteps of two people who are pacing up and down the deck, and the soft voice of one of them as she speaks to her friend. What is all this wild enthusiasm about, then?

"It is the noblest profession in the world!"—we can hear so much as she passes the skylight. "One profession lives by fomenting quarrels; and another studies the art of killing in every form; but this one lives only to heal—only to relieve the suffering and help the miserable. That is the profession I should belong to, if I were a man!"

Our young Doctor says nothing as the voice recedes; but he is obviously listening for the return walk along the deck. And here she comes again.

"The patient drudgery of such a life is quite heroic—whether he is a man of science, working day and night to find out things for the good of *the world*, nobody thanking him or caring about him, or whether he is a



“[illegible]”

physician in practice with not a minute that can be called his own—liable to be summoned at any hour——"

The voice again becomes inaudible. It is remarked to this young man that Mary Avon seems to have a pretty high opinion of the medical profession.

"She herself," he says hastily, with a touch of colour in his face, "has the patience and fortitude of a dozen doctors."

Once more the light tread on deck comes near the skylight.

"If I were the Government," says Mary Avon, warmly, "I should be ashamed to see so rich a country as England content to take her knowledge second-hand from the German Universities; while such men as Dr. Sutherland are harassed and hampered in their proper work by having to write articles and do ordinary doctor's visiting. I should be ashamed. If it is a want of money, why don't they pack off a dozen or two of the young noodles who pass the day whittling quills in the Foreign Office?——"

Even when modified by the distance, and by the soft lapping of the water outside, this seems rather strong language for a young lady. Why should Miss Avon again insist in such a warm fashion on the necessity of endowing research?

But Angus Sutherland's face is burning red. Listeners are said to hear ill of themselves.

"However, Dr. Sutherland is not likely to complain," she says, proudly, as she comes by again. "No; he is too proud of his profession. He does his work; and leaves the appreciation of it to others. And when everybody knows that he will one day be among the most famous men in the country, is it not monstrous that he should be harassed by drudgery in the meantime? If I were the Government——"

But Angus Sutherland cannot suffer this to go on. He leaves his breakfast unfinished, passes along the saloon, and ascends the companion.

"Good morning!" he says.

"Why, are you up already?" his hostess says. "We have been walking as lightly as we could, for we thought you were both asleep. And Mary has been heaping maledictions on the head of the Government because it doesn't subsidise all you microscope-men. The next thing she will want is a licence for the whole of you to be allowed to vivisect criminals."

"I heard something of what Miss Avon said," he admitted.

The girl, looking rather aghast, glanced at the open skylight.

"We thought you were asleep," she stammered, and with her face somewhat flushed.

"At least, I heard you say something about the Government," he said, kindly. "Well, all I ask from the Government is to give me a trip like this every summer."

"What," says his hostess, "with a barometer that won't fall?"

"I don't mind."

"And seas like glass?"

"I don't mind."

"And the impossibility of getting back to land?"

"So much the better," he says defiantly.

"Why," she reminds him, laughing, "you were very anxious about getting back some days ago. What has made you change your wishes?"

He hesitates for a moment, and then he says—

"I believe a sort of madness of idleness has got possession of me. I have dallied so long with that tempting invitation of yours to stay and see the *White Dove* through the equinoctials that—that I think I really must give in——"

"You cannot help yourself," his hostess says, promptly. "You have already promised. Mary is my witness."

The witness seems anxious to avoid being brought into this matter; she turns to the Laird quickly, and asks him some question about Ru-na-Gaul light over there.

Ru-na-Gaul light no doubt it is—shining white in the sun at the point of the great cliffs; and there is the entrance to Tobbermorry; and here is Mingary Castle—brown ruins amid the brilliant greens of those sloping shores—and there are the misty hills over Loch Sunart. For the rest, blue seas around us, glassy and still; and blue skies overhead, cloudless and pale. The barometer refuses to budge.

But suddenly there is a brisk excitement. What though the breeze that is darkening the water there is coming on right ahead?—we shall be moving anyway. And as the first puffs of it catch the sails, Angus Sutherland places Mary Avon in command; and she is now—by the permission of her travelling physician—allowed to stand as she guides the course of the vessel. She has become an experienced pilot: the occasional glance at the leach of the top-sail is all that is needed; she keeps as accurately "full and by" as the master of one of the famous cuptakers.

"Now, Mary," says her hostess, "it all depends on you as to whether Angus will catch the steamer this evening."

"Oh, does it?" she says, with apparent innocence.

"Yes; we shall want very good steering to get within sight of Castle Osprey before the evening."

"Very well, then," says this audacious person.

At the same instant she deliberately puts the helm down. Of course the yacht directly runs up to the wind, her sails flapping helplessly. Everybody looks surprised; and John of Skye, thinking that the new skipper has only been a bit careless, calls out—

"Keep her full, mem, if you please."

"What do you mean, Mary? What are you about?" cries Queen T.

"I am not going to be responsible for sending Dr. Sutherland away," she says, in a matter-of-fact manner, "since he says he is in no hurry to go. If you wish to drive your guest away, I won't be a party to it. I mean to steer as badly as I can."

"Then I depose you," says Dr. Sutherland promptly. "I cannot have a pilot who disobeys orders."

