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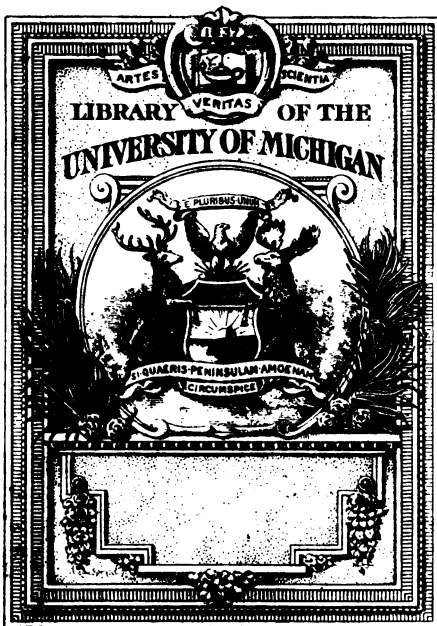
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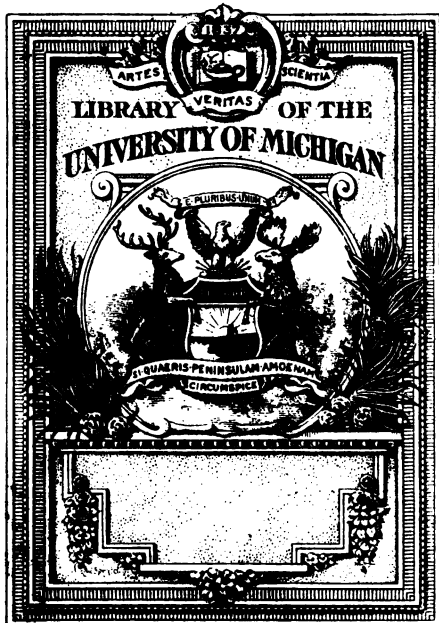
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H. W. L. J.

Handwritten: Mrs. Matilda (Charlotte) Fraser

LETTERS AND REMINISCENCES

OF

THE REV. JOHN MITFORD.

WITH

A Sketch of his Correspondent's Life.

By C. M. Fraser

LONDON:

SAMPSON LOW, MARSTON, SEARLE, & RIVINGTON,
LIMITED,

St. Dunstan's House,

FETTER LANE, FLEET STREET, E.C.

1891.



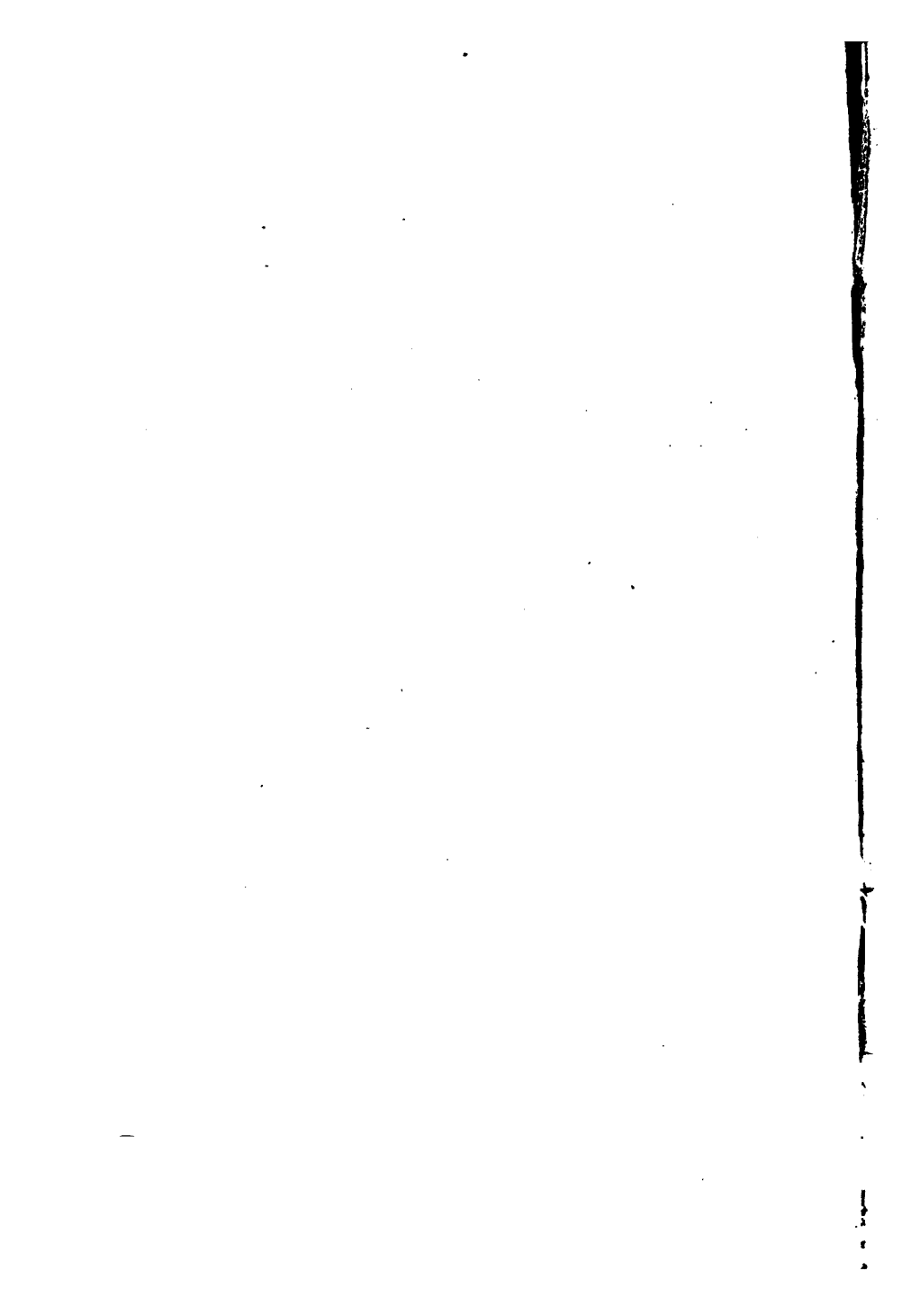
PROLOGUE.

A CONSIDERABLE number of letters, written long ago by the Rev. John Mitford, Rector of Benhall, Suffolk, and for many years editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, having unexpectedly fallen into my possession, it occurred to me to incorporate the biographies as well as some of the writings of a "pair of friends" (such as were my father, Mr. Edward Jesse, and John Mitford, whose mutual love of Natural History drew them together), in one small volume, which might perhaps prove interesting to a portion of the reading public.

Being well aware that the letters above alluded to form by far the more generally attractive contingent in the biographies which I

proposed to myself to amalgamate, and being also cognisant of the fact that the Rev. John Mitford, nephew of the Spanish historian, and, as he is styled in biographical notices, "naturalist and miscellaneous writer," ranks far beyond my father in scientific and general knowledge, I would gladly have placed a sketch of his life *before* that of his friend and follower. One objection, however, to this course stared me hopelessly in the face. I was, and am still, almost totally ignorant of any events connected with Mr. Mitford's early career, and am therefore reluctantly obliged to yield to my father—whose love, and that alone, for the works of Nature, obtained for him the title of "naturalist"—the place of honour, if any such exists, in my little book. The annals, from the age of nineteen to that of *quasi* ninety of a life which, both in public and private, was as blameless as it was uneventful, can hardly possess many of the elements which, as a rule, awaken the reader's sympathies; nevertheless I am willing to hope

that the truthfulness of the narration, together with the accompanying notices of public men, with many of whom my father in his long life became acquainted, may arouse an interest in the following pages which a simple memoir of his life might fail to elicit.



SYLVANUS REDIVIVUS.

ERRATA.

Page 1, lines 5 and 6, *for* "emigrated after the Edict of Nantes,"
read "emigrated after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes."

Page 4, *for* "Dr. Ford's son was the author of the 'Handbook to Spain,' and his grandson is Sir Clare Ford, British Minister in Madrid," *read* "Dr. Ford's nephew was the author of the 'Handbook to Spain,' and his grand-nephew is Sir Clare Ford, Ambassador in Madrid."

Page 60, line 7, *for* "æternium," *read* "æternum."

Page 191, line 23, *for* "gentle heart," *read* "gentle voice."

Page 223, line 5, *for* "Oxford," *read* "Orford."

THESE NOTES RELATE TO THE FAMILY AND ARE NOT INTENDED TO BE A CONNECTION WITH THE
Marquis de Churleval, who on one occasion wrote to my brother requesting (but in vain) some information regarding the Huguenot branch of the De Jessé family.



SYLVANUS REDIVIVUS.

CHAPTER I.

“Man hath his daily work of body or mind appointed.”

—MILTON, *Paradise Lost*.

My father's family, as indeed his name would almost imply, is of French extraction. The representative of a younger and Protestant branch of the *Barons de Jessé Lévas*,* one of the oldest families in Languedoc, emigrated after the Edict of Nantes to England, and purchased a small estate in the county of Wilts. This estate, on which is situated the village of Chillmark, remained until the beginning of the present century in the possession of my father's

* Vide *L'Annuaire de la Noblesse de France* (par M. Borel d'Hauterive, archiviste-paleographe). The same record of the Barons de Jessé Lévas family also makes mention of their connection with the Marquis de Churleval, who on one occasion wrote to my brother requesting (but in vain) some information regarding the Huguenot branch of the De Jessé family.

family;—the said family, however, when they became English country gentlemen, dropped, like sensible people, not only the distinctive *de*, but the accent on the final *e*, which marked their Gallic origin.

Chillmark Church contains some interesting memorials in the shape of brasses, &c. (some of the earliest bearing dates a year or two after that of the Edict of Nantes—1685), of my father's ancestors; and when, about the middle of the present century, the late Lord Herbert of Lea, then the Honourable Sidney Herbert, conceived the idea of repairing and beautifying the old church, he, with characteristic courtesy, invited a member of the former Chillmark landlords to Wilton Abbey; the object of the visit being that of enabling the latter to superintend, during the necessary changes, the removal of his ancestors' remains and that of the tablets placed over their ashes to another portion of the sacred edifice.

“Your family were landowners in Wiltshire long before mine had any interest in the county,” remarked to his guest one than whom no man living possessed in so great a degree the art of saying charming things; and my cousin,

an unworld-taught infantry soldier, went on his way, a flattered and nothing doubting man.

My father was the third son of the Rev. William Jesse, who during the latter years of his life was the incumbent of the then only Episcopalian church of West Bromwich in Staffordshire. Of my paternal grandfather I have no personal recollection, but I have reason to believe that his value, both as a good man and a learned divine, was duly recognised. Bishop Horne, author of Commentaries on the Psalms, was at one time his curate.

I must now make mention of one who in his generation was, especially in the sporting world, a somewhat remarkable character. Dr. Ford, my father's uncle by marriage, was for many years Rector of Melton Mowbray, and was distinguished for his wit and erudition, but still more by his passion for fox-hunting, and his reputation as one of the most forward riders to hounds of his day. It was reported of Dr. Ford that he made the hours of his occasional Church Services subservient to those of the "meets," and that often, when engaged in marrying a couple at the altar, or of consigning to the grave the remains of a deceased

parishioner, there might be detected beneath the sacerdotal garment either the sheen of well-polished hunting-spurs, or a betraying strip of enlivening scarlet. Dr. Ford's son was the author of the "Handbook to Spain," and his grandson is Sir Clare Ford, British Minister in Madrid.

The living of West Bromwich is in the gift of the Earls of Dartmouth, and as, like many other family possessions of the kind, it had been customary to bestow it on a relative of the patron, it followed that both the house and the grounds were better suited to the demands of a country gentleman than to the requirements of a clergyman's family. The gardens and shrubberies were extensive and well laid out, whilst in two large ponds which were within the Rectory boundaries were fish of the coarser kinds, galore. It was on the reedy margins of those ponds that my father in his schoolboy days, when *bobbing* (probably with a crooked pin) for roach or dace, acquired his lifelong appreciation of, and love for the gentle art.

After my grandfather's death, the then Earl of Dartmouth presented the living to the Rev. Charles Townsend, who had previously married

my father's sister. He, the new incumbent, was a cousin, and heir-entail of Chauncey Hare Townsend; but of him, I regret to say, that, although as a child I must have frequently seen him in my uncle's house, I have no recollection whatever. I can, however, boast of a hazy memory of the famous philanthropist, William Wilberforce, of whom in his unflagging efforts to effect the freedom of the West Indian negroes my aunt was a zealous as well as able coadjutrix. In her own person, Mrs. Townsend, who was a handsome woman, six feet one in height, owned, to my thinking, a decidedly tyrannical disposition. Possibly, however, my opinion may have resulted from the fact that, after the visit of the great emancipator, I owed both him and my aunt a grudge; for every article of food dear to the childish palate was strictly *tabooed*. Cakes and plum-puddings contained West India sugar, and therefore to partake of them was a sin.

This, however, is a digression, and I must now return to the early history of my father—to his marriage and to his career in life, which latter, although neither brilliant nor exciting, tended eventually, to the development of his taste for

natural history, and to his keen appreciation of country pursuits and pleasures.

At the age of twenty, my father (who was born in the year 1782) was chosen by Lord Dartmouth, the latter being, I believe, at that time in the Ministry, to be his private secretary; and about four years later the said secretary, being at that time Colonel of the Birmingham Volunteers (which corps, like many others of a similar description, was called into existence by reason of a national panic, having for its cause a threatened invasion by the French), experienced at the hands of his kind and influential Chief a further proof of favour. That proof was the procuring for my father an appointment in the Royal Household. The duties which his post as "Gentleman of the Ewry" entailed were of the slightest, consisting merely of an attendance, in full court dress, at coronations and such-like ceremonies, on which occasions the office of the "gentleman" in question was to present on his bended knee a golden ewer or basin filled with rose-water to the sovereign. Into that rose-water the royal fingers were dipped, and subsequently wiped on a fine damask napkin fringed with gold, which the "Gentleman of the Ewry,"

for the yearly pay of £300, independently of "perquisites," carried, in hotel-waiter fashion, upon his arm.

This absurd and useless office has been happily long since done away with, but whilst it existed its influence over my father's prospects in life was very considerable. For at the period when his appointment took place, he had fallen deeply in love, and being of a hopeful temperament, he saw in this accession of income a chance of obtaining the object of his worship. The lady on whom his affections were fixed was the beautiful daughter of a Welsh Baronet, whose estates in Glamorganshire, together with his extensive coal-mines, and a fine country-seat in the neighbourhood of Swansea, to say nothing of a town-house in Portman Square, would naturally lead him to look down with anger and contempt on my father and his small pretensions; but the latter, nothing daunted by this more than possible eventuality, continued *sub rosa* to urge his suit, and in process of time he obtained the object of his wishes.

One of the show places in the neighbourhood of Birmingham was, at the time when this century was in its youth, Aston Hall. It was

the property of my mother's uncle, Mr. Heneage Legge, a near relation of Lord Dartmouth's, and has now, as is well known, become a recreation ground or park for the Birmingham people. It was at Aston Hall (a fine old structure, which had suffered much, as appearances plainly testified, in Oliver Cromwell's wars) that my father met his future wife.

They led for some time after their marriage a somewhat unsettled life, for the fear of Bonaparte's threatened attack on England had not as yet subsided, and the Volunteer regiments were kept near the coast, in expectation of an attack which in all probability had never been, by the French Dictator, seriously contemplated. Whilst the Birmingham Volunteers were quartered at Horsham in Sussex, a frightful epidemic of fever broke out amongst the men; and I have often heard my mother speak of her dismal first experience of soldier life, when, with the sounds of the "Dead March in Saul" resounding through the air, she listened during the live-long days to the measured tramp of soldiers' feet as they bore to their last resting-place the remains of their comrades in arms.

These anecdotes, being of a somewhat ghastly

turn, possessed for my childish ears a singular attraction, and the discovery in a garret of a hideous shako, the once scarlet feather appertaining to which had been disrespectfully treated by the rats, remains in my memory as the sole record of my father's military career. That mutilated feather served us children for a plaything; yet methinks that we looked with something approaching to awe at my father, in that he had in *his* more youthful days worn it in soldier fashion on his head.

It is not my purpose to dwell in detail on early memories of one in whose biography there can be recorded no striking incidents, and who was that comparatively rare being—only a good and simple-minded man. Nevertheless, in order to convey to the reader some idea of my father's tastes and character, I will mention the following facts.

My first clear recollection of the subject of this memoir dates from the time when he rented a small house, farm-like and picturesque in appearance, which was situated in the prettiest and most retired quarter of Richmond Park. It must have been from a sheer love of country sights and sounds that this choice of a residence

was owing, for at that period of my father's life there existed more than one reason why a widely different course would have been advisable. His daily presence in London was at that time a matter of necessity, for he not only held a clerkship in the Woods and Forests Office, but was one of a board of gentlemen whose duty it was to keep order in the ranks of the hackney-coachmen (or "Jarvies," as in those long-ago days they were in ragamuffin parlance called). The Government Offices of "Hackney-Coach Commissioners" were situated at the river-end of Essex Street Strand, and thither on every Friday, my father, together with his four colleagues, had to betake himself. In the days of which I write, public conveyances between London and the locality in which our home was fixed were unknown, so that my father, who was a great lover of equestrian exercise, was accustomed, as regularly as nine o'clock A.M. came round, to either ride or drive himself in a "gig" from our door to the uncongenial haunts whither his official duties called him.

Very dear, although tinctured with a cloud of sadness, is the memory of my childhood's home. It was there that I first learned to

appreciate the "loveliness that is in all things living found;" there that I delighted in watching the "truant disposition" of the yellow, newly-born chickens, as they wrung the maternal heart of the hen, who from her coop on the sunny lawn distractedly watched their proceedings; and there, too, that, with a blind belief in **my father's dictums**, I learned from the domestic fowls the duty of gratitude to **Providence**; **for**, according to his simple guidance, the lifting up after every beakful of water of the said fowls' heads was a sign of thankfulness to Heaven for the tender mercies vouchsafed unto them!

One more anecdote, illustrative both of my father's simplicity of character and also of the rigid watch which he kept over the morals of his child-daughters, I will venture to relate, and then the chapter of my juvenile recollections being closed, I will pass without mention over the years which—until such time as a change in his official appointments enabled my father to devote a larger portion of his time to the pursuits he loved—contain little of interest to the reader.

At the immature age of six, one of my most valued pleasures was a drive in the "gig" with

my father to London. On looking back at it, however, methinks it could have been but a doubtful joy, and that but for "the honour of the thing," I should have been happier amongst the bees and birds at home. For the order of the day was this. After a few minutes' stay in Whitehall Place, in the neighbourhood of which Government Office our good horse "Yorick" enjoyed an hour or two's *bait*, my father took me by the hand, and together we started at a good round pace along the Strand to Essex Street. What I endured during those walks it fails me adequately to describe. My father, with his Anakian height and proportionate length of limb, apparently forgot how limited were the pedestrian powers of the small child who clung to his strong hand so closely. Breathlessly, and at a reeming trot, I held on my way, preferring, in my childish fashion, death itself to the dishonour of confessing myself beaten. Great was the relief of finding myself at last in the big dingy board-room, where, seated between a grey-haired Indian Colonel (Gwatkin by name) and a Mr. Marrable, who afterwards developed into Sir Thomas, I listened, totally unamused, to the various weekly charges which

were brought against as dirty and discreditable a set of men as it was possible for the imagination to conceive. On two occasions, greatly to my relief, I was summarily, and without any reason given, dispatched by my father from the room. The change was a delightful one, for Mrs. Quaife,* the housekeeper, to whose care I was consigned, literally stuffed me with good things. She made no allusion to the reason for my exile, but I have since learned that it was fear on my father's part lest my six years' old ears might be contaminated by the sound of a coarse or indecorous word, that occasioned my dismissal from the presence of the Commissioners.

* A singular name, which has clung to my memory when more important ones have been forgotten.

CHAPTER II.

“How doth the little busy bee
Improve each shining hour,
And gather honey day by day
From every opening flower!”—DR. WATTS.

MY father was a tender lover as well as protector of more than one class of helpless animals, and not a few of these owed him thanks for services which he had rendered to their kind; but amongst the small creatures whose wrongs he had endeavoured—and that successfully—to right, those untiring labourers, the bees, stood first and foremost. He had for a long time commiserated their fate, in that, after spending every shining hour of their little lives in *work*, a cruel death at the hands of tyrant man was their reward, and plans for the amelioration of their lot flitted oft-times through his brain. Leisure, however, in which to bring his project to perfection failed him, and it was not until the change in his official duties to which I have before alluded, took place, that he was enabled,

owing to the greatly increased amount of his leisure hours, to perfect his scheme for the saving of insect life that he had devised.

When the salutary alteration which divorced my father from his London official duties took place, I had not long entered upon my teens, and great was my joy (so true it is that in prosperity we are apt to forget the services of former friends) when I found that "Scrattle," the honest little Welsh pony on whose strong back I had for years been in the habit of riding about alone, was to be exchanged for a *horse*, on which animal I looked forward to occasionally accompanying my father when he rode on his daily tours of inspection to the Royal Parks.

The appointment which was given in exchange for the two abolished offices of Gentleman of the Ewry and the Commissionership of Hackney-Coaches was entitled "Deputy-Surveyor of the Royal Parks and Palaces." What were the emoluments of the newly-created appointment, I cannot now say, but the fact that they included the keep of two horses was one which too nearly affected my own interests to be easily forgotten. In order to be near his work, my father at that time rented a small cottage which

stood on the outskirts, or I might almost say within the boundaries, of Bushey Park. The front windows of the small whitewashed abode had a view upon the gnarled old hawthorns which at one time grew thickly upon the well-cropped greensward, and in the spring-time the scent—bitter-sweet—of millions of snowy blossoms came wafted to the open windows, and mingled with the rich perfume of gigantic red double stocks, a flower in the culture of which my father took especial delight.

A turf and *ha-ha* fence extended from a ladder-stile in the close vicinity of our cottage to the Park gate which stood at the Teddington terminus of the "Chestnut Avenue," the use of that fence being to protect a belt of young trees, planted at my father's suggestion, from the incursions of deer and cattle. The width of the plantation varied from twenty to a hundred feet, and a narrow path having been cut through the midst of the plantation, a pleasant shrubbery walk of upwards of a mile in length was the result. Through the kindness also of the then Ranger, the Duke of Clarence, my father was permitted to mulct H.M.S. Park of a few hundred feet of what eventually became a delight-

ful lawn, dotted with the flowers which bees in the pursuit of their daily avocations, are known to love the best.

We could watch the busy little creatures now, at the ceaseless labour in which they seemed to take such keen delight. The days of suffocation by gunpowder were over for them at last; for instead of destroying the bees in order to take from them the results of their toil, the necessity for performing an act of cruelty worthy of Field-Marshal Pelissier was prevented by the erection of an upper storey or work-room, which room, being partially glazed, the operations of the little factory-hands were visible to the naked eye. When the work-room was full of exquisitely pure honey in its snow-white comb, the upper story was, without the loss of a single life, removed from the hive. By this arrangement, not only was the cruel process of suffocation avoided, but the honey, instead of being, together with the comb, brown of hue, and disfigured by the mutilated remains of dead corpses, was, as I before said, white as the driven snow. The product of my father's bees was greatly esteemed by our friends on account of the delicacy of its peculiar flavour, an advan-

tage which owed its existence to the proximity of the famous lime trees, that stretch, four rows on either side of the ancestral chestnuts, from the Hampton Court to the Teddington gate of the Park. The tiny toilers did their work right well, sealing up the orifice of every cell with hermetical precision ; an operation which was very interesting to watch.

During the winter, the bees were fed by my father with moistened brown sugar placed at the entrance to the hive, and he laid, dear good man ! the flattering unction to his soul that the creatures knew him, and were grateful for the boon. If it were a delusion on his part, it was certainly an innocent one, and he adduced, moreover, excellent reasons for his belief. For instance, it was an undeniable fact, that although he, trusting to their good qualities, ventured at swarming times and other occasions of popular bee-excitement to take considerably more liberties with the irascible little creatures than did any other person present, never once was he punished by a sting ; and yet it was with face and hands unprotected by gloves or veil that he fearlessly handled the small community, and watched them gathering like loyal subjects round their newly-elected queen.

I confess that I could never quite reconcile my father's devotion to fishing with the love of animals, and the desire to prevent the suffering to which all flesh is heir, that characterised his nature. His exercise of the gentle art was, in fact—although at the time I write of I was ignorant of it—an extremely mild form of the pastime that he loved. A pike or "jack," call it which you will, is, however considerable may be his weight, an ignoble specimen of his kind, and to fish for him by the side of a reedy pond, with a float bobbing in the still and weedy water, with a dead gudgeon dangling before his voracious maw, appears to me, on looking back to it, as the poorest of all imaginable sport. But in my *quasi*-childish days—days before *le mieux* had become *l'ennemi du bien*—I saw things under a different aspect. Amongst my most sunny memories are the summer evenings when carrying the tin bait vessel in which lively minnows, ignorant of their doom, played in their watery prison, I looked forward with infinite delight to the moment when a voracious monster of a fish would seize upon his prey, and when the float that I watched so eagerly would momentarily disappear beneath the surface of the water.

They made a fight for their liberty sometimes, poor things. Not as a fresh-run salmon does, with leaps and bounds and maddened rushings to be free, but slowly, doggedly, and with a steady drag upon the line, which, if the capture were a big fish, needed to be strongly made. My father's theory, that fishes, being cold-blooded animals, are therefore not susceptible of bodily suffering, was belied by the fact that previous to baiting his hooks he invariably rendered the minnow insensible to the torture of impalement. How this process was effected remained for me a mystery, as I invariably turned away my head when the moment for opening the tin can which I, at the expense of a well-wetted frock, had carried, appeared to be imminent.

There can be, I think, little doubt of the fact that a boy, say of thirteen years, even were he a comparatively tender-hearted one, would have looked on with eager interest at the euthanasia of those helpless victims; and this fact is confirmatory of a frequently alleged truth, that man is by nature a destructive animal, and that he is, in consequence, when in pursuit of prey, dead to the instincts of humanity. Some years later, I had, even in my father's case, a proof that love

of what is called "sport" will, for the moment, render the most merciful of men deaf to the sufferings of the creatures which they pursue. We were out with the harriers on the Brighton Downs, it being my first hunting experience, and I confess to following the hounds with a keen desire that their destined prey might not escape them. In the excitement of the run I had quite lost sight of the tortures which the harmless small animal which we pursued was undergoing, when suddenly a cry, dreadfully human, for it closely resembled that of a tortured child, broke upon my ears. I was, though unaware at the time that this was the case, within a hundred yards of the spot where the most timid of God's creatures, closely followed by the hounds, sent up to heaven its death-cry—a protest truly against the cruelty of man.

That was my last as well as my first day with the harriers; and my father, after hearing my description of the child-like scream, which he had been too far a-field to hear, followed my example, and abandoned the sport in which he had previously delighted. He had never before realised what must be the agony of the heavily handicapped little animals when the hounds,

open-mouthed and panting, are closing on their prey. Truly, as tender-hearted Tom Hood has told us—

“ Evil is done from want of thought
As well as want of heart.”

We did not remain more than two years at Bushey Cottage, and my recollections of that time would have been all pleasant ones, were it not that two crumpled rose-leaves rendered my bed of childish bliss less soft. One of these minor miseries, as in truth they might be called, was the prohibition by my father of the delight which listening in Hampton Court Gardens to the music of the cavalry band would have afforded us. Unfortunately, it was *only* on Sundays that the enlivening sounds rang out, and it having been apparently part of my dear father's creed that to “make the Sabbath *an exciting* delight” is contrary to the Canons, it was our lot to listen discontentedly (when the wind chanced to blow that way) to the joyous strains which across the flowering hawthorns broke upon our rebellious ears.

The other alloy in my pleasant cup (Heaven forgive me, however, for associating it, even for a moment, with a petal of the “Garden Queen !”)

was the introduction into our household of an elderly governess. Mrs. L—— was a Welsh-woman, plain of feature, and doubtless an excellent as well as trustworthy instructress of youth. Nevertheless, “distance,” which is supposed to “lend enchantment to the view,” fails to convince me that she was otherwise than detestable. That *qu'elle n'avait que ce défaut là* was, I suppose, proved by the circumstance that she had in her earlier days been selected by the then Lord Chancellor as guardianess to one of his wealthy female wards. Probably it was to envy of this flattering choice that Mrs. L——'s general unpopularity was owing; her chief cause of offence was, however, in my eyes, her abstracting from my possession the only works of fiction, viz., “Evelina” and the “Vicar of Wakefield,” which I had ever read. They were, she said, unfit for the perusal of well-brought-up young ladies. Perhaps she was right, but the act was one which I did not find it easy to forgive.

CHAPTER III.

"The man resolved and steady to his trust,
Inflexible to ill and obstinately just,
May the rude rabble's insolence despise."

—ADDISON.

THE days before the Duke of Clarence became King were very pleasant ones for the many in the neighbourhood on whom H.R.H. bestowed the light of his countenance. The Sailor-Prince was not a gentlemen, but then, on the other hand, he did not pretend to be one, and he certainly showed himself to be, as a rule, one of the most good-natured of men. The Duke often joined my father and me in our rides about the Park, and on one of these occasions he, moved by the spirit of curiosity which is indigenious in the Guelphic race, inquired of my father concerning the future of his only son.

"What are you going to do with him?" asked H.R.H.

"Well, sir," was the reply, when my father, feeling slightly taken aback, had replaced his

snuff-box in his pocket, "he has been ten years at Eton, a rather expensive education, as your Royal Highness may have heard; so, though he failed in getting 'King's,' I entered him yesterday at Brazenose——"

"Going to make a parson of him, eh? Got any interest in the Church?"

"None whatever, sir——"

"Might as well cut his throat. Why not put him into the Admiralty? I'll see he gets a clerkship. Anything better than being a devil-dodger, with a house full of children and only a hundred a year to feed them with." *

In the years of which I am writing, an old, tumbledown inn, called the "Toy Hotel," disfigured the approach to Hampton Court Barracks. It was, however, a noted hostelry in its day, for

* I should not have repeated this conversation in detail, but for the circumstance that Mr. Louis Jennings in his "Croker Memoirs" attributed the good-natured act above recorded of the Duke, to the then Secretary of the Admiralty. Mr. Jennings, at that time an apparently strong Conservative, accused me of the sin of ingratitude, in that, forgetful of the obligation which my brother had incurred towards Mr. Croker, I had in my "Woman's Memoirs of World-Known Men" given unreservedly my opinion of the editor of the *Quarterly*. With some difficulty I obtained from Mr. Jennings a written refutation in the *Morning Post* of his accusation—a refutation which I should doubtless have found it more easy to obtain had I not, at that time, mislaid the volume of my diary in which I had scribbled down my father's conversation with the Duke. The little volume has since been forthcoming, and the result is now given to the reader.

not only were subscription balls given in the dingy, unsafe upper floor, but once a month a club, called the "Toy Club," of which the Duke of Clarence was president, and of which most of the neighbouring gentlemen were members, held high revel within the walls of the old inn. From what I have learnt concerning those gatherings, half-crown points whist, together with a dish greatly favoured by the Duke, called "marrow puddings," were the standard pleasures of the guests. H.R.H., however, evidently enjoyed the *laissez aller* of the "Toy" dinners immensely. Amongst the members were several of his old naval friends, but I have heard my father say that the individual whose conversation he appeared to delight in the most was a certain rough but jolly old merchant-captain, with whom he often dined, and before whose after-dinner euphemisms those employed by the *bo'sun* whom Captain Marryat has immortalised, would have paled their ineffectual fires.

The cause which led to our removal from Bushey Cottage was the necessity—one which cropped up very suddenly—for our taking a larger house. It fell about that an unmarried first cousin of my mother's, by name and title

“Mrs. Charlotte Mordaunt,” took it into her elderly head to make our house her home. She had lived with her uncle-in-law, Mr. Heneage Legge, till his death, and having conceived an affection for my unworthy self, the idea of promoting my interests by increasing my father’s income occurred to her mind. The realisation of this plan, involved, as I have said, the necessity of our removal to a larger abode; for “Cousin Charlotte’s” possessions, in the shape of books, classically valuable, were large, to say nothing of an exquisite “Sir Joshua,” her mother’s portrait, which would of course be hung in her private sitting-room. She was not the least exacting, that wealthy old maid, who, beneath the simplest of manners and of dress, was without exception the proudest as well as the most fastidious of her sex. She had from her childhood been accustomed to dwell in rich men’s houses; nevertheless, her domiciliation in our unpretending habitation was effected without eliciting on her part the faintest murmur of disapproval. In our pretty villa at Molesey, where we became the near neighbours of my father’s old friend, the editor of the *Quarterly*, “Cousin Charlotte’s” little sitting-

room, with, on three sides, its well-filled dwarf bookcase, and over the chimney-piece the precious "Sir Joshua," speedily became for me the most valued of refuges. In that small square library (if such it could be called), the one window of which had view upon a paddock, whereon our three cows "fed like one," I passed, after Mrs. L——'s departure, some of the pleasantest as well as the most profitable hours of my life. I had always, no uncommon taste, by the way, loved flowers, but it was in that quiet, bookworm-smelling boudoir that I, under my cousin's tuition, learned something of the science of botany, and that my love for *gardening* in all its forms grew and strengthened.

I have not as yet mentioned that, in addition to the royal parks and palaces, the gardens appertaining to those palaces were under my father's *surveillance*, and this being the case, he was fortunate in securing the services as head and landscape gardener, of a man as remarkable for taste and practical knowledge of his profession, as he was for his morose disposition and singular bearishness of manner. Between this man, whose name was Johnstone, and our

new inmate there soon existed a very excellent understanding. The former was quick to perceive, as well as ready to show respect to the possessors of real and incontestable knowledge; and therefore Miss (or rather Mrs. Mordaunt, for the dear little woman had lately assumed *brevet* rank) was always treated by him with a deference which he never accorded either to his employer or to the Ranger, who seemed to enjoy, when accident threw him in the way of the surly Scotchman, a chat with that invaluable functionary. It is needless to say that the treatment meted out to "Cousin Charlotte" was due to her botanical acquirements, and to her love of trees and flowers, which Johnstone was quick-witted enough to perceive had the merit of being genuine.

