HOME LIFE WITH HERBERT SPENCER

BY TWO

Lewis Duncan.
Dec. 1910.

HOME LIFE
WITH HERBERT SPENCER.

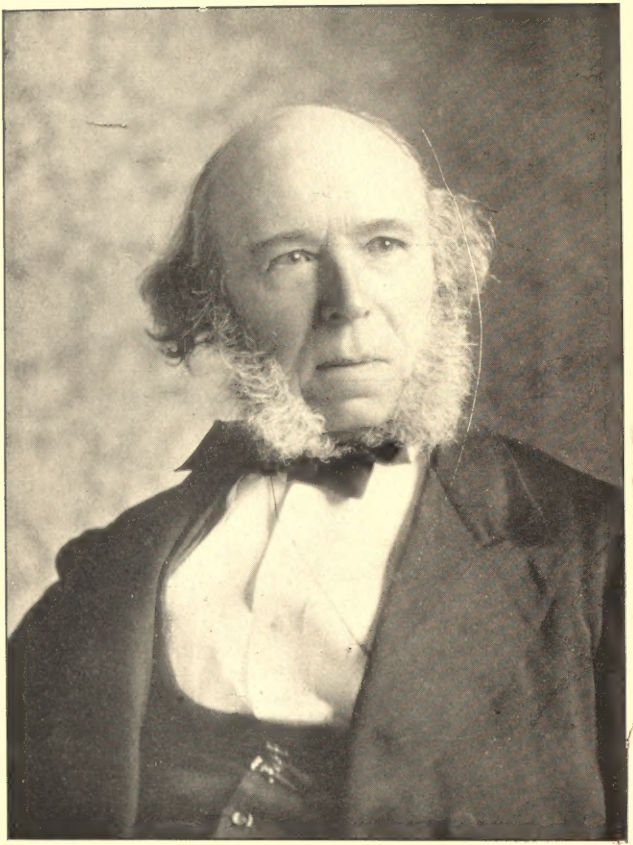

Photo: Elliott & Fry.

Herbert Spencer
when 73

Home Life

with

Herbert Spencer

By

Two

A NEW EDITION.

BRISTOL
J. W. ARROWSMITH, QUAY STREET
LONDON
SIMPKIN, MARSHALL, HAMILTON, KENT & COMPANY LIMITED

First Edition, 1906.

Second Edition, 1910.

On ne s'imagine Platon et Aristote qu'avec de grandes robes de pédants. C'étaient des gens honnêtes et comme les autres, riants avec leurs amis : et quand ils se sont divertis à faire leur Loi et leur Politique, ils l'ont fait en se jouant. C'était la partie la moins philosophe et la moins sérieuse de leur vie. La plus philosophe était de vivre simplement et tranquillement.

Pascal. *Penseés.*

CONTENTS.

INTRODUCTION.

THIS little book has its origin in the deep sense of the duty we feel we owe to Mr. Herbert Spencer. Many anecdotes were recounted at his death about his characteristics, but we have looked in vain for any which reveal the brighter and kindlier side of his nature. The great men who knew him talked of his philosophy, the little men of his quaint peculiarities. Even his *Autobiography*, completed just a few weeks before we knew him, though it shows the working of his mind, fails—and perhaps it is not to be wondered at—to convey any idea of the working of his heart. It seems but fair to his memory, therefore, that we, who spent eight years under his roof, enjoying the rare opportunity of seeing him in all his moods and

of studying him in his health and sickness, in his serious and in his frivolous moments, should direct public attention to those attributes of his character which are scarcely even suspected by the many admirers of his wonderful intellect. Nor is it amiss that this task should be left to two women to perform. Many people worshipped him, and yet more respected him, but it was at a distance. We knew him in his home, and perhaps it needed a woman to appreciate the depth and the width of the great, kindly nature that lay beneath that remarkable exterior. That the spur would urge us beyond our capacity and expose us to the criticism of those who cannot understand was only to be feared and expected. Our own private lives were so much bound up with his during those years, that they cannot be separated. The pedantic may sneer at the trivialities of this book and the unsympathetic may scoff at our weakness, but we cannot let the personal reputation

of the man we learned to know and admire and reverence go down to posterity tarnished with the suspicion of meanness, pettiness, and vulgarity that most of the stories that are told about him suggest. That the world should think kindly of the man whom all agree to admire as a philosopher, is all we ask.

TWO.

CHAPTER I.

AN "ARRANGEMENT."

THE dawn of the year 1889 was one of gloom and sadness to us,- two sisters—for the course of life seemed pulled up short by a hard, cold wall, a wall impossible to climb and with no visible chinks through which a ray of light could glimmer. Misfortunes had come to us, as they come to so many, unforeseen and unsuspected, none the less hard to bear because they were not the first we had experienced. But we were more favoured than most people who are suddenly brought face to face with their ill-fate. To many money losses mean the abandonment of all that makes life valuable or interesting. To us they

brought the society of one of the greatest men of the age.

The spring of that year passed unhappily, but on May 3rd a letter from our dear friend Mrs. B. came like a light in the darkness. It asked one of us to run up to town to see her on a matter of importance. Such a letter from her was sure to mean something pleasant for us, and naturally D., the elder of us, lost no time in obeying the summons, wondering what the matter of importance could be, but never guessing in the least its purport. Her surprise was only equalled by her consternation upon hearing the nature of the business, which was not long kept from her. Mrs. B., ready to receive her, and full of the great project, met her in her cosy, comfortable drawing-room, made her sit down, and propounded her scheme without more ado or circumlocution.

It was really almost providential, she said, so exactly did the situations fit each other. Her old friend, Herbert Spencer,

the great philosopher, who had lived for twenty-three years in boarding-houses in London, now thought, at the age of sixty-nine he would prefer a home of his own. He wanted to settle down, but as a bachelor he had a horror of the worries entailed by housekeepers and servants and the troubles of a solitary household. Besides, he felt that he wanted something of a family life. It had occurred to him, therefore, that her husband, Dr. B., might know some ladies who had goods and chattels enough to furnish the larger part of a moderate-sized house with whom he could take up his residence.

He had mentioned the matter to other friends without success, and probably scarcely hoped to find anyone so situated who would be willing to make the experiment, but Dr. B. had thought of us at once. We, as he knew, possessed furniture which, as things were, was only a burden to us. We were fresh from a

family life, and anxious for a motive for our energies.

Why, she said in her kind way, we were the very people for Mr. Spencer, for he would be responsible for the heavier part of the expenses on consideration that the ladies of the household undertook to see that the servants carried out his orders. "The arrangement," said she, "will be an advantage to you both."

"But," urged D. when her consternation at the proposal allowed her to speak, "we are quite unfit for it. Our way of life has been more of the domestic than the intellectual order. We should never get on with Mr. Spencer."

"Nonsense," said she, "nothing of the sort. Mr. Spencer doesn't want to have intellectual people about him." And with this she closed the discussion, if such it may be called, where all the argument was on her side.

With some trepidation and many misgivings, D. consented to an interview with

the great man, which it was arranged should take place the next day at Dr. B.'s consulting-room in Queen Anne Street.

The meeting was fixed for eleven o'clock, but D. was there before the time, somewhat appalled at the prospect before her, and wondering what this man would be like, the famous philosopher of whom she had vaguely heard, but whom she had never seen.

She was not kept long in suspense, however, for punctually at the appointed hour the door opened, and a tall and, as it seemed at first sight, a forbidding-looking man entered, shook hands with Dr. B., made a stiff bow to D. which drove away the little courage left in her, and seated himself as far off as the limits of the room allowed.

He at once began to narrate the terms and conditions on which he proposed the house should be managed, and while he was thus talking D. had a little time to recover herself and take stock of the man

who was to form part of our family circle for so many years. There is no need to describe the general appearance of Herbert Spencer. His photographs are well known, and his personality was strikingly displayed in them.

Everyone knows his portrait, with the domelike, bald head surrounded by iron-grey hair, the grey whiskers, the firm mouth with the long upper lip, the limp, bulging shirt-front, and the rough, old-fashioned clothes he always wore.

But what can a photograph do? It cannot show the fresh, ruddy colour in his cheeks, which made him look so well and so often belied his bad health. It cannot properly show the hazel eyes with the dark rims round the irises and the dark spots in them. It cannot show the wonderful play of expression that came over his features when he spoke, or the merry twinkle that shone in his eye when he was amused.

Of course D. did not take all this in

at once. She was too mazed, too much overawed, to realise what was taking place, still less to criticise the man who was talking to her. It was hard enough to make out what he was saying, for she is not keen of hearing, and he had seated himself as far off as possible. Moreover, she was so confused that she had lost all power of objecting to, or weighing any of his proposals, and she said afterwards, "All I could do was to ejaculate, 'Yes, Mr. Spencer'; and had he said to me, 'On thinking it over, I have come to the conclusion that you ought to support me entirely in return for the honour I am conferring upon you,' I *know* I should still have replied humbly, 'Yes, Mr. Spencer,' and felt that it was all right somehow."

His terms, however, were not so terrible as all that; indeed, they sounded very well at the time.

He offered to pay the rent and taxes of a house in the North of London, three rooms of which he would furnish for

himself, the others being given up to us entirely with the exception of the dining-room, which he would require on the rare occasions when his health would permit him to entertain friends.

He would also undertake the wages of the servants, but we were to be responsible for their board as well as our own. He added that as he spent most of his days at his club, he would only require breakfast at home, except on those rare occasions aforesaid.

Not a very sociable arrangement this! Box and Cox could scarcely have seen less of each other than we should see of our fellow-tenant if this plan were to hold good. It seemed the philosopher intended to be a recluse in his own house, or rather, like the family ghost, only seen at rare intervals. However, for good or bad it was decided to fall in with his project, and it was arranged that D. should call the next day at the boarding-house in Queen's Gardens where he was then stopping to

sign the agreement, which he promised to have drawn up by then.

The morrow did not make her wish to change her mind, but she was in no less awe of him, and it was a great comfort, therefore, to find him in a much more human mood. He relaxed into a smile more than once, and even laughed when D. gave him the name "Pitch and Pay" as the address of the friends with whom she was staying in Gloucestershire. But when she began to explain to him how it got its peculiar title he grew stiff again at once, and with a sharp "Never mind; that will do!" reduced her to silence and terror once more.

How often men do themselves an injustice by the way they speak! We were quite disconcerted at first by that short way of his, and many a time in after years have we seen well-meaning admirers crushed by the snub which he, all unconsciously, delivered. But it was not long before the reason of this became

apparent. His health was such that he was often unable to bear the strain of continuous conversation, and we soon learned to adapt ourselves accordingly.

The agreement was duly signed, and we were pledged for a period of three months, at any rate; a period all too long if the arrangement were a failure, and yet little better than a breathing space if it proved a success. But signed it was, and we began to look for a house.

News of this sort seems to spread very quickly, for scarcely a day elapsed before we had a solemn warning letter from an old friend.

"I hear you are thinking," said the letter, "of entering into some arrangement with Herbert Spencer. On no account have anything to do with him. I hear there is nothing to be said for him but that he has a good moral character!"

Pleasant! wasn't it, this? What would he do? Would it be temper that was wrong? Would he want to rule the

household with a rod of philosophic iron? Fortunately his morals were not impugned, so it was not to be supposed that his pronounced anti-religious views had sapped his character. Well, well, we were in for it for three months at least, and we should see what we should see.

Luckily we were not to remain long with this one-sided opinion as our only guide. We were introduced soon after to some ardent admirers of the philosopher, one of whom, when he found that fate had pitchforked us under his very roof, was not only duly impressed with the greatness of the honour that had befallen us, but undertook to enlighten us as to the nature of the books Mr. Spencer had written, though, alas! as he had never seen him h could tell us nothing of that terrible deficiency that we were warned about. With these two contrary opinions in our heads we started the work of house-hunting.

This was managed very characteristically, and might have given us some

insight of what was to come. Mr. Spencer marked a number of houses in an agent's list; we were to go and look over them, weeding out those which on inspection we thought he would not like, and a short list was to be prepared for him to visit, for he could take little or no bodily exertion.

Accordingly we went through the most dreary of all toils—looking over empty houses, and trying to imagine what they would look like when furnished, and wondering where our furniture could be fitted in to any of the rooms. We selected six in the neighbourhood of St. John's Wood and Regent's Park, and having submitted our proposals to Mr. Spencer, were taken with him in his carriage to see them. On the journey there he made little effort at conversation, and what he said was quite ordinary and desultory.

He looked at them all, and then, to our disgust, pitched on the one that *we* liked least—No. 64 Avenue Road, Regent's

Park. It was essentially a man's house, with its bright rooms, lofty ceilings and big windows. No lights and shadows, corners or nooks, with their endless possibilities of giving the rooms that homelike, comfortable touch which cosy corners and deep window-seats would have done. Nothing but great rectangular rooms, blank, staring, and wearisome—so different from our own old home.

But taken the house was, and we set about the task of getting our furniture in, engaging the servants and coaching them up in their duties before the advent of the great man in September.

If our hearts were sometimes heavy with apprehension of what might be the outcome of it all, we were more often stimulated by the interest of wondering what it would be like to live in a house with a philosopher, the friend of men of learning, whose name and whose works were famous to the utmost ends of the civilised world.

CHAPTER II.

HIS ARRIVAL.

SEPTEMBER the 23rd, 1889! A day never to be forgotten in the annals of our household.

A very small "i" would best describe the personality into which the unhappy D. had shrunk as she sat in 64 Avenue Road at four o'clock in the afternoon on that eventful day awaiting the arrival of our new acquaintance.

For a while the interest of expectation buoyed her up; but as the time for his approach drew near, alarm and dismay succeeded, until, as she confessed afterwards, her very innermost being trembled with apprehension. She has since admitted she would have run away and left her dignity to look after itself had

she been able to do so, but the bonds were too tightly laced for that.

It seems strange now, on looking back over the years of friendly intimacy we spent with Mr. Spencer, to think that one of us should have trembled at the thought of his arrival, and it is difficult to feel now the sensation of fear that seemed so natural then. But it must be remembered how little we knew of him, and what terrible things had been hinted of him.

To live all day with a philosopher, even one whose "moral character" was above reproach, was an alarming idea. The fears we had entertained at first now returned with renewed force.

Would he be a pedant? Would he despise us and our ignorance, and make us feel how insignificant and foolish we were? Would he treat us as inferior beings, or patronise us as children? Would he look upon all women as "something better than his dog, a little

dearer than his horse?" Would his ways of life and behaviour be as mysterious and unintelligible as his philosophy? Would he *never* descend to the earth and laugh and talk like the rest of mankind? Perhaps the petty details of daily life might not interest him, but would he be quite inconsiderate of the cares and troubles of others? Or would he—most terrible thought of all—would he know more about the management of household affairs than we ourselves?

How strange it seems now to look back on these fears, for a very short experience told us he would do none of these things, and that were he ten times more philosopher than he was, deep down below his learning and theories lay the true nature of a man, with its strength and its weakness, and, above all, with its invincible ignorance of how to manage a household properly.

And yet the manner of his first arrival was most disconcerting.

At twenty minutes to five he drove rapidly to the door in his carriage—a shabby little victoria — and, stepping quickly out, slowly ascended the steps, leaving the innumerable rugs, cloaks, etc., he had brought with him to follow.

He shook hands cordially, and then entering the dining-room sank in silence into an arm-chair. The silence lasted several seconds, after which he informed us that he had been feeling his pulse! Luckily it had been beating regularly, and conversation, to use the hackneyed phrase, "became general."

But our surprises were not all over. He had, with careful forethought and attention to detail, ordered his supper a week beforehand. It was to consist of eggs, toast and cocoatina, a simple repast which hardly needed so much warning and preparation. But now, at the last minute, he suggested a grilled whiting, "only it must *be* a whiting,

you know; half the time the fishmongers send a haddock instead."

At this prompt and unexpected exhibition of masculine nature our spirits rose. "Come," we thought, "this is more homelike. Philosopher or no philosopher, at least we feel that we have a man in the house."

But in order to avoid the possibility of any inadvertence on the part of the fishmonger on this occasion, D. undertook, being anxious to shorten the interview, to fetch the whiting herself.

But on her return we found to our dismay that the cook did not know how to grill fish, and grilled that whiting must be, as we could not let Mr. Spencer's first order be disregarded. So M., who was a teacher of cookery, gallantly threw herself among the gridirons and accomplished the feat satisfactorily.

We did not, however, feel sufficiently intimate with Mr. Spencer to join him at his meal, so we retired to our little

drawing-room, which was then still unpapered and bare. But after a while he appeared at the door with an apology. He feared he had "dispossessed" us of our room—that was a favourite word of his—and he insisted on our returning to the dining-room while he sat in the cheerless drawing-room alone, as he wanted to be quiet after his journey.

The next day, however, on his return from the club, he came into our room where we were sitting to make one of our party quite as a matter of course, and within a fortnight decided to lunch at home always instead of going to the Athenæum.

In other ways, too, he adapted himself to his surroundings, and entered into our family life. His conversations with us in the evening were on the most homely, every-day affairs, and if he felt tired or indisposed to talk, as he often did before going to bed, he did not hesitate to say so.

He used to return from the club at about nine in the evening, and sit with

us for about an hour, and if the conversation proved too trying for him he would produce his ear-stoppers and shut himself off from the world of sound. These ear-stoppers were formed of a band almost semicircular in shape, with a little velvet-covered knob at either end, which was pressed by the spring in the band on the flaps over the hole of each ear. Very practical and sensible, no doubt, but irresistibly funny to see, and a ready butt for parody, as will be related afterwards.

Each evening at ten o'clock punctually he rose, wished us "good night," and went to his room. His oddities extended even to his sleeping arrangements, and as he insisted on his bed being made in a certain fashion of his own, he retired the first evening after his arrival at an earlier hour than was his custom subsequently in order to see that the bed had been prepared for him after the approved plan.

This was as follows. A hard bolster was placed under the mattress, raising thereby a hump on which the small of his back rested. The clothes had a pleat in them right down the centre, so that they were never strained, but fell in loose folds on either side of him, an arrangement which, though we were assured it was most comfortable and restful, certainly looked peculiarly untidy.

Why, it will be asked, narrate all these absurd domestic details? Why expose the whims and cranks of an old bachelor, who had suffered from ill-health all his life, and was forced to study the little comforts and luxuries of existence which so many men insist on enjoying, without his excuse and without his achievements? Have you nothing better to tell of him than that, or is it inevitable that every account of Herbert Spencer should consist very largely of anecdotes about ridiculous trivialities? And if so, is it the fault of the philosopher or the narrators? Such

objectors have a great deal of reason on their side. There have been far too many such stories published, many of them groundless, most of them misrepresenting his true character. And it would be a thousand pities if his contemporaries let posterity think that that was all there was to say about him. It is for the sake of what these stories reveal that we have chosen to repeat them.