"Very well," she says, "you may take the tiller yourself"—and she goes away, and sits down in high dudgeon, by the Laird.

So once more we get the vessel under way; and the breeze is beginning to blow somewhat more briskly; and we notice with hopefulness that there is rougher water further down the Sound. But with this slow process of beating, how are we to get within sight of Castle Osprey before the great steamer comes up from the South?

The Laird is puzzling over the Admiralty Sailing Directions. The young lady, deeply offended, who sits beside him, pays him great attention, and talks "at" the rest of the passengers with undisguised contempt.

"It is all haphazard, the sailing of a yacht," she says to him, though we can all hear. "Anybody can do it. But they make a jargon about it to puzzle other people, and pretend it is a science, and all that."

"Well," says the Laird, who is quite unaware of the fury that fills her brain, "there are some of the phrases in this book that are verra extraordinary. In navigating this same Sound of Mull, they say you are to keep the 'weather shore aboard.' How can ye keep the weather shore aboard?"

"Indeed, if we don't get into a port soon," remarks our hostess and chief commissariat-officer, "it will be the only thing we shall have on board. How would you like it cooked, Mary?"

"I won't speak to any of you," says the disgraced skipper, with much composure.

"Will you sing to us, then?"

"Will you behave properly if you are reinstated in command?" asks Angus Sutherland.

"Yes, I will," she says, quite humbly; and forthwith she is allowed to have the tiller again.

Brisker and brisker grows the breeze; it is veering to the south, too; the sea is rising, and with it the spirits of everybody on board. The ordinarily sedate and respectable *White Dove* is showing herself a trifle frisky, moreover; an occasional clatter below of hair-brushes or candlesticks tells us that people accustomed to calms fall into the habit of leaving their cabins ill-arranged.

"There will be more wind, sir," says John of Skye, coming aft; and he is looking at some long and streaky "mare's tails" in the south-western sky. "And if there wass a gale o' wind, I would let her have it!"

Why that grim ferocity of look, Captain John? Is the poor old *White Dove* responsible for the too fine weather, that you would like to see her driven, all wet and bedraggled, before a south-westerly gale? If you must quarrel with something, quarrel with the barometer; you may admonish it with a belaying-pin if you please.

Brisker and brisker grows the breeze. Now we hear the first pistol-shots of the spray come rattling over the bows; and Hector of Moidart has from time to time to duck his head, or shake the water from his jersey. The *White Dove* breasts these rushing waves and a foam of white water goes hissing away from either side of her. Speine Môr and Speine Beg we leave behind; in the distance we can descry the ruins of Aros Castle and the deep indentation of Salen Bay; here we are passing the thick woods of Funeray. "*Farewell, farewell, to Funeray!*" The squally look in the south-west increases; the wind veers more and more. Commander Mary Avon is glad to resign the helm, for it is not easy to retain hold in these plunging seas.

"Why, you will catch the steamer after all, Angus!" says his hostess, as we go tearing by the mouth of Loch Aline.

"This is a good one for the last!" he calls to her. "Give her some more sheet, John; the wind is going round to the north!"

Whence comes the whirling storm in the midst of the calm summer weather? The blue heavens are as blue as the petal of a crane's-bill: surely such a sky has nothing to do with a hurricane. But wherever it comes from, it is welcome enough; and the brave *White Dove* goes driving through those heavy seas, sometimes cresting them buoyantly, at other times meeting them with a dull shock, followed by a swish of water that rushes along the lee scuppers. And those two women-folk—without ulsters or other covering: it is a merry game to play jack-in-the-box, and duck their heads under the shelter of the gig when the spray springs into the air. But somehow the sea gets the best of it. Laugh as they may, they must be feeling rather damp about their hair; and as for Mary Avon's face—that has got a bath of salt-water at least a dozen times. She cares not. Sun, wind, and sea she allows to do their worst with her complexion. Soon we shall have to call her the Nut-brown Maid.

Brisker and brisker grows the breeze. Angus Sutherland, with a rope round the tiller, has his teeth set hard: he is indeed letting the *White Dove* have it at last, for he absolutely refuses to have the topsail down. The main tack, then: might not that be hauled up? No; he will have none of John of Skye's counsels. The *White Dove* tears her way through the water—we raise a cloud of birds from the rocks opposite Scallasdale—we see the white surf breaking in at Craignure—ahead of us is Lismore Lighthouse, perched over the whirling and struggling tides, shining white in the sunlight above the dark and driven sea.

Ahead she goes; the land she knows!

—past the shadowy ruins of Duart, and out and through the turbulent tides off the lighthouse rocks. The golden afternoon is not yet far advanced; let but this brave breeze continue, and soon they will descry the *White Dove* from the far heights of Castle Osprey!

But there was to be no Castle Osprey for Angus Sutherland that evening, despite the splendid run the *White Dove* had made. It was a race, indeed, between the yacht and the steamer for the quay; and notwithstanding that Mary Avon was counselling everybody to give it up as impossible, John of Skye would hold to it in the hope of pleasing Dr. Sutherland himself. And no sooner was the anchor let go in the bay, than the gig was down from the davits; the men had jumped in; the solitary portmanteau was tossed into the stern; and Angus Sutherland was hurriedly bidding his adieux. The steamer was at this instant slowing into the quay.