The near neighbourhood of our home to that of my father's old friend, John Wilson Croker, was the means of our becoming acquainted with several literary and world-famed characters. Amongst these I may mention Theodore Hook, James Smith, Sir William Follett, the poet Moore, Sir Francis Chantrey, and Sir Thomas Lawrence. The two latter were, I recollect, especially introduced by their host to Mrs.

Mordaunt, and this professedly on account of the ownership by our cousin of the "Sir Joshua" which adorned her sanctum. I can see Sir Thomas's tall figure before me now, as he stood admiringly in front of my grand-aunt's portrait. He had a pleasant face and a courteous manner, which contrasted agreeably with Mr. Croker's short stature, and fussy, self-important demeanour. The successful man did the honours both of the portrait, the Mordaunt family generally, and of the artist, one of whose exquisite works was of course the theme of his lecture, with an air of patronage which, as I could plainly see, was irritating beyond measure to my cousin. Beneath the homely dress she wore, the old Norman blood of the Mordaunts evidently rose up in silent protest against the pretentious off-handedness of the Mayo gauger's son.

In order to account for, and in some degree to excuse, the bitterness of feeling which, strive against it as I may, invariably influences my pen when writing of the brilliant and successful Irishman in question, it is necessary to record an anecdote concerning my father, which, whilst it is illustrative of his high principles and strict sense of duty, certainly places the conduct to-

wards him of the "old familiar friend in whom he trusted," in a far less pleasing light.

Mr. Croker's intimacy with my father commenced when they were both very young men, and arose in the beginning from their being fellow-dwellers in a London West-End boarding-house. No characters could differ more essentially than did those of the friends who were at that time commencing their respective careers in public life. Greatly superior to my father in intellect, as well as in the audacity which is to intellect the most invaluable of helping hands, the Irishman soon shot a-head of the man whose simple tastes and straightforward honesty of purpose were barriers against, rather than assistants to, his success; and, in the arrogance which too often follows upon good fortune, the former gradually assumed towards the friend whom he had distanced in the race for Fame a tone and manner which, when I became old enough to draw conclusions, awoke a rebellious spirit in my breast. Through the force, as I supposed, of early habit, my father was still in writing addressed by his quondam *chum* as the latter's "Dear Ned," a token of friendship of which the guileless recipient of the M.P.'s occasional missives was touchingly proud,

The period of which I am now writing was, in a political point of view, a stormy one; for the Reform Bill of 1832 was under discussion, and the passions of men, and more especially of those who sat on the Tory side of the House of Commons, were, through an insane dread of an impending and purely imaginary revolution, worked up to fever heat. The editor of the *Quarterly*, an excitable man at all times, was driven to a perfect frenzy of fear by the anticipated "revenges" which the "whirligig of Time" was he believed bringing with it. Nothing but ruin could, in his opinion, follow on the passing of a Bill so iniquitous, so utterly shameless as the one which the House of Commons were now discussing.

"If it should pass, which God forbid! you and I, Ned, will be breaking stones upon the parish roads next year."

This, together with *jérémiades* of a similar description, were being constantly poured by the Secretary of the Admiralty into his friend's responsive ears, and then, during the very height of the contest, an event occurred of which, but for my then tender years, I should not have been permitted to become cognisant. This event

was no other than the sudden change of political sides taken by the then mightiest of London journals, *i.e.*, the *Times* newspaper. First and foremost amongst my father's many attached friends, I must mention Mr. John Walter of Bearwood; the father of the present (*part*) proprietor of the journal in question; and Mr. Croker, being desirous of a *satisfactory* introduction to the kindly autocrat of Printing House Square, gladly availed himself of my father's intimacy with Mr. Walter; an invitation to Bearwood being the result of the proceeding.

Well do I remember the departure, in a post-chaise, of the Member for Sudbury and his companion on their diplomatic mission; and were it not that I fear to be inaccurate, I would name the number of thousand pounds sterling which I believe to have been given by the Tory Government for the goodwill of the *Times* newspaper. Had the negotiation proved in its result successful, and had the detested Bill not passed through Parliament, it is possible that Mr. Croker might have shown more after gratitude to the friend of whose kindly aid he had gladly availed himself; but defeat had embittered a naturally sarcastic spirit, and the circumstance

which I am about to relate having recently occurred, an opening for the display, at my father's expense, of the M.P.'s satirical wit was one of which he did not hesitate to take advantage. As I have before said, the Duke of Clarence was on terms of good-natured familiarity with all the members of the Toy Club, but there came a time when, in my father's case, a stern sense of duty was at war with the subservient spirit which individuals in H.R.H.'s position (however kindly they may be disposed) imagine that their inferiors in rank should adopt towards them. The Duke, who was subject to what, in nineteenth-century jargon, are known as "fads," took it, on one inauspicious day into his somewhat empty head to commit an act of vandalism. This act was no other than that of destroying at one fell swoop the magnificent old elms which have for several centuries past and gone, stood, showing no single symptom of decay, on the mile and a half of public road that lies between Hampton Court and Kingston-upon-Thames. The road, which is a very wide one, lies, as all the world knows, between the high walls of Bushey and Hampton Court Parks. It is Crown property, and would, in its dull uniformity, be

extremely uninteresting as a promenade, were it not for the grand old giants before spoken of, and a broad belt of ornamental trees and shrubs, such as scarlet thorn, sumachs, gueldre rose, and copper beech, &c., &c., which, with the consent of the Commissioners of Woods, my father had had planted by the roadside. The masking by this pretty shrubbery of the Bushey Park wall was an innovation that met with very general approval. The trees grew apace, and in the spring and summer season were so replete with beauty, that my father, enchanted with his success, made quite a hobby of that whilom uninviting road.

The project of the Royal Ranger caused him, as was but natural, an unpleasant shock. The fine old trees, which were coeval—so said tradition—with the Palace, and which, at a distance of about a hundred yards from each other, spread their branches across the road, were, unless *he*, the surveyor of royal property, interfered to save them, doomed to destruction. The admiration as well as veneration for old trees was with him so deeply ingrained a feeling, that had he possessed an imaginative turn of mind, he would probably have endorsed Hood's fanciful theory

that the trees which for centuries had stood side by side were capable in mystic tongue, of "talking each to each."

"Mayhap rehearsing ancient tales
Of greenwood love or guilt,
Of whispered vows
Beneath their boughs,
Or blood obscurely spilt,
Or of that near-hand mansion-house
A Royal Tudor built."

The first step towards the saving of tree life which my father took was the writing of a respectful letter of remonstrance to the Duke; but this proving of no avail, he was reluctantly compelled to send an official report of the intended sacrilegious act to the First Commissioner of Woods, &c. The effect of this measure was an immediate stop to H.R.H.'s proceedings—an interference with his will and pleasure which he had neither the magnanimity, nor the sense of justice to forgive. From that time not only did his amicable relations with my father entirely cease, but later on, when the death of George the Fourth placed on the throne of England the *ci-devant* president of the Toy Club, that monarch, whose kindly recognition of former good-fellowship led to the performance by him

of many flattering as well as solid instances of his regard, the only member of the Toy Club who was left out in the cold was my father. To say that he did not feel the slight would be untrue. It is all very well to talk of virtue being its own reward, and that regret for the loss of a Prince's favour is unworthy of a right-minded and sensible man; but it is left for the "faultless monster that the world ne'er saw" to be proof against the deplorable weaknesses of poor humanity; and consequently my father did feel it somewhat hard that his act of duty should by the popular Sailor-King, have been so ill rewarded. Although my conscientious parent was of royalty no blind and ignorant worshipper, yet the sudden and marked alteration in the good-natured Ranger's manner was to him so manifestly a source of regret, that his old friend and neighbour, Mr. Croker, under whose tongue there lurked the poison of asps, was wont to aggravate the evil by playful jests, of which the uncertainty of royal favour was the frequent theme. As a proof, however, that regard for his own interests was not always powerful enough to check the venom of his pungent repartees, I may mention the following anecdote.

At one of the Toy Club dinners, of which Mr. Croker, being an honorary member, was partaking, the Duke of Clarence asked the Secretary of the Admiralty whether there had ever been an English king who was also Lord High Admiral of the realm.

“Yes, sir,” was the prompt reply, “and that one was James the Second, who was the first and also the last British sovereign who took upon himself that office.”

Although it was scarcely noticed by my father, Mr. Croker's manner towards him had become, to my thinking, since the withdrawal of the Duke's favour, in a slight degree both patronising and unfriendly; and this being the case, there was joy in my heart when circumstances, the nature of which I never fully understood, led to our departure from the Molesey Farm.

It was not, however, without something of regret that we migrated to the other side of the Thames. We, *i.e.*, my father and I, felt, our natures being in some respects similar, that we were leaving things animate and inanimate which custom had rendered dear to us. The birds that we should find at Hampton would differ from the trusting ones which during the

winter season had depended on our care; nor should we hear in our new home such nightingales as those that in the Hersham and Molesey lanes had warbled to us. The "sullen river," too, the "mole that runneth underneath," was to us as a rural streamlet when compared to the busy Thames, near to which our habitation stood; but, on the other hand, close by was a royal park, to gain access to which there was no bridge-toll to pay, and then—oh! glorious possibility—my father might, fortune befriending him, be so happy as to land a heavy Thames trout from the (at last) well-preserved old river.

CHAPTER IV.

“The right divine of kings to govern wrong.”—POPE.

“What a piece of work is man! How noble in reason! how infinite in *faculty*!”—SHAKESPEARE.

I WAS still very young, probably not more than seven years of age, when an event which, strange to say, bore fruit after the lapse of nearly half a century,* occurred in our family. The death of my father's uncle, the Rev. Charles Jesse, Rector of Newbury, Berks, resulted in the legacy to him of an old family servant, William Butler by name, who for the period of twenty years had been my great-uncle's tried and faithful attendant. He was a married man and the possessor of a large family, most of whom were now grown up, and on whom their father had been careful to bestow a sound religious education.

* Namely, the publication of a novelette entitled “Only a Woman's Life,” the writing of which proved successful in obtaining the release, after twelve years of convict life, of an innocent woman, who had been originally condemned on circumstantial evidence for the murder of her child. Of the death-sentence I was so happy, at the eleventh hour, as to obtain a commutal.

The youngest of his belongings were twin boys, who, for some reason best known to their taciturn parent's self, had received at their baptism the names of Elisha and Elijah. The former, a good, steady lad, was at the age of sixteen apprenticed to an important and still existing firm of floor-cloth manufacturers.

Of the social status occupied at that period by Elijah I have no recollection; but of the lads themselves, honest-faced, simple young fellows, and devoted to one another, I entertain a very distinct memory. Their father was both proud and fond of them—facts which by a casual observer escaped notice, for William Butler was the most reserved and silent of his sex, contented with treading calmly the plain path of duty, and requiring from his children an equal amount of steadiness and blameless conduct. It was in the month of November, and William had been about six months in our service when a startling event occurred. The huge premises known as D——'s works were one night discovered to be in flames, and the fire, which proved to be a very disastrous one, was with reason believed to be the act of an incendiary. Now, at this distance of time, it is impossible,

child as I then was, for my memory to carry me back to the reasons which induced, in the minds of the authorities, the belief that the fire was not accidentally caused. Equally impossible also is it for me to recollect why and wherefore it was that one of the most innocent of young human beings was fixed upon as the perpetrator of a crime so odious. Such, however, was the case, for Elisha Butler, the twin son of my great-uncle's faithful retainer, was, on "circumstantial evidence" only, committed to prison in order to take his trial for the crime of arson! The punishment of death for that offence was in the year 1823 one of the many which have since been mercifully modified, and therefore the grief and horror of Butler at the news of his boy's arrest is easier to imagine than to describe. It was on the night of the fifth of November that the fire took place, and on the following day poor William Butler, with as sore a heart as ever beat in human breast, wended his way to Newgate Prison, where, on the stony floor of his cell, stood the lad he loved so well, with tearful eyes, and "gyves upon his wrists."

During the terrible weeks which followed, the unhappy father drew his sole support from the

strength of his religious convictions, and from the certainty of Elisha's innocence. This belief was shared by the general public, who found it hard to believe that a youth of sixteen, well brought up, and of excellent character, could, without any apparent motive for the deed, have committed the crime in question. The face of our poor serving-man, never remarkable for cheerfulness, grew sensibly sadder as the day appointed for the trial of his boy drew near. He attended family prayers in the morning with his usual punctuality, and I felt sure that when my father improvised a petition for the release of all prisoners and captives, the parent's heart went up to the God who alone has power to save.

Yes, those were gloomy days, but the worst was yet to come. As I have already said, I can remember none of the particulars of the trial, or how it came about that suspicion rested on the young apprentice, who to the last declared his innocence of the crime. It is sufficient to say that, though ably defended by counsel provided for him by my father and his friends, the unfortunate lad was found guilty and condemned to death.

The scenes of which, during the three weeks that followed, I was an occasional witness, made a lasting impression on my mind. The despair of the boy's mother was an awful sight; and as memorial after memorial, although extensively and influentially signed, failed to produce their hoped-for effect, the broken-hearted mother sank by degrees into a state that bordered on idiocy. Meanwhile the efforts made by my father to obtain a remission of the boy's sentence were unremitting. It was for a time hoped that the extreme youth of the condemned lad would plead in his excuse; but alas! those were days when capital punishment was too frequent to excite any very strong feelings of compassion for the unhappy victims of a merciless code, and therefore it was that, on the third Monday after his condemnation and sentence, the hapless twin brother of heart-stricken Elijah Butler suffered, in the face of thousands of his fellow-creatures, the extreme sentence of the law. That his punishment was totally undeserved was by many persons believed, and it is possible that this cruel execution hastened the repeal of many unjust and merciless penal laws.

The privilege which my father in his official

capacity enjoyed of taking with him a friend or two to "inspect" the private apartments at Windsor Castle was the remote cause of our becoming acquainted with the Rev. John Mitford, the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*, and one of the most delightful companions as well as the most intellectual man whom it has ever been my lot to know. Our intimacy with Mr. Mitford came about after this wise. It chanced that three authors of note, namely, the historian of the Middle Ages, William Wordsworth, and Samuel Rogers, were simultaneously seized with a desire to see the interior of the private apartments at Windsor Castle. This harmless wish having been gratified, the trio returned with my father to dine with us in the charming old Elizabethan home in which we had taken up our quarters. The day was a warm one in Mid-July, and it is possible that the heat as well as the fatigue of sight-seeing might have had a depressing effect upon the spirits of our guests; but whatever the cause, certain is it that they were far from realising any ideas regarding the conversational gifts of distinguished literary men which I in my ignorance had formed. Of the three, Rogers, as we sat after dinner under the

shade of a spreading cedar tree, was the most inclined to be talkative, for, speaking of Windsor Castle and the sights which they had seen there, he mentioned the Queen as having been so gracious as to allow them to obtain a glimpse of her royal person.

“I saw Her Majesty,” Rogers said, “peeping round the corner when we were in the corridor. I suppose she was anxious to catch a sight of the Poets.”

This remark, which I thought savoured greatly of vanity, created a prejudice in my mind against one whose refined and delicately finished poems I had always so greatly admired; but amongst his other few and far between remarks, there was one which, inasmuch as it related to Mr. Mitford, has clung as one of importance to my memory.

The remark in question arose out of my father's tastes being so much in sympathy with those of Wordsworth, and with the latter's appreciation of Nature's ever-varying charms. My father's love for the trees and flowers which had been placed, as it were, under his guardianship, caused the conversation (if anything devoid of exciting interest could be so called) to turn

more than once upon the veneration which trees that have for centuries past played their silent parts in life ought to inspire in the human mind. One so entirely devoid of imagination as Mr. Hallam could hardly be expected to enter into the ideas which this community of tastes in the great poet and his host conjured up. To him it mattered nothing that Queen Elizabeth *might* have sat "in maiden meditation" beneath the spreading branches of Herne's oak; whilst Samuel Rogers, whose love for the "sweet shady side" of Pall-Mall was as great as that of Madame de Sévigné for the *ruisseau* in the Rue du Bac, was one of the last men living to see in an ancient tree an object of reverence, or one that afforded food for thought.

Notwithstanding, however, this absence in the banker-poet of congenial tastes and feeling, I hold his memory, as regards that summer's day's repast, in gratitude and respect, for *apropos* of trees, he made the remark which led to our after friendship with the editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

"You ought to know Mitford, Mr. Jesse," he said; "he has as great an affection for old trees as you have. Trees and butter, those are what

he lives for, it seems to me. He is in town just now; so if you will meet him some Tuesday at breakfast in St. James's Place, I shall be glad to make you acquainted with him. Poor fellow! his going into the Church was a great mistake. He is no more fit to be a parson than I am to be the Angel Gabriel."

I quote the words as they appear in a rough diary which in early life I used to keep, and methinks I can see before me now the sneering, cadaverous face of the speaker. It was my first as well as last opportunity of forming a judgment, such as it was, of Samuel Rogers, and that he was vain, selfish, and cynical was the opinion concerning him to which in my old relation's cosy little sanctum I gave voice. I have since that time become acquainted with several poets, and, strange as the assertion may appear, not one of them has on a "nearer view" conveyed to me the impression that tenderness of heart was amongst his mental gifts. I am glad that neither Tom Hood nor Charles Kingsley are amongst the poets I have known, for, as regards *their* genuine powers of sympathy; I should indeed regret to have my belief disturbed.

My father returned from the breakfast in St.

James's Place in a state of enchantment *quoad* all he had seen and heard. Mrs. Norton, the beautiful sister of two handsome lads who were always thrice-welcome to our house, was one of the guests; but great as was my father's admiration for that gifted woman, he could, on the present occasion, discourse of no one save Sylvanus Urban.

Nor, when I came to know the remarkable man to whose memory I am about to dedicate a large portion of these pages, can I feel surprised that so it was. His was not one of those inscrutable idiosyncrasies to fathom which is a work of time and labour; and for all that this was so, the nature of the man was, as I speedily discovered, full of seeming contrasts. The vast amount of varied knowledge with which his mind was stored aroused in many of those who only skimmed the surface of his character a feeling of wonder, not only at the flow of animal spirits which showed itself in clever nonsense, but at the interest which he took in the nest of a water-ouzel, and the existence in dogs (one of my father's favourite themes) of noble and hereditary instincts. And then—a circumstance in his favour which our fastidious kinswoman

did not fail to note and comment upon—the fact that he came of gentle blood was evident both in his words and manner.

Had not our new friend possessed a large share of the tact, as well as the generosity of feeling, which are alike the outcome and the result of what may be called, for want of a better term, “high breeding,” there could have existed between him and my dear father no real friendship. Although both were imbued with many of the same tastes, yet the superiority, in respect to real acquaintance with the subjects which were of interest to both, was in one case so evidently great, that, but for the exercise of the social gift to which I have before alluded, a sense on the other of inferiority must have greatly lessened the enjoyment in each other’s society of this “pair of friends.” As an example of the pleasant footing on which, in relation to each other, these two ardent lovers of Nature speedily stood, and also with the hope of conveying to the reader a better idea of John Mitford’s character than descriptive words can give, I have transcribed, as correctly as a most difficult to decipher calligraphy will permit, one of our friend’s earlier letters from his Suffolk Rectory:—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—I was so influenza'd when your letter came, that I thought of nothing but flannel stockings, warming-pans, and *seidlitz* powders. All this came of going to church. Had I not gone to church, I hadn't caught my cold. Had I not, on coming home, ate a spare rib of pork, my cold would not have been so bad. Now, we have had a fall of snow—the heaviest fall, in the space of time it was coming, ever known. The same night it was a foot deep on the level. I came home covered with white things like feathers, looking like a Canada goose. The only comfort is that I am well supplied with teal and woodcocks. The snipes are over in shoals, and the Bishop of Norwich is after them. We have also flocks of wild-geese going seaward, and altogether there is more of this kind of wild-fowl over than has been known for long. A man might make his fortune by shooting them. I spend mine on rock-whitings and grey mullet. Did I ever tell you there is a Mr. Kirwan living here, with a Mr. Theobald, both Newmarket men, and very sporting characters indeed in every way. They too are ornithologists; and by the bye, I must tell you that a fine golden oriole was shot lately on our green. A very rare

bird here. A few days ago my gardener shot a yellow wagtail, and, what is curious, this day I saw and caught a fine, and rare butterfly on the snow. There is a batch of natural history for you! All this time I am as mopy and miserable as a shepherd's dog. Wishing I was at Rogers' breakfast-table eating Rogers' his butter, or anywhere where social and civil life exists; for the parsons here can talk of nothing but double duty, the XXXIX. Articles, and the Bishop of Exeter. Fare thee well! Where are you now, and where to be?—Yours very truly,

“J. MITFORD.

“*February 10th.*”

Very early in our acquaintance with the writer of this characteristic letter, the “mystery of the butter joke” (as we, after the allusion made by Samuel Rogers to that esculent, had called it) was cleared up. It was simply this: It had reached the ears of Sylvanus Urban that the banker-poet frequently complained aloud to his friends of the too large consumption by Mr. Mitford of the butter, which in St. James's Place formed a necessary portion of the breakfast-table supply; and the idea of this really serious griev-

ance—for as such Samuel Rogers evidently considered it—so greatly tickled our friend's sense of absurdity, that he took a playfully malicious pleasure in watching the lowering brow of his host as the fresh country butter, on which the latter prided himself, was spread with aggravating prodigality on the thin slices of toast that formed the staple of Mr. Mitford's morning meal.

To one who, like my father, was deeply imbued with the vital importance of religious faith, and whose respect for the duties which that faith inculcates neither slumbered nor slept, the unfitness of Mr. Mitford for the profession on which he had entered was a source of great and constant regret. The Rector of Benhall, excellent "company" albeit he was, and, as a rule, possessed in appearance of a cheerful and contented spirit, could not at all times disguise the fact that he was subject to fits of gloom, which rendered his solitary life at Benhall a penance which it was difficult to endure. He and his wife had long been separated, and with his only child, a son, he was not on speaking terms. To neither of these circumstances was he ever heard to allude, whilst, on the subject of religion, to which my father very gently and cautiously

sometimes endeavoured to direct his attention, he showed himself equally reticent. I have heard it hinted, but with what truth I know not, that some act of indiscretion committed in the days of his hot youth, and probably since sorely repented of, could alone account for the non-advancement in his profession of a man so highly gifted as was the brilliant scholar, who in the comparative obscurity of a Suffolk Living wore his uneventful life away. Whether or not there was any foundation for the vague reports which from time to time cropped up concerning him, my father never took the trouble to inquire. His affection for his friend and his appreciation of that friend's rich fund of varied lore were inexhaustible, whilst to them was joined a tender pity for the man who perhaps did not enjoy, as was his own case, the inestimable blessing of a peaceful conscience.

Mr. Mitford took a great interest in the horticultural improvements which my father, with the saturnine Scotchman for his prime minister, effected in the various royal parks which it was his pleasant lot to embellish. The quaint and now exquisitely beautiful gardens appertaining to Hampton Court Palace were to our

visitor a source of endless delight, and many were the hours spent by him on a bench under a yew tree's shade, the while he conjured up visions of fair ladies, attired as their chronicler, gossiping old Pepys, has painted them, "flirting" their fans along the terrace-walk, or,

With singing, laughing, ogling, and all that,

gazing from out the "structure of majestic frame" in which "great Anna" and her attendant *fraus*, held, at rare intervals, her Court.

I have often thought that the gift which is possessed by the imaginative, of peopling solitude with persons who centuries perhaps before, have fretted their little hour upon the "stage of fools" is one of the most enviable that can by Nature be bestowed; and this fact has been especially brought home to me when I have watched Mr. Mitford's thoughtful face as he stood in mute contemplation in Cardinal Wolsey's Hall. In the restoration of that most valuable portion of Hampton Court Palace to its original gorgeous and artistic beauty, my father had taken both delight and pride, but I doubt—"labours of love" as the renovation had been to him—whether the great Cardinal, who had

“sounded all the depths and shoals of honour,” and who must so often in his robes of state have paced the echoing floor of the hall which now bears his name, ever appeared before his (my parent’s) mind’s eye after the vivid fashion in which, more than three centuries after Wolsey’s death, a Protestant priest half realised the mystic presence there of the mighty prince whose “high-blown pride at length broke o’er him.”

As a matter of course, and “pair of friends” although they were, they sometimes differed in opinion, and amongst other causes of disagreement was the opposite ideas regarding the character and merits of the poet Shenstone which they severally entertained. Mr. Mitford, who held Gray and Pope to be the first of English bards, took very much the same view of Shenstone’s genius and proclivities as did Dr. Johnson. In his opinion, the author of “The Village Schoolmistress” was a vain, self-concentrated man. There was no reality—Mr. Mitford in his arguments with my father urged—in William Shenstone’s assumed love of Nature’s works. Under no circumstances could he have distinguished himself in the profession (one on which Sylvanus Urban set a high value) of landscape-

gardening. His taste, as was evidenced by his adornment of the "Leasowes," was vulgar and meretricious; and as to his poetry, no man, Mr. Mitford would add, could jingle so many rhymes without occasionally producing a couplet which had to the ear a pleasant sound.

I believe that but for my father's enthusiastic admiration for the poet in question—an admiration which Mr. Mitford, with his grave yet comic manner, ascribed to the bees that buzzed about the Leasowes banks,—it is doubtful whether he would have spoken so mercilessly of one whose predilections in many respects resembled his own. Possibly, however, it was that very resemblance which, unknown to himself, aroused a sense of irritation in Mr. Mitford's breast. An article in which Shenstone and his merits was the theme, written by my father and published in *Once a Week*, met with very scant approval from his friend's playfully sarcastic pen; for that the said pen could be so wielded, even against one whom he loved and valued, is proved by the following letter, one which is also of value as demonstrating the interest which the writer took in all that appertained to the memory of a great and good man who had passed away:—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—I have been for the last week reading and reviewing the Life of Sir William Temple, and I am very desirous of finding out his house at Sheen. Do you know it? It is now inhabited by Dr. Pinkney. If you do not, pray find out and show it to me.

“I forget whether I informed you of the terrific rage in which Dr. Arster is. I believe, if Knightly had not interfered, he would have challenged me. He breathes fire and brimstone, and desires to know the reviewer. Lord have mercy on you, say I, if ever he finds you out. You will never survive to enjoy your new house—your double drawing-room—your glazed lobby—your airy attics, or your *rez de chaussée*. As for Mr. Talbot, he will reduce him to the flatness of his own fresco.

“Having been lately in the habit of attending Hampton Court Chapel, partly for the excellent sermons, and partly to see Miss Bayley, I cannot help admiring your prudent economy in not having a clerk. It does you all great credit, and the expense is very properly saved. By the bye, could not you manage to do without a clergyman?

“With many apologies for taking up the time

which you bestow on the public, believe me,
very sincerely yours, J. MITFORD.

“BENEHALL, 13th December 1836.

“P.S.—Don't forget Sir W. Temple's house,
and then you shall know what you can write.—
'I am your Highness' dog at Kew,' &c.”

The answer to Mr. Mitford's inquiry regarding Sir W. Temple's house was found in a work entitled “Beauties of England and Wales,” vol. xiv., in which is written concerning it as follows—“Temple Grove, formerly called Shene or Sheen Grove, was the residence of the celebrated Sir W. Temple. . . . Sir Thomas Barnard purchased the estate from Lord Palmerston, and later on sold four acres of the land to the Countess of Buckinghamshire, who cut down several of the large trees and the greater part of the avenue. The house and remaining portion of the land was purchased by the Rev. William Pearson, late of Parson's Green, for a boys' school, he being succeeded by the Dr. Pinkney, of whom Mr. Mitford * in his letter to

* From information given me by a friend, I find that Temple House is to this day a thriving and excellent school. “Of course,” writes my correspondent, “Dr. Pinkney was nicknamed ‘Yellow Legs’

Mr. Jesse, recently inserted, put the queries concerning it which I have just quoted.

by the boys. He was succeeded by Mr. Thomson (under whose mild ferule I was myself during five or six years educated), then followed in succession Dr. Rawdon, Mr. Waterfield, and Mr. Edgar, the present very successful headmaster. Boys have always had a very happy time there. *Templa quem delecta floreat æternium.*"—D. F. C.—ED.

CHAPTER V.

"Satire's my weapon, but I'm too discreet
To run a-muck, and tilt at all I meet."—POPE.

"Satire should, like a polish'd razor keen,
Wound with a touch that's scarcely felt or seen."

—LADY M. W. MONTAGU.

I HAVE always entertained the idea that my father's great affection for his own dogs had much to do with his "unorthodox" opinions as regarded a future state in which four-footed animals generally, and the canine race in especial, would be made amends to for the sufferings which during their short lives upon earth they had been called upon to endure. He found it difficult, as many a right-minded man has done before him, and as many will do again, until such time as the curtain which veils the "mysterious ways" of Omnipotence shall be uplifted, to reconcile the bodily tortures and the mental miseries which fall to the lot of unoffending creatures with the Mercy as well as the Justice

of the Great Being by whose will they have been created.

“We are told,” he would in his simple fashion argue, “that not a sparrow falls to the ground without His knowledge, and we are led by implication to conclude that the life of the said insignificant ‘fowl of the air’ is not without value in the eyes of its Creator. How then can we, excepting by a belief that compensation will be meted out to them hereafter, assimilate the martyrdom of so many of what are called the ‘lower animals’ with the goodness of God as it has been revealed to us in Holy Writ?”

The amount of brain-power, call it by the names of instinct, or mind, or what you will, which has been given to dogs, was a theme on which my father was never weary of holding forth, while instances which he brought forward of canine cleverness and wisdom were as numerous as they were interesting and well authenticated. Why, he would ask, had they been given hearts to feel, and capacities which enabled them to act and think, if those faculties were only available for the purpose of rendering their short space of life unhappy? The grief of a dog for the loss of a master or mistress whom he has

loved is a terribly real thing ; and who that has watched the agonised expression of a small helpless creature when, in a crowded street, he has lost sight of the human friend with whom he is wont to take his walks abroad, can deny that he is cursed with those terrible things called *nerves*, and that he therefore possesses in an intense degree, the power to suffer? That the dog who has been treated as a rational creature, and whose sorrows have met with human pity, can sympathise with the afflictions of others, none can doubt who have, when in trouble of mind, felt themselves the objects of a dog's mute sympathy.

Inheriting, as is the case with myself, the affection for dogs which formed a part of my father's idiosyncrasy, I could repeat many an anecdote of the tenderness of feeling and the wondrous sensitiveness of which dog nature is capable. Of their long-continued grief when an angry word has been addressed to them I have had many proofs, and also of the tenacity of canine memory in this respect ; but I will refrain from mentioning more than one instance of this noticeable peculiarity. I related the little story to my father, whose belief in the possession by

dogs of "consciences" and a sense of the difference between wrong and right doing, was thereby confirmed.

The little hero of my story was the smallest as well as the pluckiest of Yorkshire terriers that it was ever my lot to see. His great and exclusive devotion to myself had for me a powerful charm, but, like other pleasant things, it had its counter-balancing evil side, and I found myself one day compelled to rebuke "Nip" severely for the fault of having shown his teeth at a visitor who approached to shake hands with me. Unused to what he doubtless considered the unjust treatment which he had received, the delinquent retired beneath my sofa, and refused his mid-day meal. No especial notice was taken of that occurrence, and as it happened that I was engaged by visitors during the afternoon, it was not until some hours later that news of Nip's loss of appetite reached my ears. By that time the slight rebuke which I had given him had entirely escaped my memory, and in the belief that a brisk run through the grounds would restore his lost appetite, I called to him to follow me. He came, but was such an altered Nip! Slowly, and with lowered ears and tail, he slunk in

spiritless fashion at my heels. "What could be the matter with the small creature?" I was beginning, somewhat anxiously, to ask myself, when I suddenly recollected that some hours previously, poor little Nip's feelings had been wounded, and that a formal "making up" had never taken place between me and my canine friend. The ceremony, long delayed, and doubtless, through weary hours, longed and waited for, was then, with many a caress and penitential word on my part, performed, and the rapturous joy displayed by the then happy dog was to me a touching sight. I had forgotten Nip, but the little terrier's memory was more tenacious than mine, and he, the offended one, was more than ready to forgive.

Whilst expatiating, which he was perhaps overmuch given to do, on his favourite subject, I have heard my father point out to his listeners the innate courtesy as well as the spirit of forgiveness evinced by even brutally used dogs when accidental injury is by the hand or foot of man inflicted on them. On those occasions how frantically desirous are they to show, by gentle barks and mad waggings of tail, that in their opinion the injurer is not to blame; that the

pain is a mere accident, and that such being the case, the whole affair is unworthy the notice of a sensible dog or man. "I wonder," my father would wind up his eulogium by saying, "of how many men and women it could be truthfully averred that in powers of self-abnegation such as these, they could stand a comparison with a noble-natured dog." Amongst my father's articles of belief *quoad* the canine race, was one in which I have reason to suppose that the great naturalist who has lately passed away, coincided. After my father's death, Mr. Darwin addressed a few lines to me which had reference to the former's conviction that in what are called dumb domesticated animals, and notably in the case of dogs, not only moral qualities, but habits, as well as "ugly tricks" (as the same, when indulged in by human beings, are called), are distinctly hereditary.

Mr. Darwin's question was simply this, namely, "Had my father a breed of dogs, the juvenile members of which, when asked to 'shake hands,' gave, without any previous instructions, their right hand to the visitor?" I regret to add that I could not answer this question in the affirmative, and still more do I deplore the loss of Mr.

