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APRIL

# CORNHILL MAGAZINE

Edited by LEONARD HUXLEY



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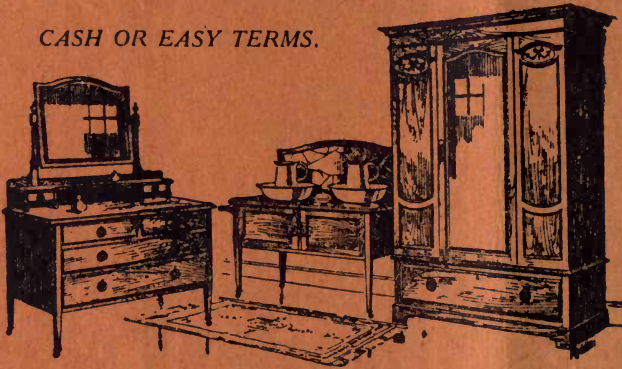
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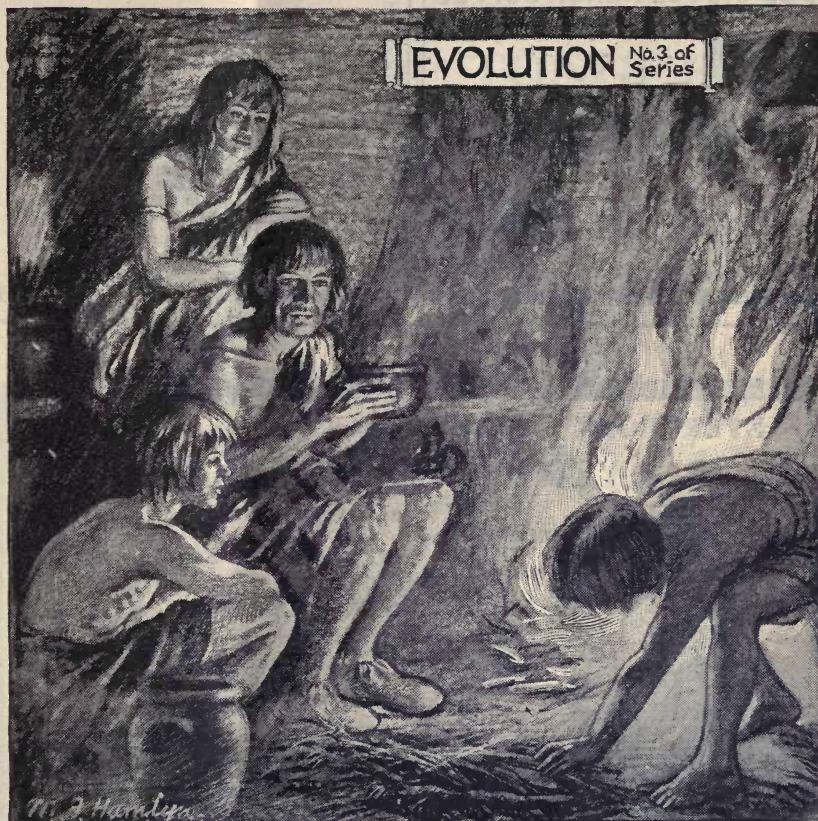
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APRIL 1922.

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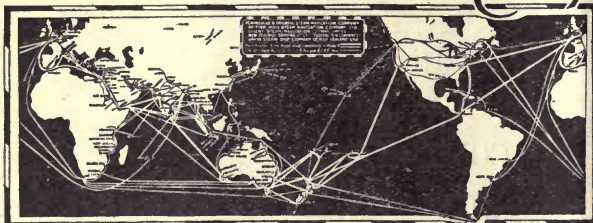
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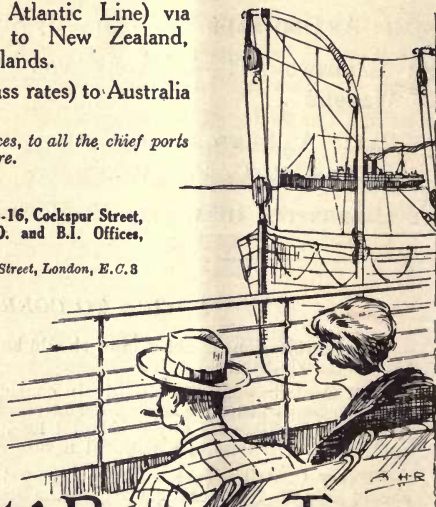
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OVINGTON'S BANK.

BY STANLEY J. WEYMAN.

CHAPTER XI.