"I forbid any one to say good-bye to him," says ou Admiral-in-chief, sternly. "*Au revoir—auf Wiedersehen*—anything you like—no good-bye."

Last of all he took Mary Avon's hand.

"You have promised, you know," she said, with her eyes cast down.

"Yes," said he, regarding her for an instant with a strange look—earnest perhaps, and yet timid—as if it would ask a question, and dared not—"I will keep my promise." Then he jumped into the boat.

That was a hard pull away to the quay; and even in the bay the water was rough, so that the back-sweep of the oars sometimes caught the waves and sent the spray flying in the wind. The *Chevalier* had rung her bells. We made sure he would be too late. What was the reason of this good-natured indulgence? We lost sight of the gig in at the landing-slip.

Then the great steamer slowly steamed away from the quay: who was that on the paddle-box waving good-bye to us?

"Oh, yes, I can see him plainly," calls out Queen T., looking through a glass; and there is a general waving of handkerchiefs in reply to the still visible signal. Mary Avon waves her handkerchief, too—in a limp fashion. We do not look at her eyes.

And when the gig came back, and we bade good-bye for the time to the brave old *White Dove*, and set out for Castle Osprey, she was rather silent. In vain did the Laird tell her some of the very best ones abou Homesh; she seemed anxious to get into the house and to reach the solitude of her own room.

But in the meantime there was a notable bundle of letters, newspapers, and what not, lying on the hall-table. This was the first welcome that civilization gave us. And although we defied these claims—and determined that not an envelope should be opened till after dinner—Mary Avon, having only one letter awaiting her, was allowed to read that. She did it mechanically, listlessly—she was not in very good spirits. But suddenly we heard her utter some slight exclamation; and then we turned and saw that there was a strange look on her face—f dismay and dread. She was pale, too, and bewildered—like one stunned. Then without a word, she handed the letter to her friend.

"What is the matter, Mary?"

But she read the letter—and, in her amazement, she repeated the reading of it, aloud. It was a brief, business-like, and yet friendly letter, from the manager of a certain bank in London. He said he was sorry to refer to painful matters; but no doubt Miss Avon had seen in the papers some mention of the absconding of Mr. Frederick Smethurst, of —— —. He hoped there was nothing wrong; but he thought it right to inform Miss Avon that, a day or two before this disappearance, Mr. Smethurst had called at the bank and received, in obedience to her written instructions, the securities—U. S. Five Twenties—which the bank held in her name. Mr. Smethurst had explained that these bonds were deliverable to a certain broker; and that securities of a like value would be deposited with the bank in a day or two afterwards. Since then nothing had been heard of him till the Hue and Cry appeared in the newspapers. Such was the substance of the letter.

"But it isn't true!" said Mary Avon, almost wildly. "I cannot believe it. I will not believe it. I saw no announcement in the papers. And I did give him the letter—he was acting quite rightly. What do they want me to believe?"

"Oh, Mary!" cries her friend, "why did you not tell us? Have you parted with everything?"

"The money?" says the girl—with her white face, and frightened pathetic eyes. "Oh, I do not care about the money! It has got nothing to do with the money. But—but—he—was my mother's only brother."

The lips tremble for a moment; but she collects herself. Her courage fights through the stun of this sudden blow.

"I will not believe it!" she says. "How dare they say such things of him? How is it we have never seen anything of it in the papers?"

But the Laird leaves these and other wild questions to be answered at leisure. In the meantime, his eyes are burning like coals of fire; and he is twisting his hands together in a vain endeavour to repress his anger and indignation.

"Tell them to put a horse to," he says in a voice the abruptness of which startles every one. "I want to drive to the telegraph-office. This is a thing for men to deal wi'—not weemen."

CHAPTER XVIII.

AN ULTIMATUM.

WHEN our good friend the Laird of Denny-mains came back from the post-office, he seemed quite beside himself with wrath. And yet his rage was not of the furious and loquacious sort; it was reticent, and deep, and dangerous. He kept pacing up and down the gravel-path in front of the house, while as yet dinner was not ready. Occasionally he would rub his hands vehemently, as if to get rid of some sort of electricity; and once or twice we heard him ejaculate to himself, "The scoondrel! The scoondrel!" It was in vain that our gentle Queen Titania, always anxious to think the best of everybody, broke in on these fierce meditations, and asked the Laird to suspend his judgment. How could he be sure, she asked, that Frederick Smethurst had really run away with his niece's little property? He had come to her and represented that he was in serious difficulties; that this temporary loan of six or seven thousand pounds would save him; that he would repay her directly certain remittances came to him from abroad. How could he, the Laird, know that Frederick Smethurst did not mean to keep his promise?

But Denny-mains would have none of these possibilities. He saw the whole story clearly. He had telegraphed for confirmation; but already he was convinced. As for Frederick Smethurst being a swindler—that did not concern him, he said. As for the creditors, that was their own look-out: men in business had to take their chance. But that this miscreant, this ruffian, this mean hound should have robbed his own niece of her last farthing—and left her absolutely without resources or protection of any kind in the world—this it was that made the Laird's eyes burn with a dark fire. "The scoondrel!—the scoondrel!" he said; and he rubbed his hands as though he would wrench the fingers off.