It is true that the strangeness of some of his ways was disconcerting at first, but we very soon got over that and learnt to look at things in the true light. And when we did understand him, how deeply we admired and reverenced the natural simplicity of our new friend, the philosopher whose name was known all over the world, and whose books had been translated into nearly every civilised language on the face of the globe. No true conception of him can be formed which is not based on that fundamental idea. The little oddities of life and

manner we have noticed were made obvious because he took no pains to disguise them, not because they formed so important a part of his nature and character.

An amusing example of this occurred one evening very soon after he joined us. Mr. Spencer had not been well enough all day to leave the house, and as one of us was obliged to be absent all the evening owing to an engagement of some standing, the other was left to spend the time *tête-à-tête* with him; a terrifying ordeal it was in those days, though we thought nothing of it afterwards, and many were the fears as to what the subject of conversation would be.

But there was no need for alarm, for he soon began to talk about *socks*, and explained how thick his were.

He went off into a discourse on the subject and on the folly of clothing an exposed part, such as the foot, more lightly than the rest of the body, and held forth

in his most serious and emphatic style for several minutes on this important topic!

It was all done in the most natural way, as if socks were a suitable and interesting subject of conversation in any kind of society.

On thinking of it now, one is inclined to laugh, but there was no thought of that then, not even when, on his companion saying she suffered from cold feet, he offered with eagerness to give her some small pairs of his own to wear over her stockings if she didn't mind appearances.

In other ways too his simplicity showed itself.

He was, of course, fully conscious of his reputation, and knew that some people regarded him as the greatest of living Thinkers, while others looked on him as Anti-Christ.

The perpetual adulation would have turned the head of many a smaller man, while the bitter attacks that were made

on him might, it is supposed, have rendered him irritable. Not a bit.

One day the postman delivered a letter addresed to "Herbert Spencer, England, and if the postman doesn't know where he lives, why he ought to." He laughed heartily, and handed the envelope to us to look at, but it is doubtful if he felt pleased, and it is probable he forgot all about it ten minutes afterwards.

Another letter which came about the same time gave him even more amusement. It was from the representatives of a body of ecclesiastics, asking him what was allowable and what was not in the way of betting and gambling. That the Church should appeal to him, even for an opinion, that it should think his views worth considering, struck Mr. Spencer as intensely funny, but never for a moment did it make him vain or puffed up. It was no more to him than if one of us had asked him for an opinion on domestic economy.

In the same way, although he often talked with us about the great people he had known, people whose names are household words, the Carlyles, George Eliot, and so forth, he never attempted to impress us with the fact, or overwhelm us with a list of his famous acquaintances. Perhaps it is only young men who do that, or men who have not really a very large number of notable persons among their friends.

It was, however, curious to hear little scraps of information about the mighty dead given in the same tone and manner as criticisms on our musical friend's singing, and with far less seriousness than his advice about socks. These used to come out quite unexpectedly, like a flash in the dark; and the sensation of hearing them and realising the new light in which the person referred to would stand for ever after in our eyes, was very like the sensation one feels on seeing a rocket burst into a crowd of coloured stars.

One trifling instance illustrative of many may be quoted.

He had lent us his carriage to go for a drive, the first pleasure drive we had had in it, and we stopped out longer than we thought we had done, returning late for supper.

Mr. Spencer was always very punctual, and we were a little alarmed lest he should be annoyed at being kept waiting, and hurried into the dining-room prepared to apologise profusely.

He was stretched on the sofa waiting for us quite patiently, and as bright and cheerful as could be, thinking over old times no doubt, for almost at once, and after a very few words, he told us that it was he who had first recommended George Eliot to take to writing fiction. Another time he told us that she and her brother were the originals of Maggie and Tom Tulliver in the *Mill on the Floss*.

He seems to have been responsible for more than one important event in that

authoress's career, for it was he who let out the secret of her identity. Someone blessed with more desire for information than with tact had asked him point-blank if it were true that Marian Evans and George Eliot were one and the same, and his simplicity being too great to allow him to prevaricate, he kept silence, which was very naturally interpreted as an admission. And so the secret was out.

Every good quality has its corresponding defect, of course, and Mr. Spencer was no exception to the rule. It must be admitted that his straightforwardness and absence of self-consciousness, which charmed us so much on the whole, was a little troublesome at times; when he wanted a thing he was determined to have it, and he did not in the least mind appearances.

Thus when he wished to buy anything he would never make any purchase if the article was not just to his mind. We spent most of October and November of

the first year he was with us in visiting shops for him, for owing to his feeble health he was unable to bear the strain of going out to choose the furniture for his drawing-room.

His secretary, therefore, was sent with one of us to make preliminary selections and to bring away samples for his approval. The selections were generally wrong, and so particular was he about every detail that the same shops had often to be visited again and again before a final choice was made.

We quite dreaded going into some of the shops, so often had we been there without making any purchase, and we were only consoled by the thought that there were so many shop assistants that we seldom were attended to by the same twice running.

The selection of the furniture was a difficult subject enough, but worse was to follow when he chose the coverings for the chairs. If he was hard to please in

the matter of form, he was even more particular in the matter of colour. He had one favourite shade which he described as "impure purple," and so devoted was he to this hue, so insistent upon it on all occasions, that in a moment of frivolity one of us suggested that some love of his youth must have had an "impure purple" complexion!

Eventually the furniture was covered with a dull-green velvet, which had a binding of the same shade. This, however, was too monotonous for the philosopher, who always insisted upon "a contrast." So he decided to have it re-trimmed with a binding of his beloved "impure purple." But the exact colour was not to be found in any shop; and after trying place after place, inspecting shade after shade, the search was abandoned, and an order was given to have it made. Home it came at last, and was duly approved. Then came the great work of putting it on, which had to be done under Mr. Spencer's superin-

tendence. Indeed, he cut the first strip himself, and with his own fingers showed the sempstress how to stick it on with seccotine.

Such was the attention to detail shown by our philosopher. What the sempstress thought of it all, there is no saying. So well was the work done that the strip of "impure purple" velvet remained glued to the chairs for many a long year afterwards.

Mr. Spencer had no great native fund of wit, and it is to be feared his jokes were sometimes of a rather heavy type.

For instance, on the occasion mentioned above, when he was telling us the little anecdotes about George Eliot, he added, in a whimsical sort of way, that he had often joked her about her "diabolical descent." It may have been that we looked a little blank at this, not understanding what he meant, or perhaps he thought the joke was too subtle for our understanding, for almost at once he

proceeded to explain that as her name was Marian she was also a Polly Ann (Apollyon). As far as our memory serves us we laughed, but subsequent years have given us no cause for thinking the remark any more witty than we thought it then. And yet, upon occasion he could be truly humorous.

One day someone had told him the well-known story of the little girl who was filled with curiosity to know what God had for His dinner, and on being told by her mother that "He did not require any dinner," remarked, "Oh, then, I suppose He has an egg with His tea!"

A few days after this M. was talking about the blissful way the gutter children dance round a street piano, and said she hoped if she ever succeeded in getting to Heaven she would be allowed to dance as they did. "Oh, no," he interposed, "in your capacity as cook you will have to boil the egg."

How we laughed!

The fact is, our lunches were very jolly at that time, full of laughter and merriment.

There had just appeared in two consecutive numbers of *Punch* a most amusing little skit about Mr. Spencer, which led to much hilarity. To make the incident we are about to relate quite clear, the points of the sketch must be briefly explained.

An ordinary young Britisher, called Podbury, is paying attention to an artistic damsel, and is afraid he may be cut out by a great muff called Culchard, who goes in for having a "mind."

To be even with his rival on that score, Podbury decides to "swat up Spencer," who, being "a stiff old bird," will soon put him "to rights." However, he soon decides that Spencer's philosophy is "bally rot," and easily gains the maiden's affections without it. The keen enjoyment of reading this humorous little skit was only equalled by the enjoyment in

witnessing the philosopher's face while he did the same.

He chuckled, he gurgled, he gave absurd little explosions of laughter while he read and gloated over every sentence. His amusement, indeed, was such that we took care he should not forget it, and it became "food for laughter" in season and out of season.

During those days an acquaintance of his lunched at Avenue Road. While Mr. Spencer was deep in conversation with him, one sister, with a perfectly grave face, looked at him and coolly broke in with—

"What bally rot is the stiff old bird talking now, I wonder?"

At this unexpected sally the philosopher's head went up as he fell back in his chair, emitting peal after peal of shaking laughter, in which the guest joined, but with a look of perfect astonishment. This was not surprising, especially when it eventually transpired, although he

had himself sent the number of *Punch* with the first part of the story in it, he had never seen the second part where those expressions occurred, and therefore was quite unaware they were a quotation!

Our fear of Mr. Spencer had completely disappeared, and we talked to him just as we liked, and as if we had known him for twenty years.

He entered into it all, and was evidently pleased with it, for he told us one day that he did not like clever women who were always "thrusting their philosophy down my throat!"

If it must be admitted he was only occasionally humorous, there is no doubt that at all times he had a very keen enjoyment and appreciation of humour and fun. Indeed, it is to be wondered whether any schoolboy could possibly enjoy a joke more than he did. No fun could be too trivial to amuse his great philosophic mind.

This was strikingly illustrated one day

when one of us lost a chatelaine. It was a very precious possession, because its steel foundation had once been the curb-chain of a favourite hunter. Now it was relegated to holding nothing more formidable than scissors, knife, &c., but consequently of continual use to a busy housekeeper.

But when the fact was mentioned at lunch one day a mischievous look appeared on Mr. Spencer's face — for even in a joke he was incapable of dissembling— which caused our suspicions to fall upon him.

Instead of proclaiming him the thief, we took a more subtle way of revenge by rushing to him continually to borrow pencil, knife—everything the chatelaine contained.

Still he said no word.

At last his victim determined to force it from him, and as fair means had failed decided to try foul; so one day casually remarked that, having lost her knife, she

had been compelled to take his razor to sharpen a pencil! Then she watched his face, guessing *that* would rile a man more than anything. But its momentary lengthening quickly vanished as he realised he was dealing with one who had often taken him in before.

He stood the constant borrowing quite good-humouredly for many days, but he tired out at last, and had ignominiously to give in and restore the lost property to its owner.

Thinking the jingling might have annoyed him, she asked—

"Why did you hide it, Mr. Spencer?"

His boyish reply, "For fun!" sent us into a fit of laughter, and the surprise was only equalled by the comicality of Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, doing such a thing for such a reason! He, quickly guessing the cause of our mirth, as usual followed suit, his features lighting up with gleaming joyousness that was perfectly captivating, as he exclaimed, "Oh dear! oh dear! I

think I ought to be called the 'laughing philosopher.'"

"Yes, indeed," replied one of us. "How astonished the world would be could it but hear that incident! Also some of our conversations! For if ever it has heard of us at all, it probably pities us, thinking to what heights and depths we have to soar and to descend."

"That is just the erroneous idea people have," he replied, almost impatiently. "Do they suppose I want to talk philosophy in my home? Such nonsense! Because I am a philosopher, am I not also *a man?*"

Then he went on to say it reminded him of a woman who had sat next to him at dinner at his boarding-house, who talked philosophy endlessly, so that he was bored to death.

Afterwards he was told she had remarked that had she had no husband she believed he would have married her. Then he continued—

"Fancy me marrying a philosophic woman! Why that is the very last thing I should ever have done," and his hands and arms were flung up to emphasise the absurdity of such a notion.

"Now what I like is clever nonsense!" he concluded.

To prove that philosophic men were much as others, and that he was no mere exception to the rule, he told us of a scientific friend about his own age and like himself, a staid bachelor. This man found it irksome to do his own writing, and at Mr. Spencer's suggestion employed a girl amanuensis for his literary work. Meeting him some days later, the philosopher inquired how the plan had answered.

"Why not at all," was the rueful reply. "I had to give her up. I found I thought far more about the girl than what I was writing!"

Hugely tickled as we were by this delightful little story, our surprise was

small compared to what it would have been had we heard it in our pre-Spencer days, so one of us exclaimed—

"Oh, we have learnt a thing or two about clever men since knowing you! We never knew before they could be so jolly or such good company to ordinary mortals!"

"*I* am not good company," he quickly interrupted. "Now for that you wanted John Stuart Mill or Huxley. They were good company if you like, especially Huxley, as he was so humorous."

That provoked him to tell of a dinner he had attended where many celebrated writers met—most of them long since dead. Over their cigarettes they fell to discussing their various methods of commencing to write.

One said he wrote and wrote, tore up, then wrote again and so on.

George Lewes, who was present, looked surprised and then cried out—

"Oh, I 'm not like that, I commence

to write at once, directly the pen is in my hand! In fact, I boil at a low temperature!"

"Indeed," cut in Mr. Huxley, "That is very interesting, for, as you know, to boil at a low temperature implies a vacuum in the upper region."

Lewes himself was the first to lead the shout of laughter which of course greeted this clever repartee.

Mr. Spencer's enjoyment of humour was so natural, simple, and genuine, that he never minded a joke directed a little against himself.

One day the conversation turned on a certain friend of ours who had declared to one of us that she always made too much noise when visiting at his house. Suggestions for a remedy were called for, all of which took the form of doctoring the sufferer, it being admitted by everyone who knew the culprit that no power on earth could mitigate the cause! All sorts of nonsensical proposals were made,

and finally the offending sister herself propounded a remedy which was adopted amid much applause.

It was decided that we should make a pair of ear-stoppers, such as we have already said Mr. Spencer wore when the conversation was too great a strain for him. He was as much amused at the idea as anyone, and entered keenly into the fun.

It was his suggestion that we should melt off the rim of an old saucepan-lid in the study fire, and all the time that we were making this wonderful instrument he was full of ideas how to improve it.

The work was eventually completed, and was duly appreciated. It does not seem ever to have occurred to him that we might have been laughing at him, as indeed we were not.

Perhaps, however, in this case there was another reason which made him more indulgent and inclined to take the whole affair as a joke, for he was always

most tolerant of us and our doings. This was especially the case in matters relating to the cooking we did for him, though the cook came in for the most severe criticism sometimes.

Thus on one occasion he affirmed that one of the baked potatoes was dirty. It wasn't; but let that pass. He argued that it was, and in order to demonstrate the proof of his contention he pulled his penknife out of his pocket—apparently the last thing in this world that will ever be civilised is the male sex—and began to scrape off minute particles that he said were dirt. It was difficult enough to disguise our laughter; but when he made one of us take the wretched thing and scrape it too, and then rub it about to see if it were dirty, it was too much. We thought it was an elaborate joke, but it wasn't, so important did he consider it that the servants should be kept up to the smallest details of their work.

Now this was no isolated example, for

on another occasion he found an infinitesimal piece of gristle in his minced chicken. The discovery roused him to a state of annoyance, and he passed it on to one of us on the end of the blade of his knife to see. Then turning to the parlourmaid, he told her to tell the cook that by her carelessness she might have caused him indigestion. Neither of us had the courage to say anything till the servant left the room.

Then we told him that the cook was ill, and that the mince had been made by one of us. He leant back in his chair and fairly laughed outright. "Oho!" he cried in the midst of his laughter, "that was a hit in the dark," and then went off into a fit of chuckling again. But of course we received no reproaches, only a gratified smile that we had done our best for him under the circumstances.

It will be seen, then, that in a very short time we were on a footing of great friendship, almost of confidence. His

presence was a pleasure to us, and he seemed to be always pleased to have us with him.

One week, when on two consecutive evenings we were out and he had been worried over a controversy in *The Times*, in which some of his friends took a line he did not at all approve, he seemed more than ever to miss the society we were able to give him. The first day after we were at home we asked him if he would go downstairs, to which he replied, "What is the use of going down if there is nobody there," as if he felt aggrieved that we ever left him alone.

After that we decided always to ask him if he wanted company. And he generally did.

In this way we spent the first few months of our life in that house, as pleasant, happy months as we have ever spent or could wish to spend if the choice were given us how to live our lives over again — days full of interest,

enlivened by the fascinating little stories about men and women Mr. Spencer had known; hours full of merriment, stimulated by the naïve simplicity of his humour and sparkling with the joyousness of his laugh; moments, and those indeed few, of sadness and depression, when his ill-health mastered him or outside affairs worried him.

For at that time no cloud had settled over our household. Those were great times indeed!

CHAPTER III.

DEVELOPMENTS.

DURING the autumn of the first year that Mr. Spencer was with us his health was excellent, so good indeed that he no longer worried over it. But, as if the care of health was ever foremost in his thoughts, as soon as his own gave him no trouble he began to consider ours. And he took us in hand in his own masterful way.

Hearing by chance that one of us had washed her hair in a fireless room, he promptly sent an order to her to proceed to the study to receive a "good bullying" from him for being so unwise. The lecture was borne meekly, and so his ascendency over us in these matters was established. He next heard that the delinquent always

made a poor breakfast; and using the advantage he had gained, he sternly remarked that he must rule her with a rod of iron, and in future should not inquire "Good morning. Have you used Pears' soap?"—and here he twinkled and gave a little chuckle—but "Good morning. Have you made a good breakfast? For eating too little is simply a habit which should be broken as soon as possible, for it is an extremely injurious one."

This assumption of authority, it must be admitted, simply delighted us. It made our relationship more human, more social, and less bound down with the chains of business. For there is enough business in the world already without having one's daily life regulated by it in every particular; while the authority that was exercised was not that of a tyrant, and if we were under discipline we knew that it was prompted by kindness and guided by experience.

But sometimes this left us very little

liberty for our own affairs. We used to receive good scoldings from him if he thought we were overtired, or had done more than was necessary. For this reason he strongly objected to the visits which one of us paid to a certain very poor street with the object of inducing the people who lived there to put their pennies into the bank.

He was most decidedly of opinion that the work should be given up, and he always looked askance if it were mentioned, till we scarcely dared refer to it when he was by. This led one day to rather an amusing tussle, in which as usual he finally had his own way. He wished some game taken to our mutual friend, Mrs. B., and on hearing this one of us remarked that as she was going out she could quite conveniently leave it for him.

"Then," he replied, "as I am going to the club you can drive so far with me, and we can leave the game on the way."

"No," was the reply, "that will be too late."

"Why too late?" he inquired.

"Because three o'clock will be too late."

"Too late for what?" he persisted.

"For what has to be done."

"But what are you going to do?"

"Some necessary business," was the evasive answer; and then, seeing that further concealment was impossible, in an almost inaudible whisper, "the penny bank collection!"

"What!" he cried. "After all I have said you still do that?" And then in a tone which admitted no denial, "You just be ready by three, and I shall drive you to Mrs. B. and tell her to keep you there."

Of course she obeyed; but great was her delight on arriving at the house and leaving the game to find that Mrs. B. was out, and could not therefore act as jailer. With an air of triumph she returned to the carriage in which Mr.

Spencer was still sitting, and dropping a curtsy to the frustrated autocrat, announced her intention of going off then and there to the slum after all. The exultation was short-lived, for the delinquent was quietly ordered to get into the carriage at once and drive on with him to the club.

"And what will be the consequence of your neglecting to collect the pennies?" he then asked, when the offender had meekly seated herself beside him, wondering vaguely how she came to be there.

"They will spend them instead of saving them," was the woeful reply.

"Well, that is better than for you to get knocked up," he answered.