JOSINA had put a brave face on the matter, but when the time came to go down to breakfast on the Monday, the girl was almost sick with apprehension. Her hands were cold, and as she sat at table she could not raise her eyes from her plate. The habit of years is not to be overcome in an hour, and that which the girl had to face was beyond doubt formidable. She had passed out of childhood, but in that house she was still a child. She was expected to be silent, to efface herself before her elders, to have no views but their views, and no wishes that went beyond theirs. Her daily life was laid out for her, and she must conform or she would be called sharply to heel. On love and marriage she must have no mind of her own, but must think as her father permitted. If he chose she would be her cousin's wife, if he did not choose the two would be parted. She could guess how he would treat her if she resisted his will, or even his whim, in that matter.

And now she must resist his will with a far worse case. Arthur was her cousin. But Clement? To the Squire he was nobody; she was not supposed even to know him. Yet she must own him, she must avow her love for him, she must confess to secret meetings with him and stolen interviews. She must be prepared for looks of horror, for uplifted hands and scandalised faces, and to hear shameful things said of him; to hear him spoken of as an upstart, belonging to a class beneath her, a person with whom she ought never to have come in contact, one whom her father would not think of admitting to his table!

And through all, she who was so weak, so timid, so subject, must be firm. She must not flinch.

As she sat at table she was conscious of her pale cheeks, and trembled lest the others should notice them. She fancied that

her father's face already wore an ominous gloom. 'If you've orders for town,' he flung at Miss Peacock as he rose, 'you'll need be quick with them. I'm going in at ten.'

Miss Peacock was all of a flutter. 'But I thought, sir, that the Bench did not sit until——'

'You'd best not think,' he retorted. 'Ten, I said.'

That seemed to promise a blessed respite, and the colour returned to Josina's cheeks. Clement could hardly arrive before eleven, and for this day she might be safe. But on the heels of relief followed reflection. The respite meant another sleepless night, another day of apprehension, more hours of fear; the girl was glad and she was sorry. The spirit, gallant enough, warred with the flesh. She did not know what she wished.

And, after all, Clement might appear before ten. She watched the clock and watched her father and in returning suspense hung upon his movements. How he lingered, now hunting for a lost paper, now grumbling over a seed-bill, now drawing on his boots with the old horn-handled hooks which had been his father's! And the clock—how slowly it moved! It wanted eight, it wanted five, it wanted two minutes of ten. The hour struck. And still the Squire loitered outside, talking to old Fewtrell—when at any moment Clement might ride up!

The fact was that Thomas was late, and the Squire was saying what he thought of him. 'Confound him, he thinks, because he's going, he can do what he likes!' he fumed. 'But I'll learn him! Let me catch him in the village a week after he leaves, and I'll jail him for a vagrant! Such impudence as he gave me the other day I never heard in my life! He'll go wide of here for a character!'

'I dunno as I'd say too much to him,' the old bailiff advised. 'He's a queer customer, Squire, as you'd ought to have seen before now!'

'He'll find me a queer customer if he starts spouting again! Why, damme,' irritably, 'one might almost think you agreed with him!'

Old Fewtrell screwed up his face. 'No,' he said slowly, 'I'm not saying as I agree with him. But there's summat in what he says, begging your pardon, Squire.'

'Summat? Why, man,' in astonishment, 'are you tarred with the same brush?'

'You know me, master, better'n that,' the old man replied.



'An I bin with you fifty years and more. But, certain sure, times is changed and we're no better for the change.'

'But you get as much?'

'Mebbe in malt, but not in meal. In money, mebbe—I'm not saying a little more, master. But here's where 'tis. We'd the common before the war, and run for a cow and geese, and wood for the picking, and if a lad fancied to put up a hut on the waste 'twas five shillings a year; and a rood o' potato ground—it wasn't missed. 'Twas neither here nor there. But 'tisn't so now. Where be the common? Well, you know, Squire, laid down in wheat these twenty years, and if a lad squatted now, he'd not be long of hearing of it. We've the money, but we're not so well off. There's where 't is.'

The Squire scowled. 'Well, I'm d—d!' he said. 'You've been with me fifty years, and——' and then fortunately or unfortunately the curricule came round and the Squire, despising Fewtrell's hint, turned his wrath upon the groom, called him a lazy scoundrel, and cursed him up hill and down dale.

The man took it in silence, to the bailiff's surprise, but his sullen face did not augur well for the day, and when he had climbed to the back-seat—with a scramble and a grazed knee, for the Squire started the horses with no thought for him—he shook his fist at the old man's back. Fewtrell saw the gesture, and felt a vague uneasiness, for he had heard Thomas say ugly things. But then the man had been in liquor, and probably he didn't mean them.

The Squire rattled the horses down the steep drive with the confidence of one who had done the same thing a thousand times. Turning to the left a furlong beyond the gate, he made for Garthmyle where, at the bridge, he fell into the highway. He had driven a mile along this when he saw a horseman coming along the road to meet him, and he fell to wondering who it was. His sight was good at a distance, and he fancied that he had seen the young spark before, though he could not put a name to him. But he saw that he rode a good nag, and he was not surprised when the other reined up and, raising his hat, showed that he wished to speak.