We should have been more surprised at this exhibition of rage on the part of a person so ordinarily placid as Denny-mains, but that every one had observed how strong had become his affection for Mary Avon during our long days on the Atlantic. If she had been twenty times his own daughter he could not have regarded her with a greater tenderness. He had become at once her champion and her slave. When there was any playful quarrel between the young lady and her hostess, he took the side of Mary Avon with a seriousness that soon disposed of the contest. He studied her convenience to the smallest particular when she wished to paint on deck; and so far from hinting that he would like to have Tom Galbraith revise and improve her work, he now said that he would have pride in showing her productions to that famous artist. And perhaps it was not quite so much the actual fact of the stealing of the money as the manner and circumstance of it that now wholly upset his equilibrium and drove him into this passion of rage. "The scoondrel!—the scoondrel!" he muttered to himself, in these angry pacings to and fro.

Then he surprised his hostess by suddenly stopping short, and uttering some brief chuckle of laughter.

"I beg your pardon, ma'am," said he, "for the leeberty I have taken; but I was at the telegraph-office in any case; and I thought ye would not mind my sending for my nephew Howard. Ye were so good as to say——"

"Oh, we shall be most pleased to see him," said she promptly. "I am sure he must have heard us talking about the yacht; he will not mind a little discomfort——"

"He will have to take what is given him, and be thankful," said the Laird, sharply. "In my opeenion the young people of the present day are too much given to picking and choosing. They will not begin as their parents began. Only the best of everything is good enough for them."

But here the Laird checked himself.

"No, no, ma'am," said he. "My nephew Howard is not like that. He is a good lad—a sensible lad. And as for his comfort on board that yacht, I'm thinking it's not that, but the opposite, he has to fear most. Ye are spoiling us all, the crew included."

"Now we must go in to dinner," is the practical answer.

"Has she come down?" asks the Laird, in a whisper.

"I suppose so."

In the drawing-room we found Mary Avon. She was rather pale, and silent—that was all; and she seemed to wish to avoid observation. But when dinner was announced the Laird went over to her, and took her hand, and led her into the dining-room, just as he might have led a child. And he arranged her chair for her; and patted her on the back as he passed on, and said, cheerfully—

"Quite right—quite right—don't believe all the stories ye hear. *Nil desperandum*—we're not beaten down yet!"

She sate cold and white, with her eyes cast down. He did not know that in the interval her hostess had been forced to show the girl that paragraph of the Hue and Cry.

"*Nil desperandum*—that's it," continued the good-hearted Laird, in his blithest manner. "Keep your own conscience clear, and let other people do as they please—that is the philosophy of life. That is what Dr. Sutherland would say to ye, if he was here."

This chance reference to Angus Sutherland was surely made with the best intentions; but it produced a strange effect on the girl. For an instant or two she tried to maintain her composure—though her lips trembled; then she gave way, and bent her head, and burst out crying, and covered her face with her hands. Of course her kind friend and hostess was with her in a moment, and soothed her, and caressed her, and got her to dry her eyes. Then the Laird said, after a second or two of inward struggle—

"Oh, do you know that there is a steamer run on the rocks at the mouth of Loch Etive?"

"Oh, yes," his hostess—who had resumed her seat—said cheerfully. "That is a good joke. They say the captain wanted to be very clever; and would not have a pilot, though he knows nothing about the coast. So he thought he would keep mid-channel in going into the Loch!"

The Laird looked puzzled: where was the joke?

"Oh," said she, noticing his bewilderment, "don't you know that at the mouth of Loch Etive the rocks are right in the middle, and the channel on each side? He chose precisely the straight line for bringing his vessel full tilt on the rocks!"

So this was the joke, then: that a valuable ship should be sunk? But it soon became apparent that any topic was of profound interest—was exceedingly facetious even—that could distract Mary Avon's attention. They would not let her brood over this thing. They would have found a joke in a coffin. And indeed amidst all this talking and laughing Mary Avon brightened up considerably; and took her part bravely; and seemed to have forgotten all about her uncle and his evil deeds. You could only have guessed from a certain preoccupation that, from time to time, these words must have been appearing before her mind, their commonplace and matter-of-fact phraseology in no way detracting from their horrible import: "*Police-officers and others are requested to make immediate search and enquiry for the above-named; and those stationed at seaport towns are particularly requested to search outward-bound vessels.*" The description of Mr. Frederick Smethurst that preceded this injunction was not very flattering.

But among all the subjects, grave and gay, on which the Laird touched during this repast, there was none he was so serious and pertinacious about as the duty owed by young people to their parents and guardians. It did not seem an opportune topic. He might, for example, have enlarged upon the duties of guardians towards their helpless and unprotected wards. However, on this matter he was most decided. He even cross-examined his hostess, with an unusual sternness, on the point. What was the limit—was there any limit—she would impose on the duty which young folks owed to those who were their parents or who stood to them in the relation of parents? Our sovereign mistress, a little bit frightened, said she had always found her boys obedient enough. But this would not do. Considering the care and affection bestowed on them—considering the hardly-earned wealth spent on them—considering the easy fortune offered to them—was it not bounden on young people to consult and obey the wishes of those who had done so much for them? She admitted that such was the case. Pressed to say where the limit of such duty should lie, she said there was hardly any. So far good; and the Laird was satisfied.