They drove on to the Athenæum in silence, and when he left the carriage to enter the club there was a wicked twinkle in his eye as he told the coachman to drive straight home and not to stop anywhere. That faithful servant would as soon have thought of walking home backwards as of

disobeying the slightest wish of his master, and the injunction was carried out to the letter.

We bore no malice, however, and on his return from the club at nine o'clock, as he was about to go up to his study to spend the last hour of the day quite quietly alone, we caught him in the hall, and promised him absolute silence if he would come into our dining-room and be cosy with us by the fire. He did not require much persuasion, and at once sank restfully into a low, inviting chair we had placed in readiness for him. For perhaps ten minutes or a quarter of an hour there was no sound in the room but the ticking of the clock and the fitful crackle of the fire as we sat mutely sewing and reading. Then M., accustomed to his ever-ready responsiveness and enjoyment of a joke, and quite forgetting the promise that had induced him to join us, suddenly broke into a laugh and began to recount some amusing incident that had

tickled her fancy during the day. He listened patiently and courteously until she had finished, and then quietly remarked, "Take a book, mustn't talk now," effectually suppressing the offender for the time being.

For a time silence reigned once more, and then, forgetting her injunctions, off she started again, being for some unknown reason quite irrepressible that evening. This time he did not even suggest the remedy of a book, and merely remarked laconically, though pleasantly enough, "Mustn't talk!" Appalled at her own garrulity, she jumped up, and pretending to be deeply offended, wished everybody good night, with the trite remark, "You are all very cross and disagreeable, and I am going to bed." She stuck her head extravagantly in the air, and was marching towards the door.

Her attention was, however, arrested by the most benign expression on Mr. Spencer's face—such an expression that

it was small wonder those who often saw it felt it a privilege to be with him or to be allowed to render him the slightest service. For there sat no grave and stern philosopher, but a genial, delightful old gentleman, a soft light in his kind eyes which spoke regret that he had all unconsciously hurt her feelings.

As she passed him she was quite surprised to feel her hand clasped and given a friendly little squeeze—a most unusual proceeding, for he seldom even shook hands with us unless he was coming from or going on a journey.

There was no doubt he had taken her speech seriously, not seeing that in reality she was rather ashamed of herself for being such a chatterbox, and so was glad of an excuse to beat a retreat and get off to bed.

D., however, had no liking for early hours, and had promised herself a long evening of reading, being deep in his *Autobiography*, an unpublished copy of

which he had lent us. With this object in view, and for the moment forgetting his declared objection to late hours, she rashly made up the fire just before ten o'clock.

This act of hers prompted him to ask—

"Are you thinking of sitting up?" and then turning to someone else in the room the philosopher continued with the look of a mischievous boy in his face—

"Let us take all the coal off the fire, then she can't sit up. Late hours are so bad for her."

The action followed the words, and promptly seizing the tongs he proceeded to take off all the coals, leaving that most dreary of sights, a dirty, dusty, empty grate, from which a thin, evil-smelling smoke arose.

But seeing how unexpectedly quiet his victim remained, for she had watched the whole proceeding without a word of protest, he became suspicious that she intended to circumvent him by reading the book in bed. This, he affirmed, was even more injurious

than sitting up late. He made, therefore, as if to leave the room, but on his way he suddenly swerved from his path and, leaning across the table, captured the *Autobiography* from the spot where it lay by the reader. When he reached the door he turned a triumphant face towards her, and with the merriest twinkle in his eye gave the book a complacent little pat as he tucked it under his arm. Then remarking cheerfully: "Good night, come up to the study to-morrow morning and fetch this if you want to read it," he, with an audible chuckle, repaired to his own room. Thus for the second time that day did our genial tyrant get his own way.

This masterful care for others did not end with us. If either of the servants were ill he gave minute instructions regarding her treatment and diet, as well as sending the patient champagne from his own cellar.

But as in our case, so in theirs, his usual manner of speaking was so pleasant, kindly,

and considerate, that it is not surprising that he gained their unswerving allegiance, often indeed to such an extent that they quite neglected us. We did not usually complain of this, as we were only too thankful that they should be anxious to see that everything was right for him.

But when a disagreeable housemaid became quite unbearable in her behaviour to us and to her fellow-servants, we were at last compelled to speak to Mr. Spencer about her conduct. He was most surprised, as she was a perfect servant to him in every way. But he sent for her at once to his study, where he had a long talk with her, allowing her to air all her grievances against us. These complaints were then detailed to us, and after hearing what we had to say he sent for her again and explained matters carefully and dispassionately to her.

The effect was magical; she became a different woman altogether for a time. Then she lapsed once more, and the

business was settled in a more simple fashion.

Our servants stood in a certain fear of him notwithstanding their devotion to him. Our elderly respectable charwoman, who came regularly twice a week, regarded him with a kind of pitying awe.

"Mr. Spencer do look so long-featured when he 's ill, don't he, miss?" was her comment one day when he had been out of health, and the expression exactly suited his appearance.

That pleasant way of his when talking to dependants, above referred to, was evidently the outcome of a fixed principle, as well as being due to an innate kindliness of feeling towards them. For when an ardent disciple of his who had been visiting at his house went away the servants had expressed great delight at her departure.

Speaking about her to one of us, the cook—who was a farmer's daughter and rather a character—had indignantly cried, "Why she treated me just as if I were a

doormat!" which speech was accompanied by a flourishing sweep of her bare arm towards the floor, to indicate that much-trampled-upon commodity.

An amused smile flitted across the face of the philosopher when this was repeated to him, with the cook's dramatic action which gave it such emphasis. But his pleasant expression rapidly changed to one of quiet severity, and as the full meaning of it was borne in upon him he gravely exclaimed, "Miss —— will find nothing in my writings to justify disagreeable conduct to servants!" and from that time forth she was never again invited to his house. His tacit disapproval of her behaviour, which was all that was in his power to show, had a very practical result for her; but taking such a negative form, it was impossible she should ever guess the reason of his silence.

Sometimes on the other hand it was he who showed great lack of imagination. Every morning about eleven

o'clock *The Times* came down for us to read, when he had finished with it, and injunctions were given that it was afterwards to be sent to the servants. It is much to be feared, however, that they very naturally did not appreciate the loan of such a newspaper, and it is doubtful if the paper was ever opened, though to the last he insisted on its being sent to them. Sometimes, too, but only when ill-health overcame him, he became curiously inconsiderate to them, and was like a different man altogether. His bell, rung from the second story, would go continually for the merest triviality, and he expected one of the maidservants to help the coachman—if no second man was available—to carry him up and down stairs in a chair made for the purpose. No doubt had he known how heavy he was he would not have asked them to do it, but we could never get them to tell him that they found it rather too much for them.

Perhaps nothing was more strikingly characteristic of Mr. Spencer than this paradox. Few men are so thoughtful and considerate as he was, or so oblivious of the trouble and inconvenience they cause. This was the case in his dealings with us, with the servants, and even with the animal world about him.

At that time he constantly drove out and took one or both of us with him. He jobbed the man and horse, but the victoria, as we have already said, was his own. The coachman had orders to drive very fast at the side of the road which Mr. Spencer said was smoother than the centre, contrary to all social usages, which require that fast travelling carriages shall keep in the middle of the road. Being utterly unused to horses, he never noticed that his own always had on a bearing rein. One day we pointed this out to him, and added that it was only put on for the sake of appearance and caused great discomfort to the animal. This it seems was news to

him, but he then and there made the man get down and remove it, bidding him never put it on again in such a tone of voice that the order was not likely to be forgotten. It was the more strange that he did not notice this, for he never cared for appearances, and would often pull up his carriage with a stentorian shout of "Stop!" to the coachman, no matter where he might be, whether in a quiet place or in the middle of the busiest traffic in Regent Street. The carriage was at once brought to a standstill, and silence reigned therein for some few seconds. This, we soon learnt, was in order that he might feel his pulse. If it was regular the drive was continued, if not, and he feared injurious consequences, the order was given to return home.

If Mr. Spencer did not notice the bearing rein on his horse, he was observant of ladies' hats.

Our remark about the uselessness of

this rein started a conversation upon cruelty to animals, when he condemned fervently the horrid fashion of women wearing on their heads birds and the plumage of birds, killed only for the sake of ornament. Most especially did he denounce the slaughter of the egret, whose little head plume (well known to *modistes* as the aigrette) is only donned at breeding time, so that the capture of the parent bird means the starvation of the young in their nest. The shocking cruelty of this fashion is so notorious, that it is a marvel any woman could openly proclaim her callousness to public opinion and the suffering of young birds by wearing such an ornament at all.

"How could women," he asked, "have the heart to wear such plumes? The feathers of edible birds were the things to wear, but, not being costly, would scarcely be popular in such an age of display as the present.'

The conversation became fervent, for

we felt quite as strongly upon the subject as he did.

"Promise me, Mr. Spencer," exclaimed his companion, "that you will never marry a girl who wears aigrettes in her hat."

"Certainly, I promise," he replied quite seriously, and then, seeing what he had said, joined heartily in the laugh that followed; for he was then in his seventieth year, and although he had discovered the ring in his last Christmas pudding, matrimony was not for him.

The ornament and personal decorations of society were of little interest for Mr. Spencer compared with the beauty and charm of the great world of nature around us. Even in London nature is at work, and as the spring advanced he listened eagerly for the birds in his garden.

Our little garden was wonderfully pretty, considering it was in London. It was quite renowned for the tall white lilies

which grew in a wide border on one side.

An old ivy-covered wall flanked it on the other side, and some big bushes gave it an air of seclusion and privacy.

In this garden, with its inviting trees and bushes, both blackbirds and thrushes built, and their song rendered the spot melodious.

The greatest care was taken by Mr. Spencer to prevent the birds from being disturbed, and so great was his anxiety for the safety of the young ones that they had to be tended almost like pets.

One day his bell was rung violently, and one of us was hastily summoned to his study. He wore a look of the utmost concern on his face as he said that he fancied a young thrush had flown against the window-pane, and since it might be hurt he begged that someone would run into the garden and see if it were all right. His fears were fortunately groundless, for it was discovered hopping about

as lively as ever, little aware of the attention that was being given to its welfare.

But on another occasion his alarm was based on more substantial grounds.

He was watching this baby thrush from his bedroom window, when he saw a large cat creeping stealthily towards it and evidently bent on mischief. Mr. Spencer's compassion for the weakling was roused in a moment, and without thinking of the struggle for existence and the survival of the fittest, forgetting the stimulating influence that the feeling of independence should have had on the bird, without even his hat or slippers, he hurried into the garden and drove away the marauder.

But his interest was not confined solely to the fledglings. There was one little bird that came every year to his garden, for which he watched eagerly, as he was much puzzled as to what breed it could be. It seemed so happy and had such a cheery little note that he was sure it could have

no family cares, so he named it "The Little Bachelor," and this title clung to it to the end of the chapter.

What with the birds and the flowers the garden was very pleasant in spring and summer, and many a day could Mr. Spencer be seen lying in his deck chair under the trees, his wideawake hat well over his eyes, and his old grey rug thrown over his knees.

Long hours did he spend there enjoying the warmth, the music and the colour of the budding, growing, living world around him, lost in thought or revising at intervals the manuscript which he held in his hand.

At other times his secretary was there reading to him or writing in shorthand at his dictation. Yet if either of us ran out to ask him anything, no matter how trivial, even advice about our own private affairs, he gave us his instant attention, and seemed rather to like than to resent the interruption.

His seventieth birthday came about this

time, and brought with it a shoal of letters and presents of fruit and flowers from friends and admirers. He disliked such things, however, and appeared much more pleased with some polyanthuses we gathered for him from his own garden than for the more elaborate presents. Knowing his objections to congratulations, we handed them to him simply with the words, "I congratulate the world, not you, Mr. Spencer," at which he smiled and bowed.

A present of some woolly cuffs which were sent him were transferred to one of us, as if he were utterly bothered by receiving them, but when the recipient thanked him for them, and said, "Just put them on to enhance their value," he actually did it with a jovial laugh at such nonsense.

If there was one thing he disliked more than receiving presents and congratulations it was being lionised or idolised.

When anyone came to see him one of us was always deputed to go in at the end

of a certain time and fetch out the caller, the permitted length of the visit depending on the state of Mr. Spencer's health and his friendship for the visitor. One day an ardent worshipper arrived to see him, and as he always began by eulogising the philosopher to his face—to his unutterable disgust and boredom—only five minutes was allotted for his visit. Punctually at the end of that period one of us appeared at the drawing-room door. She found Mr. Spencer lying on the sofa looking flushed and uncomfortable at the fulsome compliments to which he had been compelled to listen. His visitor was sitting by him with a long list of things to say and ask, and he had evidently only just embarked on it, for he looked daggers at the interrupter as she informed him that Mr. Spencer had had enough talking, and asked him to come away.

If his black looks were disconcerting she was more than compensated by seeing the look of relief which spread over the

victim's face as his worshipping tormentor reluctantly rose and left the room.

It is to be wondered what the poor man would have thought could he have seen Mr. Spencer a little later in the day bowling along in his carriage, laughing and joking with us. It might have made him realise that open flattery was not the best way to ingratiate himself with the philosopher who had received the praises and admiration of the world.

Of course Mr. Spencer had to put up with the interest which his presence aroused wherever he went in public, but in general he was quite unconscious of it, and loth to believe that people knew who he was.

At one large shop where he went to choose wall-papers the assistants were so curious and anxious to inspect him closely that they kept passing backwards and forwards unnecessarily often, giving surreptitious glances at him. It was all lost on him, though not on us, and as we were

driving home we remarked upon it, but he scouted the idea as absurd, and with an emphatic "Nonsense, nothing of the sort," tried to close the conversation.

We, however, stuck to our point, and in justification he was led to assert that people on the whole were civil enough to everybody.

He remembered, he said, an occasion of this sort when he was hunting about for a house in Maida Vale. To his great surprise a complete stranger came up to him and most amicably insisted on helping him to find it.

We who doubted whether such benevolence was common in the world claimed this as an instance in our favour, and, pressing the point, one of us exclaimed—

"Why, of course, he knew who you were!"

"Pooh! Of course he didn't know," he replied.

"Of course he did," chimed in the

other. "Did he appear to be very much awed?"

This was too much for him, and he brought out a great hearty guffaw before he rejoined—

"Well, at any rate, *you* are not."

It would have been surprising, however, if he had not attracted attention, for apart from his fame as a writer his manner of making purchases was, to say the least of it, peculiar and remarkable. The shop assistants, little knowing as a rule the sort of man they had to deal with, went the wrong way to work to make him buy. Thus, "I assure you, sir, it is very fashionable, very much in request just now," instead of meeting with the expected answer, "I'll have it," was the signal for Mr. Spencer's arm to sweep it off the counter, while a peremptory "Take it away, take it away, take it away!" was hurled at the astonished shopman. Surely they must have remembered him if he came a second time.

Many curious communications came to him by post, generally expressing admiration and veneration.

Perhaps the most astonishing was one which he received from an adoring American who requested he would bequeath to him his brain!

If the philosopher would consent, the writer promised to have three casts taken of it, which he would severally present to England, France, and America.

"Why, I would not do it for my dearest friend!" he indignantly exclaimed.

"Your dearest friend would never ask it of you," M. broke in, with equal indignation.

But the other sister glanced up and quietly informed him she thought he ought to accede to the request for the sake of posterity!

Some of the epistles he received were from strangers telling him the most private affairs of their lives.

Doubtless many were genuine, but others,

and those not few in number, were simply in order to get his almost unattainable autograph.

Needless to say, he was never taken in, and all his enterprising correspondents received was a printed circular to the effect that he regretted ill-health prevented him from acknowledging the communication personally.

One day he received a letter—three sheets long—from an American girl asking his advice as to whether she ought to marry her cousin or not.

He was much entertained at being asked such a question, and told us about it at lunch, when there were two or three of his friends present.

He went on to say he was certain it was not a *bona fide* letter, and then, turning to M., continued—

"Oh, it was only another 'dodge'—as you would say—for getting an autograph!"

"Ah!" cried D., addressing his friends,

"she should learn my sister's method of dragging that out of him."

And then she went on to tell them that whenever the much-coveted signature was required M. would straightway set to work and make a new will.

She would then run up to the study and quite gravely lay the important document before Mr. Spencer and ask him to witness it.

He, all kindness, would pause in his occupation and at once comply, quite unconsciously falling into the trap so skilfully laid for him.

As this recital finished a great guffaw came from the amused philosopher, but as he knew he *had* witnessed wills for her, who could say there was not a glimmer of truth in the statement?

At that time Mr. Spencer's health was undoubtedly better, for he was able to get through more writing than he had done at any time since his serious breakdown in 1854, and this unexpected good health

seemed to add zest and vigour to his whole life.

He even began to think of his appearance, and drew our attention to little bits of fluff that were on his coat, and that he said must have come out of one of our sofa cushions, although we assured him the hole which had formerly been in it was carefully mended.

There came a day, soon after this altercation, when he came down to lunch so exceedingly abstracted and absent-minded that all our efforts to distract him—usually so easy a business—proved futile. At the end of the meal it came out that he had that day received some photographs of the nebulæ from an astronomer, and his first words showed that it was of these he had been thinking so profoundly; for as he rose from his chair he stood a minute gazing with gleaming eyes into the distance, and then muttered in a disjointed fashion as if half to himself words to this effect: "Thirty millions of

suns! each probably having its own system; and supposing them each to be the size of a pin's head, they are fifty miles apart! What does it all mean?" And then, without a pause and only a change of voice, "The fluff still comes out of that cushion, you know," as with a wave of his small, thin hand towards it he passed rapidly out of the room, leaving us both bewildered by the quickness with which his mind worked.

If Mr. Spencer was able so rapidly to come down from the heights of his intellectual imaginings to our level, we upon occasion were able to put on a show of learning in order to impress our friends and relations immensely. For instance, a sister of ours, who is an artist, lived in the country and came to visit us during the winter.

The day she arrived Mr. Spencer was ill and did not come downstairs, so we three sisters lunched alone. The newcomer had not seen us since our instal-

ment in Avenue Road, and she was evidently surprised at the unexpected subjects that had already begun to interest us. We were talking of something we had just read in one of Mr. Spencer's books, and quite innocently used one or two long words which had not formerly been in our vocabulary. A look of awe appeared on our sister's face, and then, as the discussion continued in the same strain, she slowly and gradually disappeared under the dining-room table. This made us suddenly realise what she had been thinking; so then and there we started talking all the nonsense we could think of, stringing together words from the philosophic jargon, irrespective of all sense. At last one of us, thinking she must be tired of her cramped position, called down under the table—

"B., you silly goose, get up!"

Instantly she resumed her seat again with an exclamation of relief—

"*That* I can understand."

But how amused we were to think that we could pass as learned!

This, however, was as nothing compared with the glory we reached on another occasion. M. was away on a visit, and instead of her conversation being as usual of tennis, dancing, &c., it ran incessantly on Mr. Spencer—how he had said or done this, that, or the other.