It was Clement, of course, and with a little more wisdom or a little less courage he would not have stopped the old man. He would have seen that the moment was not propitious, and that his business could hardly be done on the highway. But in his

intense eagerness to set himself right, and his anxiety lest chance should forestall him, he dared not let the opportunity pass, and his hand was raised before he had well considered what he would say.

The Squire pulled up his horses. 'D'you want me?' he asked, civilly enough.

'If I may trouble you, sir,' Clement answered as bravely as he could. 'It's on important business, or—or I wouldn't detain you.' Already, his heart in his mouth, he saw the difficulty in which he had placed himself. How could he speak before the man? Or on the road?

The Squire considered him. 'Business, eh?' he said. 'With me? Well, I know your face, young gentleman, but I can't put a name to you.'

'I am Mr. Ovington's son, Clement Ovington, sir.'

All the Squire's civility left him. 'The devil you are!' he exclaimed. 'Well, I'm going to the bank. I like to do my business on the spot. Across the counter, young sir, to be plain, and not in the road.'

'But this is business—of a different sort, sir,' Clement stammered, painfully aware of the change in the other's tone, as well as of the servant, who was all a-grin behind his master's shoulder. 'If I could have a word with you—apart, sir? Or perhaps—if I called at Garth to-morrow?'

'Why?'

'It is upon private business, Mr. Griffin,' Clement explained, his face burning.

'Did your father send you?'

'No.'

'Then I don't see,' the Squire replied, scowling at him from under his bushy eyebrows, 'what business you can have with me. There can be none, young man, that can't be done across the counter. It is only upon business that I know your father, and I don't know you at all. I don't know why you stopped me.'

Clement was scarlet with mortification. 'If I could see you for a few minutes—alone, sir, I think I could explain what it is.'

'You will see me at the bank in an hour,' the old man retorted. 'Anything you have to say you can say there. As it is, I am going to close my account with your father, and after that the less I hear your name the better I shall be pleased. At present you're wasting my time. I don't know why you



stopped me. Good morning.' And in a lower tone, but one that was perfectly audible to Clement, 'D—d young counterskipper,' he muttered, as he started the horses. 'Business with me, indeed! Confound his impudence!'

He drove off at speed, leaving Clement seated on his horse in the middle of the road, a prey to feelings that may be imagined. He had indeed made a bad beginning, and his humiliation was complete.

'Young counterskipper!' That rankled—yet in time he might smile at that. But the tone, and the manner, the conviction that under no circumstances could there be anything between them, any relations, any equality—this bit deeper and wounded more permanently. The Squire's view, that he addressed one of another class and another grade, one with whom he could have no more in common than with the servant behind him, could not have been made more plain if he had known the object of the lad's application.

If he had known it! Good heavens, if he said so much now, what would he have said in that case? Certainly, the task which love had set this young man was not an easy one. No wonder Josina had been frightened.

He had—he had certainly made a mess of it. His ears burned, as he sat on his horse and recalled the other's words.

Meanwhile the Squire drove on, and with the air and movement he recovered his temper. As he drew near to the town the market-traffic increased, and sitting high on his seat he swept by many a humble gig and plodding farm-cart, and acknowledged with a flicker of his whip-hand many a bared head and hasty obeisance. He was not loved; men who are bent on getting a pennyworth for their penny are not loved. But he was respected and feared, and known to be just, and if a despot, to be a despot for good ends. He was regardful of his own people and owned a duty to them, and in all companies he was fearless and could hold his own. Men did not love him, but they trusted him, knowing exactly what they might expect from him. And he was Griffin of Garth, one of the few in whose hands were all county power and all county influence. As he drove down the hill toward the West Bridge, seeing with the eye of memory the airy towers and lofty gateways of the older bridge that had once stood there and for centuries had bridled the wild Welsh, his bodily eyes noted the team of the out-going coach which he had

a share in horsing. And the coachman, proudly and with respect, named him to the box-seat.

From the bridge the town, girdled by the shining river, climbs pyramid-wise up the sides of a cleft hill, an ancient castle guarding the one narrow pass by which a man may enter it on foot. The smiling plain, in the midst of which it rises, is itself embraced at a distance by a ring of hills, broken at one point only, which happens to correspond with the guarded isthmus; on which side, and some four miles away, was fought many centuries ago a famous battle. It is a proud town, looking out over a proud county, a county still based on ancient tradition, on old names and great estates, standing solid and four-square against the invasion that even in the Squire's day threatened it—the invasion of new men and new money, of Birmingham and Liverpool and Manchester. The airy streets and crowded shuts—so they call their alleys in Aldersbury—run down on all sides from the Market Place to the green meadows and leafy gardens that the river laps: green meadows on which the chapels and quiet cloisters of religious houses once nestled under the shelter of the walls.