It was not until two days afterwards that we obtained full information by letter of what was known regarding the proceedings of Frederick Smethurst, who, it appears, before he bolted, had laid hands on every farthing of money he could touch, and borrowed from the credulous among his friends; so that there remained no reasonable doubt that the story he had told his niece was among his other deceptions, and that she was left penniless. No one was surprised. It had been almost a foregone conclusion. Mary Avon seemed to care little about it; the loss of her fortune was less to her than the shame and dishonour that this scoundrel had brought on her mother's name.

But this further news only served to stir up once more the Laird's slumbering wrath. He kept looking at his watch.

"She'll be off Easdale now," said he to himself; and we knew he was speaking of the steamer that was bringing his nephew from the south.

By and by—"She'll be near Kerrara, now," he said, aloud. "Is it not time to drive to the quay?"

It was not time, but we set out. There was the usual crowd on the quay when we got there; and far off we could descry the red funnels and the smoke of the steamer. Mary Avon had not come with us.

"What a beautiful day your nephew must have had for his sail from the Crinan," said the Laird's gentle hostess to him.

Did he not hear her? Or was he absorbed in his own thoughts? His answer, at all events, was a strange one.

"It is the first time I have asked anything of him," he said almost gloomily. "I have a right to expect him to do something for me now."

The steamer slows in; the ropes are thrown across; the gangways run up; and the crowd begins to pour out. And here is a tall and handsome young fellow who comes along with a pleasant smile of greeting on his face.

"How do you do, Mr. Smith?" says Queen T., very graciously—but she does not call him 'Howard' as she calls Dr. Sutherland 'Angus.'

"Well, uncle," says he, brightly, when he has shaken hands all round, "what is the meaning of it all? Are you starting for Iceland in a hurry? I have brought a rifle as well as my breechloader. But perhaps I had better wait to be invited?"

This young man with the clear, pale complexion, and the dark hair, and dark grey eyes, had good looks and a pleasant smile in his favour; he was accustomed to be made welcome; he was at ease with himself. He was not embarrassed that his uncle did not immediately answer; he merely turned and called out to the man who had got his luggage. And when we had got him into the waggonette, and were driving off, what must he needs talk about but the absconding of Mr. Frederick Smethurst, whom he knew to be the uncle of a young lady he had once met at our house.

"Catch him?" said he with a laugh. "They'll never catch him."

His uncle said nothing at all.

When we reached Castle Osprey, the Laird said in the hall, when he had satisfied himself that there was no one within hearing—

"Howard, I wish to have a few meenutes' talk with ye; and perhaps our good friends here will come into the room too——"

We followed him into the dining-room; and shut the door.

"—just to see whether there is anything unreasonable in what I have got to say to ye."

The young man looked rather alarmed; there was an unusual coldness and austerity in the elder man's voice.

"We may as well sit down," he said; "it wants a little explanation."

We sate down in silence, Howard Smith looking more concerned than ever. He had a real affection, as we knew, for this pseudo-uncle of his, and was astounded that he should be spoken to in this formal and cold manner.

The Laird put one or two letters on the table before him.

"I have asked our friends here," said he, in a calm and measured voice, "to listen to what I have to say, and they will judge whether it is unreasonable. I have a service to ask of ye. I will say nothing of the relations between you and me before this time—but I may tell ye frankly—what doubtless ye have understood—that I had intended to leave ye Denny-mains at my death. I have neither kith nor kin of my own blood; and it was my intention that ye should have Denny-mains—perhaps even before I was called away."

The young man said nothing; but the manner in which the Laird spoke of his intentions in the past sense might have made the most disinterested of heirs look frightened. After all, he had certainly been brought up on the understanding that he was to succeed to the property.

"Now," said he, slowly, "I may say I have shown ye some kindness——"

"Indeed you have, sir!" said the other warmly.

"—and I have asked nothing from ye in return. I would ask nothing now, if I was your age. If I was twenty years younger, I would not have telegraphed for ye—indeed no, I would have taken the matter into my own hands——"

Here the Laird paused for a second or so to regain that coldness of demeanour with which he had started.

"Ay, just so. Well, ye were talking about the man Smethurst as we were coming along. His niece, as ye may be aware, is in this house—a better lass was never seen within any house."

The Laird hesitated more and more as he came to the climax of his discourse: it was obviously difficult for him to put this restraint on himself.

"Yes," said he, speaking a little more hurriedly, "and that scoondrel—that scoondrel—has made off with every penny that the poor lass had—every penny of it—and she is left an orphan—without a farthing to maintain herself wi'—and that infernal scoondrel——"

The Laird jumped from his seat; his anger was too much for him.

"I mean to stand by her," said he, pacing up and down the room, and speaking in short ejaculations. "She will not be left without a farthing. I will reach him, too, if I can. Ay, ay, if I was but twenty years younger, and had that man before me!"

He stopped short opposite his nephew, and controlled himself so as to speak quite calmly.

"I would like to see ye settled at Denny-mains, Howard," said he. "And ye would want a wife. Now if ye were to marry this young leddy, it would be the delight of my old age to see ye both comfortable and well provided for. And a better wife ye would not get within this country. Not a better!"

Howard Smith stared.