It must have become troublesome, for at last the son of the house, a young man of usually excellent manners, but no tendency towards philosophy, became so bored by this talk that he exclaimed in a tone of exasperation and scorn—

"Herbert Spencer! Herbert Spencer! who ever *heard* of him until you people took him up!"

Our cup of glory was full! Firmly but modestly we took our stand on our pedestals as the women who had discovered Herbert Spencer, and introduced him to an ignorant and unappreciative world!

It might have interested the author of the speech just quoted could he have seen his frivolous friend a few days later. A peep into the study of the Herbert Spencer she had "taken up" would have revealed her comfortably ensconced upon his sofa amongst numerous cushions, that most appalling-looking volume, *The Principles of Psychology*, in her hand, which she was reading aloud to a kindly, genial old gentleman who sat deeply buried in a low arm-chair before a bright fire.

A contented, amused expression was on his powerful face as he listened to her stumbling over the long words in that section of his book which happened by chance just to illustrate some question she had asked him, and which he had made her look up and read to him.

Nor did the pleasant, indulgent look change to one of shocked surprise when she put down the book for a moment to ask a question which showed her ignor-

ance upon some quite ordinary matter. Indeed, "Dear, dear, how innocent you are, to be sure!" was the most he ever said when it was more particularly displayed than usual, so extraordinarily tolerant was he of ignorance in others.

To that book—perhaps the "stiffest" of all the synthetic philosophy—he practically owed his wretched health and dogged insomnia. It was while writing it in the fifties that he utterly collapsed with a bad nervous breakdown, after which he was never again quite the same man.

Those who have not faltered upon the threshold of its formidable bulk—to the ordinary mind scarcely less formidable than its terribly profound matter—may be interested to hear the author's rather humorous criticism of the book which had ruined his health.

"My *Principles of Psychology*," he was wont to remark, with a twinkling gleam in his hazel eyes, "is not 'caviare to the

public,' but cod-liver oil, for although it is nasty to take at the time, it does good afterwards."

And so it came about that Mr. Spencer monopolised our thoughts and conversation when we were at home and even when we were away from him.

It was, therefore, all the more gratifying to hear from his own lips how successful he thought our menage, especially since it came out quite casually one evening while chatting over the study fire.

He was saying how weary he had become of boarding-house life, and that for quite a year before he met us he had decided he must have a house of his own. The difficulty had been to find suitable people. Only that very day a friend of his had met him at the club and congratulated him on the success of his arrangement, adding that if he too could find some ladies to keep house for him he would like to enter upon such a menage himself.

"The fact is," concluded Mr. Spencer, "I used to be discontented, and you have made me contented, so you have something to be proud of."

Such a delightful little speech coming out so unexpectedly and pleasantly led one of us to tell him how he had affected our lives, and how especially dull they had been just before his path had crossed ours.

We had gone straight from our old home in the country into London lodgings which seemed the more distasteful by contrast. Sitting before the fire and feeling rather depressed in the gloomy twilight of a February afternoon, we had suddenly been startled by a sound at the window followed by a mysterious thud at the farther end of the room.

Peering through the gathering darkness, we had become conscious of two gleaming green eyes!

On springing forward for a closer investigation of the intruder, one of us had exclaimed—

"Why it is a great black cat! And a black cat means good luck. Fortune is going to smile upon us!"

"So," continued the narrator, pointing her finger at the philosopher, who was all attention, "*you*, Mr. Spencer, were that black cat!"

As the general laughter which followed this speech subsided, he rose from his chair to leave the room. When he reached the door he turned his merry eyes upon her as he jovially exclaimed—

"Well, that is the first time in all my life that I have ever been called a cat!"

These were the delightful terms we were upon when the time came for his three months' sojourn in the country.

Just a year had passed since we had been warned of that dreadful "something" against him immediately after the agreement had been signed. Nine months of intimate association with him had not revealed the nature of that "something," nor indeed did the subsequent seven years.

It was with jealous hearts, therefore, jealous of the alluring country, that early in June we packed him and all his paraphernalia into the victoria to drive off to Paddington station. After a hearty hand-shake, he settled himself in his carriage, and with a whimsical expression remarked—

"Here endeth the first year. That is as the Prayer Book has it, isn't it?"

We stood and watched him drive out of sight, and then we turned and slowly entered the house, out of which all the life and interest seemed suddenly to have departed, leaving everything "flat, stale, and unprofitable," for the keen regret we felt at his departure exceeded by far our former dread at the thought of his arrival.

CHAPTER IV.

GLIMPSES BENEATH THE SURFACE.

ON September 5th our philosopher came back to Avenue Road, and with his arrival the interest in life seemed to have sprung into existence once more.

For us his three months' absence had been all too long, and we made no attempt to disguise our delight at seeing him. He, on his side, was so extraordinarily urbane and contented during the first few weeks after his return that we could not fail to see that he was as pleased to be home again as we were to have him with us.

He was never tired of hearing the minutest details of the menage, and he seemed to expect us to treat him just as we treated one another, with all the intimacy of relationship.

On one occasion, too, this brought forth another rare and consequently precious compliment. The birthday of a brother of ours in Australia, whom Mr. Spencer had never seen, occurring at this time, we, as usual, drank his health at lunch. As we finished he raised his glass to his lips, and with a gracious bow and pleasant smile to each of us, exclaimed—

"I drink to the health of a gentleman who comes of a good stock." Evidently he did not intend to be treated as an outsider at the little ceremony!

Then again, when one of us called out to the other, "Are you coming into the garden, dear?" he, overhearing her, promptly answered, "Yes, I am!" upon which all three of us went off into a peal of laughter; for however "dear" we had come to think him, we did not express it quite so openly as that!

In fact, he was just like one of us, and, indeed, used our sitting-rooms almost as much as his own, coming to them quite

unexpectedly at all times of the day, as the following incident will show.

There arrived a new photograph of the philosopher. It was lying by him on the bed when we went in to make the day's arrangements. Naturally it was instantly seized upon and we commenced to criticise it.

"Why it neither gives your serious nor your frivolous expression! I don't like it at all," one of us discontentedly exclaimed. Nor could the other find any points in its favour upon which to dilate.

So having only unsatisfactory comments to make, we at last put it down and left the room. About ten minutes or quarter of an hour afterwards we were astounded to see the philosopher in his shirt sleeves standing at the dining-room door tying his necktie!

The intensely amused expression on his face showed he was quite alive to the surprise he would occasion.

Without any apology for his deshabille, he laughingly remarked—

"I have come down to fire off a joke before I forget it! Your criticisms of my photograph—which you expect to be grave and gay at the same time—remind me of the farmers, who are never contented unless simultaneously it is raining on the turnips while the sun shines on the corn."

And with an audible chuckle he hurried back to complete his toilet.

The weather that autumn was glorious, and so hot that it was more like mid-summer than September, and every day we sat with him in the garden.

He seemed to want us always with him, for if only one were there she was asked to return to the house and bring out the other.

There we sat long afternoons with him, talking and asking him questions, and often did we succeed in getting him to give us his opinions on all sorts of

interesting subjects, for in the stillness and quiet of those beautiful days he would talk freely and seriously, all frolic and merry chatter being put aside for the moment.

It would be useless, of course, to try and write down all he said. His opinions are well known, and the repetition of them here might be tedious and out of place. But the most diligent student of his works can only read them in cold print, and can never appreciate the impressiveness and sincerity with which he uttered them.

His voice varied with his moods; the expression of his face changed as the conversation turned from grave to gay, as he flashed out his indignation against oppression or concentrated his mind on explaining to us in the simplest manner possible some difficult question we had asked him. There was nothing querulous in his denunciations, nothing weak; when he saw the head of oppression raise itself

he hit it like an Irishman at Donnybrook Fair.

Fancy him, therefore, putting down his copy of *The Times*, after reading about some act of oppression on the part of England, and launching forth on the iniquity of making excuses for destroying savages, men who had as much right to live as we, in addition to the fact that the climate of their country suited them and did not suit us. We had become simply a nation of political burglars, on whose promises the American Indians could no longer rely, as treaties were not observed.

After all, we were only white savages, not even content with the cruel law of "a life for a life," for in our wars we shot down fifty for one. And we, a Christian nation! which sent forth its missionaries to convert so-called savages, many of whom could give us lessons in morality! And so forth.

Nor was his disapproval expended in

vague generalities. He was equally stern and uncompromising when cases occurred where some little leniency might have been expected. We learned, for instance, that when a lady friend of his had become engaged to a well-known explorer, more famed for his discoveries than for his leniency to the native races with whom he came in contact, he showed his displeasure by refusing to write to her. "For how can I congratulate her upon marrying a brute?" he explained, with great disgust in his voice.

The tone was somewhat different when the eccentricities of certain religious creeds were touched upon.

The fierce denunciation of wrong would change to amazement, incredulity, almost despair, at the brutality and stupidity of some of these doctrines.

Some Scotch friends of ours came one day to inquire of us if Mr. Spencer's writings taught people to live for Heaven, and if they did not, what good were they?

Of course that sort of thing entertained him hugely, and he laughed heartily when we told him, as we took care to do on the first opportunity.

But when we went on to tell him that these same friends had always been very much distressed at our broad religious views, and had tried to convert us to their own comforting faith, which condemned innocent babes to everlasting torment if they should happen to die before being baptised, then his face changed.

"Why ten thousand devils," he fiercely exclaimed, "could not do worse than the god they set up to worship. Think too of the miserable pettiness of their creed—a creed which, in the face of all the great physical wonders that surround us, and the unthinkable marvel of infinite space—a marvel," he said, "which inspires me with such awe that I can only describe it as causing 'mental choking'—teaches us that the power behind all this came on earth and wrestled with Abraham!"

And at these words he threw up his hands with a gesture of hopeless despair, as if he dared not allow himself think about it.

A more congenial subject was his favourite topic of education. When he discoursed about this his face, as may well be supposed, lighted up with a fire of enthusiasm and an eagerness to carry conviction and understanding to his listeners. He was never tired of dwelling on this theme, and seemed always ready to discuss it or answer our questions about it.

One drowsy day the arrival of a letter begging permission to translate his book on education into Sanskrit roused him to propound in all form his theory that education did not alter character, though it might modify it.

He was led on and on in his talk to apply his theory to one subject after another till at last he declared that moral training should come into every branch of

education, even that of cookery, a point of view with which we naturally agreed.

He had, of course, on these occasions a great deal to say, and what he said was exceedingly severe about instruction as now carried on. This led us to tell him we thought he scarcely realised how much his book had done to reform education, because the secluded life he led gave him few opportunities of hearing or seeing what changes were actually taking place around him. To illustrate this we told him the story as it was told to us by one who was present and so would be sure to know, how his *Education* was chosen as the textbook for the training colleges of England. This was how it happened.

One of the inspectors in very high authority was a firm believer in the principles set forth in it, and was determined to have it adopted. But on the committee he was opposed by a certain cardinal, who advocated the study of Locke in its place, fearing that the teachers might be led

to read the other works of Mr. Spencer, and be drawn aside from the path of faith by their agnostical tendencies. After much controversy, and as neither side would give in, it was decided that the colleges should settle the knotty question for themselves. There were twenty-six of them to vote. Therefore great was the triumph of the inspector when the poll returned twenty-five votes for Spencer's book and a solitary one for Locke's!

Mr. Spencer listened to this with great interest and attention, and was quite astounded with the result, exclaiming with the most gratified incredulity, "No! you *don't* say so."

Indeed, this little piece of news roused him to a quite unwonted effort. For having recounted this story, we told him how the reading of this book by another sister had induced her to take the post of art mistress in a London school, and had led to our leaving the country to join her in town.

"Then," broke in Mr. Spencer, with more than usual vivacity, "it was really my little book on education that brought us together."

He began to ask about the school, and on hearing that science was more considered than history there, he became most interested in it, and at our sister's request gave her quite readily a motto for the girls. This maxim, "Instead of being made, make yourself," is now always printed in the school prize books.

But what was much more remarkable, he presented the school with a photograph of himself, to which he added the much-coveted and seldom-obtained autograph.

We used at times to put him questions of a less technical and more suggestive kind, in the hope of leading him on to talk, often with success.

Thus one day we asked him if he thought it true that people did not know themselves. He replied with caution, that

it entirely depended on the person, but that very few had the power of self-analysis. This did not take us very far, so someone suggested that people knew their vices but did not know their virtues, to which he only agreed that with some it might be the case. But when it was further thrown out that some people had no selves to know, he cordially agreed.

"Few people can say what I can say," he cried. "I have thought what I liked, done what I liked, been where I liked, and—well," with a sigh for his bad health, "I cannot say done as much as I liked."

Then as the recollection of an old story crossed his mind he began to laugh, and we saw our bait had succeeded.

"Do what I liked! I'll tell you a story about that. I remember once as a young man going out to a dinner party, and discovering just as I was leaving the house that it was very wet and dirty. I had no means of getting a cab, and the question

arose how to keep my evening pumps clean. So I took a bundle of old newspapers with me, and whenever I came to a dirty crossing I threw down one after another, making a sort of bridge over which I could cross without soiling my shoes."

The method was unconventional, if successful, and what deduction the local Sherlock Holmes would have drawn had he come by ten minutes afterwards it is difficult to imagine.

This leads us to recall another story showing how little he cared for appearances, especially if they clashed in any way with health.

One very cold, foggy day he made up his mind that we should both go shopping with him. One of us demurred, being liable to catch cold; but he was obdurate, declaring that if sufficiently clad no harm could come of it, as people did not take cold in the face.

But on her arrival in the hall ready

dressed for the drive, he at once remarked, "You haven't enough on," and insisted upon her wearing his old Inverness cape over everything else.

What a queer sight it was for the Army and Navy Stores! He himself looked quaint enough in his wideawake hat, woolly gloves—in colour the nearest approach to the inevitable "impure purple" obtainable in London,—and dark-brown, old-fashioned Inverness cape. But this was nothing compared to the extraordinary apparition which closely followed him of a girl, whose identity was almost lost in an exactly similar garment. The voluminous folds of the two capes entirely filled up the gangways as their wearers walked about together from department to department.

It was not surprising that amused and curious glances were cast at them from time to time, but of these he was quite oblivious, nor, had he been conscious of them, would he have cared in the least;

while his companion appreciated the humour of the situation far too well to propose divesting herself of the strange attire.

As may be supposed, it was not every day that Mr. Spencer could stand the strain of conversation, therefore we had to wait our opportunity to ask his opinion upon things we wanted to know. We had always to choose a "good" day, that we might not be told "mustn't talk now" before we had our answer.

Nor was the conversation always upon serious subjects. He sometimes talked about the more gracious side of life, and gave us now and then his views on art and especially on music. He was not insensible to either of these, especially the latter, but he always looked at it—at least so it seemed to us—with the same unswerving rigour with which he regarded all forms of make-believe. Truth was his ideal, and science his method of approaching it.

It was impossible for him to pretend by words, looks, or manner that he was pleased when he was really the reverse, and he carried this standard of absolute truthfulness into everything.

Yet even he could not escape the inconsistency of human nature!

This was strikingly shown when he insisted upon filling the vases in his drawing-room with artificial flowers. These he bought himself, and carefully picked out those with colours that would harmonise.

From us he could get no help. We sat stonily by watching him make his choice, while a merry gleam lurked in his eye; for he knew well how strongly we disapproved, as we had done all in our power to dissuade him from having them. But neither teasing nor entreaties had any effect.

At last one of us exclaimed one day in a tone of unutterable disgust—

"Whoever would suppose that Herbert

Spencer would have anything but real flowers in his house!"

That shaft must have gone home, for he did then condescend to give some sort of an explanation for liking them. He wished to have everything bright about him, and consequently enjoyed the colour. When it was suggested he could get that in real flowers he only remarked—

"Pooh! they would want constant replenishing."

Then, as if he had suddenly thought of an effectual way of silencing our tiresome importunity, he turned upon us and exclaimed—

"Why in the world, now, do you object to artificial flowers in a room any more than to an artificial landscape?"

It was such a novel idea to call a picture an "artificial landscape" that for the moment we were silenced. Taking advantage of his temporary victory, he rose to leave the room. As he reached

the door he paused, and turning a triumphant face towards us, exclaimed—

"Why the other day when Mr. Grant Allen was calling here he much admired the flowers you so much despise!"

"I don't doubt it, they are so well made," was the answer. "He thought, of course, that they were real. Mr. Grant Allen would never *dream* that Herbert Spencer would have anything artificial about him!"

To this sally he had no response, so he beat a hasty retreat from the room.

So downright a critic as Mr. Spencer could only be expected to look at works of art and to speak about them in a very matter-of-fact way. There was one afternoon in which we were all sitting out in the garden when we got him to say what he thought on this subject.

He had been out to buy a bronze for his drawing-room, but without success, for nothing satisfactory could be found.

He was invited to explain why so simple

a thing as a pleasing bronze could not be found in London.

"The fact is," he replied, "most of the bronzes are French, and French art, if not sanguinary, is usually obscene."

He then went on to criticise the Old Masters, of whom he was by no means a great admirer, and he analysed at some length, as he always did when he got an opportunity, what he considered their weak points.

This led him to say how pleased he had been when reading *Modern Painters* to find that Ruskin had had the courage to speak out about them, as he himself had been doing all his life.

His satisfaction, however, had not extended to Ruskin's other works, as *The Stones of Venice* had "disgusted" him, or words to that effect.

It is remarkable that he should have had so little appreciation of the beauties of sculpture and painting, for he was devoted to music. Indeed, music was one of the

few pleasures of his middle life and old age that he could stand without any injurious effects on his health. What he enjoyed most of all was beautiful melody, no matter how simple; "but," he used to say, "that is nowadays too often sacrificed to execution." Those of our friends who were musical were very kind in coming to play to him, but there was one in whose performances he specially delighted. Her choice of music exactly suited his taste, and her mode of playing had what he called "the great power of expression." Her natural modesty made her often unwilling to play, but his all-compelling insistence led her many a time to the piano when perhaps no other person could have induced her to go there.

Another friend of ours, whose voice was so fine that had she not married she would have come out as a public singer, used to come and sing. He expressed himself on one occasion delighted with her fine voice, but objected to her selection of songs, and

suggested two or three she should learn. She did so, and in a few days returned to sing them to him, and on this occasion he was entirely satisfied, as indeed he might have been.

We have now forgotten what the songs were, but there is no forgetting that Beethoven was his favourite composer and that he was never weary of listening to his music.

Indeed, on hearing Mr. Spencer remark one day that he preferred good music ill played to bad music well played, one of us was moved to practise Beethoven that she might amuse him when other performers failed us and a weary hour had to be whiled away. Her poor efforts were often rewarded by his approval and encouragement.

Our real success in amusing him with music lay in quite a different direction, as the following story will show.

One day, after a morning of Beethoven —not played by one of us—he took his

seat at dinner with a half-cross, half-amused expression on his face. He remained silent for several minutes while we talked, and then suddenly, as though he could keep it in no longer, he burst forth with—

"I can't get that pestilent tune out of my head."

"What tune?" we inquired simultaneously, wondering which piece of his favourite Beethoven had for once met with his disapproval.