The Squire could remember the place when his father and his like had had their town houses in it, and in winter had removed their families to it; when the weekly Assemblies at the Lion had been gay with cards and dancing, and in the cockpit behind the inn mains of cocks had been fought with the Gentlemen of Cheshire or Staffordshire; when fine ladies with long canes and red-heeled shoes had promenaded the fields beside the river, and the town in its season had been a little Bath. Those days, and the lumbering coaches-and-six which had brought in the families, were gone, and the staple of the town, its trade in woollens and Welsh flannels, was also on the decline. But it was still a thriving place, and if the county people no longer filled it in winter, their stately old houses survived, and older houses than theirs, of brick and timber, quaint and gabled, that made the street a joy to antiquaries.

The Squire passed by many a one, with beetling roof and two-storied porch, as he drove up Maerdol. His first and most pressing business was at the bank, and he would not be himself until he had got it off his mind. He would show that d—d Ovington what he thought of him! He would teach him a lesson—luring away that young man and pouching his money. Ay, begad he would!



## CHAPTER XII.

BUT as the Squire turned to the left by the Stalls he saw his lawyer, Frederick Welsh—rather above most lawyers were the Welsh brothers, by-blows it was said of a great house—and Welsh stopped him. ‘You’re wanted at the Bench, Squire, if you please,’ he said. ‘His lordship is there, and they are waiting for you.’

‘But it’s not time—by an hour, man!’

‘No, but it’s a special case, and will take all day, I’m afraid. His lordship says that he won’t begin until you come. It’s that case of——’ the lawyer whispered a few words. ‘And the Chief Constable does not quite trust—you understand? He’s anxious that you should be there.’

The Squire resigned himself, ‘Very well, I’ll come,’ he said.

He could go to the bank afterwards, but he might not have complied so readily—lordship or no lordship—if his vanity had not been tickled. The Justices of that day bore a heavier burden than their successors—*hodie nominis umbræ*. With no police force they had themselves to take the initiative in the detection as well as in the punishment of crime. Marked men, belonging to a privileged class, they had to do invidious things and to enforce obnoxious laws. They represented the executive, and they shared alike its odium and its fearlessness. For hardly anything is more remarkable in the history of that time than the courage of the men who held the reins. Unpopular, assailed by sedition, undermined by conspiracy, not seldom threatened with assassination, and pressed upon by an ever-growing public feeling, the few held on unblenching, firm in the belief that repression was the only policy, and doubting nothing less than their right to rule. They dined and drank, and presented a smiling face to the world, but great and small they ran their risks, and that they did not go unscathed, the fate of Perceval and of Castlereagh, the collapse of Liverpool, and the shortened lives of many a lesser man gave proof.

But even among the firm there are degrees, and in all bodies it is on the shoulders of one or two that the onus falls. Of the one or two in Aldshire, the Squire was one. My lord might fill the chair, Sir Charles might assent, but it was to Griffin that their eyes wandered when an unpleasant decision had to be taken or the public showed its teeth. And the old man knew that this was so, and was proud of it.

To-day, however, as he watched the long hand move round the clock, he had less patience than usual. Because he must be at the bank before it closed, everything seemed to work against him. The witnesses were sullen, the evidence dragged, Acherley went off on a false scent, and being whipped back, turned crusty. The Squire fidgeted and scowled, and then, twenty minutes before the bank closed, and when with his eyes on the clock he was growing desperate, the chairman suggested that they should break off for a quarter of an hour. 'Confound me, if I can sit any longer,' he said. 'I must have a mouthful of something, Griffin.'

The Squire seldom took more than a hunch of bread at mid-day and could do without that, but he was glad to agree, and a minute later he was crossing the Market Place towards the bank. It happened that business was brisk there at the moment. Rodd, at a side desk, was showing a customer how to draw a cheque. At the main counter a knot of burly farmers were producing, with protruding tongues and hunched shoulders, something which might pass for a signature. Two clerks were aiding them, and for a moment the Squire stood unseen and unregarded. Impatiently he tapped the counter with his stick, on which Rodd saw him, and, deserting his task, came hurriedly to him.

The Squire thrust his cheque across the counter. 'In gold,' he said.

The cashier scanned the cheque, his hand in the till. 'Four, seven, six-ten,' he murmured. Then his face grew serious, and without glancing at the Squire he consulted a book which lay beside him. 'Four, seven, six-ten,' he repeated. 'I am afraid—one moment, if you please, sir!' and breaking off he made two steps to a door behind him and disappeared through it.

He returned a moment later, followed by Ovington himself. The banker's face was grave, but his tone retained its usual blandness. 'Good day, Mr. Griffin,' he said. 'You are drawing the whole of your balance, I see. I trust that that does not mean that you are—making any change?'

'That is what it does mean, sir,' the Squire answered.

'Of course, it is entirely your affair——'

'Entirely.'