"Why, uncle!" said he, as if he thought some joke was going forward. We, who had been aware of certain profound plans on the part of Denny-mains, were less startled by this abrupt disclosure of them.

"That is one of two things," said the Laird, with forced composure. "that I wished to put before ye. If it is impossible, I am sorely vexed. But there is another; and one or the other, as I have been thinking, I am fairly entitled to ask of ye. So far I have not thought of any return for what I have done; it has been a pleasure to me to look after your up-bringing."

"Well, uncle," said the young man, beginning to look a little less frightened. "I would rather hear of the other thing. You know—eh—that is—a girl does not take anybody who is flung at her, as it were—it would be an insult—and—and people's inclinations and affections——"

"I know—I know—I know," said the Laird impatiently. "I have gone over all that. Do ye think I am a fool? If the lass will not have ye, there is an end to it: do your best to get her, and that is enough for me."

"There was another thing—" the young man suggested timidly.

"Yes, there is," said the Laird, with a sudden change in his manner. "It is a duty, sir, ye owe not to me, but to humanity. Ye are young, strong, have plenty of time, and I will give ye the money. Find out that man Smethurst; get him face to face; and fell him! Fell him!"—the Laird brought his fist down on the table with a bang that made everything jump, and his eyes were like coals of fire. "None o' your pistols or rapiers or trash like that!—no, no!—a mark on his face for the rest of his life—the brand of a scoondrel between his eyes—there! will ye do that for me?"

"But, uncle," cried the young man, finding this alternative about as startling as the other, "how on earth can I find him? He is off to Brazil, or Mexico, or California, long ere now, you may depend on it."

The Laird had pulled himself together again.

"I have put two things before ye," said he, calmly. "It is the first time I have asked ye for a service, after having brought ye up as few lads have been brought up. If you think it is unfair of me to make a bargain about such things, I will tell ye frankly that I have more concern in that young thing left to herself than in any creature now living on earth; and I will be a friend to her as well as an old man can. I have asked our friends here to listen to what I had to say; they will tell ye whether I am unreasonable. I will leave ye to talk it over."

He went to the door. Then he turned for a moment to his hostess.

"I am going to see, ma'am, if Mary will go for a bit walk wi' me—down to the shore, or the like; but we will be back before the hour for denner."

CHAPTER XIX.

THE NEW SUITOR.

IT is only those who have lived with her for a number of years who can tell when a certain person becomes possessed with the demon of mischief, and allows sarcasm and malignant laughter and other unholy delights to run riot in her brain. The chief symptom is the assumption of an abnormal gravity, and a look of simple and confiding innocence that appears in the eyes. The eyes tell most of all. The dark pupils seem even clearer than is their wont, as if they would let you read them through and through; and there is a sympathetic appeal in them; the woman seems so anxious to be kind, and friendly, and considerate. And all the time—especially if it be a man who is hopelessly dumfoundered—she is revenging the many wrongs of her sex by covertly laughing at him and enjoying his discomfiture.

And no doubt the expression on Howard Smith's face, as he sat there in a bewildered silence, was ludicrous enough. He was inclined to laugh the thing away as a joke, but he knew that the Laird was not given to practical jokes. And yet—and yet—

"Do you really think he is serious?" he blurted out at length, and he spoke to this lady with the gentle innocent eyes.

"Oh, undoubtedly," she answered, with perfect gravity.

"Oh, no; it is impossible!" he said, as if arguing with himself. "Why, my uncle, of all men in the world,—and pretending it was serious—of course people often do wish their sons or daughters to marry a particular person—for a sensible reason, to keep estates together, or to join the fortunes of a family—but this—no, no; this is a joke, or else he wants to drive me into giving that fellow a licking. And that, you know, is quite absurd; you might as well drag the Atlantic for a penknife."

"I am afraid your uncle is quite serious," said she, demurely.

"But it was to be left to you," he answered quickly. "You were to say whether it was unreasonable. Surely you must see it is not reasonable. Neither the one thing nor the other is possible——"

Here the young man paused for a moment.

"Surely," he said, "my uncle can't mean, by putting these impossible things before me, to justify his leaving his property to somebody else? There was no need for any such excuse; I have no claim on him; he has a right to do what he pleases."

"That has nothing to do with it," said Queen T. promptly. "Your uncle is quite resolved, I know, that you should have Denny-mains."

"Yes—and a wife," responded the young man, with a somewhat wry smile. "Oh, but you know, it is quite absurd; you will reason him out of it, won't you? He has such a high opinion of your judgment, I know."

The ingenious youth!

"Besides," said he warmly, "do you think it very complimentary to your friend Miss Avon that any one should be asked to come and marry her?"

This was better; it was an artful thrust. But the bland sympathetic eyes only paid him a respectful attention.

"I know my uncle is pretty firm when he has got a notion into his head," said he, "and—and—no doubt he is quite right in thinking that the young lady has been badly treated, and that somebody should give the absconder a thrashing. All that is quite right; but why should I be made responsible for it? I can't do impossible things."

"Well, you see," said his sage adviser, with a highly matter-of-fact air, "your uncle may not regard either the one thing or the other as impossible."

"But they are impossible," said he.