Darwin's note, which, in a moment of sorely repented of generosity, I presented to an amateur collector of autographs, by whom, however, the one in question is greatly valued.

Than my dear father there was no easier man living to deceive and to overreach. Being himself wholly devoid of guile, any suspicion of wrong-doing in another was slow to enter his mind; and as a proof of this peculiarity, I will relate a circumstance which early in our removal to Hampton took place in our household. Now, how it came about that the acquaintance of a certain zealous and devoted home-missionary to the careless ones who did not give *all* their goods to the poor and needy was suddenly sprung upon my father, I cannot, at this distance of time, remember. The name also of this chosen vessel has escaped my memory. It is sufficient to say that his credentials being apparently satisfactory, and his own appearance and demeanour being greatly in his favour, my father, with his accustomed impulsive generosity, made his new acquaintance as welcome to his home as though the possibility existed that he might unawares be entertaining an angel under his roof. And truly a most accomplished actor must our

“Reverend” guest have been; for even my mother, whose tastes were as fastidious as her judgment was, as a rule, clear, fell to a certain degree under the charm of the good man’s earnest manner, and his *evidently* disinterested and fervent zeal in the cause which he had adopted. The only doubting spirit amongst us was my brother, who had not from the first, hesitated to pronounce our visitor to be a “humbug,” and who refused to be present at the Sunday-evening prayers, at which the said “Humbug” was to offer up supplications for the conversion of souls to God. Mr. — had, on that especial Sunday, been for two days our inmate, and during that time had been both in season and out of it, earnest in promoting the cause in which he was engaged. There was certainly a slight tendency to monotony in his utterances, but on that eventful Sunday he varied his discourse, or rather his extempore prayer, in a manner which I considered too personal to be pleasant. For instance, he pleaded in turn, and by name, for each member of the kneeling household—a proceeding which caused my brother, on hearing of it afterwards, to remark that he wondered the “fellow” pulled up when he did, and that

he had refrained from including "Judy," my mother's pet Skye terrier, in his supplications to the throne of grace. "I only hope," my brother wound up by saying, "that he wont succeed in victimising my father before he gives you all his farewell blessing. The 'governor' is just the man to be taken in by that kind of plausible scamp."

"Oh," I said in response, "you need have no fear on that score. Mr. — is always talking about the empty scrips and purses of the Apostles. I verily believe that the idea of being rich positively frightens him. He thinks that the possession of wealth would close against him the gates of heaven."

When, some days later, the fact was permitted to leak out that this perambulating saint had asked for and obtained from my father a cheque for five pounds, I remembered the suggestive smile and shrug of the shoulders with which my attempted justification of the good man had been received.

But, previous to that effort of memory, an event occurred which fully justified my brother in the scepticism which, with regard to this zealous apostle, he had manifested. On the

Monday following the day when, with touching Christian fervour, he had interceded, somewhat to my annoyance, for the youngest daughter of his friend's household, dwelling especially on the sins of youthful vanity and love of worldly pleasures, from which he prayed that the weak vessel in question might be preserved, the good man, after eating a plentiful luncheon, set off, with my father's cheque in his pocket, for a walk. From that "constitutional" he never returned, but, in lieu of his dignified form and benevolent countenance, there rang at the door-bell an individual of sinister aspect, who having been ushered into my father's business-room, briefly announced the fact that a person in clerical garb, of whom he (the detective, for such he proved to be) gave an accurate description, was "wanted" by the police for the offence of obtaining money by false pretences. Our saintly visitor was, in fact, a rogue and a vagabond of the first class, his craft and cunning being only equalled by the amount of villainy of which he was capable.

My father bore with exemplary fortitude the discovery that he had been deceived, but the atrocity of the delinquent's guilt filled him nevertheless

with dismay. Of all sins, that of systematic hypocrisy was the one which he found the most difficult to pardon, and this especial scoundrel had done worse than deceive his fellow-men. For the love of gain he had adopted the garb of sanctity, and had added profanity to the sin of mendacious greed. "It is well it was no worse," said my father to me, after he had owned to the folly of thus throwing away his cheque. "If he had remained longer, and described the invented sufferings of *his poor* at a greater length, I might have thrown away still more money on a rascal."

This confession on my father's part reminded me of an anecdote concerning *his* mother which I had heard him relate. She, the best and most delightful of old ladies, was the widow of the previous incumbent of West Bromwich, and lived in a charming cottage situated at a distance of half a mile from the Rectory-house. Excepting on Sundays, she was waited on at meal-times by one of the two "maidens" who composed her household, but on the seventh day of the week, one John Taylor, a septuagenarian retainer of her late husband, was privileged, at his own request, to "bring up the tea-things." This

trifling service was for a long while performed well and safely; but alas! there came at last a day when, tray in hand, John stumbled and fell. The ruin was complete! Of the beautiful and highly-valued Wedgwood service not a piece remained unbroken, whilst only a worthless glass sugar-basin was left whole upon the board. Then, "mistress of herself though china fell," and wholly bent on sparing the feelings of her greatly distressed old serving-man, my kind old grandmother said cheerily, "Never mind, John. It is well it's no worse."

CHAPTER VI.

“Had I the choice of sublunary good,
What could I wish that I possess not here?
Health, leisure, means to improve it, friendship, peace.”

—COWPER.

AMONGST our frequent and ever-welcome visitors was Mr. John Murray, “the prince”—as I have heard him named—“of publishers.” Between my father and the liberal as well as popular dispenser in Albemarle Street of world-known hospitalities, there existed a warm friendship. At the social gatherings—which at No. 51 were frequent—some of the most celebrated of the writers of the day were wont, as is well known, to bear a part, and my father had the good fortune to be no rarely-seen guest at Mr. Murray’s hospitable board.

The comparatively large sums—as, on looking back through the vista of years, I now *know* them to have been—which were paid by Mr.

Murray to my father for the unpretending little volumes which the latter from time to time ventured to publish, were due, I am inclined to believe, more to the innate generosity of the publisher than to any striking merit of which the works themselves could boast. That they were by a certain, and that not a small class of readers, purchased and appreciated, was, I have no doubt, the result in part, of a certain truthful simplicity of style, which, together with those "touches" of Nature which "make the whole world kin," pervaded my father's unaspiring productions. That the writer also was one whose wont it was to "look from Nature up to Nature's God" was a truth which in his written pages those who ran might read, and I, his daughter, on whom devolved the task of correcting those pages for the press, can add my testimony to the fact that their author, whose chief aim in life was to benefit his fellow-creatures, never indited a single line which could give either the weakest of human brothers, or the smallest of God's "little ones" cause of "offence." To say that in his generation, the author of "Gleanings in Natural History" fulfilled in any degree his

life's desire, namely, that of doing lasting good to his fellow-beings, would be too much to assert; but of one whose happiness it was—

“To see a God employed
In all the good and ill that chequer life,”

it can truly be averred that his little books possessed the merit—a comparatively rare one in these less scrupulous days—of containing none of the elements of evil.

In the Sloane Street apartments which, when in London, Mr. Mitford occupied, he could enjoy, as he could not do amongst the “Suffolk Squires,” the society of his literary friends. It was also in London that, in conjunction with the Rev. Alexander Dyce, he published the Aldine edition of the British Poets, and it was from his second-floor lodgings that he was wont to take his departure for occasional country excursions—“outings” that were frequently shared by my father and myself—to Burnham Beeches, St. Ann's Hill, and notably to Stoke Pogis, which spot, in consequence of his worship of the poet Gray's genius, had for our friend an especial charm. The author of “Rogers' Table-Talk,” *i.e.*, Mr. Dyce, was once our fellow-pilgrim to Stoke. He

shared to the full Mr. Mitford's veneration for the place, which by the two men was evidently felt to be a sacred shrine, haunted by undying memories of the poet, whose sweetest lays had in them a ring of sadness. The day was a lovely one in early June, and the excursion made even on my girlish mind a vivid as well as lasting impression.

As will be evident from a letter which I am about to transcribe, Mr. Mitford was far from sharing my father's taste for angling; and this being the case, it seems difficult to account for the deep interest as well as the share which he took in the production of a new edition of the *Life of Izaak Walton*. In that edition as much as is known of the lives and writings of the angler's friends, Donne and Wootton, is embodied. Sir Nicholas Harris was one of his coadjutors in the work, and the task of publishing it was intrusted to Mr. Pickering.

But for his sympathy with the love of Nature, which was characteristic of the contemplative angler and his friends, I doubt whether Mr. Mitford would have found the editing of their lives and lucubrations a labour in which he delighted. He, however, frequently varied the

serious business of the hour by writing in doggerel rhymes, letters to his absent friends. One of these effusions, scribbled without previous thought, as was the case with all—whether grave or gay—of Mr. Mitford's poetry, I will here, as a specimen of his "lively" style, transcribe. The lines were addressed to me, and were written soon after his return to Benhall, after a longer stay than usual in London :—

"The changes and chances of this chequer'd life,
 Its joys and its sorrows, its peace and its strife,
 Come so, swiftly, that I in bewilderment feel
 I am sore let and hindered 'twixt Evil and Weel.
 Anon, having bidden farewell to the smoke
 Of London, I find myself wandering at Stoke,
 Amidst meadows, wild flowers, and sheltering trees,
 Whilst the carol of thrushes and murmuring of bees—
 Emblems of Innocence, whisperers of Peace—
 Command the wild tumult of Passion to cease.
 Then comes the return by the moonlighted way
 To the home where wit, friendship, and grace have their
 sway,
 Whilst I—well-a-day ! have forsooth to go back
 To Walpole and Mason,* and old Molly's clack,
 And forget, as I list to the sounds of her patten,
 How trip little feet in their slippers of satin."

That the "Contemplative Man's Recreation" possessed no charms for the writer of these lines is, as I before said, shown in a letter, the latter

* Mr. Mitford was the editor of the "Correspondence between Walpole and Mason," to which work he probably here alludes.

half of which calls for an explanation which I am totally unprepared to give. Whether its "miscellaneous author," as Mr. Mitford is in biographical notices designated, indulged during his sleeping hours in dreams of dark women, and the manifold attractions of polygamy, or whether he contemplated giving to the world a work on the subject of a plurality of wives, must remain a subject of conjecture alike to the readers of the letter, and the chronicler of the writer's amusing eccentricities :—

"MY DEAR JESSE,—I have requested Pickering to present you with a copy of his book on fishing, just published, in which you will find all the information you want; and as Picky is an angler, and has got several books on that subject, he will be most happy to send you any. 'Not to know him, argues yourself unknown;' so pray make his acquaintance, and he will doubtless ask you to 'pippins and cheese.' I have no fishing-books but old Walton in various shapes. As for the sport, I should like it extremely if my life were 450 years in extension, and if some very pretty girls would sing to me all the time: without this it has always appeared

to me rather dull. I daresay, however, that *you* think a great deal, which makes all the difference. Now *I* never could think, but am very fond of talking, and this loquacity is of no use in the company of fish, who seem to be very profound thinkers, and who probably question the rationality of so many tall, thin gentlemen standing on the banks of rivers, pools, meres, estuaries, and reservoirs, with a long stick in one hand, and a piece of bread and cheese in the other. When I shall see you again I cannot tell, for I am at this moment in Ethiopia, and have married two handsome Abyssinian ladies, with whom I have got a large fortune in ivory, peacocks, capuchin monkeys, and gold dust. To be sure, my two wives don't agree very well, and they use too much mutton-suet for their toilettes, and the weather is a little too hot for married men, and I can get nothing to eat but asses' flesh and sour milk; yet, by the blessing of God, and the use of the bastinado in one case, and abstinence in the other, I hope to be a prosperous man. One of my wives already flatters me with the hopes of a family, and I have sold my charcoal at Cairo to great advantage. I shall be happy to see you at my town-

house at Shendy, and will send a camel to meet you at the first cataract. Beware, when you come, of crocodiles and Almé girls.—Yours ever,

“ J. MITTFORD.

“ February 13, 1836.

“ P.S.—Pickering will give you a day’s fishing in the West India Docks, which abound in roach and eels. Also he will show you his beautiful edition of Walton. You will know his house by the learning in the windows.”

In the above-named edition there appears a poem which never ought to have found a place in its pages. The only merit, if merit it can be called, of which the verses can boast is the fact that both Samuel Rogers, James Smith,* Mr. Dyce, and others amongst the *literati* be-

* James Smith, the most brilliant and popular of the authors of “The Rejected Addresses,” was a frequent and ever-welcome guest at “Rose Villa.” It was his habit twice in every summer month to spend the time between Saturday afternoon and Monday morning at our house. He was a delightful companion, always cheerful and ready of wit, notwithstanding the chronic rheumatic gout and chalk-stones from which he suffered. He invariably brought with him a small book about nine inches square, which contained in MS. the *many* favourite songs, the words written by himself for Charles Matthews, and which he (James Smith), although he had passed his sixtieth year, sung with great *verve* and expression. I was his unflinching accompanist, and he has more than once told me of the difficulty he found in teaching the same songs to Charles Matthews, and in making him catch and illustrate *viva voce* the spirit of the words he sung.

lieved them to be the *bona fide* production of one or other of Walton's friends—a precious antiquarian relic, in short, which Mr. Mitford, who laughed “consumedly” (but in his sleeve) at their credulity, had had the good fortune to rescue from obscurity. But for this singular instance of intellectual blindness, I, having been, with Mr. Mitford's knowledge, the insignificant author of the imitation, should not have ventured to insert in this place the unstudied coinage of my juvenile Muse:—

“ Good Izaak, let us stay and rest us here.
 Old friends, when near,
 Should talk together oft, and not lose time
 In silly rhyme,
 Which only addles men's poor brains to write,
 And those who read bless God they don't indite.

There is a tree close by the river-side ;
 There let's abide,
 And only hear far off the world's wild din,
 Where all is sin.
 Meanwhile our peaceful rods we'll busy ply
 Where trout spring upwards to the tempting fly.

Our sports and life full oft contemnéd are
 By those who spare
 No cost of time, health, wealth, to gain their ends
 And often spend
 Their all in hopes some happiness to see
 In what they are not, but they wish to be.

We will not seek for that we may not find,
 But closely bind
 Our heart's friend, Izaak, in a tightened knot,
 And this our lot,
 Here long to live together in repose,
 Till Death for us the peaceful scene shall close."

As I find amongst Mr. Mitford's letters another written in his liveliest strain, and in which he again makes my father and Mr. Pickering the themes of his amusing banter, I cannot, I think, do better than conclude this chapter with its insertion. It bears date the 11th of June, and it affords proof that during the last few months, my father, having followed his friend's advice, had made good progress in intimacy with his fellow-fisherman :—

"MY DEAR JESSE,—You are indeed immortal in the last *Gent's*. You will outlive all the Ba-o-babs* and taxodiums in the world. You will see the dragon-tree of Teneriffe moulder away. You are preserved in our amber-covered cover. Time has no power over you. You will live countless anniversaries of the fishing-dinners in Queen Street and Hampton. I called

* Baobab, an African tree, the largest known. It is called the "monkey bread-fruit tree." It is to be found in Madras and its neighbourhood, grown from seeds brought over from its native land.

on you to acquaint you with your new perpetuity, and left a symbol of myself at Whitehall. Thus: JS, which means John Mitford perpetually united to Sylvanus Urban. How is Johnstone? and how is his Missil-toe? and how are the flowers at Hampton? I am going to Dorking on Monday to drive myself, as you can't drive me. Pickering delights in your society, and says you are very superior to his dinner-table of authors, *i.e.*, Dyce, myself, and some more hacks. He thinks Whitbread a great fishing genius, and Sir C. Taylor deserving of all the woodcocks he can springe in June. I dine with him to-morrow to meet Dr. Metcalf, an American naturalist, and to eat a *pâté* of wild turkeys from the Alleghany Mountains. I kiss my hands to Mrs. Jesse, and am, as ever, your obliged, &c.

JOHN MITFORD.

“FROM MY SYMPOSIUM,
27 PARK WALK, *Saturday.*”

It did not often happen that Mr. Mitford and the author of “The Rejected Addresses” were fellow-guests at our house, which was perhaps fortunate, as although both were in their several ways delightful, their idiosyncrasies did not

happen to amalgamate. One anecdote, however, of Horne Tooke, which was repeated by James Smith, met, I remember, with cordial approbation from Mr. Mitford. It was this. One night, during a heated discussion in the House of Commons, in which Horne Tooke bore a principal part, his chief antagonist said, "I'll take the sense of the House." "And I'll take the nonsense," retorted Tooke, "and I'll beat you."

CHAPTER VII.

“Boughs are daily rifled
By the gusty thieves,
But the book of Nature
Getteth short of leaves.”—HOOD.

IN the rough notes of what can hardly be called a diary which I, in a kind of fitful fashion kept, I find the following remarks concerning the poet Wordsworth, with which, on the occasion of an excursion undertaken by us to Burnham Beeches, Mr. Mitford and my father enlivened our somewhat lengthened drive.

“I always,” said the former, “think better of a man’s heart and taste when I have quite persuaded myself that he is a genuine lover of Wordsworth’s poetry. He never has been, and never will be, a popular poet. His writings abound in gems, but it is the condensation of exquisite bits that everyday readers like. The pearls must be found for them, and even ready strung for use. To fish for them in the long-drawn-out couplets of the ‘Excursion’ is a

labour which not one reader in a thousand cares to take."

"A feeling," rejoined my father, "in which I fully sympathise, but have never yet cared to own. I am partial to short pieces; not sonnets, which always seem to me rather laboured, but pieces with a ring in them, and that one knows, after twice reading them, by heart. I confess, at the risk of falling in your estimation, that I never could make any hand of Wordsworth's 'Excursion.'"

"You have had a loss—Has he not?" addressing himself to me,—“in not having learnt by heart the 'Old Cumberland Beggar.' In the English language, take it for all in all, there is no grander eclogue. There is not a line that it contains which has not a beauty of its own. But I agree with you that, as a rule, long poems are a trial of human patience. How few of us, comparatively speaking, have read in its entirety, Milton's 'Paradise Lost'! Perhaps, however, an interest in that great effort of human genius may yet be revived. If it could be satisfactorily proved that Oliver Cromwell, and not his secretary, was the author of the finest epic which in the English language has been written,

Johnny Russell and some of his Radical crew would take to learning it by heart."

Three days after this expedition—one to which I can still look back with feelings of regretful pleasure—I received from Mr. Mitford the following poem, which had for its heading—

BURNHAM BEECHES.

Scathed by the lightning's bolt, the wintry storm,
 A giant brotherhood ye stand sublime ;
 Like some huge fortress, each majestic form
 Still frowns, regardless of the power of Time,
 Cloud after cloud the storms of war have rolled
 Since ye your countless years of long descent have told.

Say, for ye saw brave Harold's bowmen yield,
 Ye heard the Norman's princely trumpet blow,
 And ye have seen upon that later field
 Red with her rival's blood the rose of snow ;
 And ye too saw from Chalgrove's hills of flame
 When to your sheltering arms the wounded soldier came.

Can ye forget when by yon thicket green
 A troop of scattered horsemen crossed the plain,
 And in the midst a statelier form was seen ?
 A snow-white charger yielded to his rein ;
 One backward look towards Naseby's field he cast,
 And then with onward flight and speed redoubled pass'd.

But far away these shades have fled, and now,
 Sweet change ! the song of summer birds is thine ;
 Peace hangs her garlands on each aged bough,
 And bright o'er thee the dews of morning shine ;
 Earth brings with grateful hand her tribute mute,
 Wild-flowers and scented weeds to bloom around thy feet.

Here may unmarked the wandering poet muse,
 'Mid these green lawns the lady's palfrey glide,
 Nor here the pensive nightingale refuse
 Her sweetest, richest song at eventide.
 The wild deer browse at will from glade to glade,
 Or couch'd in mossy forms each antlered brow is laid.

Farewell, beloved scenes ! Enough for me
 Through each wild copse and tangled dell to roam,
 Amid your forest paths to wander free,
 And find where'er I go a sheltering home.
 Earth has no gentler prayer to man to give
 Than "Come to sweet Nature's arms, and learn of her to live."

—J. MITFORD.

It is to be regretted that the dates of our friend's letters were not of a more explicit and satisfactory character than was in most instances the case with them. But for the post-mark on the outside of the one which is now given to the reader to peruse, I should not be able to state that it was written on December 3, 1838. Mr. Mitford was—at least so say his biographers—born in the year 1780, consequently at the period when the following letter was written he must have about reached his fifty-eighth year. That he was young, as the saying is, of his age, is apparent from the fact that he was still lissome enough of limb to engage in rival cricket-matches, while that from the occasional illnesses to which flesh is heir he was not

exempt, the closing words of the letter clearly prove :—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—Did you take care at the Strawberry Hill sale to secure the curious picture of Rose the gardener and his pine-apple for Government, and where is it? Your friend Peter Parley is an excellent fellow, and will be still better when he comes to understand that to-morrow does not mean the day before yesterday! He had better seek shelter in Suffolk, or, if he remains where he is, he will be ravished some night by the ghost of Lady Mary. Tell him that Mrs. Jermyn is very grateful for his advice. But what an ass you will think me! An ass! Alas! alas! I didn't recollect that Saturday is the Chiswick fête, to which I am going, so can't come to R——d. Will Tuesday suit you? or do you wish me at old Nick for bothering you?

“Had I been well, I should have known long ago who the Quarterly Reviewer is, but I have not been able to call in London. It arises from his suggestion entirely. He first asked me to write it, but I not having time, he found some other friend: it is one of his set, and assuredly not Croker. I shall be able to tell you in a few

days. The fact is, the 'Arboretum' has not sold, and Loudon is anxious to have it known.

"I am afraid I can't say much in favour of sperm-whales, which would be too strong for the old gentleman's stomach; but if John Gough will admit it, I am most ready.

"A thousand thanks for your kindness about the ticket for the Palazzo. I never meant to give you half the trouble. I thought Lord Duncannon could give orders, and if so, I knew you could get in without difficulty. Lord Lansdowne has most handsomely sent me permission to see the statues, &c., at Lansdowne House when I like. Those are my best enjoyments. I hope to spend a couple of days *chez vous* in the summer. The lawsuit has terminated against the East India Company. It was settled last week by the Chancellor, and the *Times* paper last week called on the next of kin to appear. What think you now?

"I am sure that old poets whose works are now little read had a true feeling for the various beauties of Nature, and have given pretty fanciful turns of expression to their descriptive sketches—as in Phineas Fletcher's 'Purple Island,' as in canto vi. stanza 68:—

‘The flowers that, frightened with sharp Winter’s dread,
 Retire into their Mother Tellus womb,
 Yet in the Spring in troops new mustered
 Peep out again from their unfrozen tomb,
 The early violet will fresh arise ;
 Spreading his flower’d purple to the skies,
 Boldly the little elf the winter’s spite defies.’

Again, canto x. st. 1—

‘The shepherds to the woody mount withdraw,
 Where hillock seats—shades yield a canopy,
 Whose top with violets dyed, all in blue,
 Might seem to make a little azure sky.
 And that round hill which their weak heads maintained
 A lesser Atlas seemed, whose neck sustained
 The weight of all the Heavens, which sore his shoulders
 pained.’

Again—

‘And here and there sweet primrose scattered,
 Spangling the blue, fit constellations make ;
 Some broadly flaming, their fair colours spread,
 Some other wink’d, as yet but half awake :
 Fit were they placed, and set in order due,
 Nature seemed work by Art so lively true,
 A little Heaven on earth in narrow space she drew.

And in the ‘Piscatory Eclogues,’ v. st. 4—

‘Algon, what luckless starre thy mirth hath blasted,
 My joy in thee, and thou in sorrow drowned,
 The year, with winter storms all rent and wasted,
 Hath now fresh youth and gentler seasons tasted.
 The warmer sun his bride hath newly gowned,
 With fiery arms clipping the wanton ground,
 And gets an Heaven on earth, that Primrose there,
 Which ’mongst those vi’lets sheds his golden hair,
 Seems the Sun’s little son, fixed on his azure sphere.’

“There—so I return your constant hospitality. These passages from a poet who is rarely met with or read in these days are charming.

“I am pleased to hear that Mrs. Jesse is getting well. I want so to ask her to tell me in the plainest way what joint a brisket of beef* is, and how my cook should dress it as yours did.

“I shall be so obliged. We are all at sea, and want clear language and clear advice, so that when I return home, I may enjoy something like a good imitation of your excellent dish.—I am yours (though in the dumps), J. MITFORD.

“200 SLOANE STREET, *Monday*.”

* An allusion to a certain dish, of which, during a visit to Hampton, he had partaken and praised. It was *tender*, which, I recollect, led to some sensible remarks on the subject of sandwiches in general, and to the circumstance that sufficient attention was not, as a rule, paid to the confection of those useful, and *sometimes* excellent, articles of food. A portion of the brisket so lauded by our friend had formed the staple of some sandwiches which were partaken of on one perfect autumn afternoon on the summit of St. Ann's, a lovely and lonely spot in the neighbourhood of Weybridge, and the charm of the locality may have tended to impress on Mr. Mitford's memory the excellence of the brisket regarding which he wrote.

CHAPTER VIII.

"Little said is soonest mended."—OLD PROVERB.

My father's love for the game of whist almost amounted to a passion, and no sooner had both my elder sister and myself reached the period of life when we might be supposed capable of in some degree comprehending the difficulties of that fascinating game, than we found ourselves installed as assistants at the nightly rubber, without the mild excitement of which my father, from force of habit probably, found his weekly evenings somewhat long. In the bosom of his family we played, as the saying is, "for love," and when, in the absence of a chance guest (a rare occurrence, for my father's hospitality was only bounded by the lack of means for its indulgence), we were reduced to the necessity of playing a dummy-rubber, he consoled himself with the reflection that three-handed whist was the best school in which a tyro in the noble

game could become initiated into its mysteries. Seeing that he was acknowledged by such experts as Mr. Clay, the late Member for Hull, as being at the head of *second-class* players, he must besides, methinks, have been considered a safe one, inasmuch as men who indulged in far higher play than he ever consented to do, were always well satisfied to have him for their partner in the strife.

My elder sister never took kindly to the game, and consequently never attained the proficiency which I, who enjoyed mastering its difficulties, was not long in arriving at. It was this circumstance, among sundry others, which, I think, went far to account for the slight and wholly unmerited preference for myself which my dear father made only too plainly evident. The superior fearlessness of my nature to that of my gentler sister, caused me to be my father's favourite companion in his rides, and led, as will shortly be seen, to no little mischief in the days that were to come. Of my precocious skill as a whist-player he was unduly proud—a parental weakness on his part which was also not without its evil consequences.

In my early girlhood, there were certain

habitués of Hampton Court Palace who, like my father, greatly enjoyed a nightly rubber. Their stakes were half-crown points, and a sovereign on the rub. My father, however, invariably declined the bet, and always averred that, playing constantly the same stakes and with the same persons, he at the end of the year, neither lost nor won. The Hampton Court whist-playing coterie consisted of Sir Horace Seymour, the father of Lord Alcester, whose sobriquet in the days of his youth was "Pop," but who is now better known as the "Ocean-swell." Then there was Admiral Sir George Seymour, the father of the late Lord Hertford, and one of the handsomest as well as the bravest and most delightful of England's naval heroes. He had received in action when a midshipman, a severe wound in the lower jaw, and the discomfort which its results occasioned must have been great and unceasing; yet his high-bred, genial cheerfulness never for a moment forsook him, and until the day of his death he remained one of my father's most attached and appreciating friends. His brother, Sir Horace, was a man of a different stamp. He too, in common with my father and the Admiral, was of lofty stature, measuring six feet three

inches in height, and it was reported of him that after the battle of Waterloo, in which, as an officer of the Life Guards, he had "done the state good service," he had on the field of battle committed a gruesome deed. Walking with some brother officers amongst the as yet unburied slain, he had, in proof of his great strength, decapitated with one blow of his sword, a dead private as he lay in his last sleep upon the blood-stained field. Many a year had, when he became our friend, elapsed since that reported episode in his life occurred, and at the period to which I am referring, namely, the years 1831 and 1832, handsome Horace Seymour was a very "gentil knight" and much-admired squire of dames. He was one of the so-called "Elegant Extracts," the said extracts being young officers, the *crème de la crème* of society, who, for some breach of discipline, the nature of which has escaped my memory, were drafted into various crack cavalry regiments, the 10th Hussars being, if I recollect rightly, the one in which Sir Horace Seymour gained during a few years, some experience of home service. Another of the habitual whist-players was one Sir Henry Wheatley, who inhabited a good-sized house

upon the Green, and who, together with the two Seymours; was knighted when William IV. ascended the throne. These, including an inhabitant of the Palace whose years were as ripe as his temper (when "luck" deserted him) was irascible, formed the quintette which, either in the private apartments of the Palace, or more frequently at my father's house, met together in order to enjoy what Mrs. Battle was wont to call the "solider" game of whist.

One of the customs, now happily extinct, which in the days of my youth prevailed amongst whist-players, was that of placing, before the game commenced, a certain amount of what was called "card-money" under the candlesticks which held the necessary lights. What was the amount of silver coin which by each player was there deposited, I cannot at this distance of time remember, but the usage was deemed by my father so altogether unworthy of encouragement by gentlemen, that, owing to his influence, it fell into disuse.

I must now relate a circumstance, trivial perhaps in itself, but which filled the mind of my sensitive parent with temporary regret in that he had so early initiated me into the mysteries

of the game he loved. It chanced that amongst his old friends were certain plethorically rich men, who, sharing as they did his *penchant* for whist, were not content without the excitement of higher stakes than the modest ones which afforded to my father much innocent, as well as wholesome amusement. One of these wealthy individuals possessed a charming villa at Wimbledon, and occasionally, when his *fidus Achates*—one Frank Mills—chanced to be his guest, the two, with the incentive of a rubber to wind up the evening's festivities, would accept my father's invitation to one of the "little dinners" which it was his chief delight to offer to his friends. And during the continuance of the simple meal, few men could have made themselves more agreeable than did the man-of-the-world banker, who had once taken Deacon's orders, but had perceived in time that the pleasures of the Turf and of high play were more congenial to his tastes than sermon-writing. He was a good *raconteur*, and quick at repartee, that gambler at heart, who was known as "Frank Mills" to all the world of "Sport;" and I, who had laughed during dinner at his amusing talk, looked forward to a continuance of his

genial sallies when, under a spreading walnut tree upon the lawn, the remainder of the delicious summer evening would, according to our time-worn custom, be whiled away. But in this expectation I was fated to be disappointed. Mr. Mills, as well as the friend, in whose house at Wimbledon he was a guest, had not undertaken a journey of some half-dozen miles, and partaken of what they doubtless considered a very inferior dinner, in order to be sent rubberless away, and great was their evident consternation when old Mr. L——, who had promised to look in, and make himself useful as a fourth player, sent instead, a note of excuse for his non-appearance. What, in such an emergency as this, was to be done? They detested dummy whist, and there remained for these men, who played guinea-points, with heavy bets upon the "rub," no other alternative than that of accepting me, who had sat at the feet of a whist-loving Gamaliel, as the substitute for the defaulting veteran. The proposal afforded me anything but pleasure; with my father, however, the case was different. His belief in my powers, even of whist-playing, was unbounded, and I could read in his kind face the wish that his

pupil should, on this occasion, give proof to his guests that she had profited by his instructions. Very reluctantly, and under protest, did I, standing by the card-table, go through the customary ceremony of cutting for partners. Before however, I relate what followed on that preliminary act, I think it expedient to record the circumstances which gave rise to my rooted objection to playing for money. As I have already said, my father never indulged in what he considered high play: indeed, he would, I think, have preferred, could such an innovation have been possible, playing sixpenny-points to half-crown ones. "I do not know," I have heard him say, "which I dislike most—losing my own money; or winning that of other people;" and such being the case, it may seem surprising that I, and possibly others, were perfectly aware whether—after a few hours spent at the whist-table—he had won or lost. Not being the "faultless monster that the world ne'er saw," and entertaining, moreover, the dislike to being "beaten" which is inherent in his sex, my dear father's usually placid countenance was apt, after a run of ill-luck, to betray the fact that fate had been against him; and the truth that so it was

inspired me with a foolish but an unconquerable dislike to card-playing in general, and to the staking of money on the cards, in especial. "If," I said to myself, "even a good man cannot remain, under the influence of Fortune's frowns, indifferent to her caprices, where, under similar circumstances, might the ungodly and the sinner be?" The octogenarian Hampton Court whist-player, who, when a loser, was so little capable of self-command that strong language was uttered by him, and the cards hurled to the other extremity of the room, should also have acted as a terrible warning to those who, not being endowed with the skill to "possess their souls in patience," had better abstain altogether from dealing with what the "unco-guid," who are given to the perceiving of *bad* in everything, have stigmatised as the "devil's picture-books."

But it is time to return to the too long delayed sequel of my adventure as the partner at the green table of one of the wealthiest of London bankers, whose serious countenance, as I took my place in front of him, betrayed to me the alarming fact that to him, at least, the business on hand was not without its solemn side. The

stakes for which our guests were playing were, I knew, very heavy, and I confess that, albeit I at least had nought save honour at stake, a sense of responsibility, as the cards were being cut, weighed somewhat heavily on my mind. Now, let the authorities who have written on the principles of the "solid game" say what they will, my opinion that a retentive memory is of all things the one which is most conducive to success, cannot be lightly changed. Now, as a rule, my recollection during a game, of the cards which had or had not been played, was a rather remarkably clear one, but I had not been many minutes face to face with the saturnine features of "Frauk Mills," before a spell—the result partly of the awful silence which reigned in the room—seemed to hold my powers of memory as in a paralysing vice. Then, too, I could read in my father's face his keen anxiety that I should do credit to his teaching, and that circumstance was not without its share in bringing about a catastrophe which from the first might have been foreseen. During one rubber, I contrived, although with difficulty, to steer clear of rocks and shoals, but the tension was too great, and when the climax came, and the last cards which

would decide the conquering rubber had been dealt, the painted faces of those hideous queens and knaves became blurred before my eyes, and, in defiance of all rules, I trumped, second-hand, a card on which I ought to have thrown away a worse than useless King! My mistake lost the hard-fought game, and in the dead silence which followed, the voice of my rebuking partner sounded cold and harsh.