'But we are most anxious to accommodate you. If there is anything that we can put right, any cause of dissatisfaction——'

'No,' said the Squire grimly. 'There is nothing that you



can put right. It is only that I don't choose to do business with my family.'

The banker bowed with dignity. The incident was not altogether unexpected. 'With most people, a connection of the kind would be in our favour.'

'Not with me. And as my time is short——'

The banker bowed. 'In gold, I think? May we not send it for you? It will be no trouble.'

'No, I thank you,' the Squire grunted, hating the other for his courtesy. 'I will take it, if you please.'

'Put it in a strong bag, Mr. Rodd,' Ovington said. 'I shall still hope, Mr. Griffin, that you will think better of it.' And, bowing, he wished the Squire 'Good day,' and retired.

Rodd was a first-class cashier, but he felt the Squire's eyes boring into him, and he was twice as long in counting out the gold as he should have been. The consequence was that when the Squire left the bank, the hour had struck, Dean's was closed, and the Bench was waiting for him. He paused on the steps considering what he should do. He could not leave so large a sum unguarded in the Justices' room, nor could he conveniently take it with him into the Court.

At that moment his eyes fell on Purslow, the draper, who was standing at the door of his shop, and he crossed over to him. 'Here, man, put this in your safe and turn the key on it,' he said. 'I shall call for it in an hour or two.'

'Honoured, I am sure,' said the gratified tradesman, as he took the bag. But when he felt its weight and guessed what was in it, 'Excuse me, sir. Hadn't you better seal it, sir?' he said. 'It seems to be a large sum.'

'No need. I shall call for it in an hour. Lock it up yourself, Purslow. That's all.'

'You may consider it done, sir,' Purslow assured him, as pleased as if the Squire had given him a large order. The terms in which he would tell the story at the Gullet that evening already rose to his mind.

Meanwhile, the old man stalked across to the court, where business kept him, fidgeting and impatient, until hard on seven. Nor did he get away then without unpleasantness.

For unluckily Acherley, who had been charged to approach him about the Railroad, had been snubbed in the course of the day. Always an ill-humoured man, he saw his way to pay the

Squire out, and chose this moment to broach the subject. He did so with as little tact as temper.

'Pon my honour, Griffin, you know—about this Railroad,' he said, tackling the old man abruptly, as they were putting on their coats. 'You really must open your eyes, man, and move with the times. The devil's in it if we can stand still always. You might as well go back to your old tie-wig, you know. You are blocking the way, and if you won't think of your own interests, you ought to think of the town. I can tell you,' bluntly, 'you are making yourself d—d unpopular there.'

Very seldom of late had anyone spoken to the Squire in that tone, and his temper was up in a minute. 'Unpopular? I don't understand you,' he snapped.

'Well, you ought to!'

'Unpopular? What's that? Unpopular, sir! What the devil have we in this room to do with popularity? I make my horse go my way, I don't go his, nor ask if he likes it. Damn your popularity!'

Acherley had his answer on his tongue, but Woosenham interposed. 'But, after all, Griffin,' he said mildly, 'we must move with the times—even if we don't give way to the crowd. There's no man whose opinion I value more than yours, as you know, but—'

'Think less of the opinions of others—and stand by your own, man!'

'Oh, come, my friend! You do me an injustice.'

'An injustice?' the Squire sneered. 'Not I! The fact is, Woosenham, you are letting others use you for a stalking horse. Some are fools, and some—I leave you to put a name to them! If you'd give two thoughts to this Railroad yourself, you'd see that you have nothing to gain by it, except money that you can do without! While you stand to lose more than money, and that's—your good name!'

Sir Charles changed colour. 'My good name?' he said, bristling feebly. 'I don't understand you, Griffin.'

One of the others, seeing a quarrel in prospect, intervened. 'There, there,' he said, hoping to pour oil on the troubled waters. 'Griffin doesn't mean it, Woosenham. He doesn't mean—'

'But I do mean it,' the old man insisted. 'I mean every word of it.' He felt that the general sense was against him, but that was nothing to him. Wasn't he the oldest present, and



wasn't it his duty to stop this folly if he could? 'I tell you plainly, Woosenham,' he continued, 'it isn't only your affair, if you lend your name to this business. You take it up, and a lot of fools who know nothing about it, who know less, by G—d, than you do, will take it up too! And will put their money in it and go daundering up and down quoting you as if you were Solomon! And that tickles you! But what will they say of you if the affair turns out to be a swindle—another South Sea Bubble, by G—d! And half the town and half the country are ruined by it! Eh,' bending his angry brow on the offender. 'What'll they say of you then—and of us?'

Acherley could be silent no longer. 'Nobody's<sup>m</sup> going to be ruined by it!' he cried angrily—he saw that Sir Charles looked much disturbed. 'Nobody! If you ask me, I think what you're saying is d—d nonsense.'