"Why — why —" with a deprecating laugh, "why that ridiculous tune, 'A—a—a naughty little twinkle in her eye!'"

A shout of laughter, in which he joined heartily, naturally followed such a confession, coming from the hypercritical philosopher, and it was several seconds before one of us was composed enough to remark—

"Aha! now you have let the cat out of the bag. Now we know where you spend your evenings when you pretend

you are at the Athenæum. *Really* you are frequenting low music halls!"

"Nothing of the sort," he laughingly retorted. "It shows I have a festive young lady in my home who is always singing music hall songs about the house, which forces me against my will to retain them in my memory."

As may be inferred from this incident, we are not musical.

In spite of his want of appreciation for so much that is beautiful in art, Mr. Spencer's good taste was not solely confined to music. He was as particular about the quality of the speaking voice as he was about singing, and one woman whom he liked he would not ask to stay with him because her harsh voice so grated on his ear that it irritated him.

A friend of ours, a Mrs. O., of a most homely countenance, so upset him with her plainness, that on one occasion, hearing she was to come to lunch with us he refused to come in, preferring a

solitary meal in the drawing-room to sitting opposite anyone who was "so ugly." He jokingly hinted that we might consult him before inviting friends, in case there was anything about them of that kind to which he might object!

"There is no greater nonsense," he was wont to say, "than the absurd phrase 'beauty is but skin deep.' It is 'a skin-deep' saying, for beauty of features is generally accompanied by beauty of nature, so that it means a good deal more than appears on the surface."

After this pronouncement, it was a very great pleasure to us to hear how enthusiastic he was about our beautiful friend Miss E., whose reception when she came to lunch was very different from that awarded to our poor plain friend. After she had left he remarked that he must go and call on her, and even went so far as to add, "Now had I met her forty years ago ——!"

This confession gave us a capital handle

for chaff, and we made the most of it, continually teasing him about her, for the gleam of fun that appeared in his eye whenever we did so showed very plainly how much he enjoyed the nonsense.

Alas! a month or two afterwards her name was mentioned and he looked quite blank. It was clear he had forgotten her.

Of course we fell upon him for being so fickle that he had to be reminded with whom he was in love. He excused himself as best he could, and explained that when he had expressed so much admiration he had only seen her full face, but that when he beheld her "sideways," he found her profile much too "nut-crackery" for his taste.

Thus do even the greatest of men excuse their fickleness, being always ready to throw the blame on the woman! He did not explain what moral obliquity the unfortunate development of nose and jaw portended.

But the stories on this subject are not all humorous. In the course of a long life a man meets with many adventures, and it seldom happens that he runs his whole career without one incident at least that has a sad, perhaps a tragic, ending. In course of time the wound may heal and be almost forgotten, or it may be carefully hidden though it never close. But for good or evil it is the sharpest test of character, and those who are privileged to hear from the lips of a great man his one short, sad love story catch a glimpse of his innermost nature which nothing else can reveal. It is for this reason that we prize the simple little story that Mr. Spencer told us of what was the nearest approach to a real love affair in his youth.

We came to learn it in the following way.

On coming into the dining-room one evening he discovered one of us asleep over a book of his which he had lent us

some months before. Highly amused at the soporific effect of his writings, and the length of time taken over its perusal, he explained—

"Why you take as long to read my books as I take to write them!"

"Oh," was the answer, "I don't always finish them! I was reading one of your books the other day, and I saw something you said about love which surprised me so much that I closed the book sharply and said, 'He knows nothing whatever about it.'"

He was much tickled with this speech, but his laughter died away as the recollection of the past came over him, and then and there he told us, gravely and unimpassionedly, what he knew about love from personal experience. It occurred during his engineering days, when he was about twenty-one.

He was left in charge of the business at the house of his chief, and it so happened that the only member of the family at

home was a young niece, who was bright, unconventional, and rather pretty.

Every morning she used to bring the letters into the office for him, and being alone and wanting company she started talking to him. He was attracted by her. She no doubt found him interesting, if only for the moment, for her visits became longer and longer as they discussed religion and endless other subjects.

In this way, as has often happened before, a "great friendship" sprang up between them, which he said—and it was all he would admit—would "probably have ripened into something deeper" on his side, when suddenly a carefully concealed fiancé turned up, and he awoke.

The "probable" event must have very nearly taken place, for he told us that even after fifty years he well remembered the unpleasant feeling he experienced on seeing her hanging on his rival's arm and looking round at him to see what he thought of it.

"She was a horrid flirt!" exclaimed one of us.

"She was nothing of the sort," he quickly retorted, loyal to the memory of this half-acknowledged love of fifty years before.

And so staunch and true was he, so simple and straightforward, that he would have no word said against her conduct. Honest as the day himself, he could not admit even for a moment that she was not so too.

It is to be hoped that the man she married believed in her as firmly as did Mr. Spencer.

It seemed that he not only felt more deeply than he would admit, but that he still cherished his illusions about her; for after he had told us his one poor little romance he suggested rather sheepishly that he should write to her and propose exchanging photographs. For although he had never seen her since, he knew where he could get her address.

Seeing that he was rather bent on it and wanted to be persuaded, we encouraged him to do it. Indeed, one of us then and there suggested that she should write the letter for him, an offer which he gladly accepted.

It would have been wiser not to have written—to have left the ash of this love-story untouched to the end, like a mummy in its coffin, for the remembrance of the past was still young and fresh to him.

In due time a letter arrived with the photograph of the old lady, which he opened in his own room. But it was evident from his manner when he brought it downstairs that he was disappointed.

It was strange if he expected the course of more than half a century to have left any trace of the prettiness and bloom of a girl of twenty, but it was clear that with the opening of that envelope the last of his illusions vanished.

He looked quite sad as he slowly and thoughtfully replaced the photograph in

the cover; but as one of us asked, "Why is everybody so interested in love affairs, Mr. Spencer? Is it because they are common to all?" some pale reflection of the old fire shone out once more as he answered, "Yes, that is one reason; but a greater reason is because love is the most interesting thing in life."

CHAPTER V.

A "PHILOSOPHER'S FROLICS."

MR. SPENCER'S loyalty and faithfulness did not stop at the love of his youth, but extended to all his old friends, and it was evidently a great pleasure to him to be able to invite four of them to dine with him in his own house.

These friendships also dated as far back as fifty years, so of this dinner he made quite a little festival, remarking that it could not often occur that five men could sit down and dine together who had been friends for over half a century.

One of them, a Mr. L., was four years younger than Mr. Spencer, but looked quite ten years older, which fact when referred to before him brought forth the laughing rejoinder—

"So much for bachelorhood."

This Mr. L. was a not too happily married man.

They had been in the same office when Mr. Spencer was a civil engineer, before he took to his literary life, and had never since lost sight of one another.

After lunch one day he left this friend to us to entertain while he retired for a short siesta, and as he was leaving the room, one of us exclaimed—

"Now we shall hear all about the peccadilloes of your youth, Mr. Spencer," at which he turned to his guest and jovially remarked, as he waved his hand towards the speaker—

"Some day she is going to write a book about me as I really am." For he knew and constantly referred to this.

From Mr. L., however, we gleaned nothing but what was good. He spoke of the true heart which undoubtedly lay beneath the stern exterior, and of which already we had had so many proofs. He

also told us of Mr. Spencer's devotion to, and care of, his invalid mother during the last years of her life. To give her greater comfort he invented and had made an invalid bed, in order to enable her to have constant changes of position.

He then spoke of the enormous odds against which the philosopher had worked, denying himself everything except necessities, that he might carry on the work of his life, notwithstanding his knowledge of its unpopularity and unlikelihood of ever bringing him much, if any, monetary return; while in addition to these material drawbacks, he had chronic insomnia and constant nervous collapses with which to contend.

These words, which had come from one of his oldest and most intimate friends, recurred to us at the time of his death, when those people who knew nothing whatever of his life or difficulties—and even had they known were quite incapable of judging either the man or

the simplest part of his stupendous work —could speak only of such things as his "conceit" because he had himself arranged who should be the writer of his biography!

It was no surprise to us to hear how jolly Mr. Spencer was in those early days, and what fun he made in the office with his colleagues, upon one of whom he played a most ridiculous practical joke.

Every day Mr. Spencer placed in the inside band of his friend's hat a strip of paper, so that the hat grew very gradually smaller, until at last it was so noticeable that the youth became quite concerned, and drew the attention of the whole office to the fact that his head was getting slowly larger!

It is easy to imagine the merry twinkle that must have lurked in the youthful Spencer's eye while the symptoms of water on the brain were being graphically described by the unfortunate young man,

who at last showed such anxiety that it eventually became necessary to tell him of the hoax.

But a far greater "take in," and one which might have had very serious results, he experienced himself when a little over thirteen.

He set forth from Derby with his mother and father for a four weeks' visit to his Uncle Thomas, who lived at Hinton Charterhouse, near Bath.

The first few days were a great delight to little Herbert, who roamed the fields at will, collecting butterflies, moths, and flowers. He was entirely happy, and thought that this joyous sort of life was to continue for a whole month.

He was, however, soon disillusioned, for after a few days he was set down to do lessons, which were always very irksome to him. But this surprise was nothing to the shock he was to receive soon after when he was informed his parents were going to leave him at Hinton, where with

another boy his uncle had undertaken to educate him.

Of course he was bound to submit to this arrangement, and for a time made the best of it, but as he did not get on very well with his fellow-pupil, being even in those early days very argumentative, his uncle decided to separate them as much as possible. Thus being deprived of companionship and also feeling terribly home-sick, he determined to run away from Hinton and find his way home on foot—over 120 miles!

Accordingly he started off at six o'clock one morning and reached Bath in about an hour, continually glancing round in abject terror lest his uncle's pony-carriage should be in pursuit.

By the time this fear had abated the sun was high in the heavens, and being at the end of July, it was extremely hot work trudging along the endless, white roads. As physical exhaustion began to tell the utter loneliness of his position suddenly

broke upon him, and he was so overwhelmed by it that he burst into a torrent of tears.

Yet no thought of returning to Hinton, a comparatively easy undertaking, ever entered his head.

He reached Stroud in the late afternoon and Cheltenham in the evening, where he obtained a bed at a tavern, for which he could only afford sixpence, as two shillings given him by his mother when she left him was all the capital with which he had set forth. Out of this he paid for his night's lodging, the occasional penny rolls, and the two or three glasses of beer which, with water, were the only sustenance he had during the entire walk of 120 miles.

The first day's journey was forty-eight miles; therefore it was not surprising he had no sleep that night, being far too overwrought both physically and mentally. Yet early the next morning, quite undaunted, he set forth on the second stage

towards home. This day he was given a lift for a couple of miles, and on resuming his weary walk was rejoiced to see the Malvern Hills, which seemed to him like old friends, for they had been passed in the company of his parents a little over a month before.

Through Tewkesbury, Worcester, and Droitwich did he trudge, reaching Bromsgrove in the evening.

During this stage of his journey, to make matters worse, he had rather a fright. He met an Italian image-seller—a common enough sight in those days—who spoke to him and sat down beside him when he was resting, and when he started again the man rose also and walked on with him.

After a time the pedlar drew out a penknife and admiringly displayed before him its large, bright blade, which only made little Herbert shudder, for it crossed his mind that perhaps the man meant to murder him!

At last they reached a little inn, and it was the greatest relief to the boy to find that although they would give him a bed, they refused one to his companion, who accordingly had to walk on.

Another sleepless night followed, for that second day had not fallen far short in distance to the first, forty-seven miles having been accomplished.

The next morning he was again fortunate in finding a friendly carter to give him a lift, and thus Birmingham was reached. From there he proceeded to Lichfield (twenty miles), where, joy of joys! he beheld the Derby coach just about to start.

He told his woeful tale to the driver, whose good heart must have been touched by the white, worn face of the poor little runaway, for he allowed him to drive in it all the way to Derby, and refused to take the few remaining coppers offered him in payment.

No news of the truant had been received at Derby, for in 1833 it took two or three

days for letters to travel from Hinton to his home; great, therefore, was the surprise and consternation at little Herbert's unexpected arrival, and very naturally his parents were quite overcome at the whole account of it.

After this escapade he was not fit to return, for he was in such a state of collapse that very little more excitement would have brought on brain fever.

His parents treated him very kindly but firmly, and after a fortnight he was sufficiently recovered to be sent back, when he was amiably received by his uncle and aunt, and no reference was made to his misdemeanour.

Another incident of his childhood may here be mentioned.

He was, even when only nine years old, an ardent fisherman—the only form of sport which he practised in later life. He sometimes rose as early as four o'clock for this purpose, and did not cease until too dark to see.

On one occasion this love of fishing nearly lost him his life.

He fell into the Derwent in deep water, and had sunk twice, when with great courage a big boy of about sixteen, one of a number of spectators, jumped in, and at the risk of his own life saved the little fisherman. The latter, before running home turned out his pockets and offered the brave youth ninepence—all they contained—which was naturally refused.

Of course Mr. Spencer never lost sight of his rescuer, and we had the pleasure of making his acquaintance when he came on a visit to Avenue Road, at that time a dear old gentleman of over eighty.

It seemed we were to hear plenty of stories about Mr. Spencer's youth just then, for his old friend Mrs. G., a beautiful old lady, came to visit him for a week or two.

As usual our chief topic of conversation was the philosopher, for it was true what one of us one day exclaimed—

"He's so interesting it's just like having a baby in the house. The last thing 'it did,' the last thing 'it said,' and the last thing 'it ate,'" which remark when repeated to him drew forth the laughing reply—

"Well, I *am* approaching my second childhood! For the sense of taste and of smell are both disappearing. In fact, I am beginning to die!"

The speech was received with groans of derision from everyone present, for at that time he looked hale and hearty enough to last for many a long day.

But what we most enjoyed was to set off Mrs. G. also telling us stories of his young days.

A picnic or party, she said, was never considered complete without him. At one of the former, when it had been wet and the ground was consequently very damp, a sister of hers, who endlessly teased and chaffed Mr. Spencer, was hunting about for a dry place upon which to sit, but

met with no success. So at last she gave up in despair, and called out to the assembled company—

"Somebody get me one of Mr. Spencer's books to sit upon; they are dry enough for anything!"

This humorous speech, although directed against himself, so hugely delighted him, as did many more of hers in the same strain, that it was always a pleasure to have them together at the same parties because they made such fun.

Another time there was a picnic to the seaside.

It turned out tremendously windy, and as the young people walked abreast in a long line upon the sands laughing and talking — for there was bound to be merriment whenever he was present— suddenly they were astounded to find it positively raining envelopes upon them, much in the same way as the pack of cards rained upon Alice in Wonderland. The author of this deluge had brought

large packets of them for the purpose. Then at the moment when the gale was at its highest, and it was most squally, he had broken the bands that held them together and let them loose. The wind blew them hither and thither like a cloud amongst the astonished company, for no one had seen Mr. Spencer produce them, and therefore could not conceive from whence they had come!

Many a talk about old times did Mrs. G. and he have, and both of them seemed to enjoy thoroughly these reminiscences of their youth.

She told us when once in his middle age she had visited him he was unwell and suffering very much from insomnia. He was in bed and not equal to talking himself, and yet wanted company with intermittent conversation. She was, therefore, bidden to his room, and was met with the remark—

"There may be just one question asked and one response given."

With this permission she made a remark and duly received a reply.

Waiting what she considered the necessary interval, she then ventured upon a second observation. To her great discomfiture, a drowsy voice from the bed responded—

"I had just dropped off to sleep, and you wakened me!" which effectually crushed her for the time being.

We had come to know him quite well in that condition, but had also learnt the fact that it was only when his health was at its worst that he showed so little consideration for the feelings of others.

It was through his exceptionally peculiar nerve trouble, so often put down to hypochondria by those who could not possibly judge, that he was bound to harbour every scrap of strength. Had he not done so it is certain his work would never have been completed. With that end always in view, care of his health had become a second nature to him.

To strangers and acquaintances who did not understand all this the occasional request of his "not to talk" was, of course, very disconcerting.

One day when that fact was brought home to him he showed himself most distressed about it. A caller was unexpectedly ushered in when he was not sufficiently well to receive acquaintances. His eager hand was merely touched by the invalid, who coldly remarked—

"I am very unwell, and cannot talk."

Mr. Spencer's secretary, always to the fore, quickly led the visitor into another room, where he explained how matters stood. The evident embarrassment of the poor disconcerted young man gave one of us the courage to expatiate upon it to the philosopher.

His expression at once changed to one of deep concern as he listened and sat quite silent and contemplative for several minutes. There is no doubt he was

thinking over the little incident, for at last he burst forth—

"I do hope I have not hurt his feelings!"

When thus brought home to him it was clear his behaviour was rather a shock to himself, for he constantly referred to it with regret; and it was a regret which lasted, for many years after, when he was sending a pamphlet which he had written to numberless notabilities, he told us we should be interested to hear that he had also sent one to "the man you said I had snubbed!"

In a former chapter it is stated that music was the chief amusement of his later life, and perhaps ranking next to that was the pleasure he derived from the society of children. Of little girls he was especially fond, and once confessed that had he had a mixed family of his own he feared he might have spoiled the girls.

One of us told him she could re-

member as a small child how intensely she disliked men acquaintances kissing her. He at once became very thoughtful, and two or three days after referred to the fact, adding it had never before occurred to him that it might not be as pleasant for his little friends to receive his kisses as it was for him to give them.

When any of them asked him questions, as they were continually doing, his rule had been to demand the toll of a kiss in payment of the answer.

The mothers of those small people he had known in their babyhood, and when he was preparing for his three months' change into the country he would write and beg them to allow him "to borrow" — his own word — some children for a short time, and that request was usually granted.

He was evidently very indulgent to them when they visited him, and carried out his principles set forth in *Education* with regard to their food, allowing them to eat

the same kind as their elders, avowing that variety was essential for a complete diet. When someone expressed surprise at the risk he took upon himself of upsetting them, he replied—

"If in childhood food cannot be digested, when will it be?"

Nor did he limit them in quantity, and confessed to us once that one night even he was anxious, such hearty appetites were displayed at an eight o'clock supper; but no ill-effects followed, and the next day the children were as jolly and vigorous as ever.

He went on to say he was convinced that the ill-effects which followed over-eating in childhood were very temporary, but that persistent under-feeding had such an injurious effect upon the constitution, it was rarely, if ever, overcome in later life.

The "toll of a kiss" referred to above one day led to an amusing little incident, and a rather embarrassing one, too, to the person concerned. When visiting him in

the country, Mr. Spencer's little guests—two small girls about six and seven—were taken by their pretty hostess to the front door to see a performing monkey led by a handsome young Italian.

When the children's screams of delight at the little creature's antics had subsided, the young girl began to ask questions of the wandering foreigner—how long he had been in England? from where he hailed? &c. A pause followed. The little girls stood as if expectantly waiting for something.

Then one of them, apparently losing patience, fixed the Italian with her round blue eyes, and artlessly exclaimed—

"Why don't you kiss her? Mr. Spencer always kisses us when he answers *our* questions!'