"That card," he said, "cost me forty pounds," and his sharp, fox-like countenance betrayed no sign of anger as he spoke, a circumstance which rendered his reproach the more impressive.

In a moment I was on my feet, and words, hot and angry, rose to my lips.

"It was by your wish, not mine, that I made up your rubber, and it is unlike a gentleman to taunt me with my mistake."

What more I might, but for my father's restraining words, have said, I know not, but his quiet remonstrance fell like oil upon the troubled waters of my wrath.

"Hush, my dear," he said gently. "Mr. Mills spoke, I am sure, without thought, and the best of us might have been provoked as he was." Then addressing the delinquent, who sat alone,

and with an unmoved countenance at the whist-table, he added, "My daughter was right, Mills, in reminding you that it was at your own request she made herself of use, and certainly if I could have supposed it possible that her good nature would have been so ill rewarded, I should not have allowed the child to risk incurring the reprimand she has received."

The mild remonstrance had its desired effect, for "Frank Mills" was a gentleman at heart, and made both to my father and myself an ample apology for his lapse of good-breeding. We parted as good friends should, but I never forgot the lesson I had received, whilst my conviction—a foolish one as it will doubtless be considered—that the games which were originally invented for the amusement of an idiot king are endowed especially, when played for money, with a subtle influence for evil on the minds and characters of both men and women. I should feel, were it not for the light which it throws upon my father's disposition, that some apology is due to the reader for the insertion of an anecdote in which the principal part is played by myself, but the self-command evinced by my father on the occasion of my *fiaseo* and its punishment,

made at the time so vivid an impression on my mind, that, as a trait of character, I have not been able to resist its insertion in this place. Anger was with him at all times a short-lived passion, but being of a nervous temperament, he had often, as he sometimes regretfully, and as a warning to his children, confessed, to struggle against fits of impatience and irritability. That this had been the case with him when his friend Frank Mills permitted his temper to get the better of his *savoir faire*, I could plainly see; for the effort to control his own wrath was great; and sorely did I reproach myself in that my own shortcomings had added their quota to the annoyance which he was enduring. I had escaped all censure for my blundering, and after receiving his nightly kiss, I retired to my bed, happy in the conviction that to few of my age and sex was there granted so kind and forgiving a parent as the one with whom Providence had blessed my life.

CHAPTER IX.

“Alas ! for the rarity
Of Christian charity
Under the sun.”—HOOD.

THE following letter is so eminently characteristic of the writer's turn of mind, now grave, now fanciful, now philosophical, and alas ! anon sadly deficient in reverence for sacred subjects, that I give it to the reader, *à propos*, as the French saying is, *de bottes* :—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—It is very true I have been chewing wormwood for the last quarter, dry, bitter stuff enough, but not for any of the philosophical reasons you have been pleased to tickle your fancy with. I take it, there is a fly in every man's pot of ointment ; mine is about the size of my neighbour's,—no bigger, yet a kind of bluebottle, growing corpulent certainly, but easily subdued. A week at Upton would reduce him to a skeleton. He buzzes and puffs a good

deal in London, but I know how to tame him ; therefore don't alarm yourself any more about him. He is at present fast asleep. *Pauvre mouche ! restez tranquille ! Vous avez mangé trop de sucre. Dieu ! qui vient ici ? Véritablement, madame, je crois—*

“‘I have often told you, Adam,’ said Eve, looking very unamiable, ‘that I don’t understand French. I don’t like it. Speak plainly and properly.’ ‘Well, then,’ said Adam, ‘I take it that this marriage of yours and mine, my dear, does not portend any great good. All depends on making a good marriage. Suppose we have a son—he, of course, as our eldest, will be Prince of Wales, and he will take to climbing forbidden trees, associating with unclean animals, and’——‘Nonsense,’ said Eve ; ‘you’re always putting such sharp corners into one’s head. The child will do very well, I don’t doubt.’ ‘Then,’ said Adam, ‘if he has a brother, he will of course be Duke of York, and then’——‘Take the candle, I say, and go to bed, and stop talking in this way. To-morrow you have to get up and give names to all the animals.’ ‘True,’ said Adam, ‘and I mean to do it systematically. I shall first divide them

into classes after the manner of Linneus—the solid hoof, the cleft hoof, the ruminating, those that have incisors’—‘What are incisors?’ said Eve. ‘I never heard the word before; has it anything to do with scissors?’ Lord! if you had seen Adam’s look. ‘Scissors! Whew! Pooh! Nonsense! Scissors! Incisors mean cutting teeth. Eve, you are a good woman, an excellent wife, an admirable cook; but certainly you are no scholar. You were taken from the ribs, and not from the head of man. You are bone of my bone, but you have no partnership with my intellectual organs, and your descendants will be all the same. If one of them were to write an account of a voyage she had made, she would express surprise at seeing the Neem tree in Bermuda, though the streets of New Orleans are shaded with them. And just so of the rest. But as I said, I shall then take the horned animals. I shall make a decided division of the horned cattle.’—‘My dear Adam! my good man! this will never do! Horned cattle! *Animala cum cornebus!* Do take the candle and come to bed! Whoever saw cattle without horns?’ At that instant, as luck would have it, a beneficed and benevolent clergyman passing

by, and taking off his hat, assured them that in his county the cattle had no horns. Horns were there unknown, even as a sign to a public-house; 'Thank you, doctor,' said Adam.—But, my dear Jesse, I must put off telling you the end of the conference, which afterwards consisted of a trio, and will doubtless interest you extremely.

“It is scarcely an hour since I returned from the Bishop's Visitation, and his charge has given me an indigestion. He ought to read it on the stage at Covent Garden. It would be as good as 'The Love Chase.' I placed myself under the care of all the Holy Virgins whom I could remember, who lived for virtue and who died for honour's sake, as Saint Perpetua, Saint Honoria, and Saint Eustachia, who are now blooming in immortal youth, and enjoying the rewards of inviolable chastity. You are very kind in asking me to Upton, but I am like a sparrow on the house-top, who, I suppose, finds a difficulty in getting down, or an owl in the desert, who is at much trouble in procuring mice fit to eat, or——But that is enough in the way of similitudes, especially as they are not very *à propos*, and do not exactly describe what I resemble. However, here I am, and when I shall

cease to be here I know not, but it is quite as well for my friends that I *should* be here, for a more unsociable, uncommunicative, unreasonable, and unpleasing kind of two-legged creature don't at present exist in the pale of good society. Please give my kind remembrances to Mr. Rogers, and tell him that I think it is neither in good taste or good scholarship to do as Jortin (whose writings he well knows) has, I see, done, namely, in his famous Sixth Dissertation, to hash up, transpose, and add to the beautiful invocation of Book Third in 'Paradise Lost.' The following are Jortin's lines :—

'Hail, holy Light ! Offspring of Heaven's first-born !
Thee I revisit, and thy vital lamp,
Escap'd the Stygian Pool, and realms of flight
Are taught by thee a hue to re-ascend.'

“The lines of the poet are not applicable to the writer's purpose ; let him look for others, as this invocation is spoilt, and I am surprised that Jortin is the offender.

“And now let me congratulate you on having got your house so full of agreeable society. What a combination of female charms ! What a delightful clack of tongue—wheels never ceasing ! moment-hand ticking of feminine con-

gratulations! What delicate air-pumps continually at work! It must be charming! Click! clack! What refreshing showers of giggles! Miss B—— meditates an account in *Bentley's Magazine* of a voyage up the River Amazon to ascertain the aborigines of America, which she supposes to be originally Jews of the Tribe of Reuben or Red men. They, being also a very maritime nation, doubled Cape Horn, having never seen land since they left Joppa, collected a great number of araucaria trees on the coast of Chili. Then settling in the country, they intermarried with the native women, whom they found, as Dr. Robertson wrote, exceedingly accomplished, and, in compliment to their wives, adopted their language, as the American ladies found it difficult to pronounce Hebrew because of the want of vowels. But gracious me! I shan't have time for the Magazine! Well, good-bye. Excuse this scrawl.—Ever yours,

“J. MITFORD.”

And now, in justice to my father's friend, and for the satisfaction of such of my readers as may have failed to appreciate the erratic character of the above epistle, I think it expedient to

transcribe a very different description of missive, the serious nature of which will, I hope, make amends for the flightiness which is observable in its predecessor :—

“ February 17, 1853.

“ MY DEAR JESSE,—Are you going to town soon? I’ll tell you why I ask. I have been writing very good and necessary notes and remarks on Lord John’s edition of Moore’s *Memories*, such as must be printed when a new edition comes out, as much that is obscure is elucidated and explained, and I have introduced some curious matter from MSS.

“ I want you to get me £20 for the notes, which are well worth it. Ask Bentley. They would suit his periodical, but I should like a pamphlet better, as I mean to put in *names*. If he’ll give you the money, I’ll take a bill at three months. If he won’t do this, ask Murray.

“ The book is in great want of notes, and part I will supply. Murray and Bentley know me enough to trust me when I say that the notes are substantially good. I am getting on very fast with them. You haven’t got an answer to the sea terms of Swift.

“ Fine change of weather. Nectarines getting

ripe. Melons in the open ground coming on. Thermometer some degrees above freezing. In another month the trees will show leaves. Baltic opening, and rain instead of frost, and veal with kidneys coming in. The poor people who were starved to death this winter all safely buried; no need to talk about it. The women cry when they speak of their hungry children; no one seems to mind them. Two said to me yesterday, 'Daresay the *restaurateurs* get on well. *They* don't feel the famine at Very's or the Trois Frères—*patés d'anguilles* as usual, and *epigrammes d'agneau aux asperges*—excellent! Cry on, my poor Benhall wives! There's nothing for you in the Rue de Sainte Charité. Do as the *filles des rues* do when there's nothing to eat. They lie in bed.' 'But, sir, I've sold my bed.' 'Oh, Lord! Well, then, I've nothing more to say. Dear! dear!' 'Oh, yes, 'tis very dear indeed,' says another woman. 'Well, my good creature, Mr. H. Drummond says everything will be set right.' 'Well, sir, I hope it may, but'—Hark! The Bishop is coming, I hear his carriage and four!

"P.S.—Get me my money, for the MSS. is worth it.

“*P.S.*—Since yesterday at noon there has been nothing but snow. Where are you abiding? On Snow Hill or in Spring Gardens? for I don’t know what climate you are having in the South of England. Ours in the east is such that I have built a pyramid of snow in the meadow, six feet high and eight feet at the base, and thatched it over with straw. I mean it to last till July. Come and see it. It is the wonder of the bumpkins. Next to that, I have to inform you that I live on teal and red-legged partridges (stewed), also gingerbread nuts and Southwold soles. By way of amusement, I go about the garden with Pratt, making him explain to me all the different footprints of animals in the snow. Do you know them? A squirrel’s and a small rabbit’s footprint are much the same, a hare’s quite different; water-rat’s very curious. We have no lynxes or hyenas in this part of Suffolk, so can’t tell you about them just now. Ask Professor Owen, as I asked Pratt just now, which bird suffers most in this weather. He said the thrush (not the blackbirds). He has found many thrushes dead, but never recollects a blackbird. He and I have been talking, with the snow up to our

knees, on the comparative paucity of wrens and robins. We have a dozen or two of robins about the house, but not a sign yet of a wren; and yet the wren lays from two to ten eggs. What becomes of them? Does she in winter go into the woods? Do you know the different footprints of the stoat and weasel? Because I do. You see what snow-lessons I am taking. I shall be a second Gilbert White. You'll find me as worth having (as Pirdis) some day or other; but you must wait. The parsons are getting up a petition to open the Crystal Palace on Sundays. What do you think on the subject? Will it be for good or otherwise? Do sit down and write me a letter about this; and pray tell Mr. Croker that in Boswell's 'Johnson,' vol. iii. p. 144, the words, 'He did not care to speak ill of any man behind his back, but he believed the gentleman was an attorney,' seem very like Murphy's Guy's Inn Journal, No. 17, 1752, 'I overheard a sober-looking man saying to his friend, "I am not fond of giving anybody an ill word, but I believe he is an attorney."

"In Mr. Lennox's 'Female Quixote,' the last chapter, called the best in the whole book, was

written by Johnson, though I do not find that any of his commentators are aware of it.

“I printed the whole chapter in the *Gent.'s Mag.* about two years ago, and Mr. Crossley of Manchester wrote to me that he had made the same remark, and noted it in his copy.—Yours ever,

J. MITFORD.

“P.S.—I'd give many a little stiver
To be walking with you in the fields of Iver ;
I'd give some pence from out my poke
To be strolling with you in the park at Stoke ;
But I should like best of all to see
The foolish virgins—one—two—three,
For I'd sooner talk to those silly queens
Than be bothered to death with rural Deans.

“J. MITFORD.”

CHAPTER X.

"Nature, through all her works, in great degree
Borrows a blessing from variety."—CHURCHILL.

IN the year 1831 an event which had the effect of causing my father to seek another home, occurred in our family. My dear old kinswoman elected to end her days, as she phrased it, in the companionship at Leamington of a friend of her own age, and who was, like herself, a spinster. As a matter of course, she took with her, to our great regret, the "Sir Joshua" * which had so long ornamented her sitting-room, and her place looked doubly empty in that it no longer contained the gem of art, which more than one distinguished man had made a pilgrimage to gaze upon. The old red-brick house, also, which

* The beautiful portrait by Sir Joshua Reynolds of my great-aunt, Mrs. Mordaunt, is now in Walton Hall, the seat of Sir Charles Mordaunt, whilst the companion picture, also by Sir Joshua, of my grandmother, Lady Morris, sister of Mrs. Mordaunt, was bought a few years ago by Mr. Beaumont, M.P., for the large sum of £50,050, and now adorns the walls of the wealthy purchaser's Northumberland home.

we were about to quit, was endeared to me by many a pleasant memory of days gone by. Its spacious rooms—spacious, *id est*, as compared to those to which in our previous habitations I had been accustomed—were peopled by me with the “spirits of friends departed.” Of the young and joyous ones who had brightened by their presence, their laughter, and their quips and cranks, those otherwise gloomy-seeming rooms, nothing of youth’s spring-time of bloom remained. They had become men, those slim and beautiful lads, the grandsons of the immortal Sheridan, whose wont it was—when I too was young—to make merry in the old rooms, and, clad in their boyish attire of short jackets and out-grown trousers, to amuse themselves by relating to my kind and too credulous parent, fictitious and thrilling anecdotes of dogs, on the veracity of which, they, until the eleventh hour had struck, continued to insist.

The memory of those handsome, brilliant Sheridan lads was intimately connected with the many excursions which on fine summer evenings we, during those cheerful days at Hampton, occasionally took, both up-stream and down; now to Richmond, where we would

sometimes land, and, to the infinite delight of Mr. Mitford, who was often one of our party, would enjoy a delicious hour in that paradise of trees and flowers, the Royal Gardens at Kew. Then came the row homewards, it might be by moonlight, and, with the glorious voices with which Nature had gifted our joyous young companions, singing in concert, some sweet and stirring love-ditty. But pleasant as were those *down-stream* excursions, there floated around them an atmosphere of Cockneyism which all but neutralised their charm. From the pretty little *ait*, fringed with its weeping willows, and vulgarised by its very name (that of Eel-pie Island), sounds suggestive of rude laughter and of ruder love-making greet the ear, and disenchant the scenes which Nature has made so fair; and therefore it was that the prow of our slow, roomy boat was far more often turned towards the quieter and more rural waterways of the Upper Thames. Past Sunbury and Walton, with its pretty bridge, and on to Shepperton, sleepest, in those days, of river-villages, till Maidenhead was reached, and then, beneath the trees of exquisitely lovely Clifton, we "rambled a-field to brooks and bowers."

I remember especially one hot day in August, when our boat was moored under the hanging woods, and the boys had been singing our chief favourite amongst their duets, namely, "Farewell! but whenever you welcome the hour." The talk, between the intervals of ducks-and-drakes pastime, turned on the manners and mental capabilities of the canine race. It was among my father's crotchets, as his opponents termed his dogmas, that but for the selfishness and inhumanity of mankind there would be amongst four-footed animals, no such thing as a natural enmity. "A dog does not naturally hate a cat, or a cat a dog," said my father, as he leant back luxuriously on the stern cushions, and took from out an old-fashioned silver box a big pinch of ("Pontet's mixture") snuff.

"Oh, don't they, though?" exclaimed Charlie, who, having brought on board a good supply of flat round stones, had just hurled one of the most likely-looking of the number, skimming along the surface of the water. "Just you look at a kitten. Why, as soon as she can see, if a dog comes within a yard of her, up goes her tail, her eyes glare, and she outs with her claws, spitting and swearing like a mad creature."

“ Ah ! that is because her mother did it before her,” rejoined my father. “ I do not pretend to deny that there exists *now* a great amount of ill-feeling between the races. I spoke, however, of natural, not hereditary tendencies, which, as well in four, as in two-footed creatures, it is difficult to disprove. It has been for too many generations the evil habit of cruel, unmannerly boys to encourage cat-and-dog fights, for anything short of absolute hatred to be, as a rule, the sentiments of those hot-blooded creatures towards each other. Still, I could give you more than one instance to the contrary.”

“ Exactly ! when they have been brought up from their birth together ; and so could I,” put in one of the boys. But my father having an anecdote illustrative of *his* opinion, ready to hand, “ kept the floor,” commencing as follows : *—

“ A friend of mine, old Everard (he is dead now, but his daughter would answer for the truth of my story), having had the irremediable mis-

* I am indebted for the chief part of the conversation here recorded to the rough and intermittently written notes to which I have before alluded. The Colonel Everard spoken of by my father was a fellow dog-lover and brother of the angle ; but during the short period that the intimate relations between the two continued, I was absent from home, and therefore was unacquainted with the owner of the terrier “ Bob,” and with the eccentricities of that remarkable animal.

fortune to lose a small Yorkshire terrier which he valued as the apple of his eye, was minded, although no dog could make up to him for the loss of 'Tim,' to buy himself another terrier. Well, he found one—a sharp, knowing little fellow, well bred and handsome, but in character and disposition as different from Tim as an eagle from a vulture. Tim had a noble nature, exclusively devoted to one person, but kindly to all, neither greedy nor selfish—a dog, in short, of a thousand. He learned his lessons and performed his daily duties, such as carrying in his small mouth the letters to the post, &c., without even a harsh word being said to him, or a promise of reward being held out. I attribute, as did also his master, the beauty of Tim's disposition and behaviour (for he was a thoroughly well-bred dog) as much to the fact that he had always been treated as a rational being, as to the circumstance that his immediate ancestors had not been subjected to the painful and humiliating process of bullying.

“It very soon became apparent that 'Bob,' for such was the name borne by the successor of poor stolen Tim, was a dog who, although he was only ten months old, had already made intimate

acquaintance with the ills to which canine flesh is heir. It was clear that he looked upon the entire human race as his enemies, for he was as ready with his teeth as a trained-for-fighting bull-terrier, and on the slightest imaginary provocation would show in very suggestive fashion that he knew how to defend himself. That his education had been conducted on King Solomon's principles, and that with his former owner it had been 'Spare the *stick* and spoil the dog,' was very certain; and the poor little animal, feeling that every one's hand was against him, had grown savage and morose. When he had been three days in his new quarters, he began, however, to slightly fraternise with the footman, a commencement of intimacy which, but for Master Bob's own cleverness, might have led to disastrous consequences. The first day," continued my father, after he had refreshed his memory with another pinch of snuff, "that old John, who was rather deaf, took him out to walk, the dog was lost. Great was the dismay of the delinquent, who, in the dusk of an autumn evening, had promenaded the little fellow in the Strand, and all too near to the Seven Dials—a neighbourhood with which 'Bob' must have been

well acquainted. The man's first inquiry was at the dog-depôt, where his late companion had passed his miserable puppyhood, either seated on a chair, to which he was attached by a chain, or exposed to view in the window, where passers-by could admire, behind the iron bars of his cage, as perfect a living likeness of Landseer's 'Impudence' as could well be seen."

"He was not such a fool, I should think, as to go back *there!*" broke in one of the party, who having gained possession of my father's fishing-book, was languidly engaged in futile efforts to obtain from some unwary chub or gudgeon the mild excitement which a "bite" is capable of affording.

This flippant remark, implying, as it did, a doubt of the dog's sagacity, was treated with deserved contempt, and my father, like the Eastern princess of old, went on with his story.

"When old John found that 'Bob' had not returned to his old haunts, he, in much perturbation of mind, endeavoured to console himself with the thought that the dog's inherently pugnacious temperament would preserve him from capture. 'Why, Lord bless you, sir,' he, when the panic was over, said to me, 'Bob is that

ready with his teeth, that I defy any one to lay a hand on him. He hadn't been in our place six hours afore he took a 'olt of a big dustman by the trousers, and frightened him half out of his wits.'

"The fact, however," continued my father, "that Bob 'delighted to bark and bite' was no guarantee against his having the misfortune to fall amongst thieves, and Everard, in common with his whole family, retired to rest with the painful conviction that they would never see Bob's wicked little face again. In the dead of night, however, the occupier of the first-floor front bedroom was roused from her slumbers by piteous howls and entreaties for admission, such as a dog in distress alone can utter. No time was of course lost in giving admittance to the wanderer, who must have spent seven or eight hours in search of his new home. To the surprise of all who heard the story, he was found, not on the pavement, or the door-step, but inside the area, to which haven of safety he had found entrance *through the bars*, between which he was enabled, being one of the smallest of his kind, to force himself. Now, when one considers that his new home was one of which he had next to no experience, that the street to which he

returned was a comparatively insignificant one, and so situated that human wayfarers not unfrequently found it somewhat difficult to find, it is certainly surprising that little 'Bob,' after his lengthened pilgrimage, should have recognised not only the street, but the very house (all those of which the said street was composed being as alike as so many peas), which during that extremely short space of time he had inhabited. His sides, poor little fellow, were evidently sore, owing doubtless to the efforts he had made to force an entrance into a place of safety—one, namely, to which strangers in the shape of dog-stealers would not dare to follow."

"Well," said Mr. Mitford, who had returned from his saunter through the woods in time to appreciate the large demand upon his auditors' credulity which my father's anecdote had called forth, "I see nothing impossible in the story. Bob had, of course, thought the matter out, and had decided that it would be safer to howl forth his prayer for admission inside the area railings than on the pavement or the door-step, where his capture might have been easily effected. As for a dog's moral qualities, I quite agree with you," turning as he spoke, to me, "that the worst

dog is born with better, nobler instincts than is the best man."

"But," asked Frank Sheridan, "how about the cat-and-dog platonic? From your account of 'Bob,' he scarcely seems the kind of terrier that would be on speaking terms with any of the pussy cat race."

"I will tell you how it happened," said my father, who was too good-natured, and also too well accustomed to the Sheridans' boyish chaff to take umbrage at the laughter with which they had greeted his account of 'Bob's' intellectual gifts. "Colonel Everard's little terrier proved in every respect a dog of remarkable character. He gradually became more humanised; but for a considerable time he would resent, by a refusal to eat, even an angry word; and would growl savagely at any one who offended him. He learnt almost instinctively the art of 'begging,' and would 'sit up' of his own accord for anything, let it be what it would, that he had set his mind upon. He never entirely lost the habit of taking upon himself the defence of both his person and property which he had acquired in St. Martin's Lane, and he was always observed to be especially pugnacious when any one presumed

to touch the small basketwork kennel in which, when the weather was cold, he delighted to ensconce himself. Well, one day after he had gone for exercise into the small yard at the back of Everard's house, he was accompanied on his return by a large and very beautiful jet-black cat. She was well known as the property of the next-door neighbour, and was evidently a petted favourite, for she wore a collar with the owner's name and address, and a tiny silver bell adorned her neck. The cat was in the habit of airing herself on the party wall between the premises, and 'Bob' seeing her there, 'she became his sun.' The feeling was evidently reciprocal, for 'with love's light wings she did o'erperch the walls,' and, led by her adorer, made her *entrée* into the kitchen. She was a very gentle cat, and it was pretty to see the two creatures, 'Bob' with his paws round her neck, and she patting his face with the velvet glove, from out of which never a claw appeared, while nothing that she could do—no, not even the taking possession by her of his little kennel—had the effect of rousing him to anger. The affection of the pair of friends was something wonderful; less strong, however, on the cat's part than on 'Bob's'; for when, having

grown too familiar with the household, it became necessary, for the sake of Mrs. Everard's pet canaries, to give her a hint, in the shape of a sprinkling of water, that her presence was not desired in the kitchen, she took dire offence, and notwithstanding 'Bob's' piteous appeals, his tender whines, and 'begging' attitudes, she tacitly refused to leave the summit of the wall. For several weeks the despairing *fidus Achates* watched, whimpered, and entreated. Puss's dignity had been too deeply wounded for any reconciliation to be possible. At last, and just when it was beginning to be feared that the sickness of hope deferred was telling upon 'Bob's' health, the object of his platonic attachment suddenly disappeared, and was seen in the neighbourhood of his home no more."

On our return that evening, Mr. Mitford gave us a curious account of a small fox-terrier, which, either from native pugnacity, or from a sense of humour (but to the last idea our friend decidedly leant), was in the constant habit, when presented with a biscuit, a piece of sugar, or any valued gift, of dropping it on the floor, and then, with savage growls and much showing of sharp white teeth, standing over his property, and

daring any one present to take it from him. Of course, he being a general favourite, the challenge was responded to, and the jest allowed to be successful. "It was a case like that of the row-loving Irishman," continued Mr. Mitford, "who trails his coat on the street, and then shouts to those about him to 'come on and trid upon that.' The fun of the thing was evidently as thoroughly enjoyed by the dog as the chance of a head-breaking shindy is duly appreciated by Paddy."

Yes! those days of which I have been calling back the memory might in truth be called "halcyon." I was then in the "May-morn of my youth." The time for me had yet to come when—

"Woe succeeded woe, as wave on wave;"

and happily no "shadow before" gave warning of the "coming events" which, for a time, darkened the horizon of my life. Enough, however, for the present of the *ego*, which, but for its intimate association with my father's life, would have found no place in these pages. From the time when he fixed his home at Hampton Court, many events that were for him

fraught with remarkable consequences, occurred, and we must therefore return to the subject with which this chapter opens, namely, his departure from our old Hampton home to the more modern one on Hampton Court Green, which during a longer period than usual (for he had, I am bound to confess, a mild mania for change of residences) was destined to become his abiding-place.

CHAPTER XI.

"I wonder you will magnify this madman ;
You are old, and should understand."

—BEAUMONT AND FLETCHER.

FROM the French windows in the rear of my father's new abode, Bushey Park, with its grand old avenues, its well-cropped turf, and the deer that browsed thereon, formed a pleasant "look-out." Nevertheless, the gardens and shrubberies appertaining to the big Elizabethan villa we had quitted were greatly missed, especially by my mother, whose then failing health caused her to value the privacy which at "Rose Villa" she had been able to command. It was by means of a ladder-stile only that at Hampton, Bushey Park could be reached, but once within the portals of the royal property, a section of it was gained, which, owing to its comparative remoteness from the Palace, might almost lay claim to be called a "retired" spot. The same praise could certainly not be given to

that portion of the park which was visible from the drawing-room windows of our Hampton Court residence. Although the town of Hampton is only a mile distant from the Green, the very deer which browsed on their respective localities conveyed to us the impression that our new friends had been subjected to human, and therefore to contaminating, influences. They were no longer the timid creatures, with the graceful, half-frightened movements which their kind usually evince when retreating from the near neighbourhood of man, and which convey the idea that they are still "wild," and therefore fitting inhabitants for sylvan haunts; for familiarity with the Cockney visitors who on Sundays and Mondays were wont to hold high revel under the chestnut avenue trees had emboldened, and, so to speak, *vulgarised* them. The said individuals, who, on "pleasure bent," desecrated by their disorderly behaviour the royal manors that once were kingly hunting-grounds, and who, as a rule, "brought their *nose-bags*"* with them, were in the habit, after strewing, with remnants of greasy paper and

* The slang term by which the "baser sort" (as James I. designated those who are now spoken of as the "lower orders") alluded to the baskets of provisions which the London visitors brought with them to Hampton Court.

still greasier bones the spots on which they had elected to enjoy their *al fresco* repasts, to feed with bread, the deer, which they had contrived in some degree to tame. This proceeding on the part of the London sight-seers fully accounted for the boldness with which the pretty creatures looked through our open windows, and accepted what to them were evidently highly-appreciated dainties at our hands. So tame indeed were they, that on one occasion I foolishly placed a pair of my mother's spectacles across the forehead of a beautiful big-eyed deer, which protruded itself, apparently from motives of curiosity, across the low window-sill of the drawing-room. For a moment or two she seemed too much astonished to move away, but then, with the glasses still on her nose, off she bounded to the shelter of the tall bracken, where possibly some searchers after ancient relics may, a century or so later on, light upon the remains of my poor mother's broken spectacles, and idly speculate on the use to which in bygone times those queer-looking fragments of steel may have been put.

Having touched upon the subject of the royal hunting-grounds, and upon the "rascal deer,"

which we have the authority of history for saying that King James First "loved better than men, seeing that he was more tender over the life of a stag than of a man," I may as well make further allusion (inasmuch as they are connected with my father's official position) to the animals in question. In addition to his salary, the Deputy Superintendent of His Majesty's parks and palaces was legally entitled to receive yearly half a buck (or doe, according to the season) from every one of the royal parks. The quality and flavour of the venison was pronounced by the many to whom joints of the official perquisites were by my father dispensed, to vary greatly according to the respective parks in which the animals had grazed. By the frequent guests invited by my father to discuss the merits of the choicer portions of the deer, it was, I remember, decided that those fed in Hampton Court Park were the best, whilst those which, in the beginning and middle of the present century, beautified Hyde Park by their presence were, as venison, inferior, fat although they were, in taste and flavour, to the others.

Amongst those guests, Mr. Mitford was often, as I need scarcely mention, one. The attacks of

low spirits, consequent in part on weakened health, to which he was subject, had of late increased, and he gladly hailed the change of residence to Hampton Court on which my father had decided. The following short note is, I think, suggestive alike of dyspepsia, and of the longing for mental as well as bodily variety which was a part of the writer's idiosyncrasy:—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—I wish Nicoll * would get in type the Darwin article. I have now the book to correct it by, and shall not have it long. I also wish to add a note from Darwin on Dugald Stewart.

“The little poetical scraps from Fletcher I hope you will love like your own eyes. They are unknown by the vulgar.

“You tantalise me about Bearwood, as I can't come up just now. And yet I like your house and home better than any others. It is quiet and gentlemanlike, two things indispensable to my comfort. I wish I were with you, far from this, for I am diabolically hipped here; and to improve my temper I lost a turtle-dinner to-day

* Printer and antiquary, who eventually succeeded Mr. Mitford as editor of the *Gentleman's Magazine*.

because I had no evening dress clothes. I send you a note, that you may judge of our Suffolk Squires.* All my comfort is thinking of the agreeable sights I have had with you, and hoping for *some more*, for here everything is a black, monotonous, and miserable existence, without even a well-dressed lady to stimulate it to a momentary appearance of satisfaction. My curate also has departed, and my only comfort is in my garden, where I am to be seen in a *robe de chambre* looking at the gold-crested wrens. Farewell. Write soon. Write often to yours truly,

J. MITFORD."

The extremely small amount of knowledge *quoad* the history of Hampton Court Palace which I, at the period of my abode in its immediate vicinity, possessed, has often (and especially since the appearance of Mr. Law's interesting and analytical History of the great Cardinal's magnificent abode) been to me a subject of keen regret. My father's official position rendered, on his part, a certain amount of acquaintance with the previous history of one

* The enclosure here spoken of has unfortunately not been preserved.

of the most important of the royal palaces absolutely necessary, but it was to Mr. Mitford's exhaustless fund of varied knowledge that we were chiefly indebted for the insight into its interesting Past that we were so fortunate as to possess. But for him, and for his love (although no sharer in the "sport") of accompanying my father on his fishing expeditions to the Longford River, the latter would probably have remained in ignorance of the origin, if I may so call it, of that river, and of the fact that it was in the reign of Charles the First that a portion of the River Colne was diverted from its course, and carried across Hounslow Heath "for the better recommendation of the Palace, and the recreation and disport of His Majesty." The channel thus artificially made, and which was eleven miles long, was called the "King's or Longford River," and the fountains in Hampton Court Palace and gardens owe their supply of water to the river, the origin of which our antiquarian friend was the first to make us acquainted with.

It was doubtless to the great interest in all subjects connected with horticulture which was taken by Mr. Mitford, that his search after facts with which Hampton Court gardens had to do

might be traced. It was from him I learned the mindfulness displayed by Charles the First to the embellishment of those gardens, and also that to the better taste of Charles the Second is due, not only their conversion to their present style and form, but the planting therein by the *then* head-gardener of the Palace grounds, of the famous yew-trees, beneath which Mr. Mitford so dearly loved to contemplate the infinite variety of Nature's works. For, as he on one of such occasions quoted to me—

“Who can paint
Like Nature? Can imagination boast,
Amidst its gay creations, hues like hers?
Or can it mix them with that matchless skill,
And lose them in each other, as appears
In every bud that blows?”