"Then I am very sorry," said she, with great sweetness. "Because Denny-mains is really a beautiful place. And the house would lend itself splendidly to a thorough scheme of re-decoration; the hall could be made perfectly lovely. I would have the wooden dado painted a dark bottle-green, and the wall over it a rich Pompeian red—I don't believe the colours of a hall can be too bold if the tones are good in themselves. Pompeian red is a capital background for pictures, too; and I like to see pictures in the hall; the gentlemen can look at them while they are waiting for their wives. Don't you think Indian matting makes a very nice, serviceable, sober-coloured dado for a dining-room—so long as it does not drive your pictures too high on the wall?"

The fiendishness of this woman! Denny-mains was being withdrawn from him at this very moment; and she was bothering him with questions about its decoration. What did he think of Indian matting?

"Well," said he, "if I am to lose my chance of Denny-mains through this piece of absurdity, I can't help it."

"I beg your pardon," said she most amiably; "but I don't think your uncle's proposal so very absurd. It is the commonest thing in the world for people to wish persons in whom they are interested to marry each other; and very often they succeed by merely getting the young people to meet, and so forth. You say yourself that it is reasonable in certain cases. Well, in this case, you probably don't know how great an interest your uncle takes in Miss Avon, and the affection that he has for her. It is quite remarkable. And he has been dwelling on this possibility of a match between you—of seeing you both settled at Denny-mains—until he almost regards it as already arranged. 'Put yourself in his place,' as Mr. Reade says. It seems to him the most natural thing in the world, and I am afraid he will consider you very ungrateful if you don't fall in with his plan."

Deeper and deeper grew the shadow of perplexity on the young man's brow. At first he had seemed inclined to laugh the whole matter aside, but the gentle reasoning of this small person had a ghastly aspect of seriousness about it.

"Then his notion of my seeking out the man Smethurst and giving him a thrashing: you would justify that, too?" he cried.

"No, not quite," she answered, with a bit of a smile. "That is a little absurd, I admit—it is merely an ebullition of anger. He won't think any more of that in a day or two I am certain. But the other—the other, I fear, is a fixed idea."

At this point we heard some one calling outside:

"Miss Mary! I have been searching for ye everywhere; are ye coming for a walk down to the shore?"

Then a voice, apparently overhead at an open window—

"All right, sir; I will be down in a moment."

Another second or two, and we hear some one singing on the stair, with a fine air of bravado—

A strong sou-wester's blowing, Billy; can't you hear it roar, now?

—the gay voice passes through the hall—

Lord help 'em, how I pities all un—

—then the last phrase is heard outside—

—folks on shore now—

Queen Titania darts to the open window of the dining-room.

"Mary! Mary!" she calls. "Come here."

The next instant a pretty enough picture is framed by the lower half of the window, which is open. The background is a blaze of scarlet and yellow and green—a mixture of sunlight and red poppies and nasturtiums and glancing fuchsia leaves. Then this slight figure that has appeared is dark in shadow; but there is a soft reflected light from the front of the house, and that just shows you the smile on Mary Avon's face and the friendliness of her dark soft eyes.

"Oh, how do you do?" she says, reaching in her hand and shaking hands with him. There is not any timidity in her manner. No one has been whispering to her of the dark plots surrounding her.

Nor was Mr. Smith much embarrassed, though he did not show himself as grateful as a young man might have done for so frank and friendly a welcome.

"I scarcely thought you would have remembered me," said he modestly. But at this moment Denny-mains interfered, and took the young lady by the arm, and dragged her away. We heard their retreating footsteps on the gravel walk.

"So you remember her?" says our hostess, to break the awkward silence.

"Oh, yes, well enough," said he; and then he goes on to say stammeringly—"Of course, I—I have nothing to say against her——"

"If you have," it is here interposed, as a wholesome warning, "you had better not mention it here. Ten thousand hornets' nests would be a fool compared to this house if you said anything in it against Mary Avon."

"On the contrary," says he, "I suppose she is a very nice girl indeed—very—I suppose there's no doubt of it. And if she has been robbed like that, I am very sorry for her; and I don't wonder my uncle should be interested in her, and concerned about her, and—and all that's quite right. But it is too bad—it is too bad—that one should be expected to—to ask her to be one's wife, and a sort of penalty hanging over your head, too. Why, it is enough to set anybody against the whole thing; I thought everybody knew that you can't get people to marry if you drive them to it—except in France, I suppose, where the whole business is arranged for you by your relatives. This isn't France; and I am quite sure Miss Avon would consider herself very unfairly treated if she thought she was being made part and parcel of any such arrangement. As for me—well, I am very grateful to my uncle for his long kindness to me; he has been kindness itself to me; and it is quite true, as he says, that he has asked for nothing in return. Well, what he asks now is just a trifle too much. I won't sell myself for any property. If he is really serious—if it is to be a compulsory marriage like that—Denny-mains can go. I shall be able to earn my own living somehow."

There was a chord struck in this brief, hesitating, but emphatic speech that went straight to his torturer's heart. A look of liking and approval sprang to her eyes. She would no longer worry him.