It was from a member of the family of sisters from whom he "borrowed" children that we heard the truth about the story which came out in the papers headed "Converting Mr. Spencer." Her

parents were great friends of his, and when he was about forty he was always worrying her mother and the governess with his "let alone" theories regarding children. One day they were all committed to his charge to go for a long walk, the governess hinting to them they might be as naughty as they liked. And they just *were* naughty! In fact, they gave him such a time as he had never had before, and he returned home in a great rage.

As he handed them over to their mother, he remarked severely—

"Your children are very rude children, Mrs. ——, and ought to be well punished."

One day the cook at Avenue Road was suddenly taken ill. It was impossible to get in another in time to prepare the philosopher's dinner, so without mentioning the fact D. repaired to the kitchen to do the cooking.

In the middle of dinner, learning she was not out as he had supposed, he turned

and questioned the parlourmaid, from whom he heard what had occurred.

He straightway rose from the table and descended to the kitchen, where he discovered her preparing him a savoury. Flicking at her with the dinner-napkin he had brought with him, just as if she were a fly, he laughingly drove her round the table and then upstairs before him, remarking as they went—

"I do not want a savoury, but I do want you forthwith to have your dinner comfortably."

When they reached the dining-room he made her sit down then and there and have her lunch without more ado.

This little scene, like everything else he did or said, was repeated to a girl friend who was very devoted to him. She listened intently, and being charmed with this—another proof of his consideration for others—spontaneously exclaimed—

"The darling! I should like to kiss him!"

That speech made a capital handle to keep her in order—often a difficult task—and we continually threatened, even in his presence, to tell him of her speech.

At length, after much joking and teasing about it, he beamingly remarked to one of us, "You know I *know* what she said. When you see her you can tell her she may if she likes!"

It so happened that shortly afterwards she came and acted with two other girls the well-known song, "The Three Old Maids of Lee." The performers for this were got up in dual costumes. In front they were young girls, but their backs were arranged as old maids with hideous masks placed over the hair to represent old women, into which they turned by swinging round for the last verses of the song. Mr. Spencer hugely enjoyed the little performance, which was got up to amuse a few friends spending the evening with us.

He was evidently about to retire, when

the assembled company was astounded to see his girl admirer shuffle backwards towards him, make a curtsy before him, lean down and give little pecks at his face with her repulsive mask, as if it were kissing him, crying out as she did so, "You *said* I might if I liked!"

He tried to seize her, but she escaped; and although he was sunk in the depths of a very low chair, he quickly struggled up, was after her like a flash, and captured her as she reached the door, when he twisted her face round and gave her a resounding kiss on her own lips, and in the midst of a perfect deluge of laughter quickly disappeared from the room.

Another great admirer of his was present. She immediately ran over to the audacious actress, who was too limp with laughter to move. Holding the latter's face in her hands she seriously exclaimed—

"Oh, let *me* be the next!" as she

gravely and reverently kissed her on the lips too!

Naturally a bad night followed the philosopher's unwonted excitement, so we, to whom he had given the title of "keepers," informed him we must certainly in future put an embargo upon the kissing of girls!

He declared, however, it was not the kiss that had upset him, but the laughter and hilarity so late in the evening, when he should have had perfect quiet.

The next day D. wrote a very exaggerated account of the affair, and heading it "Philosopher's Frolics," placed it inside a newspaper, and when we had finished dinner picked it up and casually remarked,

"By the by, Mr. Spencer, have you seen this?" and straightway commenced to read it to him before he had time to inquire what it was. His look of surprise and amused consternation is a thing to be remembered as he listened to the absurd account.

But before it was half read through he realised with whom he had to deal, having become by then, pretty well accustomed to our ways. As it was finished he suddenly jumped up and tried to seize the newspaper out of D.'s hand, when the MS. floated to the floor and so revealed the fraud.

It was curious that not long after he had kissed the "Maid of Lee" we read in the *St. James's Gazette*, under the heading "Did she enlighten him?" that a philosopher, whose works on sociology were monumental and who was a confirmed bachelor, had arrived at the point in his writings when he had to deal with Polynesian marriages and the "custom of kissing," about the practice of which he knew nothing. So one day when talking to a very charming woman he gravely remarked to her, "I have been studying the customs of the Polynesians, and specially the practice of kissing. Now I know nothing about kissing. Can you enlighten me?"

We knew Mr. Spencer had read the paper, but did not know whether he had seen this article, so one of us ran up to the study where he was sitting, popped her head inside the door and exclaimed—

"Did she enlighten him?"

"What? What?" he cried.

"Did she enlighten him?" was repeated.

"I don't understand," he called out as the head was withdrawn and a hasty retreat made towards the stairs.

Five minutes too early for lunch down he came in order to hear what the joke might be. The whole of the article was then read to him, while he continually went off into amused chuckles or hearty laughter. But there was no foundation whatever for it, and he began to ruminate as to who could possibly set such amusing stories going.

Nor was there any truth in the one that has been constantly quoted in the papers about him, which states that when on one occasion he was beaten at billiards he

laid down his cue and remarked to his adversary, "Moderate skill in billiards implies a certain amount of mental capacity, but such skill as you have displayed is clear evidence of a misspent youth." Something to this effect was said by a friend of his to a young military officer. No doubt Mr. Spencer often repeated it, as it was just the kind of story to tickle his fancy. And so it had come about that the speech was reported as having been actually made by him.

America also added sundry untrue statements concerning him. Out of twenty-six that were made in a newspaper article which was sent over, only eleven had the merest glimmer of truth in them. For instance, that—

"Herbert Spencer cannot bear to take his meals with other people," struck us as particularly funny, for years of experience had shown us an exceptionally social man, delighting always in congenial companionship when sufficiently well to be able to

stand it, but especially enjoying good company during his meal times.

Such absurdities as—

"Herbert Spencer never goes out without an umbrella"—a thing with which he was rarely seen—and "Herbert Spencer always wears gaiters"—articles he did not even possess—show the drift of what was said.

Trivial as most of the statements were, they nevertheless proved the writer knew no more of him than he knew of the writer.

Then Australia sent over a spurious anecdote about him which the English press at once published. There was no more truth in it than in those just quoted.

When one day the butter was sent to table surrounded by parsley, it was said he furiously threw the garnish on the floor and stamped upon it.

We wondered whether a little incident which occurred when he was away for his

summer holiday in the country could have given rise to that last libel.

When one day lunch was late and the punctual philosopher was impatiently awaiting his summons to it, he saw the cook run down into the garden and gather parsley.

At table he observed it had been procured as a decoration for the butter, which was so smothered in it as to be scarcely visible. It so provoked him that the delay had been caused merely for the sake of "appearances" that in a half-annoyed, half-joking way he remarked—

"Pass me the parsley and butter, please!"

At any rate there was often no more foundation for the stories told against him than in that one.

Before closing this chapter a word must be said about those visits to the country to which we have just referred, and constantly mentioned in these pages.

To see Mr. Spencer off on his travels

from one of the large London stations was an experience not easily forgotten.

That fell to the lot of one of us in a year when his secretary happened to be away for his holiday.

First of all there was the great man himself to be looked after. Then his carriage in charge of his staid and solemn coachman. Then his carrying chair, his hammock, his rugs, air cushions, and endless small paraphernalia, the most important of which was the MS. of *Beneficence*—we think it was—which he carried himself, and for which he made a most amusing arrangement to insure its complete safety.

He tied a thick piece of string round his waist which could not be seen—one end, however, was left two or three yards long, and this issued like a tail from underneath the back of his coat, and to its end the MS. was attached, made into a brown paper parcel, which he then easily held in his hand. It so

comically reminded us of the dog in the story-book which ran away with a saucepan tied to its tail that it sent us off into a peal of laughter. On learning the reason of our amusement he very soon joined in; all the same, he still continued to carry it in that droll way. The safety of the packet was of all importance, so appearances, as usual, mattered less than nothing at all.

On reaching the station he sat reading in the waiting-room while his "keeper" went to make various arrangements for the journey.

The railway officials were quite aggressive in their attentions, and continually inquired—

"Would Mr. Herbert Spencer like this?"

"Will Mr. Herbert Spencer have that?"

And finally—

"Will Mr. Herbert Spencer have our invalid chair to bring him from the waiting-room to the train?"

While declining that kind offer, it was impossible to disguise the amusement such a question occasioned.

The reason, however, soon became clear—for that was one of his best days—as an alert, upright man, with a healthy colour in his cheeks, walked with a swinging step rapidly along the platform, and quickly entered the saloon carriage which had been previously reserved.

Experience had taught him that by travelling in a hammock when going a long journey he avoided the evil consequences which usually followed the shaking of the train.

On that occasion he became so absorbed in superintending the slinging of it, that he did not at once observe the numerous inquisitive faces which peered eagerly through the windows at him.

Directly, however, he became conscious of them, out rang in stentorian tones to the porters—

"Draw down those blinds!"

The four men present instantly sprang to do his bidding, so the little entertainment for those inquisitive persons came to a sudden end.

When all was complete the officials were dismissed, and he climbed with some difficulty into his exceedingly unstable resting-place.

He settled down comfortably, and as the train was about to start he warmly shook his companion's hand and delighted her by exclaiming—

"You have done very well! Good-bye." And as she stepped on to the platform and turned to wave a last farewell, he cried, "I wish I could take you with me."

Lingering a moment to see the last sight of the train, she began to wonder whether all the attention he had received was due to respect felt for the "greatest mind of the age" or merely for the passenger who travelled in a reserved first-class saloon?

As the thought crossed her mind a porter who had just arrived upon the

scene stepped forward and with a jerk of his head towards the departing train addressed her.

"Beg parden, miss, but is he Earl Spencer?"

For a porter, with the awe of his class for a title, it was a likely enough mistake to make under the circumstances, but there was no such excuse for the question which was put shortly afterwards with regard to his identity.

One of us was asked, by an educated girl we met at the house of an intellectual friend, if he were the *poet* Spenser?

Another woman speaking of him to us, and knowing that we shared a house with him, talked about the philosopher inconsequently for several minutes, winding up with, "But, you know, I have not read his books. The fact is, I never can take an interest in any of those Socialists!"

That "migration" to the country we have just tried to describe will not easily

be forgotten by either of us. Not only because of the amusement it caused but also because he had left us in his very best health, so that he was in that rare exultant mood, the outcome of a simple joy of life, uncommon in this pessimistic age when early youth is past.

He returned just three months later, and how eagerly we watched for his arrival! As he slowly ascended the steps to the house we ran to bid him welcome, but alas! it was too clear an altogether different man had come home to us from the one with whom we had parted in the summer.

He was ill, depressed, and aged.

He sank into an easy chair, and—most ominous of signs—straightway commenced to feel his pulse. At length, seeing we looked concerned, he began to tell us how well he had been until the last few days, when an unfortunate occurrence had quite upset him.

It appeared that while driving with

his hostess through the country lanes they had come upon a woman lying by the roadside. She was poor, old, and ill —too ill, in fact, to reach her home in a neighbouring village.

They managed with some difficulty to get her into the victoria, where she occupied Mr. Spencer's seat. He, therefore, was compelled to sit upon the box. This would have been no hardship to an ordinarily healthy man; but to Mr. Spencer, with his feeble constitution, it was inevitable injurious results would follow. Well knowing this, one of us cried out—

"But when it was bound to knock you up, why did you not suggest young Miss —— should sit upon the box?"

"She wished to do so, but she is not strong, and I would not allow it," he explained, then went on sympathetically, "And as I could not leave the unfortunate creature alone on a country road, the course pursued was the only one to be adopted." Then he continued—

"A bad night too followed, for a poor cow had evidently lost her calf, and kept up a continual lowing, so that sleep was quite impossible."

We heard afterwards that the journey home had not improved matters.

The local train by which he travelled reached Reading so late that he missed the express to Paddington. That meant a wait of some length, which led to an amusing little incident.

While he sat on the platform, pale, worried, and lugubrious, a porter, glancing several times at him in passing, at last had courage to venture forward. Touching his cap, he remarked—

"The young lady and the baby, sir, has gone on home. She asked me to tell you as how she couldn't wait no longer for you."

"Wh—what! Wh—what! What?" came from the astounded and bewildered philosopher.

His secretary at that moment ap-

proached and heard the speech. He was just able to control his amusement enough to explain—

"My wife and little daughter, Mr. Spencer, who were to have met me here;" then beat a hasty retreat, in order to give vent to the irrepressible laughter the comic mistake brought forth. It was a ludicrous error; but is it worse than that of the critics who call Mr. Spencer cold, hard and unsympathetic.

CHAPTER VI.

A CLOUD.

NEARLY four years passed away in the life we have tried to describe in the preceding chapters, the happiest and the best of the whole time we spent together.

The pleasant acquaintance had gradually developed into a warm friendship and admiration on our part and a kindly interest on his.

We had lost the awe of the great man which had so oppressed us at the outset, though we had never lost the reverence which so quickly took its place.

The simple, genial manner in which Mr. Spencer accepted our homage, our devotion, our frank admiration had never failed, never altered.

It seemed as if we were no longer living with a stranger, of no kin to us; rather was he a near and trusted relative, almost a parent, so great was the confidence between us. Indeed, during a short illness which one of us had during this time, so kind had been his care and attention towards the invalid that she told him outright that she should call him "father" in future, so like one had he become. He acknowledged the title with a beaming smile, calling her in turn his "affectionate daughter."

And yet, as in most other delightful circumstances, this intimacy had its less pleasant side.

He seemed at times to forget, or at any rate we thought he did, that the relationship was not a real one, and that there was no natural obligation on our part to render him the services we offered and that he grew to expect.

He seemed to think that we ought always to be at his beck and call, and

he even showed displeasure if he thought we were too much taken up with our own occupations. A real father might have claimed our attention, and had we been his real daughters we might have inherited, as it were, an appreciation of his wants. But the instinct was not there.

It must not be supposed that we complained. We gloried in being entirely absorbed in his life and his interests, but we wanted a little individuality of our own every now and then.

No doubt it was our own fault, no doubt we spoiled him, but we thought he was great enough to resist the influence.

Many another old man who has worked hard, and had, perhaps, as he had, bad health, has grown overbearing, peevish, and exacting, especially towards the women who have given up most for him, sacrificed themselves for him, and looked after him. But Mr. Spencer was a philosopher, he had made mankind his study,

he had written books on the laws of conduct. Surely he should be above such weaknesses.

All this, it will be guessed, is but a prologue to an unpleasant story, and it must be confessed that about this time our happiness became a little clouded.

Looking back after so many years' interval at all that passed, it is easy to see our own mistakes, and it is to be hoped even his point of view. It would be easy to say nothing about the whole incident, but as our object is to show Mr. Spencer as we believe he really was we cannot omit it altogether.

It was as a man that we got to respect and regard him, a great man no doubt, but a man with the faults and blemishes to which men are liable, and in spite of which women manage to tolerate them. Such of our readers as are women will understand.

The business arrangement that we had originally made with him contemplated

two almost separate establishments in one house, for it was assumed that Mr. Spencer would live his own life almost entirely by himself, and that we should go our own way with ours.

But as has already been said this plan broke down at once, and he spent a great deal of his time in the rooms which were really ours—naturally to our intense satisfaction. There came a time at length when we found that the household expenses had so increased that they were greater than we could possibly afford.

On more than one occasion it had been necessary to point this out to him, and each time he had carefully gone into the matter, and with his usual justness had made some slight concessions in our favour, which enabled us to continue for a time.

But it was only for a time. We soon found out that these concessions were insufficient and that a crisis was impending.

What were we to do?

We could not run into debt, for, apart from the unpleasantness of such a course, there was no reason why we should burden ourselves in that way for the sake of another person, no matter how much we liked him, with whom we were supposed to be on a business footing.

The thought of asking for further concessions was intolerable, as it seemed as though such a request would make him class us with the daughters of the horse-leech, ever crying, "Give! give!"

There was no way out of the dilemma, therefore, so it seemed to us, except to terminate the agreement, and after endless controversy and indecision that was what we decided to do.

It is easy to see now where we were wrong, that we ought to have taken him into our full confidence, trusting to his sense of justice to see it from all points of view; but, oh! remember we thought he would understand. Why else was he a philosopher?

We were quickly undeceived. The elder of us, who as spokeswoman went quaking up to his room to deliver the message, met with a reception she little expected!

No sooner had she said, "Things have come to such a pass in the way of expenses, Mr. Spencer, that we are bound, with the utmost reluctance, to give you notice to bring our arrangement to an end in three months' time," than a great change came over him. His face flushed with anger, he started from his chair, and before she could offer a word of explanation, he cried out that he refused to listen, and impulsively left the room.

Nor did his anger abate in the course of the day, though the hot fit was succeeded by a cold fit, and when he met us at dinner his manner was frosty and ungenial in the extreme.

This mood continued for days, and to our horror it slowly became clear to us that he suspected us of those very attempts

at encroaching which we were so anxious to avoid.

The old friendship, therefore, seemed shattered at a blow, the jovial, pleasant days were gone, and a miserable time succeeded, a time which he mostly spent in bed, prostrated, as he said, by the upset we had given him. This was pain enough to us, and yet more cruel was it to feel that though he never wanted our help more than at this time, it was impossible to be with him or do anything for him.

But the hardest part of it all was he never would give us an opportunity of giving him a full explanation, which we felt sure would have shown him the absurdity of his suspicions and would have put everything right.

After some days of this state of things he recovered in health sufficiently to take the matter in hand, and this he did in a most characteristic fashion.

He drew up long documents covering several sheets of paper, some of which he

sent to us as communications, others to various friends. The little details of our private life were submitted to our friends and to his, for judgment to be passed on them.

Just think of it! If it were not so maddening it would be exquisitely funny.

Our friends, who behaved splendidly throughout the whole affair, tried to smooth things over and explain matters, but though their influence was undoubtedly of the greatest service, they could not effect a complete settlement.

In the meantime Mr. Spencer would not allow the notice we had given him to come into effect. No, the matter was set forth and discussed by letter, till one day he announced that in future he would do his own housekeeping, evidently in order to show us how inexpensively it could be done.

Then followed a wonderful time.

Orders were given to the cook to do the catering for him, so that everything should

be kept quite separate. But even the hapless cook was not allowed to have a free hand in her marketing, and detailed instructions were given her, with the result that might be expected.

It lasted scarcely a fortnight.

Before that period had elapsed she came to us in tears, saying that it was quite impossible to manage on the sum that Mr. Spencer allowed her, and that he was very much annoyed at her failure.

We did not, however, feel triumphant at this vindication of our case, as we might have done. It was impossible to feel anything but pity.

We longed, of course, to take over the housekeeping work again, but after what had passed it was difficult to suggest that we should. Some blundering overtures were made, but nothing came of them till one day the elder of us was sent for to his room—a rare thing in those days. Little did she expect what awaited her.

Without any preliminaries, with no

excuse or attempt at "making it up," Mr. Spencer remarked quite casually and in a matter-of-fact sort of way, "I think you had now better resume your housekeeping duties," and almost before she had time to take it all in, he said—

"I will take lunch with you to-day. What are you going to have?"