My father was in the Commission of the Peace for the county of Middlesex; and that being the case, it followed that his time during the *belle saison*—a short one in our unsatisfactory climate—was on every Monday and Tuesday of the week fully occupied. The reason why “cases for hearing” were—especially on the first days of the week—numerous and urgent, was this. On those days, large numbers of omnibuses, crowded inside and out with London pleasure-seekers, were wont to

take Bushey Park, together with the neighbouring Palace and gardens, almost literally by storm. The advent of these, it must be confessed, somewhat "rowdy" visitors was the signal for keeping within the walls of the "quality poor-house" (as Hampton Court Palace was irreverently termed), of the aristocratic dwellers therein. And for this fastidious display of exclusiveness there was certainly some excuse, for the *profanum vulgus* paid but scant respect either to things or persons. Through what is called the "Wilderness Gate," the joyous Cockneys, in their thousands, thronged. From the adjacent Maze,* wherein the cheery, giggling fair ones elected, with their attendant swains, to lose themselves, proceeded shouts and screams of the laughter which, when it is under no wholesome control, jars like a discordant note in music on the ear. Thence they sped into the Palace gardens, the multitude being meanwhile jealously watched by the saturnine head-gardener, Johnstone, and by the constables,

* The chief popular attraction of Hampton Court is the Maze, which is near the Lion Gates in the Wilderness. Its walks are half a mile long, though the space it covers is merely half an acre. The Maze is first mentioned in the reign of William III., and it was probably made at that time. *Vide* New Guide to Hampton Court Palace, by Ernest Law. The *British Magazine* for 1747 contains an account of it, and a moral poem on it.

as well as under-gardeners, whose business it was to guard the safety of the shrubs and flowers. During the entire summer, and when the work over which my father had with infinite skill and care presided was at its full flush and prime of beauty, those inroads of barbarian hordes continued, and during all that period, Johnstone's condition of mind, especially on the holiday-making days I write of, was something approaching to the infernal. He was a married man, having (unfortunately, as matters for the object of his choice turned out) espoused, in the days of his elderly bachelorhood, a cheerful, fresh-coloured little woman, who, having been during seven years in my mother's service as housemaid, was liked and appreciated by us all. Poor Martha! She never could have loved the hard-featured, taciturn man, whose every thought and feeling was centred in his vocation, and whose only object in taking to his home a wife, was that of providing himself with a useful *femme de ménage*; but the poor foolish woman, elated—the case is no uncommon one—with her rise in the social scale, entered with a light heart upon her new duties, and had only too soon, ample reason to regret the step which she had taken

Instead of becoming, as she had hoped and expected, the mistress of a small household of her own—for Johnstone was a well-to-do man, and could well have afforded to give his wife the comfort, to say nothing of the pride, of a young maid-of-all-work—Martha found, to her mortification and disappointment, that she had only, by her marriage with the canny Scot, exchanged one state of servitude for another. She was, however, a sensible as well as a good-tempered woman; so she accepted without a murmur the, in that respect, non-fruition of her hopes; but what the once cheerful, comely creature could not grow accustomed to was the companionship, if such it could be called, of the cold, unsympathetic man to whom she had linked her fate. Under that infliction her ruddy, cheerful face grew pale and worn, and although her thirtieth year had not long been passed, she might have been taken for a woman of fifty. We were all, including Mr. Mitford, very sorry for her, and could well understand a reply made by her aged mother to our friend's inquiries regarding her daughter's changed appearance and melancholy expression of face.

“Well, sir,” the good old creature said, “Johnstone ain't a drinking man, no, nor he ain't a

wife-beater, nor one of them swearing, passionate fellows, but he makes her a *tedious husband*, so he does—just a tedious husband,” she added with a sigh; and Mr. Mitford, fully entering into the appropriateness of the description, often afterwards repeated the epithet as one that was singularly, as well as neatly suggestive of what in married life is not a wholly unprecedented fact.

Something worse, however, if possible, than tedious was Johnstone on the days when his treasured gardens were being desecrated by the excursionists; and I verily believe that if the rifler of even a single flower had been sentenced by my father to three months' imprisonment and a severe flogging, Johnstone would have considered the punishment scarcely adequate to the enormity of the offence committed. There existed, however (a circumstance of which Johnstone was happily ignorant) a still more dangerous intruder into those sacred precincts than was even the liveliest of the Cockney pleasure-seekers, who, to borrow a phrase which I overheard from the lips of a “Toy” Inn hanger-on, brought his “nose-bag” with his sweetheart to the Palace gardens, and lost himself with that presumably nothing loth *demoiselle*, in the bewildering

windings of the Maze. The daring depredator of whom I speak was one who certainly should have been amongst the last to take undue liberties with the property of "his Liege Lord the King," for the offender was none other than a gay young officer of Hussars, a troop of whose regiment was quartered at Hampton Court, and who should have deemed it his duty to protect, rather than tamper with the property of the Crown. This young soldier, however, entertained apparently somewhat confused notions of the rights of *meum* and *tuum*, added to which failing, the maiden whose youthful coquetries had fired him with the spirit of adventure which is inherent in every youthful breast, happened to have an especial weakness for clove carnations. The result of this combination of circumstances was unfortunate, for nightly raids were made upon the flower-beds from which the odorous blossoms sent forth their welcome fragrance, and it was in vain that Johnstone and his myrmidons kept nightly watch and ward over the spot on which the now rapidly diminishing cloves had whilom dazzled with their crimson glories the eyes of the passers-by; for no trace of the marauder

could they discover. But *en revanche*, I, the foolish maiden who had owned to a predilection for clove carnations, had my own suspicions regarding the identity of the delinquent. By whom, I asked myself, save and except the boy-officer who so frequently brought with him for my acceptance, blossoms *galore* of my favourite flower, could those daring thefts be perpetrated? It was true that he declared to me (remember, O kindly reader, that I was the seventeen-years old spoilt child of a tender-hearted father) that the carnations which he tendered for my acceptance were plucked from the garden of his aunt, whose home was in Sunbury village, some three miles' distance from Hampton. I could not bring myself to quite believe the beardless young soldier's word. And yet, how almost impossible it seemed that he, that slip of a lad, could scale those lofty walls, and overcome all the many difficulties which lay in the way of his ultimate success! He was acting very wrongly, and the more so as he was one of my unsuspecting parent's most frequent dinner-guests. But I, girl-like, found something akin to chivalry in the young fellow's proceedings, and many a day elapsed before I could summon sufficient courage

to warn him that if he did not tell the whole truth to my father, I must myself betray him as the culprit whose detection had been for a lengthened period vainly sought for.

Poor young fellow! He was only nineteen, and looked younger still. At the age of seventeen I felt ten years older than the lad who, after the lapse of more than half a century, I can see before me now, looking, as he leant against the gnarled trunk of an old walnut tree, both indignant and ashamed.

"*You!*" he exclaimed. "Impossible! Why, it was for you I got the confounded—I beg your pardon—flowers, and now, by Jove! you talk of turning upon a fellow as coolly as if he were a cockchafer on a pin."

He was terribly in earnest—so terribly indeed, that the facile laughter of seventeen was checked, and that I could and did very seriously reproach him for the sin of which he had been guilty. In what manner, and by what arguments I succeeded in inducing the delinquent to do penance for his past transgressions, I cannot, after so long a lapse of time, remember. One fact, however, I must be allowed, in justice to myself, to record,—the fact, namely, that I could not

accuse myself of the slightest complicity with the lad in his acts of daring folly. He was at the age and of the temperament when the imagination is so fired by 'deeds of daring do,' that the desire to excel his fellows by silly performances such as that by which this young Hussar had distinguished himself, are not uncommon. The spice of danger which the boy incurred threw also a glamour as of chivalry that was not without its charm, over the affair; and then there was the *fun* of the thing—the delight of outwitting old Johnstone, and the intoxication—delicious whilst it lasted—of success! Well, there must have been good in the lad at bottom, for after some little delay, and the gruesome declaration on his part that he would rather put a pistol to his head than perform the task which I had imposed upon him, he knocked, with an evidently hesitating hand, at the door of my father's study.

Poor young culprit! I confess that, badly as he had behaved, I felt sorry for him then. As an officer and a gentleman, the humiliation which I had called upon him to undergo must have been terribly great, and for his sake I more than half regretted the step which a sense of

duty had caused me to take. Later on, however, and after listening to my father's account of the interview, the compassion with which the culprit had inspired me was transferred from him to the recipient of his confession. The young soldier, who from his good looks and lightness of heart had been an especial favourite with my father, had told his tale after a fashion which caused the listener thereto to say, with genuine depth of feeling, that rather than it should have happened he would have paid fifty pounds from his own not too well-filled purse. The difficulty also of reconciling his duty as a magistrate with his pity for the offender weighed heavily upon his conscience. The offence of the educated gentleman greatly exceeded, in his estimation, that of the ignorant Cockney, who, emancipated for a day from the smoke and thralldom of the city, had found the temptation of appropriating a single flower from the rich and varied store before him, too mighty to be resisted. But the penalty for such a deed, *i.e.*, five shillings per flower, was a heavy one, and my father well knew that if the delinquencies of the impecunious cornet were to be visited in like manner on his guilty head, the payment of the fine would be a

trying demand upon the young soldier's resources. The "boys," as my father called them, who ate his dinners, and were ever welcome to the best he had to give, had one and all of them a kindly feeling for the grey-haired man who judged their juvenile escapades so leniently, and who, when at the whist-table they even went the length of trumping his (their partner's) best card, never lost his temper, or rewarded their carelessness by an oath. The respect in which they held the "beak," on whose good nature and guilelessness of heart young Arthur N—— had successfully traded, had invited confidence, and the kindly magistrate had not now to learn that the boy-soldier was deeply, and almost hopelessly in debt. It is—so the saying goes—"the last feather that breaks the camel's back," and my father could not bring himself to impose the fine of even five pounds upon the foolish young spendthrift, each one of whose fragrant bouquets must have contained a dozen at least, of the much-prized flower; so the interview ended, as I afterwards learned, by a few words of kindly advice from my father, and by the imposition on the culprit of a forty-shillings fine. Nor was this all. The lad's secret was well kept, and from my father's

purse the remainder of the forfeit-money found its way, as did all the fines which on the London pleasure-seekers were imposed, to the dwellings of the poor.

Truly, the "one human heart," which Wordsworth tells us that we all possess, beat strongly in the breast of the good man to whom that foolish young soldier found courage to confess his fault; and if it be true that "best men are moulded out of faults," the penitent, of whose future career I am in ignorance, may eventually have become the better, forasmuch as he had been "a little bad."

I cannot close this chapter—the last in which I record the events of my not unhappy girlhood—without mention of some more of the friends and acquaintances who assisted in rendering that girlhood a still brighter time. Amongst these was one "Sophy Armstrong," who, together with her father, Colonel Armstrong, were frequent guests at my father's house. The latter, who had formerly been A.D.C. to H.R.H. the Duke of York, was at that time an elderly man, and the father of two children—the girl Sophy, with whom I became very intimate, and a popular son, George Armstrong, a clerk in the Colonial Office,

whose health was delicate, and who died of consumption not long after our acquaintance with the family had been formed. The mother of these children was generally supposed to be dead, and it was only by a curious concatenation of circumstances that I discovered her some years after, living, a married woman, under another name, in a retired village in Wales. She became my friend, and when I had heard her story, I told myself that a sadder revelation never fell from human lips.

Colonel Armstrong was one of those agreeable profligates who, in society, can be the most charming of their sex, but who in domestic life are simply *brutes*. The friend and favourite of the royal family, he had passed his life amongst the wits and kindred spirits of the day, and his flow of lively anecdote was inexhaustible. In private, however, he proved himself a cruel tyrant, and the hapless mother of his children at length found her burden too heavy to be borne.

Another of the friends to whom we were indebted for many pleasant hours, was Baron Knesebeck, the equerry of the Duke of Cambridge. My acquaintance with the courtly Hanoverian soldier commenced after this wise.

It chanced on one occasion, when I had ridden with my father to Kew Green, that he, having business as well as gossip to transact with H.R.H., left me at the entrance to Cambridge House with the charge of *his* horse as well as my own upon my hands. Now this was a proceeding to which I had a strong objection. I could manage my own horse, but in the heat of summer, when flies innumerable are holding high revel over the nose and sides of a thin-skinned, well-bred chestnut, the chances of his breaking away are too many to be overlooked. Already was Ali Pasha, after half-an-hour's patient endurance of the ills that horse-flesh is heir to, showing signs of insubordination, when the Baron, seeing my dilemma, came kindly to the rescue. Taking the reins of power into his own hands, he led us, nothing loth, to the shade which a few trees afforded, and from that moment the Duke's equerry and I were friends.

Another short but characteristic anecdote of the pleasant branch of the royal family of which I am writing may as well be quoted here. It took place several years later, and a few weeks previous to my second marriage. I was riding on Wimbledon Common the second charger of

my betrothed, an officer in the 10th Hussars, when the old Duke, with whom curiosity was an especial failing, joined, on his stout bay, our riding-party. My engagement had not at that time been announced, and I therefore parried as best I could the Duke's questions as to the horse and its owner. At last, however, the climax came, for, with a wink of the eye that was more suggestive than regal, His Royal Highness put the following leading question as we sauntered on, "Sweetheart, hey?" There was no resisting this point-blank query, and the soft impeachment had to be owned at last.

CHAPTER XII.

"Therefore, all hearts in love use their own tongues :
Let every eye negotiate for itself,
And trust no agent."—SHAKESPEARE.

I NOW come to a period of my father's life in which I, strange as the fact may appear, saw cause to modify the remark concerning my relations with him which at the close of a previous chapter I gave utterance to. The cause of that modification was far from being an uncommon one, it having for its origin certain conflicting views regarding an offer of marriage, which at the early age of seventeen, I received.

My father was, during several years, in the habit of passing, with his belongings, a portion of every winter at Brighton. To this temporary migration I, as the season for it came round, looked forward with intense anticipations of delight. We always occupied a house in the King's Road, and the mere pleasure of seeing

the crowd of carriages and equestrians, as they rode and drove in the bright sunshine before the windows, was one which by repetition was never for me bereft of its exciting charm. Little did I think, however, that on the last occasion when my father and his belongings visited Brighton, that the first great event in my life was soon after our arrival, to take place there. That event was no other than my first ball, to which I, together with my sister, were in the following fashion, bidden.

I was riding at a foot-pace, for the crowd was considerable, along the West Cliff, when my father was unceremoniously hailed by Lord Errol, who, on our coming to a halt, said, "I have orders from the King, Jesse, to say that you are to bring your daughters to the Pavilion Ball to-morrow night." "But," remonstrated my father, "they are too young. This one" (meaning me) "is not out, and——" But he was allowed to say no more, for Lord Errol, after reminding him with a laugh that the invitation was a command, hurried away, leaving us to discuss the wonderful event which had taken place. As a matter of course we went, and when the rather dreaded presentation to gracious, kindly Queen Adelaide

was over, I thoroughly enjoyed, in what appeared to me a scene in fairyland, "my first ball."

Brighton was not only a gay but a sunshiny town in those days, for the rage for building had not extended northwards, and consequently, when the wind hailed from inland, the demon of smoke did not, as is the case at present, spread its baleful wings over the South Parades.

At the period of which I write, the meets of a capital pack of fox-hounds were frequently within a reasonable distance of the town, and great was my delight when, owing to a proximity which—by the impecunious non-possessors of a second horse, was of course felt to be a boon—my father and myself were enabled to ride to covert, and see something of the anticipated sport. I was well mounted, for my father, thanks perhaps to his Yorkshire birth and raising, was a good judge of a horse, and the short-jointed, half-bred old hunter which I rode, was admirably suited for the Down country. His shoulder, lying well back, was perfection, and he was more than equal, as a woman's horse should be, to my weight. As much could not be said for my father's *monture*. He was a magnificently made dark chestnut, and had been a right good horse

in his day, but that day was nearly over now, or he would not have been in the hands of an owner who could not afford to give long prices for his nags. The necessity which existed for sparing the legs of his old favourite led in the sequel to certain wholly unlooked-for results. In the first place, I unfortunately very soon lost sight (amongst the ups and downs of the rolling country) of my father; for my horse being young and fresh, was ready to follow wherever hounds were leading, the consequence of which not unfrequently was, the return of myself and steed, minus my legitimate chaperon, to the paternal roof.

Under these inlegible circumstances, it is scarcely surprising that I should have met on my homeward way, more than one substitute for the protector who had so evidently missed *his*, and also that one of those substitutes, the youngest and the best-favoured, proved eventually the cause of almost the first difference of opinion which with my father I ever had the misfortune to experience.

Well aware was I, whilst listening to my first offer of marriage, that the threatened loss of my companionship would cause my kind parent to

view with distaste any proposal for my hand which might be made for me ; and under these circumstances it was only natural that he should seize upon any reasonable excuse for the veto which from the first I had anticipated. And yet, beyond the fact that my *pretendant* could boast of but little of this world's goods, there existed nothing concerning him to which exception could be taken. He had lately left Cambridge, and having chosen the Church as a profession, had been offered, as a title for orders, a curacy by the incumbent of one of the largest parishes in Sussex. With the exception of his adopted calling, which I, like the wicked, foolish, pleasure-loving girl that I was, objected to, I saw in Lionel Fraser every good and perfect gift by which the love of a young girl could be gained. He was young and handsome, well-born, and oh ! so much too good to be the husband of a frivolous child like me ; for although he was full of energy and life, and rode as forward to hounds as any member of Mr. Craven's Hunt, his heart—at least as much of it as could be spared from me—and the mental powers with which he was plenteously endowed, were centred in the performance of the duties of his calling.

My betrothed, for such, disregarding my father's opposition, I considered the man I had learned to love to be, was the youngest son of a member of the diplomatic corps, who having married *en second nocés* the daughter of Mrs. Dorset, authoress of the "Peacock at Home," and sister of Charlotte Smith, the novelist,* was one day found dead on the beach at Hove. In the churchyard of that parish there is a monument to his memory, on which it is recorded that at the time of his death he was "Her Britannic Majesty's Plenipotentiary to the Courts of Lower Saxony." Unfortunately, the circumstances attendant on his decease afforded my father a fresh, and, in his opinion, a still more cogent excuse than he had possessed before, for his refusal to ratify my engagement. He had always both felt, and openly expressed his unquerable objection to marriages with members of a family in the veins of which the fell taint

* The sisters were co-heiresses, the beautiful property known as Bigner Park in Sussex being theirs. Charlotte Smith's share, however, was soon made away by an unprincipled husband, and she was reduced to the necessity of trusting to her pen for a livelihood for herself and family. The late General Sir Lionel Smith was her eldest son, and after her death a memorial stone relating to her was inserted in the wall of the house, which in the town of Storrington, Mrs. Charlotte Smith had for many years resided.

of insanity was even suspected to lurk ; and seeing that the cause of Mr. Fraser's death remained a mystery, the *possibility* of its being due to suicide was an argument against my marriage that was too important not to be made use of. The shadowy nature of this suspicion would, however, I think have been of less importance in my father's eyes, had not some singular revelations regarding the Fraser family, which about that period came to his ears, strengthened his belief in the hypothesis that it was neither by accident, nor an attack of illness that Mrs. Dorset's son-in-law had met his end.

It had frequently been a subject of some little surprise that, although the crest and arms of those whom I may call the Sussex Frasers were similar to those of the Saltoun family, the name of the former branch was nowhere made mention of in the Peerage. This anomaly was after a while, in the following manner, accounted for. In the reign of George the Second, a young man bearing the name of Fraser is mentioned in contemporaneous histories as having risen rapidly in political and public life, till at an unprecedented early age he became an Under-Secretary of State, for what department, however,

I am ignorant. Whether or not the signal favour with which this young man was treated by the sovereign excited at the time the curiosity of King George's subjects, cannot now be known, but after a while, the fact leaked out that it was his own son by a lady of the noble house of Fraser that His Majesty had delighted to honour, and to whom he had given legal permission to bear, in common with his descendants, the arms, crest, and motto of the Saltoun family. The grandsons of the second Guelphic sovereign were the father of my future husband, General Fraser, who was killed at the siege of Deeg in India, and Admiral Percy Fraser. There was also a grand-daughter, who by a second marriage, became Lady Doyle, and the stepmother of Sir Hastings, and of the diplomat Percy Doyle. The discovery of this direct kinship with the line of Guelph rendered my father more than ever adverse to an union which clashed against one of his strongest and most deeply-rooted prejudices : his kindly nature, however, induced him at length to give a reluctant consent to a marriage which the possession by me of a few independent hundreds—the legacy of a godmother—rendered financially

realisable. Before those few hundreds would be exhausted, it was our sanguine hope that some judicious possessor of Church preferment would reward my husband for the zealous discharge of his duties; for which he had already, at the age of twenty-five, rendered himself known. We were married in June, and before the winter set in, I had begun to take an interest in parish work, and was in truth as happy as youth and health (together with the absence of all anticipations of evil) could cause a wife of my age and temperament to be. The pride that I took in my husband's talents was only equalled by that which I felt in his untiring efforts to convert "sinners from the error of their ways." The quiet life, so different from what had been my ideal of a bright existence, was, therefore, until the Spring came round again, I repeat, a very happy one; but alas! with that Spring, a cloud, that was at first no bigger than a man's hand, made its appearance in the horizon of my sky. I began to perceive, slight as were at first the signs I noticed, a change in my husband's moods, and a certain restlessness that was foreign to his character. His temper also became variable, and although his love for me

remained unlessened, the tender gentleness by which it had once been characterised had undergone what to me was an alarming change.

I was at that time looking forward to becoming, in a few months, a mother, a fact which may perhaps account for the unreasoning dread with which these changes filled my mind. Was my father, I asked myself, about to be justified in his objections to the marriage, and was it my lot to undergo the most awful of punishments for the sin of undutifulness of which I had been guilty? Could it be that the brain that was so swift to engender ideas, which, whether grave or gay, were always, to my thinking, worthy of being listened to, was about to be visited by the direst calamity to which God could subject His creatures? By terrors such as these my mind was so perpetually haunted, that at length, unable to endure my mental sufferings alone, I wrote confidentially to my kind friend, Mrs. Charlotte Mordaunt, that I was miserable! She, who had always admired and appreciated my husband, responded to my appeal at once. Almost as soon as post-horses could bring her, she arrived at the pretty Shropshire Vicarage, which was then, with an improved income, our

home, and during the fortnight of my dear relation's stay, I perceived little cause for uneasiness. The object of my solicitude was absent throughout the greater portion of each day in parish work, and more especially in the engrossing effort to awaken to a sense of his soul's danger a certain sick and old, and apparently hardened sinner, whose cottage was situated at the farthest extremity of the village, and who for a long time, had resisted every effort on my husband's part, to make him see the danger of dying while upon his head lay the burden of unrepented-of sins. From day to day it was my husband's wont to tell me how his work was speeding, and at last, on one never to be forgotten evening in late October, he returned with the joyful intelligence that "Kempshall," whose end had been, for several days, hourly expected, had expended his latest breath in fervent prayers for pardon to the God whom he had offended.

"I wonder," added my dear one solemnly, "whether old Kempshall and I will meet each other in heaven;" and then, with his accustomed bright manner, he proceeded to amuse his guest with spirited sketches (for he was a clever draughtsman) of some of the figures, male as well

as female, whom he had met with in his rounds. Feeling somewhat tired, I retired early to rest, and was too drowsy to make any response to the loving words, "God bless my boy," which were whispered over my pillow. Ah! how little did I then anticipate the bolt which from the blue of my sky (for my former fears were lulled to rest) was about to fall upon me! In the early morning I was awakened by a short yet agonised cry, one which, even before I could call for help, was followed by a heavy stertorous breathing—a sound which, once heard, it is difficult to forget. He never spoke again, and had it not been for my unborn infant's sake, I believe that in the agony of my grief I should have died. They took me back to my father's house, and there, three months later, the "boy," who had already received his father's blessing, was born.

And now, having perhaps at too great length recorded the melancholy story of my early widowhood, I will revert to the share in this affliction which my dear father, with a patience worthy of his generous nature, bore in my great grief. Indeed, but for that share, and for my earnest wish to record a striking proof of Christian-like forgiveness of ingratitude and of

wrong, I should feel that many, as well as humble apologies, were necessary for the intrusion of my private sorrows into these simple annals of a good man's life. Most unworthy did I at that time show myself of the parent of whose too partial affection I had always received such abundant proofs; for remembering only the objections of my father to the marriage which had terminated in such terrible suddenness, I conceived a morbid prejudice, which amounted even to a dread, of seeing his face again. I entertained at first a perfectly unwarrantable fear that he would rejoice in that his anticipations of disaster had been justified by results, and the first gleam of consolation which in my affliction was vouchsafed to me, resulted from the ascertained cause of my dear husband's death. It was known that a few months before he left Cambridge, when a bevy of reckless spirits were holding, after a wine-party, high revel in the hall of their college, the tallest and strongest of those wild youths threw, for very wantonness, and in his pride of strength, the most popular of the undergraduates over his shoulder on to the stone pavement of the hall. He fell upon his head, and was taken up, as was imagined—

dead! He recovered, however, and was to all appearance the same "good fellow," than whom none could sing a better song, whether its theme were the joys of hunting, or the torments of the tender passion.

But although to outward appearance no harm had resulted from the fall, a fatal injury had been inflicted. A hidden evil had been slowly but surely working, and at last the rupture of a tiny vessel in the brain did its deadly work. For my boy's sake it was a relief to hear that the injury was amply sufficient to account for the symptoms which, previous to my cousin's visit, had so much alarmed me. All fear of hereditary insanity being now removed, I, although feeling thankful that my father's fears had not been realised, I for a time closed my heart more firmly than ever against him, for he had, I told myself, been unjust to the dear one I had lost, and to see and speak to him was more than I could bear.

And how good he was, and how patiently he endeavoured to obey the fiat of the doctors, who were of opinion that, in the then condition of my nerves, a meeting with him might produce disastrous consequences, were truths which until

some months after the birth of my child had elapsed, I never knew. In a small house such as ours, it must have been a work of difficulty to avoid a meeting which I so foolishly and ungratefully dreaded, and it was only, as I was afterwards told, by untiring efforts on my father's part that the doctor's orders were carried out. And during all that weary time he was yearning, as I could well believe, not only to be near me, but to endeavour by prayer and gentle reasonings to bring me to a more submissive frame of mind than the one, in which he could not but fear I was indulging. His own belief in the existence of a beneficent and superintending Providence was unbounded, and I own with shame the truth that one reason why the thought of meeting my father was to me painfully repugnant, had its rise in my conviction that the stereotyped Scripture phrases which counsel unquestioning submission to the Divine will and *pleasure* would, by one who had never experienced the agony of bereavement, be brought to bear upon my rebellious spirit. In truth, I was in no mood to see the hand of Divine Love in the blow which had been dealt to me. My dear father, however, was, I am happy to say,

spared the knowledge that I did not inherit his immutable faith in the dogma that a merciful God is the directing agent of every awful calamity which befalls His creatures. Fortunately, when, after many months of the strictest seclusion, I awoke to the fact that I was making a cruelly ungrateful return for the untiring tenderness which from childhood upwards had been my portion, the time had gone by when the religious consolation which from my father's lips I shrank from, would be in season. I was safe too, thanks to his singularly forgiving nature, from any reproaches on his part for the selfish indulgence in sorrow of which I had been guilty. He was too thankful for the doubtful good of having me again for his companion, and the sharer by degrees, in his walks and rides, for the memory of the long months of gloom which, like a darksome pall, my presence therein had thrown over his home, to be remembered by my dear kind father in the days that were to come. Very often has the thought crossed my mind how well it was for him that the Book of the Future is hidden from human ken! Had some "good angel oped" its pages for his inspection, he would, methinks, instead of rejoicing over

the prospect of my return to worldly interests and pleasures, have felt his heart sink within him at sight of the ills which, one by one, I should, in the course of my earthly pilgrimage, be called upon to endure.

CHAPTER XIII.

“And every mother loves, you know,
To make a pigeon of her crow.”—GAY.

It is, I imagine, seldom that “infants in arms” are objects of attraction, even to their nearest male relatives. Even a grandfather, tottering on the verge of second childhood, will be found ready to inform his friends that he never cares to notice children until they are old enough to be amusing. This general prejudice against babyhood in its earliest stages, my father was very far, in the case of my little son, from sharing. From his very birth he, metaphorically speaking, fell down and worshipped the fatherless child, which, in its white robes and mourning ribands, was brought to him to bless; and later on, when the little one had reached the mature age of eight months, it was with exceeding pride that he related an anecdote concerning his small

grandson, in which, singular as it may appear, the poet Wordsworth bore a part.

It had reached my parent's ears that during his last long vacation, my husband had spent some weeks in the neighbourhood of Windermere, and that whilst there, he and the poet had grown very near to becoming—

“A pair of friends, though *one* was young,
And *th' other* seventy-two.”

Many were the hours which the passionate admirer of the Laureate's poetry, spent, either in taking long walks with the author of the “Excursion,” or in lounging with him on the brae-side, and listening with rapt attention to the recital of such passages as the poet deemed the worthiest—where all was beautiful—to be listened to. Now, whether it was the genuine admiration of the undergraduate for the beauties of thought and of versification, of which he himself was so ready to estimate the value, or whether the aged poet was capable of appreciating at their just worth the character and endowments of his new friend, cannot now be known. Certain however it is that Wordsworth not only gave the undergraduate a cordial welcome to Rydal Mount, but presented him, when

the hour for separation arrived, with his own beautifully bound copy, in four volumes, of his poetical works. His knowledge of these facts induced my father, when his little grandchild was, as I before said, old enough to "take notice," to invite Wordsworth, together with a few other friends, to dinner, the intention being to introduce the poet to the orphaned child of his old acquaintance. Of this project I had, unfortunately, received no previous warning; consequently, when the guests, including the Laureate, had arrived, my little son was in his bed asleep. Now, as every mother, as well as child's nurse, must be well aware, the awaking from his first slumber (to say nothing of his being suddenly brought in unexpected contact with strangers) is likely enough to produce on the infant mind the reverse of a soothing effect. Fortunately, however, for the success of my father's project, the little one in question did not happen to belong to the class of "infants clamorous," who, whether "pleased or pained," are always ready to indulge society with a howl. A "jolly little chap," one of the young Hussar officers quartered in Hampton Court Barracks had called the boy, when, instead of being

frightened at the sight of a drawn sabre, he had endeavoured with his tiny hands to gain possession of the weapon; and such being the little fellow's nature, I fearlessly lifted him from his cot, and carried him, flushed and rosy, to the drawing-room, in order that he might make acquaintance with his dead father's friend. Now, although William Wordsworth is well known to have been overflowing with the milk of human kindness, his appearance, stern and rigid, with "high top bald with grey antiquity," like some of his own mountains, was ill calculated to inspire the mind of a newly-awakened infant with confidence, and the child's stare of bewilderment when the tall form of the Laureate towered majestically before his wondering gaze, was not altogether encouraging. If, however, the recluse of Rydal Mount had only abstained from any display of individual interest, a *scene* might have been avoided; but to act on even the least important of stages a subordinate part, did not chime in with our guest's estimate of his own importance, and the result of this peculiarity was, that the good old man, holding out a pair of long black arms towards the sleepy child, said kindly—

“He will let me take him! I have grandchildren of my own, and know their ways.”

Then, to my dismay, the little underlip began to droop, whilst the look which portends an outbreak, spread over my darling’s face.

“What!” exclaimed Mr. Wordsworth, whose susceptible vanity even a half-scared infant possessed the power to wound, “make such a face as that at an old man and a poet!” and he retreated in haste, whilst I, with a murmured apology for the babe’s ungracious reception of his advances, was glad to escape with my charge before the audible proof of lung power, which I could perceive was not unlikely to occur, had been produced.

As my fatherless child increased in intelligence and beauty, for he was in truth a very bright as well as handsome little fellow, so did the delight and pride which my father took in his grandson grow day by day more evident, and my efforts to prevent the spoiling by over-indulgence of the child, were constantly called into requisition. It was a curious, and to me an interesting sight, that of the six-feet high grandfather and his (say) three-feet nothing descendant, walking hand in hand, and very slowly, in order to accommodate

the pace to infant feet, across the "Green." Often from my bedroom window have I watched the pair, praying the while, with tearful eyes, that the little one might eventually become as good a man as the grandsire whose hand his little fingers clutched so closely. Alas! I was in later years fated to learn how inimical to the fulfilment of my wishes was the system of over-indulgence to which my boy was early subjected. The melancholy circumstances attendant on his birth were probably answerable for much of the petting and making-much-of which fell betimes in his young life to the bright, handsome little fellow who was born fatherless.

It was to the Barracks generally that my father led his small companion, for the child doated on the sights and sounds which accompany military life, whilst the amount of elaborately adorned toy instruments of warfare which by those thoughtless young warriors, who cordially welcomed the ill-matched pair of pedestrians to their quarters, were presented to their child-visitor, would have supplied with bendable swords, and harmless pistols a whole regiment ordered upon foreign service.