"Don't you think," said she gently, "that you are taking the matter too seriously? Your uncle does not wish to force you into a marriage against your will; he knows nothing about Adelphi melodramas. What he asks is simple and natural enough. He is, as you see, very fond of Mary Avon; he would like to see her well provided for; he would like to see you settled and established at Denny-mains. But he does not ask the impossible. If she does not agree, neither he nor you can help it. Don't you think it would be a very simple matter for you to remain with us for a time, pay her some ordinary friendly attention, and then show your uncle that the arrangement he would like does not recommend itself to either you or her. He asks no more than that; it is not much of a sacrifice."

There was no stammering about this lady's exposition of the case. Her head is not very big, but its perceptive powers are remarkable.

Then the young man's face brightened considerably.

"Well," said he, "that would be more sensible, surely. If you take away the threat, and the compulsion, and all that, there can be no harm in my being civil to a girl, especially when she is, I am sure, just the sort of girl one ought to be civil to. I am sure she has plenty of common sense——"

It is here suggested once more that, in this house, negative praise of Mary Avon is likely to awake slumbering lions.

"Oh, I have no doubt," says he readily, "that she is a very nice girl indeed. One would not have to pretend to be civil to some creature stuffed with affectation, or a ghoul. I don't object to that at all. If my uncle thinks that enough, very well. And I am quite sure that a girl you think so much of would have more self-respect than to expect anybody to go and make love to her in the country-bumpkin style."

Artful again; but it was a bad shot. There was just a little asperity in Madame's manner when she said—

"I beg you not to forget that Mary does not wish to be made love to by anybody. She is quite content as she is. Perhaps she has quite other views, which you would not regret, I am sure. But don't imagine that she is looking for a husband; or that a husband is necessary for her; or that she won't find friends to look after her. It is your interests we are considering, not hers."

Was the snubbing sufficient?

"Oh, of course, of course," said he, quite humbly. "But then, you know, I was only thinking that—that—if I am to go in and make believe about being civil to your young lady-friend, in order to please my uncle, too much should not be expected. It isn't a very nice thing—at least, for you it may be very nice—to look on at a comedy——"

"And is it so very hard to be civil to a girl?" says his monitress sharply. "Mary will not shock you with the surprise of her gratitude. She might have been married ere now if she had chosen."

"She—isn't—quite a school-girl, you know," he says timidly.

"I was not aware that men preferred to marry school-girls," says the other, with a gathering majesty of demeanour.

Here a humble witness of this interview has once more to interpose to save this daring young man from a thunderbolt. Will he not understand that the remotest and most roundabout reflection on Mary Avon is in this house the unpardonable sin?

"Well," said he frankly, "it is exceedingly kind of you to show me how I am to get out of this troublesome affair; and I am afraid I must leave it to you to convince my uncle that I have done sufficient. And it is very kind of you to ask me to go yachting with you; I hope I shall not be in the way. And—and—there is no reason at all why Miss Avon and I should not become very good friends—in fact, I hope we shall become such good friends that my uncle will see we could not be anything else."

Could anything be fairer than this? His submission quite conquered his hostess. She said she would show him some of Mary Avon's sketches in oil, and led him away for that purpose. His warm admiration confirmed her good opinion of him; henceforth he had nothing to fear.

At dinner that evening he was at first a little shy; perhaps he had a suspicion that there were present one or two spectators of a certain comedy which he had to play all by himself. But, indeed, our eyes and ears were not for him alone. Miss Avon was delighting the Laird with stories of the suggestions she had got about her pictures from the people who had seen them—even from the people who had bought them—in London.

"And you know," said she quite frankly, "I must study popular taste as much as I fairly can now, for I have to live by it. If people will have sea-pieces spoiled by having figures put in, I must put in figures. By and by I may be in a position to do my own work in my own way."

The Laird glanced at his nephew: was it not for him to emancipate this great and original artist from the fear of critics, and dealers, and purchasers? There was no response.

"I mean to be in London soon myself," the Laird said abruptly; "ye must tell me where I can see some of your pictures."

"Oh, no," she said, laughing, "I shall not victimise my friends. I mean to prey on the public—if possible. It is Mr. White, in King Street, St. James's, however, who has taken most of my pictures hitherto; and so if you know of anybody who would like to acquire immortal works for a few guineas apiece, that is the address."

"I am going to London myself soon," said he, with a serious air, as if he had suddenly determined on buying the National Gallery.

Then Howard Smith, perceiving that no one was watching him, or expecting impossibilities of him, became quite cheerful and talkative; and told some excellent stories of his experiences at various shooting quarters the previous winter. Light-hearted, good-natured, fairly humorous, he talked very well indeed. We gathered that during the last months of the year the shooting of pheasants occupied a good deal more of his time and attention than the study of law. And how could one wonder that so pleasant-mannered a young man was a welcome guest at those various country-houses in the south?

But it appeared that, despite all this careless talk, he had been keeping an eye on Mary Avon during dinner. Walking down to the yacht afterwards—the blood-red not quite gone from the western skies, a cool wind coming up from the sea—he said casually to his uncle—

"Well, sir, whatever trouble that young lady may have gone through has not crushed her spirits yet. She is as merry as a lark."

"She has more than cheerfulness—she has courage," said the Laird, almost severely. "Oh, ay; plenty of courage. And I have no doubt she could fight the world for herself just as well as any man I know. But I mean to make it my business that she shall not have to fight the world for herself—not as long as there is a stick standing on Dennymains!"

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