'It may be,' the Squire said sternly. 'But just another word, please. I want you to understand, Woosenham, that this is not your affair only. It touches every one of us. What are we in this room? If we are those to whom the administration of this county is entrusted, let us act as such—and keep our hands clean. But if we are a set of money-changers and bill-mongers,' with contempt, 'stalking horses for such men as Ovington the banker, dirtying our hands with all the tricks of the money market—that's another matter. But I warn you—you can't be both. And for my part—we don't any longer wear swords to show we are gentlemen, as I did when I was young—but I'm hanged if I'll wear an apron or have anything to do with this business. A railroad? Faugh! As if horses' legs and Telford's roads aren't good enough for us, or as if tea-kettles will ever beat the Wonder coach to London.'

Acherley had been restrained with difficulty, and he now broke loose. 'Griffin,' he cried, 'you're damned offensive! Yes, sir, you are! If you wore a sword as you used to——'

'Pooh! Pooh!' said the Squire and shrugged his shoulders contemptuously, while Sir Charles, terribly put out both by the violence of the scene and by the picture which the Squire had drawn, put in a feeble protest. 'I must say,' he said, 'I think this uncalled for, Griffin, I do indeed. I think you might have spared us this. You may not agree with us——'

'But damme if he shall insult us!' Acherley cried, trembling with passion.

'Pooh, pooh!' said the Squire again. 'I'm an old man, and it is useless to talk to me in that strain. I've spoken my mind and the plain truth, and——'

'Ay, and you horse two of the coaches!' Acherley retorted. 'And make a profit by that, dirty or no! But where'd your profit be, dirty or clean, if your father who rode post to London had stood pat where he was? And set himself against coaches as you set yourself against the railroad?'

That was a shrewd hit and the Squire did not meet it. Instead, 'Well, right or wrong,' he said, 'that's my opinion. And right or wrong, no railroad crosses my land, and that's my last word!'

'We'll see about that,' Acherley answered, bubbling with rage. 'There are more ways than one of cooking a goose.'

'Just so. But——,' with a steady look at him, 'which is the cook and which is the goose, Acherley? Perhaps you'll find that out some day.' And the Squire clapped on his hat—he had already put on his shabby old driving coat. But he had still a word to say. 'I'm the oldest man here,' he said, looking round upon them, 'and I may take a liberty and ask no man's pleasure. You, Woosenham, and you gentlemen, let this railroad alone. If you are going to move, as you say, at twenty-five miles an hour, then, depend upon it, more things will move than you wot of, and more than you'll like. Ay, you'll have movement—movement enough and changes enough if you go on! So I say, leave it alone, gentlemen. That's my advice.'

He went out with that and stamped down the stairs. He had not sought the encounter, and, now that he was alone, his knees shook a little under him. But he had held his own and spoken his mind—d—n that puppy, Acherley! He shouldn't dictate to him!—and on the whole he was content with himself.

The same could not be said of those whom he had warned. Acherley, indeed, abused him freely, and one or two joined in, but the majority were impressed, and Sir Charles, who respected his opinion, was much shaken. He put no trust in Acherley, whose debts and difficulties were known, and Ovington was not there to reassure him. He valued the good opinion of his world, and what, he reflected, if the Squire were right? What if in going into this scheme he had made a mistake? The picture that Griffin had drawn of town and country pointing the finger at him rose like a nightmare before him, and would, he knew, accompany



him home and darken his dinner-table. And Ovington? Ovington was doubtless a clever man and, as a banker, well versed in these enterprises. But Fauntleroy—Fauntleroy, with whose name the world had rung these twelve months past, had been all these, clever and enterprising and plausible. Yet what a fate had been his, and what losses had befallen all who had trusted him, all who had been involved with him!

Sir Charles went home an unhappy man. He wished that Griffin had not warned him, or that he had warned him earlier. Of what use was a warning when his lot was cast and he was the head and front of the matter, President of the Company, Chairman of the Board?

Meanwhile the Squire stood on the steps of the Court House, cursing his man. The curriole was not there, Thomas was not there, it was growing dark, and a huge pile of clouds, looming above the roofs to westward, threatened tempest. The shopkeepers were putting up their shutters, the packmen binding up their bundles, stall-keepers hurrying away their trestles, and the Market Place, strewn with the rubbish and débris of the day, showed dreary by the failing light. In the High Street there was still some traffic, and in the lanes and alleys around candles began to shine out. A one-legged sailor, caterwauling on a crazy fiddle, had gathered a small crowd before one of the taverns.

'Hang the man! Where is he?' the Squire muttered, looking about him with a disgusted eye, and wishing himself at home. 'Where is the rogue?'

Then Thomas, driving slowly and orating to a couple of men who walked beside the carriage, came into view. The Squire roared at him, and Thomas, taken by surprise, whipped up his horses so sharply that he knocked over a hawker's basket. Still storming at him the old man climbed to his seat and took the reins. He drove round the corner into Bride Hill, and stopped at Purslow's door.