And thus it was that very gradually, I emerged

from the seclusion in which I had for nearly two years been buried, and partook again of the pleasures which were suited to my age and disposition. With renewed zest I accompanied my father in his rides and fishing expeditions, whilst my enjoyment of the excursions, in which Mr. Mitford was our frequent companion, had by dint of abstinence therefrom, rather increased than diminished. And now *à propos* of our old and highly valued friend, the charm of whose society was perhaps enhanced by my long avoidance of his companionship, a letter from him to my father, in which he (Sylvanus Urban) alludes to an article on "Instinct" which he had written for the *Gentleman's Magazine*, shall, as the letter is an amusing one, be transcribed here. My father's theories regarding a future life for animals were not only unshared by his *fidus Achates*, but were usually treated by the latter with a playful raillery, at which it would have been captious to take offence:—

"MY DEAR JESSE,—I am sorry to hear of your illness, and trust that you will again revive to drive me to 'fresh fields and pastures new.' As to your being flat, why, a man who is so fond

of fishing in troubled waters cannot expect *high* spirits. You remind me of broken promises and perjured vows. Woe is me! I lose all method, industry, fidelity, and all other virtues, small and great, as long as summer lasts. I live out of doors like a wild man, an Ourang-Hurryskurry, never at home. To-day wicketing at Woodbridge, to-morrow boating at Ipswich. I drop Urban. I am all Sylvanus. But your tender rebukes have called me to myself. *Me recolligo*. I ponder on my past ways, and amend. You shall hear. My Prime Minister, to whom I pay twelve shillings a week, my Reis Effendi, my *κηποτύραμμοι*, Jonathan Pratt, will get the cuttings to-morrow, and they will go up by the mail the same evening. May they thrive! And may you live to have gum-trees of your own, and sit under the shadow of your own Eucalyptus, as Fitzroy did under his sweet chestnut, for such is the *Fagus*, and not a beech. Talking of trees, I have lauded you in the *Gentleman's Magazine* of next month, in a note to my review of Kirby's Bridgwater Treatise, where you will see what I say of 'Instinct,' and also you will see the richest list of pines and firs ever given to an ungrateful world. Your new volume I

shall read with delight, when old Nick lets it out of his Pandemonium. As to the motto to the Wyattville portrait, it ought to be pithy, saying a great deal in little compass; but that is not so easy. Ask Mr. Hallam, consult Mr. Croker, question Mr. Bayley,* turn over Sir H. Halford's Harveian oration, written with the fear of Dr. Copplestone before his eyes. My parish clerk, who is a bit of a satirist, thinks that the following would do—

NOVA . MAIESTATE . DECORATVM .
 CASTELLVM . REGIVM . AVCTVM . ADORNATVM . EFFIGIEM . ARCHITECTONIS .
 LVBENS . CONSERVAT .

“Do you mean to have a translation for the use of the Maids of Honour? or will you have an *interpretatio* beneath it, like a Delphin Classic? Then Wyattville or Villa Wyatt or the Chateau Wyatt—how will you romanise that? Would *Viaticus* do for Wyatt? But who, except Dr. Parr's ghost, will divine whom you mean by

* Mr. Bayley, the husband of Lady Sarah Bayley, inhabitants of Hampton Court Palace. The former, a rather exceptionally dull personage, was usually to be seen fishing for pike in “Diana Water.” His ledest daughter married Dr. Allen, the Warden of Dulwich College. Sir Jeffrey Wyattville, concerning whose motto Mr. Mitford wrote, was an architect, who, having been employed in works at Windsor Castle, was knighted there by George the Fourth, on which occasion he changed his name from Wyatt to Wyattville.

Geoffridus Viaticus or Villa Viaticus? O Lord! you don't know what you have undertaken. They will have to send to Sir Robert Peel to translate it. Mr. Hudson will be dispatched to Tamworth. You had better leave it alone. Consult those interested in your welfare. If Johnstone's countenance falls when you mention it to him, the thing's decided. You are risking too much. If you break *Priscian's** head, by the soul of Sir John Cheke you will be gibbeted; if you succeed, you will be offered the second mastership of some endowed grammar-school. Talking of grammar reminds me of Skelton and his future editor. I am much obliged to you for endeavouring to assist him. It would be most desirable to see this edition, as the text of Skelton is mighty worm-eaten, and old editions very scarce. Furthermore, he is a most curious and valuable poet, and Mr. Dyce is a most valuable editor. As for the loss of the book at Ham, *nulla manus furior est quam mea*. I hold no unchristian practices of purloining my neighbour's goods. *Nullum librum furtim carpsi*.

* Priscian, a great grammarian of the fifth century. The Latin phrase *Diminuere Prisciani exput* has for its meaning to violate the rules of grammar.

“If Milady* wishes for an Aldine, she shall have it; that is more than you have had, but you shall have one. To-morrow’s post shall waft an order from Benhall to Chancery Lane; and Mrs. Fraser, she too shall be constrained to say, ‘After all, the man means well, I daresay, though he certainly is very disagreeable compared to Captain — and has forfeited his word, which in a parson is unpardonable. Pray don’t have him any more. He is remarkably dull, and can’t even write a sonnet when he is ordered. I don’t believe he wrote that epistle to Parnell, but bought it of some one, ready-made, and changed the names. At any rate, if he comes, he shan’t sit next to me. Let him preach his sermons to Miss Mordaunt; and yet he wishes to be civil, only, living out of the world, and writing for that horrid magazine, he is as old-fashioned and frumpy as if he had never been out of college. Then did you observe how shy and modest he is? Never ventured to look in my face, and blushed when I spoke to him. I don’t think he is much used to ladies’ society. Ah! poor man! he can’t have much pleasure in this world. No

* Probably Lady Dacre, the accomplished sister of Mrs. Talbot, the wife of the translator of “Faust,” who occupied apartments at the top of Hampton Court Palace.

wonder he complains so in his poems. I daresay it is all his own fault. I could see his disposition and temper in an instant. I believe he spends most of his time playing one-handed cribbage. I expected at least to have seen a natural man when you brought him down, but' Here it is said Mrs. Fraser became very energetic, and an eloquent and powerfully drawn portrait was expected, when she was called out of the room to receive a visitor, and I am told that she still retains her opinion, which she has most carefully and candidly formed. It is believed that the gentleman's opinion of her is much more favourable, and he has been heard to mumble something to himself of 'Very agreeable'—'Clever person'—'Should like to know more of her'—'Hope soon to meet her again,' and so on. Perhaps you will hear of him as soon as he can compose a sonnet. In the meantime, I, his friend and confidant, remain most truly yours,

J. MITFORD.

"*P.S.*—I play at Bury on Monday against the West Suffolk. Drink to our success.

"*P.S. 2nd.*—Here is a happy motto for you—

'And thou, Imperial Windsor, stand enlarged.'

—*Prior's Carm. Secularie*, st. xxviii.

“I defy Mr. Croker to give you a better,

Though he's head Reviewer in the *Quarterly*,
And cuts up ladies very naughtily.”

The rapidity with which Mr. Mitford wrote, and this, whether the emanations from his brain were “nonsense verses” or what might have been imagined to be a carefully composed sonnet, caused him to experience not a little wonder at the length of time which other writers bestowed previous to publication on their works; and I remember that on one occasion, and when alluding to this circumstance, he spoke of his having once said to S. Rogers, “Is it possible that you have passed six years of your life in bringing ‘Italy’ to perfection?” The answer of the poet to the query was in the affirmative.*

The following extract from another of Mr. Mitford's short letters is indicative not only of his willingness to oblige his friend, but of his own keen sense of the ridiculous, a faculty in which Samuel Rogers seems to have been totally wanting:—

“I shall be happy to insert the article on

* Since writing the above, I have been told that in a valuable work, lately published, entitled “Rogers and his Contemporaries,” the above anecdote is also narrated.

Herne's Oak whenever you send it. The sooner the better if for the next magazine. Mrs. Fraser thinks that instead of answering the reviewer, you had better break off a small branch from the oak itself, and force conviction to your argument on his shoulders. This also is my opinion. Mrs. Fraser says she learnt the efficacy of this kind of argument from seeing how successfully it was used by Mr. (Hadji Baba) Morier, who was her friend.'

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I now come to an episode in my father's life, on which, inasmuch as it caused him infinite pain, I almost shrink from commenting. It is this selfish sparing of my own feelings which induces me to narrate, in my father's own truthful and simple words, the circumstance to which I have alluded.

"Shortly after the marriage of the Queen, I was informed by the First Commissioner of Woods and Forests that Her Majesty intended to visit Hampton Court, and he requested me to be there, to show her over the Palace. I had lately published a small handbook of Hampton Court, and had a copy especially bound for, and presented to, Her Majesty on her arrival.

I was accompanying her through the picture gallery, when Her Majesty especially called the attention of Prince Albert to a portrait of Michael Angelo, the Queen at the same time remarking on the great merit of the picture. Turning to me, she then expressed a wish that I should express my opinion of the work in question, and I, seeing that Her Majesty held in her hand my handbook, which she was consulting, could hardly avoid (inasmuch as the portrait of Michael Angelo was there described as a copy) saying to the Queen that it was a copy, and a very excellent one, of some other master. Whether or not the Queen was annoyed by my outspoken words, I had of course no opportunity of discovering.

“One of the most stringent orders issued by the Woods and Forests Board was to the effect that no repairs or alterations should be executed at Windsor Castle unless authorised and certified by me. One day, whilst I was paying an official visit to the Castle, I found workmen employed on an alteration for which I had given no order, and it was clear to me that the alterations they were making as regarded chimneys, flues, &c., were likely to endanger by fire the safety of the

Castle. On inquiring how it came about that the work was being executed without my knowledge, I was informed that it was by Prince Albert's directions that the changes were being made. Under these circumstances, it was my duty to report to the Commissioners what was going on, and furthermore to express my opinion regarding the danger to the Castle by fire if the work were carried on. On receipt of my official report, the said work was at once stopped, but the First Commissioner showed—which I think he ought not to have done—my report to the Queen and Prince Albert. The consequence of this indiscretion was, that shortly afterwards, F. Seymour, whom I had known from his boyhood, called on me, saying that he was charged with a communication to me, which he hoped I would believe was made by him with great regret, the duty being a most unpleasant one, namely, that he had been directed to intimate to me that it was the Queen's desire that I should not again enter the Castle."

The sympathy which, far and wide, was felt and expressed by my father's many friends for this summary expulsion from the scene of his long official duties was very keen, and it was empha-

sised by the manner in which the sufferer bore the injustice that had been done to him. His forgiving spirit, as well as the high respect for the powers that be, in which he had been brought up, were never more, than in this patient submission to an unmerited wrong, made manifest.

Soon after the event, Mr. Mitford sent the following amusing and characteristic letter to his friend :—

“ 1st June 1855.

“ MY DEAR JESSE,—Nothing could exceed the beauty, the grace, the elegance of the Preface, and also of the capon, which arrived together. I devoured them with equal eagerness. The capon was perhaps a little the firmer of the two. The Preface I hope to see again, for it is immortal, but the capon has gone into eternity. I broiled his left leg to-day, his right was dignified with curry-powder and pickled mushrooms. Our turkeys are but sparrows compared to it—I mean the capon, not the Preface. The cook, housekeeper, and gardener all assembled when its naked beauties were exposed to view. Eliza was in raptures. I had a friend to dinner, and added some whittings, sausages, ham, and apple-

pudding. Suffolk never before saw such a fowl; nor did I ever before have such a present as the Preface.

“A stray parson called in this morning with *Fraser's Magazine*. The review is either by Murray, or his friend Peter Cunningham, that is quite clear. I expect a revise of ‘Hever,’ and then all is finished. When does the birth take place? You should keep within doors, like newly married persons, for a week or so, till you can appear with propriety, to receive the praises which will be lavished on you with a mixture of firmness and modesty. How Murray's door will be besieged, and I—

‘Shall see my little bark attendant sail,
Partake the triumph, and pursue the gale!’

“We have had a heavy fall of snow to cool our vanity. Talking of that, will you ask Cutting, the nurseryman, if he could get me some bulbs of the ‘*Lilium Japonicum*,’ and if so, to send me about four or five? I have just finished a stove for foreign plants, and lighted the fire first to-day. I mean to sit under my own palm-trees, like sad Judea, only I shan't weep.

“I want to know how Mistress Jesse is, and I

send my love. What is done for the woman and the idiot girl? Have you called Prince Albert out? Give me some of your pension, will you?

“I must not forget to thank you for other favours received. I got the card for the Lion at Charing Cross, and the letter from Kew. Which is best, the Lion’s *queue* or the other, I don’t know, but the Lion’s they say has a sting at the end. I have been gardening lustily. My rhododendrons are fine, and my Judas trees might be envied by their brethren at Jerusalem.

“To-morrow I go to Sir H. Bunbury’s and Lord Bristol’s gardens, and return crammed with vegetable knowledge. On Wednesday I presume you are surrounded with floral and *forestal* beauty, but suspect you have a *Suædia gratis-sima* on the Green that beats them all. The Hon. Mr. Harcourt—Lady Waldegrave’s Mr. Harcourt—is going to bring me Mason’s Letters from Nuneham, which I expect to find very interesting.

“If any one wants to see Chinese pansies, purple magnolias, and yellow roses, it will be advantageous for him to come here, for the distance does not exceed two hundred miles. Asparagus and cucumber to order—ducks, young rabbits

coming in with parsley—gooseberry dumplings ready at six o'clock, fourpence each."

"In spite of flowers and musicians, I should like to find myself at Rogers' breakfasts and your dinners, which I hope to enjoy speedily, that is to say, Saturday, to stay Sunday. Sir Joshua is in high favour with me just now. I have been to Barton to see Sir H. Bunbury's, which are glorious. How great a man may be with great defects! Lord Clarendon could not write English and Reynolds could not paint hands!

"I presume—that is to say, imagine, or rather think—that the Roses at Hampton Court are passable good just now. I have formed mine into a beautiful cradle, in which Cupid is lying fast asleep.

Lie there, lie there! sweet God of Love,
Though seldom in my garden seen,
But mourning like a silver dove
You nestle upon Richmond Green.

Yours truly,

J. MITFORD.

"*P.S.*— had a visit yesterday from two red mullets. They called in before dinner. I understood they came from the seaside. They were

particularly agreeable. Being strangers in these parts, they rather blushed on seeing me."

The year of which I am writing closed for me with the sad intelligence, during my absence at Scarborough, of my dear mother's death. The event, though long anticipated, was not the less a shock when it took place, and deeply did I grieve that I should see her dear face no more. After my father's death her portrait in chalks fell into my possession, and I was touched to the heart to find that there were pasted at its back, a few childish lines which, at the age of ten, I had written on my mother's wedding-day. Had not my father prized them they would not have found a place in these pages:—

“As wife so gentle, kind, and true,
She made the cares of life seem few ;
As mother, let her children raise
Their loving voices in her praise.
In all their griefs she bore a part,
Their pleasures cheered her tender heart,
And ev'n when suffering racked her frame,
Her gentle heart was still the same !
Mother ! when years have passed away,
And many another wedding-day,
Though Time perchance has shed its snow
O'er thy dark hair and dimmed thy brow—
Though some may deem thy face less fair,
No charm shall we find wanting there,

SYLVANUS REDIVIVUS.

But feel that love still ling'ring lies
Within thy deep and earnest eyes,
And that when earthly ties are riven,
That heart will watch o'er us in heaven.—M. J."

CHAPTER XIV.

“When I was at home I was in a better place,
But travellers must be content.”—SHAKESPEARE.

MY second marriage, which took place four years after our migration to Hampton Court, was an event which, for a time, considerably interfered with the pleasant as well as instructive intercourse with Mr. Mitford, which I had so greatly enjoyed. During a voyage to Texas and the Gulf of Mexico, which in my husband's yacht I, by medical advice, undertook, I, however, frequently received tidings of my old friend; and the following letter, which my father enclosed for my amusement, and which reached me during a dismally wet day at New Orleans, produced, I am free to confess—unclerical as is its tone—the desired effect:—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—Why were not you amongst

the literati and other personages of distinction at yesterday's fête? All the world too was at the Horticultural Lecture. Old Nic was there with his seven daughters, who stood there with their spectacles on, looking like so many cucumber frames. My dear Jesse, you have no idea of my extreme simplicity, which, in fact, is only just beginning to be known to the world. In a book which came out last week called 'Selections from Milton,' in the index is the following reference, page 103. Milton's wives all virgins—amiable simplicity of Mr. Mitford! He says of me, 'Good, unsuspecting old man! He little knows the wiles and artifices of the female sex,' which, in fact, is very true, including Mrs. N——n and Mistress Honey, whom till last week I took for Minervas, Dianas, and such like. But I must not encroach on that time which on Sunday you doubtless devote to a chapter of the Psalms in the original Hebrew, and in the afternoon to reading to your assembled family the Book of Enoch. If you persevere in this righteous course, and repeat the responses pretty loud in church to prove your piety, you will find yourself, like me, living for ever in the index of an admiring critic. I will call and see you on

Tuesday, as I leave town on Friday. Till then I
am, yours faithfully, J. MITFORD.

“CHELSEA, *Saturday.*”

“*P.S.*—Gracious me! You have turned Pickering’s head. He says you are so *affable*. I told him it was born with you, and that you were noted for it from an infant. I believe he is going to ask you to supper: at least he meditates some mighty project in your favour.”

The letter from my father in which the above was enclosed contained, as may be supposed, matter of a very different character, and, as an antithesis to the flighty effusion of his friend, its merit may I hope be appreciated by the reader:—

“MY DEAR DAUGHTER,—I have, in the first place, to thank you for the excellent guava jelly which, with the turtle, you sent to us from Barbadoes. The former being genuine, which no *bought* guava jelly is, we greatly enjoy, while the London Tavern has engaged to give us three quarts of soup in exchange for the turtle, which arrived in excellent preservation at the docks. Mitford is looking forward with much satisfac-

tion to the turtle-feast which there is in store for him. Your dear mother is, I am sorry to say, very far from well. Her headaches are more frequent, and it is touching to see the devotion of poor little Judy* to her suffering mistress. The faithful dog will not leave your mother's room on the days when the pain she bears so patiently, obliges her to remain alone, and its sorrowful eyes are constantly fixed, even when it seems to be asleep, on your mother's face. The whistling mouse† is alive and well, but I am sorry to say that his wife has devoured a second family of eight, which three days ago she brought into the world. It is not hunger which drove her to this unnatural act, for she devoured everything that was put into her cage. Perhaps it is captivity that has altered the animal's nature; but whatever the cause, we must get rid of her. Your mother will not have her put to death, so she is to be carried to a distance in the country, and allowed to go free. There is no doubt that

* *Judy*, a very small Scotch terrier, of which my mother was extremely fond, and which returned her affection with interest.

† The whistling or singing mouse was a small specimen of its kind, the small twittering of which we once heard behind the wainscot in a Brussels Hotel. We afterwards, on its venturing into the room, caught it in a trap. It took very kindly to captivity, and was afterwards presented by me to my father.

little Jacky's whistle is caused by some malformation in his throat, but as he always seems in good spirits, I hope he does not suffer. He has grown very tame, and makes his way into my pocket in search of biscuit crumbs. I hope that, when this letter reaches you, you will be safe on dry land. You are constantly on my thoughts, for the dangers you must incur are necessarily great, and I am glad to hear that you have prayers on Sunday mornings for yourselves and the crew. When, on your last evening in England, I accompanied you on board the yacht, I was glad to find that the men with whom I spoke appeared to listen with attention to the few words of affectionate advice which I addressed to them. I bade them remember, as indeed we all should do, that in the midst of Life we are in Death, and that their calling being one in which the time given for repentance is but too often short, they should not put off till the *last*, the repentance of which we all stand in need.

“ We had a visit from kind Mrs. Talbot yesterday, and she sends her love to you. Captain T——e is engaged, it is said, to Lord G——e's daughter. He is, as you know, a young man of whom I entertain a high opinion. As for

Mitford, he is, I fear, incorrigible. If I did not believe, which I truthfully do, that he is a far better man than he makes himself appear to be, his condition of mind would give me greater cause than it does for uneasiness. Neither his health nor spirits have lately been at their best, but his sense of humour is so keen, that even when, as in the letter I send you, he is himself made fun of, he can never resist putting his experience of the joke upon paper. He always inquires kindly after you. Believe me ever your affectionate father,

ED. JESSE."

A considerable time elapsed, the spring was far advanced, and the yacht was on her way home, before I again saw the handwriting, (namely, that of Sylvanus Urban,) which I knew so well. The schooner was at anchor among the Bermudas, and lying under the lee of Admiral Sir Charles Adams' flag-ship, the *Illustrious*, when letters from home, including one addressed by Mr. Mitford to my father, were put into my hands. The one which I now transcribe tells in a great measure its own tale, and methinks that the good and grateful sentiments which it contains are corroborative of my

father's opinion, that the writer was too apt to hide under very heterogeneous, and sometimes harmful matter, the good that was in him. The girl, aged about twelve, who at Mr. Mitford's request, and under circumstances into which it is unnecessary to enlarge upon, had been taken for a while by my parents under their protection, was by many persons supposed to possess stronger claims than that of mere compassion on his good offices. Into the truth or falsehood of these whispers my father did not think it necessary to inquire. If rumour in this instance had not, as is too often the case, erred in its surmises, all the more was the child, who had done no evil, a fitting object for the charity which ought to be, yet is not, the concern of all mankind. So the child "Eliza" was received as though she were a relative of his own under my father's roof, and while she remained in her new abode she was treated by him as though she had been a daughter of his own. Mr. Mitford's gratitude for the sheltering kindness which this poor waif—for such by his own account she was—met with from his old friends is clearly evinced by the characteristic letter which, in the midst of coral reefs and on

the classic ground of "vexed Bermoothes," I gratefully received:—

"MY DEAR JESSE,—I beg your kind acceptance of the enclosed verses* for a chapter for your book. I have taken great pains with them, and they are in my best style, being intended for a slight return of gratitude for you and Mrs. Jesse's kindness to that dear child, whom I would not have trusted in any hands but yours. I can make an introduction to the chapter. The original Greek poetry is most beautiful. I have been very close in the first and the fourth, tolerably so in the second, and have added most in the third. Helas!

"I will send in the beginning of the week an order for Gray. I hope you will like what I have sent, for of course it has cost me more labour than a hundred chapters in prose.

"Your anecdote of the black swan is excellent, and I send it to-day to an Evangelical parson.

"Our partridges about here have paired, the thrushes sing, the crocuses appear, and the peach-buds are bursting. The farmers are giving away their turnips. When you can spare

* The verses mentioned are unfortunately missing.

the *Times*, do send it to me. What is said of Dickens' new paper? I long to know. Is Walter epileptic?

“ Ah! what a debt of gratitude I owe to Mrs. Jesse and you, for there is no human being I regard as I do Eliza, whom I took out of the fields keeping cows, and for whom I mean to provide when I am no more.—Ever, ever yours,

J. MITFORD.

“BENHALL, *Sunday*.”

It was not until the summer following our return from the yacht voyage that I had the pleasure of receiving my father and mother under my own roof. The house in which I welcomed them was an ancient and somewhat dilapidated abode situated on the banks of the Wye, and which, as was the case with many such like tenements in Wales, went by the proud name of a “castle.” One wing of the house had been, about half a century before, burnt down, and what remained was (at least such had always been the popular superstition) haunted by the ghost of its owner—a man of evil life, who had been, by his own desire, buried together with his favourite horse in the unconsecrated ground of the “Llangoed” woods.

The salmon-fishing season was at its height; and I had indulged in eager hopes that my father would, during his stay, realise the *acme* of a fly-fisher's delight, viz., the landing with his own rod more than one big, fresh-run salmon. My expectations were, however, fated to be disappointed. In that portion of the Wye on which we had the right of fishing, the sport could only be successfully followed by wading over the half-hidden rocks, which near the banks, are beneath the surface of the water, and, as may easily be imagined, several circumstances combined to render, on his part, so adventurous a course as that of putting on wading-boots, &c., unadvisable. To fish from the wooded banks was therefore all that remained for him to do, and seeing that the difficulty of throwing deftly and lightly over the surface of a stream, is greatly increased by the branches with which the said stream is overhung, my father's success was, I regret to say, not commensurate with the zeal and patience which he from day to day, during the fortnight of his sojourn with us, displayed. He had never in his more youthful days enjoyed many opportunities of practising the higher branches of the art he loved, and therefore he was fated to learn

by experience that the throwing deftly and lightly of an artificial fly upon either loch or stream is an accomplishment that is not to be acquired in a day. The skill and science also which (as he was told by veteran anglers) was a *sine qua non* as regarded success, of "striking" when a fish is hooked, was one which entirely eluded his powers of comprehension. If he lost a salmon he had hooked, he was told either that he "struck" too soon or "too late," as the case might be; whereas the fact, in my opinion, at least, really is, that all depends on whether or not a fish is, or is not *well* hooked. If the hold on him is but slight, no *striking* in the world will, as a rule, prevent a heavy fish from getting away.

As a proof of the danger which unconscious anglers, when fishing in wading-boots, may run, I will here mention a melancholy accident which, immediately after our departure from Llangoed, occurred to Mr. Holmes, a son-in-law of the late Lord Valentin, who, after being our guest for a week, took the remainder of the lease off our hands. During his stay with us, he had unfortunately failed, even in the famous pool, far into which a sunken, smooth-faced rock ex-

tended, to land a fish ; but on the third morning after taking possession, he succeeded in landing a fresh-run 14 lbs. salmon. So elated was he by this performance, that after dinner he donned his wading-boots, and, accompanied by Evans, our old keeper, and two men guests, he proceeded in eager haste to try his luck at the rock pool again. Alas for him ! In his excitement, poor young fellow, he took one step too many along the treacherous water-covered slab of rock, and falling into the river, was at once sucked into the hollow beneath the ledge ! The high water-proof boots he wore rendered all hope of rescue impossible, nor was it till a fortnight later that the river, which had been almost ceaselessly dragged, gave up its dead. The scene after the accident by the river-side was described to me as having been heart-rending, the lately-married wife being on her knees beside the tranquil stream, frantic with grief, and calling vainly, in her pretty evening dress, on the husband who could never listen to her voice again.

But although, as I have already said, his hopes as an angler were to a certain degree frustrated, my father thoroughly enjoyed his visit, and the various excursions into the neighbouring moun-

tains which for his pleasure, we undertook. My dear mother also, whose failing health had long given us cause for anxiety, seemed to revive under the influence of what might almost be called her native air. The reposeful quiet of the country suited her tastes and habits far better than had ever done the mode of life which my father, who, with all his love for Nature's works, was essentially of a social temperament, had always elected to lead.

During the stay of my father at Llangoed, he received one of Mr. Mitford's short doggrel notes, which, seeing that it is the last of the kind that to his old friend he ever addressed, I will give a short space to here :—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—I have been waiting for your book arriving here, filled with trees and flowers. Where has it stopped? Why tarry the wheels of your chariot? Why is Mr. Murray asleep? I don't know an oak from an elm till I get your volume.

“In Suffolk, for six months we are a great deal too dry, and now we are a great deal too wet. We have the ‘former and the latter rain’ all together, and as I can't walk in my garden, I am

contented to swim in it. It is lucky that four rivers don't run through it, as they did through the garden of Paradise. Has not the Thames got atop of Richmond Hill yet ?

“ I am growing fastidious, and can't do without myrtles in the open ground, so have transplanted a border of them. At present, I prefer them to *Victoria Reginas* or *Pauloneas*, or other things with hard names and gigantic leaves. That is all I have done in the department over which Adam first presided, and has been succeeded by Sir William Hooker and yourself.

“ I hope that G. Kitson goes on rightly in his vocation. Man is born to labour, at least so are all but you and a few others of the cream of the earth, whom Providence has crowned with happiness and leisure.

Mon jardin est flétrie,
Et tout le jour je crie
La pluie, la pluie, la pluie !

La pluie est tombé sur ma terre,
Sur mes fleurs et ma parterre,
Oh oui ! Oh oui ! Oh oui !

We have many rare birds, as witness the goosander,
And others which we know not whither they do wander,
Or whence they come ; and I do often wish
That birds and beasts, and even fish,

Could write, and stranger stories pen
Than ever yet were known to sons of men.

“So no more at present from your poor suitor
and humble servant to command,

J. MITFORD.

“*P.S.*—Where is Mrs. Houstoun? Which
does she, land or sea, condescend to roost on?”

It may perhaps be objected by the more serious of Mr. Mitford's critics, that these lines, proceeding from a brain which, as the author tells us, was “full of cobwebs,” are unworthy, alike from their absence of musical merit as for the unclerical expressions they contain, of being copied into these pages. In excuse, however, for my insertion of the rhyming letter in question, I venture to plead, that even in the apparently least thought-out of Mr. Mitford's doggerel lines there is always to be found some suggestion, some pearl amongst the refuse, which may afford to the reader food for thought. The concluding lines of almost the last nonsense rhymes, which Mr. Mitford ever wrote, will, I hope, be accepted as an apology for the insertion of the entire letter.

Since writing the above, I have had an opportunity, through the kindness of Mr. Clayden, the author of "Samuel Sharpe's Life," of reading the following extract from the diary of Samuel Rogers' nephew, and most frequent guest in St. James' Place :—

"*December 22, 1847.*—Breakfast at St. James' Place: Mr. Dyce, Mitford, Harness, Spedding, Gould, &c. &c. Harness was against Dr. Hampden; everybody else seemed against the Bishops. Mr. Dyce was alarmed at the news of some more going to be published from Gray's note-books. Nothing can equal the pleasure of these conversations. Dyce, Mitford (nephew of the historian of Greece), and Spedding are simple, unaffected men, learned, full of conversation and literature. Dyce and Mitford are very little of clergymen, Harness more so."

Another extract from the same volume I also venture to copy, and I do so the more willingly, as the extract in question contains not only a tribute to Mr. Mitford's kindness of heart, but a specimen of the doggerel rhymes of which so many were written to my father and myself.

“As my uncle’s infirmities increased, the circle of visitors lessened, and after a time it was limited to those few whose good sense and good feeling enabled them to make allowance for an old man’s deafness and occasional forgetfulness. Mr. Mitford, the editor of Gray’s works, in some doggrel lines addressed to him when removing to Brighton for the winter, thus describes the reduced list of Tuesday-morning visitors:—

Happy the man, and happy he alone,
Who passed the winter months at Brighthelmstone,
He who, secure within, can say,
I’ve ’scaped from all my London friends away,
From Robinson the loud, and Dyce the gay,
And Henderson, who gives the best Tokay,
And Mitford, ever prosing about Gray,
And Sharpe, who rules all Europe like a Dey :
Now, my friends, do your worst, for I have lived to-day.” *

* Parodied from one of Dryden’s imitations of Horace, 29th Ode, Third Book, beginning “Tyrrhenu regum progenies.”

CHAPTER XV.

"But looking back, we see the dreadful train,
Of woes anew, which were we to sustain,
We should refuse to tread the path again."—PRIOR.

As the owner of our *soi-disant* castle had been in the habit, for the last half-dozen years, of letting his ancestral home to the lovers of fishing, and of such mild grouse-shooting as the Welsh moors afforded, the care of the gardens appertaining to the house had not been altogether neglected. In the old-fashioned flower parterres there blossomed many an old-world perennial favourite. The dazzling crimson of the *Lobelia cardinalis* contrasted well with the dark blue lupin, which, in spite of floricultural neglect, cropped up year after year by its tall neighbour's side; whilst the scarlet *Lychnis* and the tall white "Mary" lilies grew in profusion, and flowered bravely under the rough *surveillance* of a journeyman gardener.

Beneath the shade of a spreading walnut tree which stood on one side of the jasmine-covered porch my mother had loved to sit. The blessed freedom both from household and *company* cares was by her thoroughly appreciated, whilst little bouquets of the flowers she loved the best, *i.e.*, mignonette, clove-carnations, and the white-starred jessamine, which were daily freshly gathered for her from their native stems, recalled to her memory, with a vividness of which only floral perfumes possess the gift, the joys and sorrows of the long since past.

The necessity, real or imaginary, of returning to his official duties, had the effect, to our great regret, of curtailing my father's stay at Llangoed. I was glad, however, to realise the fact that during his short visit he had enriched his *repertoire* of "anecdotes" which were illustrative of animal sagacity and tender-heartedness. He had amongst other specimens of its kind, made acquaintance with my tiny short-legged terrier, "Daddy," and had been an eye-witness of that animal's ingenious method of overcoming a difficulty. "Daddy" had the misfortune to be lame. His shoulder had been injured by a fall from the foot of my bed, and he consequently found his

powers of jumping impaired. One day, whilst showing my guests over an unfurnished portion of the old house, we came, accompanied by "Daddy," to a higher door-step than (however ancient may be the tenement), between two rooms, it is customary to meet with, and the little dog, finding his efforts unavailing to surmount in his usual fashion the barrier which checked his progress, adopted (we watching his proceedings the while) the following ingenious plan. He retreated for a few yards, backwards, and then taking a run, his impetus carried him, as he doubtless felt sure that it would do, to the vantage-ground where he desired to be.

Now this action on the part of "Daddy" could only, remarked my father—and who could gainsay him?—have been the result of a reasoning faculty on the small creature's part which approached very nearly to what is usually called, in the case of human beings, *sense*. Call it, however, by what name we may, it is clear that "Daddy's" instinct enabled him at a pinch to put "two and two together."

Of the intense maternal love which the most timid animals are capable of feeling, my father had the good fortune whilst he was at Llangoed

of witnessing a striking proof. He had one day in the early morning, left his bed in order to examine the weather prospects which the sky held out, when the noise of strife upon the lawn below attracted his attention, and he beheld for a few minutes a deeply interesting fight between two unequally matched combatants. The animals thus matutinally engaged were no other than "Daddy" and a full-grown hare, which, seated on its haunches, was with her vigorous fore-paws defending as best she could, a tiny leveret crouching behind her, from the dog's attacks. The issue of the combat was not, although fierce, of long duration. The devoted mother was forced, maimed and bleeding, to retire from the field, whilst "Daddy," flushed with conquest, bore away his prize—its feeble life having been put an end to—and laid it triumphantly outside the larder door.

Mr. Mitford's inquiries after my whereabouts produced after a few days, the following letter to myself:—

"DEAR MRS. HOUSTOUN,—I have not a notion where you are, on the Wye. I was there last year, and saw Godrich Castle and Sir J. Meyrick's

housekeeper, the two great sights at that time; and further, I had no notion you were in Breconshire, or anywhere else. Jesse lost me my visit to the Island, for which I have grieved ever since from the bottom of my heart. I had set my mind on going there, and even now dream of its green delights.

“Talking of castles, I saw a love of a castle the other day in Kent, Hever Castle, and the room Anne Boleyn slept in—her bed—her chairs—her toilette—her little turret staircase. Oh, what a charming, thought-suggesting thing it was! A person shows it very like Anne Boleyn, excepting that she has not five fingers. I think she rouges, or is it innate modesty displaying itself in the capillary vessels of the cheeks? She is perhaps more like Madame de Maintenon. Her *cheve-leure* is engaging, her hair (whose hair?) falling in long *boucles*. Oh, she’s a widow, the ‘pride of the valley.’ I heard of her twenty miles off. I am not talking of Anne Boleyn, but of Mrs. Fielding. Sir Robert Peel says that she—No—he says that ‘the castle is the most interesting thing in England.’ I think so too, with the exception of yours. Had you any one belonging to your castle who had his or her head cut off?