"Only some cold meat, Mr. Spencer," was the reply.

"Ah, very good," said he, quite amicably. "I will take some too."

This was too much! The feeling of triumph surged up and almost welled over, but it was suppressed, and the only comment was a quiet—

"*I* should never have dared to give you such a thing as cold meat for lunch, Mr. Spencer."

He did not answer.

Days followed during which he sometimes almost relapsed into his old manner, and he even accepted an offer from one of us to play the piano to him; but the

strange coldness returned suddenly when there was anything to irritate him, and it was plain that there was something still behind.

He still wrote long letters to us while we were in the house, and the formalities were preserved in our correspondence. But we had not the slightest idea what was wrong or how we could mend it.

And so the strange, uncomfortable days wore on, everything unsettled, till the time arrived for him to go away for his summer change.

He went, leaving us wretched but helpless, and oh! how different were the letters he sent us from those he had sent in previous years. Cold, formal, dealing with business details only, they were painful to read and harder to answer. They were, however, necessary, and did in the end bring in some comfort, for the business arrangement was entirely readjusted in such a way as to enable us to continue living in the same house with him after all.

The relief to us was beyond words, and we eagerly looked forward to his return for the resumption of the old pleasant days

But, alas! to our great distress and disappointment, his manner was scarcely more cordial than when he went away. We were amazed, for said we to one another, If he felt as unfriendly towards us as his manner implied, why did he wish us to go on living in the same house with him?

In our perplexity we had recourse to our friend, Mrs. B., the good friend who, as related in the first chapter, had been the means of bringing us together, and she with her usual tact found out the cause of the mischief, and at once allayed it.

It was the old story, "Whispering tongues can poison truth."

He had heard, and believed apparently, that we had been saying things about him which gave him the idea that we held a very different opinion of him than that which we tried to show him.

How untrue it was let these pages be the witness, or if an unguarded word or expression has crept in, or the unskilfulness of the writers have given the reader a wrong impression, let it here be stated clearly and definitely that we honoured him, reverenced him, and loved him as a father, a philosopher and a friend. Let the misunderstanding be recorded only to be blotted out.

Mrs. B. told him this, and it delighted us to hear from her that as she told him what real affection and devotion we felt for him in spite of what had passed, his whole face lighted up with pleasure and joy.

"There was no doubt," she told us, "how glad he was to hear it," and the reader may guess how pleased we were that the clouds should have been cleared away.

For so it was; the old footing was re-established, or very nearly so, and we lived for nearly four years more in the

same house with Mr. Spencer on quiet, happy terms.

We cannot close this chapter without a few words of comment which time and reflection enable us to make, and which are necessary as an illustration of the purpose we have in writing this little book.

However much blame we may allow ourselves, we cannot quite acquit Mr. Spencer.

He showed an amount of suspicion of which we had not dreamt him capable, and which was unworthy of his great mind.

He showed a wonderful and as it proved a wholly unfounded belief in his own powers of domestic organisation and management.

The latter failing is no doubt a fault every man makes once at least in his life, perhaps oftener. But the former is a weakness of small men. The great qualities we expected to find in the

philosopher were not always forthcoming when occasion required them, that is to say, when they were most needed.

But it will be seen that this did not shake our feeling towards him, though it altered our opinion of his character.

There are some illusions that survive every kind of catastrophe, and some that the first and slightest blow shatters irrevocably, and our illusions about Mr. Spencer were of the first order.

His faults seemed to bring him down from the high altitudes to the lower levels in which ordinary men and women walk on this earth, and made him easier to understand. They served not to make us disbelieve in his greatness, but to appreciate it the more by comparison, just as one only realises the length of a gigantic fir tree or poplar when it falls on the ground.

Some people always want their heroes to be perfect; with the writers of this book it is otherwise.

CHAPTER VII.

SUNSHINE AGAIN.

THE trials and difficulties of the sad time described in the last chapter left their mark on the friendly relationship which had existed for so long between Mr. Spencer and ourselves, and the old intimacy was never quite renewed. It was almost as if something had been broken which could not be thoroughly repaired.

It is not easy to say in what respect things were different, for in most ways everything seemed to go on just as before.

Yet differences there were. For instance, when he went off in the following winter to stay at St. Leonard's, although many of his old friends were asked to visit him, contrary to previous

custom, we were not invited. Then, as a distraction, he "borrowed" some of the children, whom he usually only invited during the summer months to visit him. We heard he much enjoyed having them with him in spite of his ill-health, so unlike the typical old bachelor, who generally regards them with detestation.

They, unfortunately, were only available in their holidays, so he could not have them with him on his return to town. He managed, however, quite by chance to continue that kind of diversion at home.

His drawing-room had a bay window, the lead roof of which was flat and projected from his bedroom into the garden, which is very common with London houses.

On these leads, politely called by us "the balcony," it was possible for two or three people to sit comfortably, and a good view could be obtained of the adjoining gardens on either side. There

did he often lie in his deck-chair that spring, and gained much entertainment by watching what was going on.

We had become acquainted with the parents of a family of jolly children on the left-hand side, and from his vantage ground he could see them at their play. Naturally he was observed in his turn, although they did not converse under those Romeo and Juliet conditions! But when the may and laburnums were in blossom he had branches of them gathered and brought up to him, which he himself arranged and tied into bunches and threw down to them. These they received with childish glee, but of course quite without any sense of the unusual honour they were receiving in the gift of a flower from the hand of Herbert Spencer!

It was on those leads that an amusing little incident occurred shortly afterwards.

Sitting idly there one day, his hands lightly clasped in front of him, with no occupation but to ruminate and gaze about,

Mr. Spencer noticed a young elm tree that was getting so large, he feared eventually it would shut out light from the house and garden. So he announced it must come down.

To us it seemed almost like sacrilege to destroy anything so precious as a tree in a London garden. So we determined to make a fight for its life.

Unfortunately, notwithstanding our experience of years, in the heat of the moment we were foolish enough to broach the subject at once, although Mr. Spencer was not well, and consequently not altogether amenable. Our entreaties, therefore, failed to dissuade him.

When as a last resource we told him what our wrath would be did either of our tenants cut down a tree without our sanction, his face for a moment lengthened, But his countenance soon changed as he exclaimed defiantly, "Pooh! a little tree like that!" Then he continued

his instructions for its downfall to Cray—who acted as his coachman and general factotum. He, good man, stood there while we were arguing silent and impassive as usual, but ready to obey any orders he might receive in that complex household.

Mr. Spencer took his seat upon "the balcony," while Cray below, with saw and axe, looked up for final instructions from above, standing well in view of the open drawing-room window, which was directly underneath. We sat melancholy spectators, our unusual silence speaking ominously of our disapproval at what was being done.

Cray commenced to saw. How tough that sturdy little elm was, and how bravely did it fight for its life! But when the trunk was still only half sawn through, above the hish-hish-hish of the saw came the sharp clang of the front-door bell. We were scarcely conscious of it, so intently were we watching the slowly weakening tree, and when the housemaid's voice

announced "Mrs. J., to see you, sir, in the drawing-room!" we all three were startled.

Mrs. J., of all people! the owner of the house! the owner of the half-mutilated tree! she, who called but once a year, to choose that very day, that very hour, *that very minute*, for her visit!

Had we planned revenge it could not have succeeded better.

We shot a glance at one another, and then we looked at him—shall we confess it?—with triumphant, gleeful exultation in our eyes, which he met with comic consternation in his own. The keen humour of the situation thus striking us all together swamped all else, and our recent difference forgotten, we broke into shaking but suppressed laughter, for Mrs. J. was immediately beneath, while the ceaseless "hishing" of Cray's saw was plainly audible.

The philosopher was the first to recover his equanimity. He dried his eyes, and

with difficulty commanded sufficient voice to call quietly down to him—

"Go in and have your tea, Cray;" but Cray, doubtless objecting to having his tea two hours before the proper time, scarcely paused as he called back in his respectful tones—

"I don't want it yet, thank you, sir." And with his face showing dark and grimly stern in the shadow of his little victim, he commenced to saw again.

"You must be tired, go in and rest!" came softly gurgling down, for at Cray's unfortunate persistence the philosopher's shaking laughter had begun again. Then louder—

"Go in, I say, and rest!" But Cray was slightly deaf and so with the stolid determination which characterised his performance of the minutest duty, he still sawed on and on.

"Plague take the fellow!" broke at length from Mr. Spencer, and waxing half-cross in the midst of his amusement,

he cried: "Will *nothing* stop him?" At this we pulled ourselves together, and feeling he had been punished enough came to the rescue. One ran down to receive Mrs. J., and the other went into the garden to inveigle Cray into the kitchen and out of sight.

The end of the story is tame.

It was impossible to resist the temptation of telling the whole incident to Mrs. J., whose sense of humour proved far keener than her affection for the little tree—which, by the way, she did not know existed, a fact we carefully concealed from the philosopher.

During the evening that followed, while sitting with him before a cosy fire in his drawing-room he, doing nothing as was his wont at night, continually burst out into little fits of irresistible laughter, and when asked what the joke might be his merry eyes turned to us as he cried—

"To think that Mrs. J. should have

picked out to-day of all days to make her annual call!"

At that time a favourite occupation of his was to look through the piles of photographs he had in his possession and study them from some particular point of view.

Amongst these was the portrait of a lady, whom we always believed he had once admired, and about whom we often teased him, the nonsense evidently amusing him. We tried to trap him into an admission, but all in vain, till at last one day one of us, gazing intently at the photograph, exclaimed—

"What a long nose she had! She must have been very difficult to kiss, Mr. Spencer!"

"Yes, indeed!" he brightly acquiesced, to our intense delight at the apparent admission. He laughingly protested he was only speaking "theoretically"; but would Herbert Spencer, the philosopher, have generalised from *a priori* reasoning?

The most interesting of all the photographs to us were those of Mr. Spencer's parents and relations. He used to bring these out and study them, as he was undecided which ones to publish in his *Autobiography*.

The matter was debated with us, and we at length persuaded him to include not only those of his parents and grandparents, but his uncles as well—a regular family group.

It happened that one day the portraits of his father and mother came back from the frame-makers, and on their arrival our assistance was required to hang them in the study. Now in the early days the youngest of us had fallen into a grievous blunder which he never allowed her to forget. She had asked him artlessly and seriously when he expected to finish his "*Sympathetic*" *Philosophy*.

At that he had fallen back in his chair and emitted a hearty shout of laughter, and when composed enough to answer

told her he thought most of his readers would be a little astonished at such an adjective being applied to his writings.

He never forgot the fatal error, and again and again brought it up against her, always with the merriest twinkle lurking in his eye.

On the occasion previously referred to the portraits were duly hung over a photograph of the philosopher himself on either side of the fire-place. Then Mr. Spencer was led to the opposite side of the room to examine and criticise the effect of the arrangement. After sundry comments had been passed and the family group admired, M. exclaimed—

"And now, Mr. Spencer, there ought to be a likeness of your children and your grandchildren to hang underneath yours."

Perhaps the same thought had run through his mind too, for there was a look in his face which made her add hastily—

"Oh, but never mind! Had there

been any there might never have been a *Synthetic Philosophy*."

"No! but there might have been a '*sympathetic*' philosophy," he at once replied with a whimsical laugh for the old joke, and yet with a touch of pathos in his voice, as he seemed for a moment to realise what he had lost by giving up his whole life to the completion of his work.

When we think of all that that speech of his implies it is impossible not to feel saddened by it, till we remember how really happy, how joyous even, he could be when his health would only allow him.

Indeed, it was one of his most striking characteristics that when well he was able totally to ignore the dark cloud of illness which, always hovering, so constantly descended upon him.

His energies never flagged when his strength did not desert him, and when he was drawn into public controversies

he still showed the vigour of a man in his prime.

He wrote his well-known articles to *The Times* against the metric system, and brought out a pamphlet soon afterwards on the same subject. His pleasure at its success both at home and in America was like that of a novice over his first victory.

He was in such spirits about it that we felt constrained to inquire if he had any system to suggest as a substitute, to which he replied—

"No. Leave that to posterity. Why should posterity have nothing to do? It will certainly know what it requires better than we do?"

But his energies did not cease there. He evidently had schemes for the benefit of mankind which the present generation might enjoy even if posterity did not avail itself of it.

"When I have finished my philosophy," he announced one day, "I shall write a

cookery book." And so serious was he over this that one of us was prompted to say with equal gravity—

"Then you will just go down to posterity as 'Herbert Spencer, the man who wrote the cookery book,' and no one will ever remember the *Synthetic Philosophy*."

Possibly he took the speech in good faith—he often did take absurd remarks of ours that way, if there was no third person to lead the laugh—for we heard no more of it, and, as far as we know, the world is still without any philosophic treatise on the subject. He did, however, spend a good deal of time inventing a mouse-trap, for which purpose he was closeted frequently with Cray in his study, and when one of us rallied him on the triviality of making such a thing, he replied—

"You see, I am like an elephant's trunk, which roots up trees and picks up sixpences!"

Could any phrase better have represented Mr. Spencer's versatility and ceaseless energy?

In spite of all this it was sad to see how his strength was declining, and with it the buoyant good-humour that characterised him when well. Advancing age emphasised his whims and crotchets, and his moods were endlessly variable and often difficult to follow.

The trouble that this caused in the household affairs is only remembered and mentioned here because of the regret we naturally feel that we were not always able to arrange things to his liking.

Orders that were given for tidying the house and garden were countermanded by him for the most trivial reason. Servants were dismissed for little better than no reason whatever; all signs of a temper sadly tried by suffering and irritated by trifles.

It was often hard enough to keep an equal demeanour and a cheerful spirit,

and it was ever needful to be on the watch.

We could always tell when one of these bad bouts commenced, for on those occasions he used to adopt a curious garment he had devised to protect himself from cold with as little exertion in dressing as possible. It was made of a very warm, woolly material, and compounded in such a way that he had only to step into it and with one pull was fully clad in boots, trousers, and coat. We used to call this the "woolly bear"—a name he adopted for it—and when we heard from the housemaid he was clothed in it, it was a warning to us that there was a trying day to be faced. The trouble that caused these bouts lay wholly beyond the power of himself or any member of the household to prevent.

Public controversies gave him many a sleepless night.

Ill-informed newspaper paragraphs upset him more than formerly.

Any anxiety too, such as delay in the

arrival of his MS., caused remorseless insomnia, and many a weary hour did he pass in bed unable to sleep when he made his attack on Lord Salisbury. He was determined to "smash" him for his excursions into science, and for this he had to suffer, for he could not get the matter out of his head night or day, and finally he was completely prostrated, and a bad bout of illness followed.

No words can adequately describe the black pall of depression which then appeared to descend upon Avenue Road. Its dreariness affected every member of the household, and forced the spirits into the lowest depths. One typical November day, when the gloom of the impenetrable fog outside was only equalled by the dreary gloom which prevailed within, M. as usual was sitting in the poor old invalid's bedroom, simply that he might feel the comfort of a human presence near him, for he was too ill for conversation.

He lay buried in his pillows, and gave

no sign of life except an occasional long-drawn sigh — almost a groan — which accompanied the rising and falling of his hand, and that spoke far more eloquently than words could have done of the state of hopelessness into which he had sunk. For it was one of his worst days, when his ill-health completely mastered him, and although only of a temporary nature, it was terribly trying for him and very distressing for us.

Hour after hour crawled by. Darker and darker grew the room as the fog slowly descended like a thick veil before the window.

Complete silence reigned within. From without could be heard occasionally the far-off scream of the London and North Western Railway whistles, as the trains rushed with a dull roar into the tunnel near Chalk Farm Station.

At length a belated but prosperous bluebottle, as if in protest at the unusual silence in the room, flew noisily across

the prostrate figure in the bed. Its buzzing fussiness was almost startling, breaking so suddenly upon the deathlike stillness, and this led M., who was sitting by the fire, to glance across at it and cry, "You ought to be dead!"

"Wh—what! *What* did you say?" came in a feebly surprised tone from the pillows, and something very like a weak laugh followed.

"I said that that vociferous bluebottle ought to be dead; and so it ought at this time of year," she replied.

"I saw no bluebottle," he went on, and the tone of his voice showed signs of increasing amusement as he continued, "But you suddenly looked straight at me and emphatically cried, '*You* ought to be dead!'"

Having made that quite long speech, he broke into low, irresistible laughter! And what a welcome, welcome sound it was, for there could not have been a better sign that he was beginning to

mend. It was so, and before the day was over M. ventured, with success—for she was not checked—to tell him of an amusing little incident which she had shortly before experienced.

She had ever since wanted to tell him, but had not dared embark upon so long a story until that weak laugh gave her, as it were, permission.

It was one more proof of the inaccuracy of statements which were promulgated about him.

While staying at a hydro in Scotland, a lady, a total stranger who had only just arrived, sat next to M. at dinner.

In the course of conversation it soon transpired they had a mutual acquaintance about whom they talked.

At length the new arrival remarked—

"She thinks a good deal of herself, for she stayed at St. Leonard's last winter with Herbert Spencer."

"Yes, I know," M. replied, rather tickled.

Then came the surprising rejoinder—

"He lives with three old ladies in London you know."

"Yes," was the quiet response as M. with difficulty suppressed her intense amusement, "*I am one of them!*"

* * *

Notwithstanding Mr. Spencer's many quaint ways, he was extraordinarily free from the usual fussiness and fads of the proverbial old bachelor.

He scorned the idea of having milk and water boiled. If there was an epidemic about then, he said, precautions should be taken, but not necessarily otherwise.

Tinned foods, too, he ate and enjoyed and laughed at people being afraid to take them. It was, therefore, all the more surprising when upon occasion he showed nervousness and apprehension in other directions.

This one day led to us all being put into

an amusing but strikingly absurd position, or at least so it seemed to us.

It has already been stated that all sorts of presents used to arrive for him, usually with some sort of notification on the outside from what source they had come.

It was therefore unusual when a rather mysterious looking case arrived, while Mr. Spencer was away from home one summer, with no mark or sign to show from whom it had been sent.

We wrote, describing its appearance, and asking if it should be forwarded to him. The surprising answer came back that it was to be sent to the police! That excellent body of officials refused to receive it, but consented to send an inspector to the house, in whose presence it might be unpacked.

In due course the inspector arrived. The case was carried with extreme care and placed very gently upon the kitchen table, where the lid was unscrewed.

With suppressed excitement and intense

curiosity as to what evil thing would confront us, we burrowed through an interminable amount of straw, and, holding our breath, came upon something hard.

It was slowly and gingerly excavated, and there on the table stood—not an infernal machine, but two innocent bottles of a prime brand of whisky!

Whether the inspector was more amused or annoyed never transpired, but at any rate he made the best of it and soon joined in the peals of laughter which naturally followed such an absurd and ignominious *dénouement.*

It would be interesting to see the report he made on returning to the police station. Of course we wrote at once to Mr. Spencer and gave him a graphic account of the whole affair, whereupon he thought fit to give an explanation of his suspicions.

His anti-anarchical ideas, he said, were well known, and it seemed to him just possible that it had been sent by someone anxious to do him an injury. How such a

thing occurred to him is inexplicable, for he had never before shown any nervousness about such matters.