The draper was at the carriage wheel before it stopped. He had the bag in his hand, but he did not at once hand it up. 'Excuse me, excuse the liberty, sir,' he said, lowering his voice and glancing at Thomas, 'but it's a large sum, sir, and it's late. Hadn't I better keep it till morning?'

The Squire snapped at him. 'Morning? Rubbish, man! Put it in.' He made room for the bag at his feet.

But the draper still hesitated. 'It will be dark in ten minutes,

sir, and the road—it's true, no one has been stopped of late, but——'

'I've never been stopped in my life,' the Squire rejoined. 'Put it in, man and don't be a fool. Who's to stop me between here and Garth?'

Purslow muttered something about the safe side, but he complied. He handed in the bag, which gave out a clinking sound as it settled itself beside the Squire's feet. The old man nodded his thanks and started his horses.

He drove down Bride Hill, and by the Stalls, where the taps were humming, and the inns were doing a great business, their lights twinkling through the leaded panes of the low windows. Passing one or two belated carts, he turned to the right and descended to the bridge, the old houses with their galleries and gables looming above him as for three centuries they had loomed above the traveller by the Welsh road. He rumbled over the bridge, the wide river flowing dark and silent below him. Then he trotted sharply up Westwell, passing by the inns that in old days had served those who arrived after the gates were closed.

Now he faced the open country and the wet west wind, and he settled himself down in his seat and shook up his horses. As he did so his foot touched the bag, and again the gold gave out a clinking sound.

### CHAPTER XIII.

THE Squire in his inmost heart had not derived much satisfaction from his visit to the bank. He had left the place with an uneasy feeling that the step he had taken had not produced the intended effect. Ovington had accepted the loss of his custom, not indeed with indifference, but with dignity, and in a manner which left the old man little upon which to plume himself. The withdrawal of his custom wore in the retrospect too much of the look of spite, and he came very near to regretting it, as he drove along.

Had he been present at an interview which took place after he had retired, he might have been better pleased. The banker had not been many minutes in the parlour, chewing the cud of the affair, before he was interrupted by his cashier. In itself there was nothing unusual in this; routine required Rodd's



presence in the parlour several times in the day. But his manner on the present occasion, his look, and the way in which he closed the door, prepared Ovington for something unusual, and 'What is it, Rodd?' he asked, leaning back in his chair, and disposing himself to listen.

'Can I have a word with you, sir?'

'Certainly.' The banker's face told nothing. Rodd's was that of a man who had made up his mind to a plunge. 'What is it?'

'I have been wishing to speak for some time, sir,' Rodd faltered. 'This——' Ovington understood at once that he referred to the Squire's matter—'I must say I don't like it, sir. I have been with you ten years, and I feel—I ought to speak.'

Ovington shrugged his shoulders. 'I don't like it either,' he said. 'But it is of less importance than you think, Rodd. I know why Mr. Griffin did it. And we are not now where we were. The withdrawal of a few hundreds and the loss of a customer——' again he shrugged his shoulders.

'No,' Rodd said gravely. 'If nothing more follows, sir.'

'Why should anything follow? I know his reasons.'

'But the town doesn't. And if it gets about, sir?'

'It won't do us much damage. We've lost customers before, yet always gained more than we lost. But there, Rodd, that is not what you came in to say. What is it?' He spoke lightly, but he felt more surprise than he showed. Rodd was a model cashier, performing his duties in a precise, plodding fashion that had often excited Arthur's ridicule; but hitherto he had never ventured an opinion on the policy of the bank, nor betrayed the least curiosity respecting its secrets. 'What is it?' Ovington repeated. 'What has frightened you, man?'

'We've a lot of notes out, sir!'

The banker looked thoughtfully at the glasses he held in his hand. 'True,' he said. 'Quite true. But trade is brisk, and the demand for credit is large. We must meet the demand, Rodd, as far as we can—with safety. That's our business.'

'And we've a lot of money out—that could not be got in in a hurry, sir.'

'Yes,' the banker admitted, 'but that is our business, too. If we did not put our money out we might close the bank tomorrow. That much of the money cannot be got in at a minute's notice is a thing we cannot avoid.'

The perspiration stood on Rodd's forehead, but he persisted. 'If it were all on bills, sir, I would not say a word. But there is a lot on overdraft.'

'Well secured.'

'While things are up. But if things went down, sir? There's Wolley's account. I suspect that the last bills we discounted for him were accommodation. Indeed, I am pretty sure of it. And his overdraft is heavy.'

'We hold the lease of his mill.'

'But you don't want to run the mill!' Rodd replied, putting his finger on the weak point.

The banker reflected. 'That's the worst account we have. The worst, isn't it?'

'Mr. Acherley's, sir.'