That would be a great inducement for visitors. It makes a sensation. On second thoughts, I take Mrs. Fielding to be more like Katherine Howard than Anne Boleyn. Her skin is fairer. Let us ask Professor Tytler; he knows all about it. As for Henry VIII. (excuse the transition), there is this to be said in his favour, that his knowledge of music and civil law was very considerable; but I am obliged to refer you to Hume and *Rapin* for the detailed account, and believe me, dear Mrs. Houstoun, very sincerely yours,

J. MITFORD.

“BENHALL, *Saturday*.

“*P.S.*—The enclosed four lines are on a charming little girl, Blanche Sandby, whom I loved dearly. She lies at Kensal Green, and I wrote her epitaph. She is before me all day long:—

Pure and sweet as lilies fair,
Blanche lived amongst us for a day,
Then angels came from realms of air
And bore the blessed flower away.”

From the “Sister Island,” in the Far West of which unhappy country it soon after became my fate to be a lengthened sojourner, I made for some time, on account of my dear mother’s rapidly declining health, frequent visits to Eng-

land. She had been induced, contrary to her own wish—but self-abnegation was amongst her many virtues—to try the effect of the cold-water cure, and it was in the Hydropathic Establishment of Dr. — at Petersham, and whilst slowly taking her prescribed exercise in the Doctor's extensive grounds, that I last saw the one who was to me "the holiest thing on earth." That the promised "cure" was proving, as I had feared would be the case, even worse than an ineffectual one, I felt at that time painfully convinced, and the result only too soon proved that I was right in my forebodings. My father, however, as is the custom with those who have been during a lengthened period, accustomed to the gradual fading away of a chronic, and invariably patient invalid, pursued his normal course, unwitting of the end, which was, in truth, almost "within measurable distance." A letter, moreover, from his old friend and fellow-searcher after the beauties, alike of nature and of art, which about this period he received, bears sufficient evidence that their pleasant pilgrimages had not as yet, either by the shadows which are cast by coming events, or from any other cause, been seriously interrupted.

"MY DEAR JESSE, — Many thanks for the tickets. I propose to come up on Monday next, and I will go with you to Dropmore, or any other place. I should like to go to St. Anne's Hill very much. It is easy of access by getting out at Chertsey.

"As I hope that Thursday will suit you, I shall expect a line to say that this arrangement will do, and I shall be at my lodgings in Sloane Street on Monday evening. You see I have not time to get up for *next* Thursday, as I have two churches to provide for (one per pound) on Sunday, and in the other case I shall have a whole week in town. I presume you would like to fill up the ticket. I know that Miss Meymott* would like to see Sion. Good-bye, my dear Jesse. Ever yours sincerely,

J. MITFORD.

"BENHALL, *Monday 12th.*"

* *Meymott*, the maiden name of my father's second wife, a lady whom he married in the year 1852, and who by her cheerfulness of disposition and care for his comfort contributed largely to the happiness of his declining years.

CHAPTER XVI.

“ Know thou thyself ; presume not God to scan ;
The proper study of mankind is man.”—**POPE.**

AND now, as the sad time, unsuspected by ourselves, was drawing near when the well-furnished brain of this marvellously gifted man would cease its throbbings, and when the fingers which wrote down his quaintly amusing words were about to be almost, of a sudden, rendered for ever powerless, I shall, I trust, be pardoned for condensing in one chapter some of the last letters which Sylvanus Urban ever indited to his old friend and fellow-worshipper of Nature's works. In the last letter there is a ring of sadness, which, despite its playful tone, tells of an inner warning of the end that was so near at hand :—

“ ASTON, YORK, *Saturday.*

“ MY DEAR JESSE,—I am now leaving Aston, having been very ill with influenza this last

week. If anywhere there is a paradise of content, comfort, and benevolence, this is the dwelling. The situation is beautiful, looking in the distance on the Derby Hills; the gardens charming; the people all kindness and goodness. The house, inside and out, is just as Mason left it seventy years ago. All his books, pictures, manuscripts, drawings, furniture, and his favourite chair in its accustomed place. A summer-house is dedicated to Gay, and has his MSS. in the closets. I have found such interesting letters of Pope's, Warburton's, &c., and all which are placed here are at my command. Mr. and Mrs. Alderson are the guardian angels of the place. They support fifty persons entirely all the year round. They give away broth, food, coals every Saturday. All the servants have lived here nearly twenty years, and last of all, Hamlet, the gigantic mastiff, is my companion in all my walks. In short, no one can come here without being better for his visit, and I leave them with deep regret.

“I unfortunately caught the worst cold I ever had, in going to a distant church to see the chapel of the Leeds family and their monuments, and hurried back when very hot to dress

instantly for dinner, so that I am suffering under a bilious fever. Mr. Alderson has a large farm, and has fattened a bullock up to 145 stone, for which the Sheffield butchers are all contending. I must tell you that we live like princes. In the evening I read Shakespeare to them, and the young lady sings divinely. There is a seat and park in the parish belonging once to the Holderness family, which is pretty enough. I thought you would like to have a little sketch of my visit. I shall be in town next week.

“I have a droll character of a doctor, who is visiting the house at all times, and who knows himself so accurately that he always drinks tea in the housekeeper’s room with the ladies’-maid. But though he sits there for hours, he is always punctual to five o’clock, and never comes at any other time. He is very clever, but the oddest fellow I ever saw. Yours truly,

“J. MITFORD.”

The above was, as I have reason to believe, not followed, as might have been expected, by any of the much-prized notes which from Sloane Street my father was in the habit of receiving. Mr. Mitford’s love of country and of his gar-

den, which, unlike that of Shenstone at the Leasowes, had been a "labour of love," and not the outcome of vanity and rivalry, evidently grew daily stronger, whilst his liking for his London lodging decreased. Still, in the following letter can still be traced the quaint and playful humour of the writer :—

"Lord bless my soul, Mr. John Murray! What! Am I to have only one copy of your invaluable book? Why, I have promised one to Miss B——, and then I shall certainly want another myself. I shall read nothing else for the next twelve months to come. Oh, Mr. John Murray, be generous as well as just! Two copies at the least. Even Pickering the inexorable gives more.

"I can't give cuttings. Ten shillings for a bulb of the Emperor of Japan's exportation! They are marked in Carter's Catalogue at one shilling each. *Mais demandez à Mons. Cutting, jardinier, s'il a reçu une lettre dans laquelle je lui ai donné un ordre pour les greffes. J'ai une grande manie pour les fleurs. Selon le sentiment de notre poète anglais, I*

'Die of a Rose in aromatic Pain.'

Mais heureusement, comme un autre poète, I

‘Revive with Nature in the genial Spring.’

“Therefore I should like some of those pinks, which sound beautiful in description, and which Cutting holds out for sale in his Catalogue. As for his hint as regards ready-money, what I have is always at his service.

“There are no family misfortunes just at present, excepting that one of the canaries has cramp in his left leg. One of the goldfishes behaves extremely ill to the others, so that I talked of sending him back to China, when, after a long life of every possible virtue, he expired peacefully on the night of the 18th instant. I am writing his epitaph, which shall beat the Queen’s to dust. I want Mr. Batchelor to send me the Greek lines in the title-page of the first edition of Sterne’s ‘Sentimental Journey.’ Now mind that. Those lines are never repeated. I hope Mrs. Jesse finds the strait waistcoat I recommended her to wear, quite comfortable.

“Your beech tree will come back soon. I have only to verify quotations. I think, if a man wished to discuss the question of the meaning of *Fagus*, he had better leave Cæsar out entirely.

"I have enjoyed the weather, but not in the garden. I take my drives round the seashore in various directions, and have discovered a view across a sea-river, worthy of *Winandermere*. Yesterday I was at Oxford, dining on a grass mound near the old Castle, while the Preventive Service men landed from their cutter, and with their officers fired short rifles and pistols at a target in a pit close to me, but did not hit the mark. I thought them regular dashing-looking fellows, and fit for anything.

"The day before I was at Stavendor Park, *i.e.*, a wood of 200 acres of oaks and hollies of immense age and size, every oak surrounded with a group of hollies ten feet high. In the wood there are as sporting proprietors, first, Lord Rendlesham, secondly, the trustees of the Rendleshap property, and thirdly, Lord Hertford. For game, you never saw the like. I get the keeper to show me about. The wood is beautiful, and then I gave him a dinner at the ale-house. 'Butley oysters.'

"The large commons which extend between me and this country are now covered with *furze in full bloom*, so that yesterday the *gales of fragrance* were everywhere delicious. This led

me lately to look into the subject, and I find that there are two species of *Ulex* furze, one larger and one less, called here the male and female whins. The former blossoms in May, the latter in September, and the latter is now in bloom. I drove over at least eight miles of it and of heather, to Stavendor, and part of the time the blue sea was not a mile from me. Your most illustrious author and friend,

“J. MITFORD.”

Whilst copying my old friend's letters, I am constantly struck by instances of the good-humoured banter wherein are mingled the excellent literary advice, which, wholly without pretension to superior wisdom, he offers to his less experienced correspondent. The spirit in which the said advice was received may, I think, be judged worthy of that in which it was offered. My father was too well aware of his own inferiority, as regarded learning and grasp of intellect, to his friend, for the demon of jealous anger to find a place in his breast. The following lively scrap is suggestive of complete recovery from his lingering illness:—

“MY DEAR JESSE,—Many thanks for the

enclosed. I quite agree in the praise bestowed. I know no place more interesting than H. Court, notwithstanding old Baily and Lady Sarah.

“How the d——l came your book to be reviewed before it was printed? The reviewer is Walter’s curate.

“I have sent the notice to Fraser. I am building a stove to force plants, and have such a darling of a plant in the room—the *Daphne odora*. Oh, its scent must be like that of the Houris in Mahomet’s Paradise! And I have had a present of six fine hyacinth roots. Won’t I be gay in the spring! I hope you are carrying your head high. Don’t speak to B——h. Nod to the foolish virgins, and take your hat off to Sir W. Whympier. The people will know by your change of manners that something great has occurred.

“I shall send you, as the time of the *accouchement* takes place, fresh instructions for your conduct. Be guarded; much depends on it. Dyce is ashamed of his man-mountain, and has written to knock under. He has all the spite of a school-girl who means to tell her governess that Miss Tottileplan in going upstairs,

took two steps at once, for which there is a heavy punishment at Kensington Gore and the Hammersmith seminaries.

“Rogers is plunging into the erie regions of senile apathy. He cares naught for Greville’s death, or his own, but gets drunk as usual at breakfast. I shall send the Archbishop of Canterbury to him.

“Send the capon whenever it suits you and Mrs. Jesse, but send love with it. Eliza is living on mince-pies and broiled turkey; I on humbler diet. I have had the offer of all the Gray MSS. at Stoke. There’s for you! Never was such a pen! Pendragon, Penmanmawr were nothing to him. Such a pen is not to be mended, but take care he don’t get a slit, and show something of the goose, his parent.

“The book to which you allude was written by the Rev. R. Graves of Haventon, near Bath, who died at the age of ninety, I think. He also wrote a novel, which is entertaining enough, called the ‘Spiritual Quixote.’ It is directed against the fanaticism of the Methodists, in the same manner as the ‘Bath Guide.’ This book I possess, but there is another of the same kind by him and Shenstone called ‘Ishenella’ and in two

volumes. Both are scarce. Mr. Graves' character and talent seem much to resemble Shenstone's.

“Mr. Saunders, also, a clergyman of Lalesowen is the author of a history of Shenstone, printed in ‘Bibliotheca Topographia.’ Shenstone was connected with Dr. Percy in the publication of that most valuable work called ‘Religion of Instinct Poetry,’ which was of great use in bringing a pure taste into the school of English verse, which had been well nigh driven out in the days of Pope.

“Then arose Collins, the two Whartons, Aken-side, Thomson, Dyer, and Mather, who got right again, and who put forth good work. There were two other poets at that time, intimate friends of Shenstone, I mean Jago, the author of ‘Edge Hill,’ and Somerville, the author of an excellent poem called ‘The Chase.’ Both had taste, feeling, and poetical talent. You know Jago's little elegy on ‘The Blackbird,’ while Somerville's ‘Chase’ is of course familiar to you. I had a letter with yours this morning from Dr. Beattie, giving very favourable accounts of Rogers after his severe illness, for which I am very grateful, as I have a real regard for him.

“I am just writing for the Ipswich journal

a short paper on the cholera arising from insects. I shall send it this evening. I am very sorry for the death of a friend actress of mine, Mrs. Fitzwilliam. In her the public has lost much harmless amusement. A good actress is difficult to replace.

“I have been thinking to-day of what you write of Mr. Broderick’s opinion as regards Shenstone. He may be right; but I must impress one thing on your mind, that if you are to bring Shenstone back to the public intellect, it must be done by a critical view of his poetry, the age in which he lived, and the change of public taste; also by an entirely new memoir of the man. This is a large and rather arduous business to undertake, and I am convinced it is quite necessary. Merely adding a few MSS. poems won’t do, and won’t advance a step.

“Now I don’t say this to discourage you, but to prepare you for the work you are going to undertake; and this reminds me to refer you to another quarter for information, that is, to Campbell’s ‘Specimens of the British Poets’—an excellent model for you to study. Old Wordsworth, had he been alive, would have given you good instruction on the subject. Ask your

friend Murray what he thinks, or consult Dyce, who has a greater knowledge of English poetry than any man alive (9 Gray's Inn Square), and hear what he says.

“I forgot to say you had better read Phillimore's ‘Life of Lord Lyttelton,’ in which you will be sure to find something useful. And now I think I have helped you to enough sources of information. The rest must be done by your own labours and taste. Parnassus is not as steep as Alma.—Yours truly.”

“And now the task which, with a loving heart, I set myself, is nearly over, for the last letter which my dear father received from his friend is, in his beautiful but somewhat illegible hand, lying open before me. The truly considerate advice which in the last letter I have transcribed was so delicately given, produced good fruits, for without the aid of his long-tried guide, philosopher, and friend, my father felt that the editing of Shenstone's “Life and Works” was a task beyond his powers to undertake.

“MY DEAR JESSE,—Thank you for the enclosure regarding cholera. We seem so far

removed from it in Suffolk, that no one seems to think of it. I go on eating damson-pies, and devouring peaches, and taking calomel as though nothing were the matter with the rest of the world.

“The fly that injured the bean is well known, not a conjecture. The cause of cholera being insect poison is very probable, but you can’t go beyond that.

“As you are at present so interested in Shenstone, I will tell you all I know that is worth telling about him.

“Shenstone died about 1762 or 3. The Leasowes were purchased by a Mr. J. Home, who improved and added to them very much, and made them what they were (not are). He erected a monument in them to Shenstone, with a pretty inscription thereupon; and this reminds me that you should find out who purchased Thomson’s place in Kew Lane, and planted those beautiful trees, and how long he had it. I daresay Lady Shaftesbury can tell you.

“Shenstone wrote and printed a poem called ‘The Snuff-Box,’ which, for some reason or other, Dodsley did not insert in his edition of Shenstone’s works.

“ I possess a copy of Æsop’s Fables in Greek given by Shenstone to Dodsley when he left the Leasowes after a visit, with a friendly Latin inscription to him in the fly-leaves.

“ A selection from Shenstone’s poems, with a few of some of those of his contemporaries, such as Lyttelton, Somerville, Dyer and Jago, might be acceptable and useful.

“ It is not generally known that Christopher Wren, son of the great architect, was a poetical friend of Shenstone’s, and a great humourist. Lord Bathurst informed Daines Barrington that he was the first who deviated from a straight line in pieces of artificial water, by following the natural lines of a valley, or widening a brook, as at Ryskins near Colnbrook. Then, upon Lord Strafford thinking that it was done from poverty or economy, asked him to own fairly how much more it would have cost him to make it straight.

“ *Mon cher*, the above is a very curious anecdote. It is wonderful to think that the little water at Ryskins put the first idea of the Serpentine into folks’ heads. Quote it in your next immortal volume.—Yours ever, J. MITFORD.

“ P.S.—Here I sit forlorn, and poke
About my now deserted bower,

SYLVANUS REDIVIVUS.

Very like Gray's owl at Stoke
In his ivy-mantled tower.

I wish myself at Upton Park,
Listening to your pleasant speeches,
How the Romans on the bark
Carved their names on Burnham beeches.

I wish—but what's the use of wishing?
All things here will end at last;
Life a kind of made-up dish is,
Whereso'er our lot is cast.

“Pray let *la fille* in to hear the service in
St. George's. *Addio, mio caro. Sono molto*
infelice.”

“BENEHALL, *Saturday.*”

CHAPTER XVII.

"The beauties of the wilderness are his
That makes so gay the solitary place
Where no eye sees them."—COWPER.

AMONGST the many letters which, written by Mr. Mitford, I have copied into these pages, there is scarcely one which, whilst bearing testimony to the writer's love for trees and flowers, did not awaken in my breast a keen sense of gratitude towards the friend who gave that love expression. My cause for gratitude lay in this, namely, that having inherited (I imagine, from my father) a taste for horticulture, and a fervent admiration for such grand old oaks and other forest trees as were placed, as it were, under his protection, the tastes which I had early imbibed, were, by association with Mr. Mitford, stimulated into what may almost be called a passion, and to a love for landscape-gardening, to which I owe my endurance of an

existence which for twenty unhappy years I was called upon to endure.

On taking possession of my newly-built home amongst the Connaught Mountains, the "wild bog," as the native population style the soil on which it is their lot to be cast, reached to the very doors and windows of Dhulough Lodge. Truly a very wilderness of moist earth, on which cotton-grass waved, and bog-myrtle, with ditto bean, and stunted heather, together with yellow asphodel alone met the eye, was a view from which a lover of dainty flowers might well turn away, heart-sickened and discouraged; and at first, I honestly confess that the prospect of causing the said wilderness to "blossom as a rose" seemed hopelessly distant. I, however, took heart of grace. The lay of the land was favourable, for the house was built in a kind of punch-bowl, so that shelter from the most trying winds could be obtained. Towering above and behind our roughly-built domicile was a mountain, yeleft Glenumra, the height of which exceeded 3000 feet, whilst in front of us rose Muelhrae, or king (as it is the loftiest) of the Irish mountains, one of whose broad shoulders effectually deprived us of that most glorious of Nature's spectacles, *i.e.*,

the nightly setting of the god of day. Still—a chief desideratum in this case—there was at the foot of Glenumra, natural shelter to be found. Transportable hollies, self-sown and of goodly size, grew along the shores of Dhulough, and the wetness of the climate was in favour of rapid growth. Labour was plentiful, so I set to work at once.

My first proceeding, the month being June, was to dig a trench round the roots, about fourteen inches distant from the stem, of every good holly that I could find, taking care to divide all the larger roots; the *cut* was then filled up with stones, and the tree left for transplanting (young roots having by that time formed round the ball of earth) in October.

My next move but one was a foolish act, namely, that of covering up all the self-made watercourses which lined the mountain-side. I had laid out a narrow walk which wound up the steep ascent of the mountain, and was already begining to see order growing out of chaos, when lo! a few hours' heavy rain burst open all my drains, destroyed the labour of days, and lined the mountain-sides with silvery threads which in the rare sunshine glistened dazzlingly.

Nature had taught me a lesson from which I was not slow to profit. Instead of filling up, I widened and sloped the sides of the drains, planting those same sides with bamboos, the *Osmunda regalis*, and other water-loving plants. The edges of my narrow walk were composed of cuttings of the small-leaved *Cotoneaster*, kept clipped; for in truth I was greatly aided in my work by the fact that in that humid climate, cuttings of most kinds of plants and shrubs took root at once. I had only to insert a few feet or inches, as the case might be, of laurel, fuschia, veronica, or hydrangia into the soil, and the slips, like green bay trees, grew and flourished.

How often in after days, and when nature-loving Mr. Mitford was resting, after his troubled life, in the silence of the grave, have I thought how *he* would have worshipped the luxuriance of vegetation which the mild climate of the West produced. Fuchsias thirty feet high with stems as thick as a woman's wrist; *hedges* of hydrangia, both blue and pink (I have counted on one bush eighty-five blossoms); veronicas of various hues, six feet in height, and blossoming in November! It would almost seem, in truth, so rapid was the growth both of trees and

shrubs, that at no time of the year did they cease to increase in size and beauty'; but it was only when well sheltered from the winds, which blew even from the south so fiercely upon those rain-visited mountains, that they thus attained such rapid growth. Once passed beyond the limits of the small undulating valley, in which my exquisite sub-tropical garden displayed its beauties, the effects of the wind became manifest. Trees of the fir tribe, which within the "valley" had attained twelve feet in height, were contrasted—when the exposed brow was reached—by others of the same tribe, which, planted at the same time, had not added an inch to their stature. The Cupressia of all kinds, as well as the Deodoras, were a sight to see. But even from the south wind I had to provide artificial shelter, a refuge which was secured by means of a summer-house, built on the edge of a precipice frowning down upon the loch, or rather upon a well-wooded walk, in which there was certain to be found the first woodcock of the season.

In common with Mr. Mitford, a longing seized me for a stove-house and small conservatory, and these by degrees I secured. In my exotic fernery I took intense delight. It was built of

unhewn sandstone, and between its walls an inner one of chicken-wire was stretched. Between the walls, moss was thickly pressed, and peeping from between the unseen meshes of the wire were small tropical ferns, together with the various *adiantum*s, and the broad, variegated-leaved *Begonias* came peeping forth. Two tall New Zealand tree-ferns stood in the centre, their rough stems covered with tiny parasitical ferns. Twice a day the walls were syringed, and here, with the wild winds howling without, and the rain ceaselessly descending, I spent much of my time. But the damp of the climate, together with the deprivation of exercise, told severely on my health. During a residence of twenty years in that distressful country, the blessing of health was denied me, and at this day I am suffering severely in every joint from the effects of an uncongenial climate, and the effects of a terrible fall which resulted in hopeless injury to both knees. The strain also upon my nerves and strength which the total deprivation of medical aid entailed upon me was very trying. Although paying largely, according to the extent (86,000 acres) of our 'holding,' for medical assistance, none nearer than Westport, twenty miles

away, was procurable. I could not allow the poor creatures, our dependents, to die for want of aid, and so, at all hours of the night, I was at their beck and call. My reward—an ample one for this trying duty—was hearing, after my husband's death, an opinion expressed by a resident magistrate, our landlord's brother, that but for my claims upon the people's gratitude, my husband's life would long before have been cut short by assassination. Be this, however, as it may, to live for twenty years in comparative solitude, with a revolver always within reach for defence of life, is not a mode of existence which, by the majority of my readers, will, methinks, be deemed an enviable one.

The companionship of faithful and intelligent dogs was a very decided alleviation to my lot, and I cannot resist in this place making honourable mention of one who distinguished herself on more than one occasion for signal acts of bravery. To my father the records of the small animal's deeds were duly transmitted, and received, as they deserved, the full meed and measure of his approval. At a distance of about three hundred yards from the house, there ran along the face of Glenumra Mountain, an almost

perpendicular wall, built of unhewn stones, and which was therefore, to use a term common in the country, "dry." Mortar being conspicuous by its absence, the said wall was but an ineffectual protection from the assaults of black-faced sheep, and not seldom had I to grieve over the destruction caused in the lovely Paradise I had raised, by the acts of the wild animals from whom we drew, as the Irish say, our "support."

Amongst the wild animals in question I may name *cats* of Brohdignagian dimensions, that burrowed in the quarries from which stones for the formation of the wall, and eke the house itself, had been blasted. These formidable creatures having taken to themselves wives from the daughters of Heth (*i.e.*, the domestic animals of their kind, which did their feeble best to defend our property from the legions of rats that found their subterranean way to it from the lake), bred and multiplied amongst the sandstone boulders, feeding, it was presumed, upon such grouse and young hares as came within their clutch.

One fine August day, I and my small fox-terrier "Nell," chancing to be seated in one of my favourite shelters, namely, a plot of ground

on which my only *Wellingtonia* had made rapid growth, when one of the wild cats, which had secreted itself under the low-growing branches of a *Cupressus microcarpa*, sprang from its hiding-place, and catching sight of Nell, ran for safety up the *Wellingtonia*. Nell was on the alert at once, and kept watch and ward under the tree till such time as my shrill whistle brought a man and gun to the rescue. Then a well-directed shot caused the savage animal to fall, "scotched but not killed," to the ground, and the fight for which Nell had been evidently longing, began. She was the smallest of her species that I ever saw, and a present to me from Captain Price of the *Orwell* gunboat, which had been sent round by Government to Killery Bay for our protection. She came of a famous breed, and at once tackled the wounded wild cat. It was for me an awful moment when the two animals—one small and snowy white, and her fierce black foe—rolled together down the grassy slope in what appeared to be a death-grip.

To fire again was rendered, by their close proximity and the fear of injuring the dog, impossible; but at length a blow from the butt-

end of a rifle put the cat *hors de combat*, a circumstance which, sorely mangled though she had been, Nell evidently resented as a grievance.

Many a year has passed since that day, and the garden which I had fashioned out of the "wild bog" has become a wilderness. The tall Mediterranean heaths which I had transplanted from the Killery side are now overrun by the heather and ling of the mountain, whilst the beautiful bell-like species, "only to be found in some parts of Portugal and the Connaught mountains," has vanished out of sight. Trampled under the feet of sheep and cattle are the hedges of hydrangia, veronica, and fuchsia in which I had taken delight, and the hollies I transplanted have been stripped by the "boys" of their stoutest branches for the sake of the shillelaghs, without which no Irishman can take his walks abroad. And Nell too has long ago fought her last fight both with cats and rats, and lies buried under the Wellingtonia, which is now alike a ruin. They were melancholy years which I spent in the Wild West, but I can still think gratefully of the friend who, by inspiring me with a taste for landscape-gardening, rendered these twenty years endurable.

It was not until the latter years of Samuel Rogers' life that Mr. Mitford became one of the most frequent guests at the poet's Tuesday breakfasts, and we find in S. Sharpe's Diary, records of those who, even in Mr. Rogers' extreme old age, and consequent weakness, were wont to congregate round his hospitable board. Amongst those guests we find mention of Alexander Dice, the compiler of "Rogers' Table-Talk," the Rev. W. Harness, Mr. Mitford, Gould the ornithologist, and, in addition to others of greater note, my father. To him as well as to myself the death of our old friend Mr. Mitford, which occurred in the year 1859, was a source of deep and lasting regret. His end, which was the result of paralysis, was unexpected, and took us painfully by surprise. His first attack of the malady, to which he was destined finally to succumb, was, though slight, one which might have been attended, seeing that it seized him whilst walking in a crowded street, with serious consequences. Happily, his fall—for fall he did—was not followed by any fresh disaster, and he was driven home to Sloane Street, helpless as regarded the use of one leg, but with his brain in no wise affected by his accident.

Three weeks since the occurrence of this seizure had elapsed, and our poor friend was still from weakness, a prisoner in his London lodgings, when I, who had been during that time absent in Ireland, went to visit him in the small sitting-room, which until that time I had never entered. It was on the second floor, small and low-pitched. The furniture was shabby, and of the well-worn kind which in the second-floor rooms of third-class furnished apartments is, I imagine, the "rule." It was sad to see, in the midst of such surroundings, the man whose delight it had ever been to live among trees and flowers, and to revel—with the fresh air of heaven whispering round him—amongst the thrice-blessed sights and sounds of Nature.

Seated in a large but very much worn arm-chair, and with a book lying open on his knee, my old friend was, as I at once perceived, very greatly altered. With the courtesy that was with him inborn, he, on my entrance, endeavoured to rise; but with my hand on his arm I prevented the attempt, and then, drawing a chair near him, we began a conversation which, if only owing to the contrasting surroundings of the locality with those amongst

which we had formerly been wont to meet, could hardly be otherwise than unsatisfactory. Alas! however, it was, as I only too soon ascertained, a dialogue for which *unsatisfactory* is far too mild a term; for after touching lightly on one or two unimportant subjects, Mr. Mitford suddenly questioned me concerning myself. "Had I," he asked, "heard anything lately about Mrs. Fraser? It was a long time since he had seen her, and as his landlady was not kind to Mrs. Houstoun, he should look out for other lodgings."

To describe the painfully stunning effect which this wandering speech had upon me would be impossible. That the brain which held so vast an amount of knowledge, and the mind so quick to perceive and to appreciate at their true value all things, whether great or small, that came within the range of his mental vision, should be thus by some jar, some hidden accident to the fearful and wonderful machinery which connects the spirit with the flesh, be "like sweet bells jangled and out of tune," was a fact very terrible to realise. It was with difficulty that I concealed the emotion with which the words, uttered by a tongue on which paralysis had begun to do its work,

awakened in me, and I was glad to have an excuse at hand for cutting short my visit. Between that day, however, and the one on which he took his departure for Benhall, I made frequent pilgrimages up the two steep flights of stairs which led to the stricken man's small, comfortless room, and truly a sadder close to the life of a brilliant scholar could not well be imagined. He had never, as must have been apparent to the reader, attempted to conceal the truth that he was not what is called a religious man. His profession was one for which he was singularly unfitted, and I always imagined him as very much out of place when fulfilling any of the duties which in his sacred calling he had necessarily to perform. When, therefore, he, in a confused and almost incoherent manner, first spoke to me on the subject which, to a mind that is capable of thought, must in cases of sudden and serious illness occupy it, I was startled and distressed by the terror of the unknown future which his words disclosed. Could it be—it would almost seem so—that he was haunted by remorseful memories, and that ghosts of the dead past were rising up like vengeful spirits before his mind's eye? I could

not tell, but the question, in different forms, that was ever on his lips was this—"Will the God who made us what we are, who cursed us with evil instincts and strong passions, punish us in that we were unable to resist their promptings?"

I could not answer him, and as I listened to what at times rose almost to the ravings of fear, my heart was wrung with compassion for the unhappy man, who, at the approach of the last dread enemy, had neither armour, nor weapons wherewith to confront the foe. Of what use, I asked myself, were now to him the stores of learning which, in that now dulled and terror-stricken mind, had been amassed? Happier far, I felt, than he, was the most ignorant of his kind, if at *his* dying hour he could breathe one prayer in the humble hope that in heaven it would be heard and answered!

CHAPTER XVIII.

“ ‘Never mind,’ said Philip ; ‘ the Macedonians are a blunt people ; they call a spade a spade.’ ”—KENNEDY'S *Demosthenes*.

“ *We never mention hell to ears polite.* ”—POPE.

THE reader may possibly recollect that in the earlier pages of this Memoir I have made mention of the warm friendship which for many years existed between my father and Mr. John Walter, the creator, if I may so call him, of Bearwood, and the editor of the *Times* newspaper. The latter was one of the kindest and most large-hearted of men, and he was, moreover—a circumstance which naturally led to the cementing of their friendship—a brother of the angle. It was by my father's advice that Mr. Walter became the purchaser of a barren and unattractive-looking tract of land, which had once been within the precincts of Windsor Forest. That desolate region was, in an incredibly short space of time, converted from a “howling wilderness” into

beautiful and sumptuous Bearwood, while the extensive lake which is visible from Mr. Walter's "palace home" betrays no sign of the fact that it owes its origin to art.

My father was a frequent visitor to Bearwood, and his friendship with its hospitable possessor continued without interruption during that possessor's lifetime; and I may here allude to the fact that to the day of his own death a copy of the *Times* newspaper was daily sent from Printing House Square (*gratis*) to my father. Under these concurrent circumstances, it might naturally be supposed that the office of the leading journal of the day was the last from which would emanate the sharpest blow which during his long life had hitherto been dealt to the peace of one of the kindest and most inoffensive of human beings. Such, however, was unhappily the case, and the particulars of the occurrence—one which for my father's sake caused me much unavailing sorrow—shall now be narrated. My sympathy with that sorrow was the more poignant, inasmuch as I was myself the unwitting and most unintentional cause of his long-enduring regret.

During the early years of my protracted exile

in Ireland, I, partly owing to the lonely character of the life which I was doomed to live, and partly for the sake of the repentant "erring sisters," the amelioration of whose lot I had much at heart, wrote my first novel; and having chosen for its title the suggestive one of "Recommended to Mercy," I endeavoured to find a publisher for the work in question. But all in vain! One after another, the gentlemen to whom I offered the product of my brain refused to undertake, under any circumstances, its introduction to the reading world. This was a blow indeed; and had I not been supported by the knowledge that the *first* works of authors who have since taken a foremost place in literary circles had been treated with a like contumely, I should probably have given up in despair the hopes which I had been cherishing.

On looking back to that period of disappointment and humiliation, I am led to conclude that the opinion which I, in conjunction with *another person*, had formed in private of the merits of the work, was a tolerably high one; for had it been otherwise, the expense of publishing it on "my own hook" would hardly, methinks, have been incurred.