Fortunately all arrivals were not so alarming, and curiously enough on one day, but by two different posts, came letters from the Austrian Government and the German Emperor wishing to confer some honour upon him. In accordance with his usual practice the offer was in each case declined. The reasons which prompted him to decline honours from every European country—which some time or other were proffered him—are well known. But perhaps it is not common knowledge that he very much appreciated some of the attentions that were paid him.

He always spoke most gratefully of what the Americans had done for him, and of the encouragement and sympathy they had shown him—in very early days as well as when he became famous—for this meant far more to him than the

titles and dignities with which foreign Governments were anxious to load him.

We too received all kinds of communications about him, often surprising and generally amusing.

Thus one day a letter arrived for "Miss Spencer," and was brought to us. It was from an Italian begging her to use her influence with her "illustrious and highly-gifted brother" to procure the writer an interview.

It was comical to us to be taken for his sisters, but the mistake was natural enough for a foreigner to make, considering how little was ever known of Mr. Spencer's private life.

Another time a letter arrived, written in hot haste, from a young nephew of ours, who was away on a visit. He begged us to send an account *immediately* of any of Mr. Spencer's peculiarities, that he might retail them to the daughter of his hostess, who was a great admirer of the philosopher.

The latter was intensely amused when we read it to him, and never appeared to think of resenting it as an impertinence.

Nor did it in any way prejudice him against the boy, who soon afterwards came to visit us. Upon that occasion Mr. Spencer was very kind, and took sufficient interest in him to look through a number of his original sketches, which to our great delight he criticised most favourably.

Unfortunately, that letter demanding "peculiarities" arrived just a few weeks too soon, for a most amusing and surprising one was soon after perpetrated, about which no one was more amused than the philosopher himself.

The pattern of his drawing-room carpet began to fade when it had only been down a few months. It consisted, or rather *had* consisted, of clusters of blue flowers on a drabish ground. Now with the principal colour gone it had become far too dull for

the taste of that lover of brightness. He therefore conceived the unique idea of having each flower stamped over with red ink.

For this purpose he invented a small tin tray, which was made so that it stood quite flat on the floor to prevent any possibility of the ink being spilt or dropped about. Bent in it were little wells about as large round and twice as thick as a halfpenny. These depressions were filled with the liquid.

The sempstress—whom he was always glad of an excuse to employ because she was so hard-working and so poor—was soon set to carry out his plan. Down on her knees she had to go, and as she was decidedly stout it was no light task.

With a cork cut the exact size and dipped in the ink, she pressed firmly down on each flower, thus leaving it as if covered with red cherries.

No wonder it took her over a week, working all day, for the carpet was from

twenty-five to thirty feet long and proportionately wide.

The chief pleasure we derived was in witnessing Mr. Spencer's amusement and keen interest as the work progressed, and when it was at last completed, he never failed to tell anyone who came to the house about it. If they looked incredulous and inclined to think it was a joke, with exultant glee in his eyes, he would lead them to his drawing-room that they might see for themselves how successfully he had "turned blue flowers into red in a little over a week."

We were glad that that chameleon-like carpet was amongst the possessions—which also included his study chair and sofa—which he bequeathed to us in his will.

CHAPTER VIII.

GROWING DIFFICULTIES. CONCLUSION.

THIS little book must not close without a word being said about Mr. Spencer's approval of private charity to deserving cases of genuine distress.

His principles are so well known, that it is unnecessary to dwell on the fact of his disapproval of compulsory charity or the distribution of private money by public bodies.

This has led many to believe that he was hard. Whatever he was in theory, we can emphatically deny that he was so in practice.

"Worthy people should be helped," we have continually heard him remark, when he was about to suit the action to the words.

Carrying out his individualism, he again and again relieved cases that were brought before him, but not until he had taken some trouble—far more difficult to him than the easy method of putting his hand in his pocket—to prove the case was genuine.

Many were the discussions he had with us as to what means it would be best to take. There was, however, to our knowledge an occasion when he followed the dictate of his heart rather than that of his head.

One day a stranger called upon him. Mr. Spencer, as usual, refused to see him. Indeed, he was too unwell to receive a visitor, so he begged one of us to go down and interview the man.

A pitiable tale of misfortune and straitened circumstances was unfolded, all the worse because the sufferer had formerly had a good position, that of editor of a newspaper in a far town of Western America.

He asked for work of some kind—copying, anything, in fact, which would bring in a few shillings until he obtained regular employment.

The story was repeated to Mr. Spencer. There was, however, nothing to guarantee its truth, for on the card he had sent in there was only a name, which told him nothing.

After some discussion and indecision, a message was sent down that nothing could be done for him, so the poor fellow went hopeless away.

That evening, while we were passing the study door, Mr. Spencer called out to us to come in. We found him slowly swinging in his rocking-chair, and his face looked flushed and rather perturbed.

At once he commenced to tell us that he had been carefully thinking over the case of the ex-editor, whose story seemed to him to ring true. Feeling almost convinced that it was so, it had flashed into his mind that only a few weeks before he

had received a copy of the very newspaper of which the man had spoken. That part of his story at any rate seemed genuine, so probably the rest of it might be also. Anyway, he had decided to give him the benefit of the doubt, and with only such slender proof of the man's honesty, he sent him next day help to tide over immediate necessities. Fortunately we too had felt it a genuine case, and had taken care to keep the address.

Mr. Spencer's dislike of monotony, and what might almost be called his passion for change,—to which he constantly alludes in his *Autobiography* as being constitutional,—led him to spend a great part of the year away from Avenue Road.

For many years he went to Pewsey for his summer outing; but at last he gave up even that, and insisted on trying new ground. The change was a mistake in many ways. He had been very comfortable at that place; every care, every consideration possible was shown him,

and his health was too precarious for adventures. But in spite of his years he tried new places, and unfortunately not being very lucky in finding suitable ones, he was rather buffeted from pillar to post.

At one place he took so great a dislike to his hostess that on his return he actually called her a "beast"—a very strong expression for him, and one he seldom, if ever, used. "Pestilent" was the most he would allow himself as a rule, and then the term was applied indifferently to men, tunes, or sparrows when the chirping of the latter disturbed his slumbers.

At the next place he tried he discovered the landlady had been divorced, which so horrified him that he packed up his traps and left at once directly the fact became known to him. That kind of laxity was most abhorrent to him, and had he known the circumstance beforehand he would never have consented to go to her house.

After these two unfortunate experiences he advertised for "a lively family in the country," and yet, when not in a happy mood, he would come down heavily on all slang and exaggeration, a weakness to which, it is to be feared, lively families are somewhat prone.

A restlessness of disposition was, however, settling upon him, and he was continually craving for new sensations, or, to be more correct, for a renewal of the old ones. For a long time he had been content with the little garden at Avenue Road in the spring-time, even when he was in good health ; but now a desire suddenly seized him to go down into the country. He had always admired the feathery beauty of spring, and hoping to experience a keener enjoyment when right in the midst of it, he left home earlier in the year than was his custom in order that he might see the bursting of the buds once again. But, alas! he was doomed to disappointment, for although he was

there at the right time, and notwithstanding lovely weather, the charm seemed all gone. He returned to town and resumed his arm chair, telling us sadly that it was one more sign of advancing age, one more "pleasurable sensation" the less for him.

His distaste of monotony extended in an excessive degree to his diet, variety in which he affirmed was most necessary to health. For that reason he liked to have different food products from all over the United Kingdom. Often when they arrived he was too unwell to take them. This led to many difficulties and much expense in the housekeeping. Indeed, we sometimes wished, notwithstanding our profound admiration for his colossal intellect, that it was not quite so great. Then perhaps he would have been content to "root up trees," and leave to us the "picking up of sixpences"!

For instance, the butcher sent one day a tough joint of meat: tiresome, but

occasionally inevitable. He was at once given up, and we too were blamed for not having more in at a time to hang. "Hanging" was, of course, perfectly right in moderation, and this was generally done. When we complained too much at a time would not keep, Mr. Spencer ordered it to be syringed with a solution of permanganate of potash to check decomposition.

Soon afterwards, while away from home, he wrote the day before his return to ask us to order in a leg of mutton, a loin of mutton, a neck of mutton, a sirloin of beef, and an ox-tail. Already there was a good-sized sirloin in cut.

That surprising order told its tale! Well we knew the state of health in which he would return. There was no time to write a protest, and the order had to go as it stood.

Now we and the two servants were all small meat-eaters, and he himself took about enough to feed a sparrow; but

even by that small amount he did not help to reduce it, for our surmise had been correct, and on arrival he was too unwell to take anything but poultry, which, of course, only helped still more to overcrowd the larder.

We could not bear to bother him about it, as his health was bad; but how we groaned under that load of meat!

Naturally such a mountain of it grew gradually high, as our capacity for diminishing it was so small.

At length, notwithstanding the syringing process it underwent, there came a time when the cook refused to dress it, and she sought an interview with Mr. Spencer upon the subject. With secret satisfaction we heard an order given to Cray to go up to his master in the study.

A few minutes later, with suppressed amusement and a spice of triumph, we watched that stolid, trusty servant dig a deep round hole in a flower bed in

the garden, after which that hecatomb of meat was seen no more.

How soon all his cooks came to understand him! Seeing his curious ways, yet knowing him a kind and just master, they accepted them and strained every nerve to please him.

Indeed, he did not ask so very much, for his living was simplicity itself. He only required them to take sufficient trouble to produce good, wholesome food, cooked as he wished it.

It was an amusing fact, and one we often rallied him upon, that notwithstanding his often-expressed scorn of "pretty" things, he almost invariably had pretty cooks! And with one or two exceptions they all became devoted to him and flew to do his bidding.

We well remember one who came just as a bout of illness had commenced. His meals on these occasions were taken by the housemaid up to his bedroom or the study. Stationed at the top of the

kitchen stairs could be seen his anxious cook waiting in tense, expectant attitude, a bright colour in her cheeks, her pretty blue eyes shining, while she listened intently for the sound of his voice from above. Then, if she heard him express a wish for something she had not sent up, down she would fly, her steps clitter-clattering on the stone stairs, and be up again like a flash, that he might not be kept waiting while the housemaid came down to fetch it for him.

Particular as he was, he could also be lenient to them upon occasion. Thus one day the cook sent up the soup without any salt in it. Naturally she was told of the omission. The next day it was so salt nobody could take it. D. exclaimed irritably at the utter stupidity of such a thing, but the philosopher smiled patiently, and as he put down his spoon remarked—

"What did you expect? You must

not look for discrimination in low orders of intellect."

The writer of the *Principles of Psychology* should, of course, be lenient, but it would have been difficult to imagine anyone more tolerant of small human weaknesses than was Mr. Spencer. He just complacently accepted them as inevitable.

Yet upon other occasions when reading an important decision, the public adoption of which he considered would ultimately retard social progress, he gave the little characteristic shrug of his shoulders as he threw up his slim, delicate hands and impatiently exclaimed—

"The irrationality of human beings is incredible! And I show my irrationality by ever expecting them to be rational!"

After we had been with him a few years it became necessary for him to go regularly to the seaside every winter. This was in addition to his annual change during the summer, which left only six months in the year for him to be in his own home. Now

it often happened that during that time he was in such poor health that he was almost entirely confined to his room. His visits to the Athenæum became rarer and rarer; and as it was chiefly for the sake of being able to go to his club that he lived in London, it is not surprising that he began to ask himself why he still kept up a house. This was borne in upon him more and more in the many dreary hours he spent in bed, and he naturally came to the conclusion that he was being put to a great deal of expense for the small amount of benefit he was able to get out of it.

He did not actually say so much at first, but he let drop hints which were not to be mistaken. He next announced that if he could sublet the house he thought he would go and live nearer the club.

It was evident he was getting dissatisfied with the arrangement with us also, and yet did not quite know on what grounds to terminate our agreement, nor was he quite decided what course

he should adopt afterwards. We on our part not only saw what was working in his mind, but felt that there was much to be said in its favour both from our own point of view and from his; for the fact was he had become most difficult to please, which was very trying, although we knew his ill-health was at the bottom of it all. This worried us to such an extent that we welcomed any little distraction that came in our way. So during that autumn, having an overwhelming desire for fresh air and a sight of the country, we instituted long walks on Sundays with some of our friends.

Ten or twelve of us would start off immediately lunch was over, and after some hours of walking, a rest, and tea, would return about six o'clock. Many a delightful afternoon was spent that way, though our pleasure was somewhat marred by a guilty feeling that we had left Mr. Spencer in solitude at Avenue Road, and solitude was never to his taste.

Upon one occasion we missed our train, and arrived home very late, feeling really distressed at having deserted for so many hours the poor, lonely old man. D. went straight to the study, and finding him with every appearance of dolefulness, asked how he felt. "Very miserable" was all the reply he vouchsafed. This was rather upsetting, so the state of affairs was reported to M., who at once resolved on different tactics.

Though inwardly very penitent at having so deserted the philosopher, she entered the study with an air, abusing the train she had missed and the watch of the unlucky man who had brought about the mishap. Not a word of sympathy for Mr. Spencer; nothing but pity for herself and pretended annoyance at the discomforts she had had to put up with.

At the end of a long tirade, to which Mr. Spencer listened with increasing forgetfulness of his own woes, she exclaimed—

"I was sick and tired of waiting all that time in a horrid, draughty little station, dead tired, hungry and longing to be home."

Instantly he was all sympathy and solicitude. He listened to the tale of our adventures with the greatest interest, and became so cheerful that what remained of the evening was spent by us altogether pleasantly enough.

Yet he never became reconciled to those walks, noticing how tired out we were the next day, and tried in many ways to prevent our taking them. Arguments were of no avail, so eventually he tried a sharper weapon.

One Monday morning, when the younger of us went up to his room as usual to wish him good morning, fixing his critical eyes upon her he said with an air of concern, "I don't think those long walks suit you at all. You look quite haggard!" As this was absolutely true there was no gainsaying it.

About that time he was frequently talking of a change, and more than once gave us notice to leave him. Indeed, we had nearly made new arrangements for ourselves which, however, fell through, and when he was unable to sublet the house—as already mentioned—everything went on for a time as before.

There was one thing on which we were quite determined. Under no circumstances would we give him notice, so upset had he been when we did it before.

And so spring became summer, and summer drifted into autumn, and winter at last arrived without any definite settlement being made. We lived in a constant state of uncertainty, always expecting and never receiving the final *congé*.

At last a real disagreement occurred, and one on which we were determined to make a stand.

It had always been treated as a matter of course that we should have our friends to visit us at Avenue Road, for which

purpose we had a guest room. Up to that time we had asked those we chose, although indeed they were few enough. It was, therefore, the more surprising that Mr. Spencer should have suddenly taken objection to the number of them. He was obviously getting very dissatisfied, so we were determined to hold our own. Discontent was growing steadily on him and at seventy-seven years of age it was more likely to increase than to decrease. We therefore ignored his wishes regarding guests, and went our way unmoved. If he wanted an excuse for breaking the agreement he should have it, and so we decided to disregard his expressed wishes.

But it is very difficult to describe what we felt when the inevitable notice came at last. It arrived on April 1st, 1897, and said quite simply and shortly that the arangement must terminate on July 1st following.

Notwithstanding our anticipation, when the letter really came bidding us leave him it was something of a shock.

After all those years we were to part!

Eight years of friendship and intimacy were to cease, and a new era was to begin.

A crowd of different emotions surged over us. Perhaps grief at leaving the poor old man quite alone was most dominant in our minds, as we thought of the merry days we spent together, the laughter, the jokes, and the fun. Then came a wave of relief at the thought of freedom and a country life for ourselves once more when we remembered the dark days full of difficulties consequent upon ill-health coupled with the town life which had no attractions for us. At one moment the stern, thoughtful face of Mr. Spencer rose up before us compelling silence, at another the same countenance wreathed in smiles, bubbling over with fun, and begging for "some nonsense, please."

Where should we have again such delightful conversations, in which he used to tell us so much that was instructive,

so much that was inspiriting; who would laugh so whole-heartedly at the smallest joke, or show such responsiveness to all fun; and who else would be great enough to find such keen pleasure in such little things? Where, in fine, should we ever discover that wonderful charm of manner, a charm perhaps which appealed to women more than to men. It must, like the glow of an autumn sunset, be felt, for it cannot be described.

During the three months that elapsed before we parted things went on much as before. We discussed our various plans in the same way as we had done during the last seven years. Naturally we experienced great regret at parting, and signs were not wanting that Mr. Spencer felt the same. Nevertheless, we ignored anything that might mean an overture towards reconciliation, as there was no doubt the time had come when it was better that we should part.

The weeks passed, the final changes

were made, and our furniture and belongings were packed up and taken away.

Owing to some plans that he had made having fallen through, our philosopher was with us to the last, and did not seem to mind in the least the disturbance and discomfort that was necessarily caused him.

When the hour arrived for us to leave we went into the study to bid him good-bye. He was lying on the sofa looking very flushed and rather miserable. One of us was just convalescent after a long illness, and as she went forward to shake hands with him he began to give her a lecture, with lips that trembled, on the necessity of taking care of her health; then picking up one of the air cushions against which he was then resting, he gave it to her "to ease the journey" she was about to take to the seaside. Up to the very last he showed us his fatherly care.

Our friendship with Mr. Spencer did not

by any means cease the day we departed from Avenue Road. It lasted until his death.

We had only left him a few months when we were surprised, amused, and very pleased to receive letters, on more than one occasion, asking one of us to interview numbers of housekeepers for him, and select two or three out of each batch whom we thought likely to be suitable to go to him for a personal interview.

Again and again, too, did invitations come to visit him, often written by his own hand.

More than once when ill-health overtook one of us did he help her generously and freely in many ways which it is a pleasure to remember. So ready was he to give help and sympathy to his friends in trouble, that it is small wonder at his cremation on that sad December day in 1903, among the women who were there to bid him their last farewell, few could restrain their tears

He is gone, and there remains but the recollection of him. His works will survive for generations to come, but as the years pass by there will be taken one by one all those who knew him as he was in his home, and the memory of his private life will be no more. We would willingly have treasured the remembrance of our philosopher in silence. But the popular opinion of him is so grotesque that we have felt constrained to write down for those who care to read the impression we had of him before it is too late.

If we have succeeded in presenting a picture of Mr. Spencer that shall keep the remembrance of his kindliness and thoughtfulness green for another generation, we shall have achieved our dearest wishes. If not, let the failure be laid at our door and not at his. Our aim has been to draw a true likeness without favouring or maligning him; we have tried to describe his private life just as

it was, for we know that he had sufficient humour to laugh at the little stories that might appear to tell against him.

We have striven to avoid flattery, knowing how he hated it; we have not hesitated to criticise him, knowing how just he was; we have not disguised his weaknesses and failures, knowing how completely arrogance was absent from his nature. But we knew him also to be kindly, simple, straightforward, courteous, and considerate, and in that knowledge and in the consciousness of our own affection for him, we must rest content.

THE END.

PRINTING OFFICE OF THE PUBLISHER.