However, not to dwell longer on a subject which for the reader can contain little or no interest, I will simply state that the book, with all its faults—and they, as I can now perceive, were great and many—proved what is called in press jargon, a “success.” The critics gave it, for the most part, both in the daily and the weekly journals, their meed of approbation. Even the monthly magazines had something to say in its favour, while, to crown all, the *Times*, that mighty organ and oracle, as well as leader of public opinion, found a place in its all-important columns for a critique on “Recommended to Mercy,” so long and so eulogistic, that the brain of even a younger and less inexperienced author than myself might, on reading the flattering comments, have incurred the risk of being thrown temporarily off its balance. The novel was published anonymously, and especial pains were taken to prevent the name of its author from becoming generally known. My father, however, was in the secret, and great as well as natural was his satisfaction in that the daughter on whom he lavished a large amount of wholly undeserved fatherly pride had succeeded in winning by her pen, not only a certain amount

of *kudos*, but a "good few" of far from unwelcome hundreds.*

At the period of which I write, it was very generally believed, but with what amount of foundation for the idea I cannot, of course, say, that a "good review" in the *Times* would sell an entire edition of the lauded pages, and that the market value, during the Parliamentary session, of a column in the leading Journal was three hundred pounds sterling! My acquaintance with this real or imaginary circumstance, together with my knowledge of the friendship which between my father and Mr. Walter's family had so long existed, ought, by suggesting to me that private influence had been at work, to have modified the self-glorification with which the review in the *Times* had unfortunately filled my mind. Such, however, was not the case. I flattered myself, like the foolish, inexperienced authoress

* Unfortunately for me, of those hundreds I never reaped the benefit, for Mr. A. Robins, who, trading under the name of "Saunders & Otley," was the nominal publisher of the novel (receiving, according to agreement, 20 per cent. on the sales), quite unexpectedly, and whilst having in his possession the sum belonging to me of £400, "put up his shutters." He had on the previous day given me a bill at six months, for the amount due: *that* was of course dishonoured, and my gains were lost to me and to my heirs for ever. After this crisis in his life, the defaulter took holy orders, and is now the Rev. Arthur Robins, Rector of Trinity Church, Windsor, and Chaplain to the Queen.

that I doubtless was, that I might possibly have, in some slight degree, done my small part in the Christian duty of supporting the feeble after they had been—by stronger hands than mine—helped up. And this being the case, I rashly arrived at the conclusion that to improve the morals of the thoughtless among my sex was a work that had been given me to do.

According to the critics, “novels with a purpose” are rarely successful ventures. In my early scribbling days, however, that dictum had not been promulgated, and I commenced with a light heart, my self-imposed task. The growing evil—a very serious one, as I considered it—which it was my purpose to stoutly combat, was the license of speech and manner in which too many of our English girls indulged, and which had lately led, unfortunately, in more than one well-known instance, to terrible as well as irremediable consequences. The subject was one which, even when handled by a writer of experience, bristled with difficulties; but as if in illustration of Pope’s often-quoted line that “fools rush in where angels fear to tread,” I, without any fear of the perils which beset my path, followed on my way rejoicing. Unfor-

tunately, the art which so many authors possess of throwing a half-concealing veil over a distastefully-sounding word was one which at that time was totally unknown to me. Hidden beneath sweet and attractive flowers, blossoms, in each one of which there lurks a fatal poison, lies often the not to be named *fact*, on the stubborn nature of which the interest aroused in the majority of even our more thoughtfully-written novels is too apt to depend; but of this truth, I—as I before said—knew at that time, *nothing*.

That my plan of proceeding differed essentially from this, was owing entirely to my ignorance of the niceties of story-writing. To *hint* suggestively at a fault, and to conceal the ugliness of that fault by idealising the fallen one, and attributing to her a loveliness, and even purity of thought and feeling, which, to my thinking, are inconsistent with the truth, was a gift which I could not boast of possessing. It was part of my "nature's plague" to call a spade a spade, nor could I perceive any very essential difference between the *misfortune* of Mary Ann the scullery-maid, and that of the Lady Meleora de Montmorency. The results to both, although different, are as a rule disastrous.

In the one case the yielding to temptation too often leads to acts which bring *them* within the reach of the law, whilst the well-born young lady, with whose good name the tongues both of men and women have been busy, must, I declared, throughout her life, and even though some noble-hearted man may generously give her the protection of his unsullied name, remain more or less under a cloud.

This long preamble, one in which the object of this Memoir is apparently lost sight of, can only be excused on the ground that without its insertion no fitting amount of light could, on the subject of my father's wrongs, be thrown. The sketch which I have given of the nature and purpose of the novel which I published under the title of "Such Things Are" will doubtless prepare its readers for the unflattering welcome with which in many quarters it was received. The *Times*, however, was staunch! The new work by the author of "Recommended to Mercy" was, immediately on its appearance, greeted with a large amount of laudation, and just such a modicum of judicious censure as was calculated to procure for the novel a satisfactory sale.

For this act of friendly kindness I was at the time duly grateful, but I had (and that only too soon), for my father's sake, to deeply regret that that gratifying notice in the *Times* newspaper had ever seen the light. As will, however, shortly appear, the hypothesis that to the insertion of the above article the blow which so sorely wounded my father was owing, was far from unfounded; but on this point the reader will, on learning the particulars attendant on the said blow, be enabled to form his own opinion.

It was during one of my short absences from Ireland that I received from my father, who was then making a temporary stay at Richmond, a letter entreating my immediate presence. He was at that time far from well, for Asiatic cholera was rife in the lower parts of the town in which he had been for some weeks sojourning, and his visits and ministrations amongst the stricken poor had told upon a constitution which was at no time remarkable for vigour. I was, after my arrival, greatly struck, on entering his sitting-room, by the change in his appearance, and by the perturbed and anxious expression of his countenance. The story he had to tell was this.

He had on the previous day received a letter from Printing House Square, the reading of which had most grievously distressed him. In that letter the writer expressed, on the part of the *Times* newspaper, extreme regret that its columns had ever been "discredited" by the notice taken in them of a work entitled "Such Things Are." The article alluded to had been—it was averred—inserted through inadvertence, and works by the same author would never again be noticed—so said the writer—by the *Times*, the annoyance inflicted upon those who were answerable for the respectability of the paper being already sufficiently great.

That the above was the *substance* of the letter, which had produced upon my father so evidently painful an effect that his voice trembled audibly whilst he spoke of it, I found no difficulty (much as the effort to speak the insulting words, evidently cost him) in ascertaining; but a proof to me that far worse remained unsaid was this, *i.e.*, that he persistently refused either to show me the letter, or to reveal to me the name of the writer. It was so contrary to his habits to refuse any request of mine, that I could only conjecture—what I afterwards ascertained to be

the truth—that it was owing to his anxious desire to spare me the sight of certain coarsely-made animadversions which he well knew to be totally devoid of truth, that he turned a deaf ear to my entreaties.

The real fact, as regarded the anger of the *Times* authorities, was not long in being brought to light, and it was simply this. More than one Journal of good standing had, for reasons not difficult to understand, ventured to “beard the lion in his den,” and boldly attack the *Times* newspaper for the encouragement (“due to private influence”) of what they chose to call “immoral literature,” and the *Thunderer*, as *Punch* nicknamed the then all-powerful paper, not only lacked the courage to stand by their own opinions, but were mean and cowardly enough to throw, in some sort, the *onus* of their acts upon one whose age and character ought to have been his safeguards against an attack so violent and uncalled for.

My indignation in that *he* had suffered this bitter wrong knew no bounds, nor would I listen to his assertions that the son of his old friend *could* have had no part in the injury which had been inflicted. His Editor, a man of the world,

and also of high standing in that world, would not, I urged, have ventured, despite his social position, to act in this matter without the cognisance at least, of his employer, and therefore it was that on the shoulders of Mr. Walter I threw the burden of the offence. And a cruel offence, to my thinking, it was, and as unjust as it was cruel. "Surely," I to my patient listener argued, "if these people did believe that my poor book had an immoral tendency"—("Absurd!" interrupted my father; but without heeding the interpolation, I continued hotly)—"they should have addressed themselves either to me, or to a man who would not have been, as you are, wounded to the quick by their unmanly and ridiculous accusations."

"I cannot believe," repeated my father sadly, "that my old friend's son can have been a party to this insulting proceeding, and if I were a younger man"——

"You would," I with a smile put in, "have defended your impulsive daughter with your bow and spear. Dear," I continued, caressing, as I spoke, the large, well-shaped hand, the long, aristocratic fingers of which retained, even in old age, the hue and symmetry of youth, "do

not let the thought of that ugly letter worry you. It will do me no harm, for its origin is plainly to be traced, and no one, I hope and believe, will think the worse of me because of the cruel words that have been addressed to you."

It was in this manner that I endeavoured, although with little apparent success, to comfort my dear father under one of the most grievous trials which, in his hitherto prosperous life, it had been given him to undergo. But whilst striving with all my power to make light of the matter, my own heart was greatly disquieted within me. The insult, as well as the gross injustice, with which I had been treated, filled me with a sense of shame and anger, which was rendered by the impossibility of obtaining redress, more poignant still, and more difficult of endurance. The fact that the letter was simply the outcome of personally angry feeling on the part of the *Times* representatives could not undo the circumstance that it had been written, and, moreover, that it contained expressions regarding myself of so insulting and objectionable a character, that my father, knowing well how greatly they would shock me, would not permit them to meet my eyes.

I have perhaps dwelt at too great a length on this painful episode, but I may perhaps be forgiven when I add, that throughout the remainder of my father's life he from time to time dwelt with keen regret upon the rude and unexpected affront which from the office of the *Times* newspaper had been offered to one whose good name was dearer to him than his own. Whether or not he made any reply to the obnoxious missive I never knew, but as a proof of the rancorous and abiding anger with which the heads of the "leading journal" had resented the liberty that, by the daring "smaller fry" of the *dailies*, had been inflicted on them, I may mention that never again has any publication of mine been honoured by a notice in their columns. Nay, so many were the suns which went down upon their wrath, that when, after the lapse of nearly twenty years, and when my dear father had passed away, his daughter, in aid of a charitable work, ventured, through the intervention of a mutual friend, to ask from Mr. Walter the assistance in his newspaper of a few encouraging lines, no answer was returned to my application. Apparently the ghost of John Thadeus Delane was still a power in Printing House Square.

If there be truth in Pope's pithy saying that "no creature smarts so little as a fool," the extraordinary sensitiveness of a man as wise in his generation as the proprietor of the *Times* to the wound which had been inflicted on his *amour propre* is less hard to be accounted for. Very difficult, however, of explanation his conduct must still remain, for his wrath has endured rather more than the twinkling of an eye, and the daughter of his father's friend should, methinks, have been deemed far too slight a butterfly to be wantonly crushed beneath the wheels of his ponderous and powerful juggernaut.

CHAPTER XIX.

"Friends I have made whom envy must commend,
But not one foe whom I would wish a friend."—CHURCHILL.

Two years after my mother's death, my father, who was then remarried, took up his abode at East Sheen, a locality which procured for him the inestimable advantage of Professor Owen's friendship and companionship. Until the year 1862, when the subject of the present Memoir finally migrated to Brighton, the intimacy which was so greatly prized by him with the great naturalist continued unabated, and I have lately had the pleasure of copying some of the letters that from time to time reached the small house in Belgrave Road, Brighton, to which my father, on a retiring pension, repaired, from the charming residence in Richmond Park, which by the taste of the Professor had been greatly embellished. The first of these letters bears date—

“BRITISH MUSEUM, June 18, 1854.

“MY VERY DEAR OLD FRIEND,—Your crab is the *Portunus scaber* of Linneus, a rare British species, and it will be preserved in the Museum as being of intermediate size to the specimens we possess.

“I have now sent me by the Bishop of Newfoundland the mummy of the Great Awk or Garefowl (*Alca impennis*), from beneath a kind of guano four feet deep at Penguin Island, off the coast of Newfoundland, which used to be a breeding-place of the Great Awk before it became extinct. I have got out all the bones, and gave an account of the skeleton last Tuesday night at the Zoological Society, and on the previous Thursday I read my paper on the human fossil remains from the cavern of Brameguel in the South of France, which I went to explore last January, and almost caught my death, the snow being a foot deep, although so near the Pyrenees. I got hundreds of the flint weapons and bone implements of these ancient people, who lived chiefly on reindeer, but also killed the gigantic oxen, wild horses, bouquelins, chamois, and two or three other extinct kinds of deer for their food, crushing every marrow-bone

for the marrow it contained. I expect to have an entire skeleton of the Great Moa, so my hands keep pretty full. Carry and William are both well. Mr. Nettleship is very unwell. Mr. Bates has much recovered, but has left East Sheen for good. We often think and talk of you and Mrs. Jesse, to whom my kindest regards, and believe me ever yours truly,

“RICHARD OWEN.”

After making myself mistress of the contents of the Professor's interesting letters, I wrote to Richmond, requesting the writer's permission to publish them, and at the same time I inquired whether any letters of my father's were in Sir Richard's possession. In answer to this query the latter wrote as follows:—

“I have always regretted not to possess a note or letter from my dear old friend, your father. Many a long chat we had together when we were near neighbours at East Sheen, and while he was fulfilling valuable duties in the Park. I beg to be respectfully remembered to surviving relatives, and especially to yourself.”

The next letter which I here transcribe, affords me both pride and pleasure, since it bears testimony to the esteem in which the world-famed naturalist held his less erudite, but thoroughly appreciating friend :—

“BRITISH MUSEUM, *May 23, 1865.*

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—Never more so than in the recollections which yesterday’s anniversary of thirteen years of added happiness to my life brought with them, in reference to the sweet abode, the superiority of which over the Kew Mansion you first made me acquainted with, and pressed upon my attention with good counsel and encouragement.

“How many kind acts have you to look back upon! May they bring you all the pleasure and peace which are their natural fruit.

“Your delicate and slender insect is the *Ranulea linearis*, an aquatic predatory species.

“Caroline and William join in kindest regards to Mrs. Jesse and yourself. I admire the style of your artist ♀, and shall preserve the shading with your letter. Believe me, yours ever truly,

RICHARD OWEN.”

The letter of the 30th December 1865 is one

which, as a testimony to my father's worth, as well as a proof of the humility of true greatness for which it is remarkable, I am especially grateful for permission to transcribe in this short biography of my father's life :—

“MY DEAR FRIEND,—With hearty thanks for your kind and good wishes, I send you the same from a full heart, and with the memory of much happiness added to my life through your true friendship, society, and example. May I be spared with faculties to impart such knowledge of our Maker's works as I possess for as long a time as you have been privileged to exercise them. I shall receive with grateful pleasure the testimony of your esteem which you propose to give me in the ‘Dedication’ of the collection of your latest writings.

“I am busy, as you may suppose, with my *Dodo*, and hope to have my account of the extinct bird ready for the meeting of the Zoological Society on January 9, 1866. They have come at my busiest time, and I often feel the longing to be at the repose of ‘a retiring allowance,’ for this is a rough world to battle with. I will not fail to send you the earliest

copy of my *Dodo* paper. I intend to arrange the figures of the bones in an outline of Edward's painting of the bird in our gallery, which is quite correct. With my best wishes, I remain, yours ever truly,

“RICHARD OWEN.”

On re-reading, after the lapse of years, an article in the *Times* newspaper which, consequent on my father's decease, appeared concerning him, it occurred to me that I should be acting unjustly towards his memory were I to omit all mention of his strong affection for his son, and the pride which he took in my brother's literary success. It was not until comparatively late in life that the author of “*The Court of England under the Stuarts*,” together with other historical works, turned his attention to literature as an all-engrossing employment (for such it speedily became) of his few leisure hours. After a long continuance in official life as a clerk in the Admiralty, he grew so wearied of the daily and mechanical routine of office work, that he suddenly threw up the then lucrative situation which he filled, and became a free man at last. Could he have endured the existence that had

grown to be so irksome to him, but a few months longer, his period of service would have entitled him to a far larger pension than the one on which he actually retired; but to drag on the lengthening chain to its last link had become impossible to him. And so, to the regret of many to whom his position—for he stood high in the opinion of his chiefs—enabled him to perform “kind deeds and offices of charity,” the well-worn steps of the shabby old “Admiralty” were trodden by him no more. That he himself was well satisfied with the winding up of his long-standing connection with official life, the following short note to my father will prove:—

“GARRICK CLUB, 6th May.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—Many thanks for your kind note. I am very sorry to find you still complaining about your eyes, and to miss your admirable handwriting. You are quite right in supposing that the Admiralty did all they could for me in the matter of my retired allowance. I have a great deal more reason to be grateful than to complain. The Board also sent me a pretty complimentary letter on leaving office. I have some very curious materials relating to

the Princess Charlotte and the Regency, which I may perhaps put together, and in that case I should be glad to receive from you any particulars favourable to your old chief, George the Fourth, if it would not give you too much trouble. I will give your message to my sister, who will, I suppose, return to town to-day. Yours very affectionately,

“J. HENEAGE JESSE.”

It was my brother's habit, long before he left the Admiralty, to pass his evenings at the Garrick Club, where, till the small hours came round, he sat—a well-known figure, and always a welcome one, for he was very popular—at the whist-table. Then he wended his way to his chambers in the Albany Court Yard that looked out on Piccadilly, and in all winter seasons the light in those windows disclosed to the passer-by the fact that the occupant of those rooms was still awake and working. He was, as the critics of the period remarked, a thoroughly conscientious compiler, and untiring were his efforts to procure unquestionable proofs of the facts which he adduced. In the case of Hannah Lightfoot—the “fair Quakeress,” as she was called, and the

object of George the Third's earliest passion—he was more than usually desirous of investigating every possible detail concerning the intimacy and suspected secret marriage between Hannah and her royal lover. The interest which the writer took in the subject is evidenced by the following letter:—

“7 ALBANY COURT YARD,”
Wednesday.

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I should have written to you some time ago, but for the old reason that I have little or nothing to say. The last accounts I had of you from your old Windsor acquaintance Gordon, and from one or two others, were as good as good could be, or I should have written to inquire after you before. Your old friend Dr. Blair breakfasted with me the other day, and seemed to enjoy the strawberry jam and cream which I took care to provide for him as much as he did in old days. I was surprised when he told me his age was eighty-six, for in everything excepting his white hair he seems as young as ever. I am going on with my curious inquiries about Hannah Lightfoot, which I am afraid will turn out not a very wise speculation, either in the way of profit or

kudos, but which has been a very entertaining hobby to me, and, I presume, from the many queer letters that have been addressed to me on the subject, quite as entertaining to others. I hope soon to hear from you telling me of your health.—Yours very affectionately,

“J. HENEAGE JESSE.”

During the latter period of my brother's ten years' stay at Eton College, his intimacy with “mad” Lord Waterford was the occasion of many a wild prank, which more than once threatened to bring both into collision with the authorities. One of these exploits was the purloining of Dr. Keats' flogging-block, and its triumphant conveyance by Lord Waterford to the Clarendon Hotel in Bond Street. Its abstraction was a work of daring worthy of a better cause, and was followed by the departure for Norway in a yacht, of the principal perpetrators. In this excursion my brother accompanied the owner, and was present during the night-broil, when Lord Waterford received a blow on the head which nearly put a stop to his earthly career. During many weeks the ex-Etonian remained with his suffering friend, and after his return to

London entered upon his career of duty at the Admiralty. The "mad Marquis" had a kind heart and generous nature, and would gladly, in days of impecuniosity which followed for his old schoolfellow, have put his well-filled purse at his friend's disposal, but his offers were invariably, with many thanks, refused.

In the last letter of my brother's which I shall quote, it will be seen that the mode of life which he led was telling on his nerves and health. His literary labours were unceasing, whilst the only recreation he allowed himself was his nightly rubber at the Garrick Club. On one of those occasions, Millais, the artist (now Sir John), made on the envelope of a letter, a life-like pencil-sketch of his neighbour, as he (my brother) sat with gravely unconscious face at a whist-table near by. On seeing it, I at once, both as a memorial of the great artist, and as a wonderful likeness of a well-loved face, coveted its possession. But alas! I was too late. It had already been asked for by, and promised to, another.

As a proof of the interest taken by my father in his son's literary pursuits, I will in this place transcribe a letter from John Wilson Croker, of

whom it is apparent that a question having reference to those pursuits had, by his old friend been asked:—

“ALVERBANK, GOSPORT, *September 22, 1854.*

“MY DEAR JESSE,—A slight return of my disorder has made me leave a question of yours unanswered,—that is, to lay your letter aside for a few days, for even now I find that I cannot answer it. I have no books here but a few of the commonest, and none that enable me to say anything more distinct than my *not recollecting* any other letters of Lady Hertford but her correspondence with Lady Pomfret.

“You ask me about ‘letters of *Lady Hertford and also of the Duchess of Somerset.*’ Of course you know that those letters belonged to the same person, though you have worded the phrase as if they were different.

“I think I have seen somewhere a stray letter of hers with the last signature, but I cannot tell where. I have a faint recollection of some tender expression about the loss of her son, which, however, happened before she was Duchess.

“I fear her correspondence will not be very

interesting. She was an excellent lady, of great good sense and piety—most admirable qualities, but not likely to lead her to the topics that enliven familiar letters. Madame de Sevigné had sense and piety, but she possessed a liveliness of mind which the good Duchess does not seem to have had.—Yours sincerely,

“J. W. CROKER.”

“CONSERVATIVE CLUB, *November 28.*”

“MY DEAR FATHER,—I am distressed at not hearing a better account of your eyes, but sincerely hope that you will soon be able to let me know that they are much better. With regard to your kind inquiries about myself, I think that my general health has been better since I have had less work to do, but I cannot say much for my nerves. I never, to the best of my knowledge, ever even heard the name of your friend at whose house my card was left, neither do I think I ever left a card on any one in Kensington, excepting one on Lady Harrington when she was in distress. I have very little to tell you about my book. Since the reviews which I sent you, I have heard but of one other, and as that was forwarded to me by ‘a

good-natured friend,' you may suppose it was not a pleasant one. I have not seen Tinsley since it was published, and as I purposely avoid looking at the newspapers, &c., I naturally know almost as little about how it is getting on as my neighbours do. I am told, however, that it has been having a success at the clubs and in what is called 'Society.'—Yours very affectionately,

“J. HENEAGE JESSE.”

And now, with two more notes from Professor Owen, which I venture, for the reason that they make pleasant mention both of my father and his son, to insert, I shall close this budget of letters, all of which must, I think, have given in their day, pleasure to the receiver thereof:—

“BRITISH MUSEUM, *February 12, 1867.*

“MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,—I am glad you have received any pleasure from my dry account of the Dodo's bones, but they are all that be left now of that species of bird!

“I am so charged with work at this season of annual inspections, stock-taking and reports to Parliament, that I have no time to read any book for pleasure; but I see your son's work at

the Athenæum, and from what I hear it must be very interesting and instructive. What a crash of Overend, Gurney, Chapman & Co. the Vice-Chancellor's wonderfully able report and judgment reveals!

"I am tired of my work, and if I had my way, would start for Brighton to-morrow to have a rubber of whist with my old friend, and a hit of backgammon with his wife. — Ever yours truly,

RICHARD OWEN."

"BRITISH MUSEUM, *May 8, 1867*

"MY DEAR FRIEND,—It is most kind of you to give me the expression of your good opinion of my dear daughter-in-law, for I value it very much, and I feel very confident she will always deserve it. I walked over yesterday to play chess with David Barclay Chapman at Roehampton, and we talked much about you and the good you had done at Brighton. With my best regards to Mrs. Jesse, believe me always truly yours,

"RICHARD OWEN."

And now, the end, so long delayed, was near at last!

Of no distemper, of no blast he died,
But fell like autumn fruit that mellowed long,
Even wondered at because he dropt no sooner.

Fate seemed to wind him up for fourscore years,
Yet feebly ran he on eight winters more,
Till, like a clock worn out with eating time,
The wheels of weary life at last stood still.

DRYDEN EDIPUS.

And yet, prolonged as was that kindly life, it might be truly said of my dear father that his days on earth were not weary ones. So few, indeed, were his warnings of decay, that even when his old friend wrote his last short note, he little thought that before another year would have gone by, the power to "do good," of which he wrote, would be, for the doer thereof, at an end. Of him so many were those who loved and valued him, it might in truth be recorded that he knew "more friends alive than dead," for though, in the course of nature, many of his intimates had gone before him to the silent land, yet so kindly was his nature, and so warmly did he enter into the joys and sorrows of others, that for human and sympathising companionship he was never at a loss. The close of his long life was as peaceful and painless as had been the blameless existence which during fourscore and eight years he had led. To my great grief I was abroad when the end came, and the first intimation I received of the fact that my beloved

father had passed away was made known to me by a notice concerning him in the columns of the *Times*, which in Bruxelles, on our return from the Italian lakes, I read. Many of the facts which the commemorative notice in question contains having previously found a place in these pages, I fear that their repetition here may be deemed blamably superfluous. I, however, trust that their insertion in this short biography may be excused, on the ground that, as a daughter, I cannot but feel proud of the tribute paid in the columns of so important a journal as the *Times* newspaper to my father's memory. During the course of his useful life he received from every member of Mr. Walter's family tokens of affection and esteem, amongst the most valued of which were the many proofs that his godson, Sir Edward Walter, the philanthropic founder of that fine body of men known as the Corps of Commissionaires, held his own and his father's friend in grateful remembrance:—

“On the 28th inst., much beloved and regretted, Edward Jesse, Esq., Brighton, in the 89th year of his age, J.P. for Middlesex and Westminster, and formerly Surveyor of Royal Parks and Palaces.”

THE LATE MR. EDWARD JESSE.*

In the person of Mr. Edward Jesse, the veteran naturalist, whose death occurred on Saturday week at his residence at Brighton, at the ripe age of eighty-eight years, society has lost one of the last links which connected it with the Court of George III., and also one of the most respected members of the Guild of Literature. He was the second son and fourth child of the late Rev. William Jesse, who, while holding the Vicarage of Wellington in Somerset, had the celebrated Bishop Home as his Curate. Mr. Edward Jesse was born at his father's Parsonage, Hutton Cransweek, near Halifax, Yorkshire, on the 14th January 1780, and received his early education, first under a clergyman at Leicester, and afterwards under a French Pro-

* My wish to publish in its entirety the above gratifying notice will, I hope, be accepted as an excuse for the repetition which is to be found in it of some of the facts recorded in the opening pages of this Memoir. I have, however, I fear, a less valid excuse to plead for the circumstance that in a book of mine, published some years ago, and now consigned to the limbo of things forgotten, I, amongst my "Memories of World-Known Men," gave a short sketch of my father's parentage and earlier career. In extenuation for *this* repetition I can only plead my earnest desire to render this short biography, which, at the instance of some of my father's surviving friends, I am publishing, as complete in a succinct form as those who value his memory are desirous that it should prove.

testant *émigré* at Bristol. In 1798, through the influence of Mr. Wilberforce, he was appointed to a clerkship in the St. Domingo Office, where his knowledge of French recommended him to the notice of Lord Dartmouth, who made him his private secretary when he came to be President of the Board of Control. The same nobleman, on accepting the office of Lord Steward of the Household, recommended Mr. Jesse to the notice of the King and other members of the Court at Windsor and at Kew. Having held for some time a commission as Lieutenant-Colonel of the Birmingham Volunteers, under his patron and friend Lord Dartmouth, and afterwards that of Captain in the Leicestershire Militia, Mr. Jesse was appointed by Mr. Sylvester Douglas (afterwards Lord Glenbervie) to the post of Deputy-Surveyor of Royal Parks and Palaces. In this capacity the knowledge of natural history which he had picked up as a child stood him in good stead, and he was enabled to effect many useful and permanent improvements in the royal residences and gardens, more especially at Windsor and Hampton Court Palace. Mr. Jesse held under George III. and IV. the honorary post of Gentleman of

the Ewry at Windsor Castle, and Lord Liverpool during his Premiership bestowed upon him unsolicited, the Commissionership of Hackney-Coaches. This post he retained until the abolition of the office, when he retired on a well-earned pension. Mr. Jesse spent the greater part of his long life in the neighbourhood of Windsor, Hampton Court, and Richmond; but in 1862 he removed to Brighton, where his tall handsome figure and courtly manners will long be remembered, and where he took an active part in the establishment of "The Fishermen's Home." As an acknowledgment of his services to the town, his bust was placed by subscription in 1864-65 in the great room of the Pavilion. Mr. Jesse was the author of "Gleanings in Natural History," "Anecdotes of Dogs," "A Summer Day at Eton and Windsor," &c., &c., and the editor of "White's Selborne," and "Walton and Cotton's Angler." He was also a frequent contributor in his day to the columns of the *Times*, the *Gentleman's Magazine*, *Bentley's Miscellany*, and *Once a Week*. He was twice married, and his widow survives him. His first wife was a daughter of the late Sir John Morris, Bart., of Sketty Park, Swansea, and

a relative of his early friend and patron Lord Dartmouth. By her Mr. Jesse has left three children, two married daughters, Mrs. Curwen and Mrs. Houstoun, and also a son, Mr. John Heneage Jesse, who is well known to the literary world as the author of "The Court of England under the Stuarts and House of Hanover," "Memoirs of the Pretender," "Memoirs of George Selwyn," and "Memoirs of the Life and Reign of George III.," published last year, and reviewed at considerable length in these columns. Mr. Jesse, by observation and experiment, added considerably to our knowledge of the animal creation. At the time of his death he was one of the senior magistrates for Middlesex, having been put into the Commission of the Peace in order to control the visitors who came to see Hampton Court Palace, and were in the habit of committing depredations in the gardens thereunto belonging.

I was alone in the twilight of an April evening when I read, in the nearly deserted park at Bruxelles, this tribute to my dear father's memory. And whilst I read, my tears fell fast, as much from sorrow in that I should

see his face no more, as from self-reproach because that while he yet lived I had not shown him all the love that was his due. Few of the mourners for their dead who are so blest as not to have some shortcomings regarding their lost ones with which to reproach themselves, and of those few, I alas! was not one. And thus it chanced that when it was too late, the thoughts of all his "little, nameless, unremembered acts of kindness and of love" came back to me, and filled my eyes with self-reproachful tears.

Some few days later, when I read in a Brighton journal the following well-deserved testimony to my father's worth, I could have envied—inasmuch as their sorrow was untinged by remorse—the regrets of those who bore him to his last resting-place :—

Brighton Guardian, April 8, 1868.

“The remains of the deeply-lamented deceased were interred in the extra-mural Cemetery, Brighton, on Friday last. Between thirty and forty fishermen connected with the Fishermen's Home, in the welfare of which the late Mr. Jesse had taken a deep interest, and several members of the Brighton and Sussex Natural History

Society took part in the funeral ceremony. The coffin was carried by six fishermen. At the conclusion of the service, but before the mourners had left the grave, an interesting addition to the obsequies was made by the fishermen assembled singing a hymn over their lamented friend."

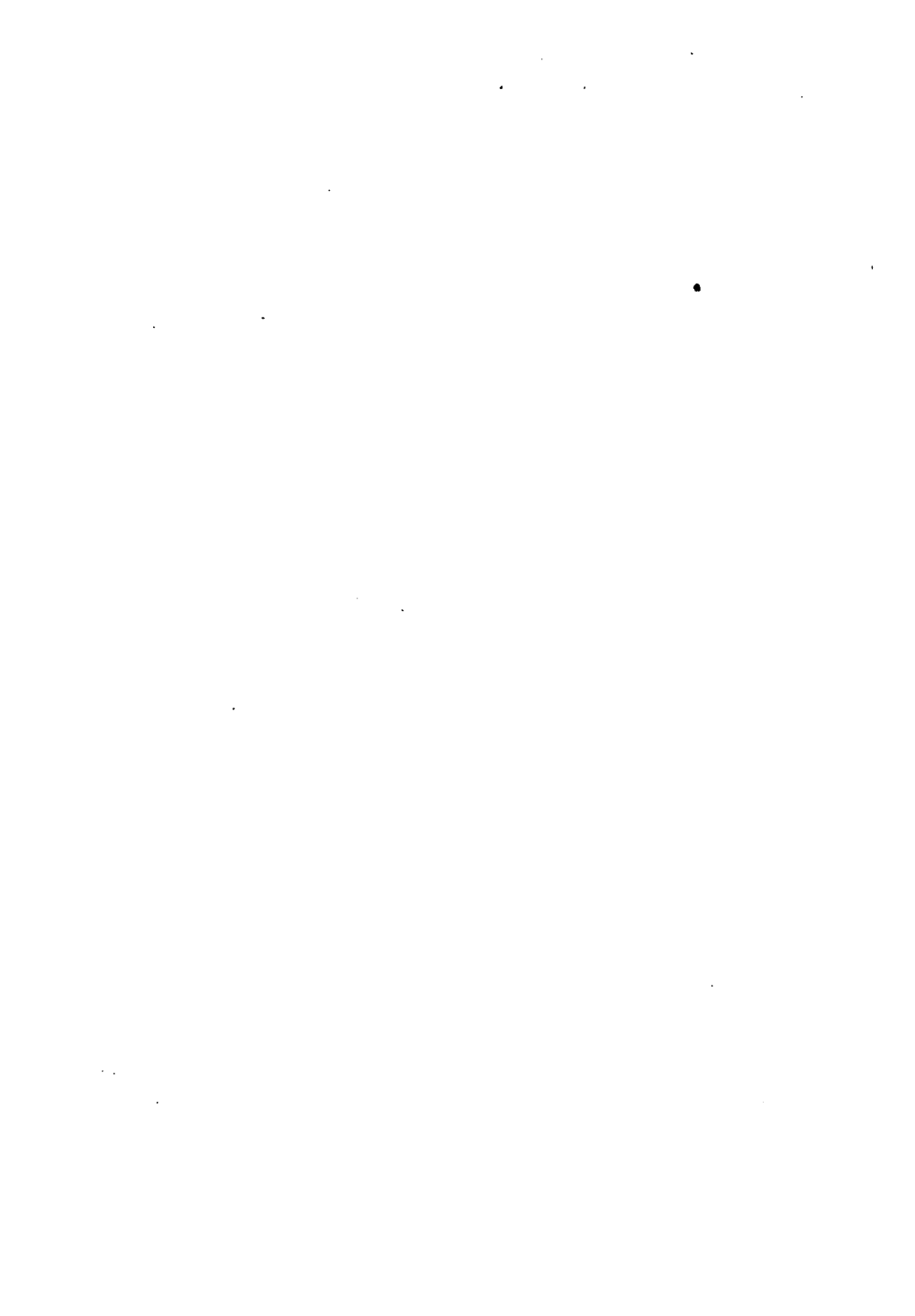
Of that friend it might be truly said that—

“The man who melts
With social sympathy, though not allied,
Is of more worth than a thousand kinsmen.”

—*Euripides.*

THE END.







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