'Well, yes. There might be a sounder account than that. But what is it?' He looked directly at the other. 'I want to know what has opened your mouth? Have you heard anything? What makes you think that things may be going down?'

'Mr. Griffin—'

'No.' The banker shook his head. 'That won't do, Rodd. You had this in your mind before he came in. You are pat with Wolley and Mr. Acherley; bad accounts both, as all banks have bad accounts here and there. But it's true—we've been giving our customers rope, and they have bought things that may fall. Still, they've made money, a good deal of money; and we've kept a fair margin and obliged them at the same time. All legitimate business. There must be something in your mind besides this, I'm sure. What is it, lad?'

The cashier turned a dull red, but before he could answer the door behind him opened, and Arthur came in. He looked at the banker, and from him to Rodd, and his suspicions were aroused. 'It's four o'clock, sir,' he said, and looked again at Rodd as if to ask what he was doing there.

But Rodd held his ground, and the banker explained.

'Rodd is a little alarmed for us,' he said—it was difficult to be sure whether he spoke in jest or in earnest. 'He thinks we're going too fast. Putting our hand out too far. He mentions Wolley's account, and Acherley's.'

'I was speaking generally,' Rodd muttered. He looked sullen.

Arthur shrugged his shoulders. 'I stand corrected,' he said. 'I didn't know that Rodd ever went beyond his ledgers.'



'Oh, he's quite right to speak his mind. We are all in the same boat—though we do not all steer.'

'Well, I'm glad of that, sir,' contemptuously.

'Still—it is a good thing to have an opinion.'

'If it be worth anything.'

'If opinions are going——' Betty had opened the door behind the banker's chair, and was standing on the threshold—'wouldn't you like to have mine, father?'

'To be sure,' Arthur said. 'Why not, indeed? Let us have it. Why not have everybody's? And send for the cook, sir, and the two clerks—to advise us?'

Betty dropped a curtsy. 'Thank you, I am flattered.'

'Betty, you've no business here,' her father said. 'You mustn't stop unless you can keep your opinions to yourself.'

'But what has happened?' she asked, looking round.

'Mr. Griffin has withdrawn his account.'

'And Rodd thinks that we had better put up the shutters!' Arthur added, with more heat than the occasion seemed to demand.

'No, no,' the banker said. 'We must do him justice. He thinks that we are going a little too far, that's all. And that the loss of Mr. Griffin's account is a danger signal. That's what you mean, man, isn't it?'

Rodd nodded, his face stubborn. He stood alone, divided from the other three by the table, for Arthur had passed round it and placed himself at Ovington's elbow.

'His view,' the banker continued, polishing his glasses with his handkerchief and looking thoughtfully at them, 'is that if there came a check in trade and a fall in values, the bank might find its resources strained—I'll put it that way.'

Arthur sneered. 'Singular wisdom! But a fall—a serious fall at any rate—what sign is there of it?' He was provoked by the banker's way of taking it. Ovington seemed to be attaching absurd weight to Rodd's suggestion. 'None!' contemptuously. 'Not a jot.'

'There's been a universal rise,' Rodd muttered.

'In a moment? Without warning?'

'No, but——'

'But fiddlesticks!' Arthur retorted. Of late it seemed as if his good humour had deserted him, and this was not the first sign he had given of an uncertain temper. Still, the phase was so new that two of those present looked curiously at him, and

his consciousness of this added to his irritation. 'Rodd's no better than an old woman,' he continued. 'Five per cent. and a mortgage in a strong box is about his measure. If you are going to listen to every croaker who is frightened by a shadow, you might as well close the bank, sir, and put the money out on Rodd's terms!'

'Still Rodd means us well,' the banker said thoughtfully, 'and a little caution is never out of place in a bank. What I want to get from him is—has he anything definite to tell us? Wolley? Have you heard anything about Wolley, Rodd?'

'No, sir.'

'Then what is it? What is it, man?'

But Rodd, brought to bay, only looked more stubborn. 'It's no more than I've told you, sir,' he muttered, 'it's just a feeling. Things must come down some day.'

'Oh, damn!' Arthur exclaimed, out of patience, and thinking that the banker was making altogether too much of it—and of Rodd. 'If he were a weather-glass—'

'Or a woman!' interjected Betty, who was observing all with bright inscrutable eyes.

'But as he isn't either,' Arthur continued impatiently, 'I fail to see why you make so much of it! Of course, things will come down some day, but if he thinks that with your experience you are blind to anything he is likely to see, he's no better than a fool! Because my uncle, for reasons which you understand, sir, has drawn out four hundred pounds, he thinks every customer is going to leave us, and Ovington's must put up the shutters! The truth is, he knows nothing about it, and if he wishes to damage the bank he is going the right way to do it!'

'Would you like my opinion, father?' Betty asked.

'No, certainly not, child. Where's Clement?'

'Well, I'm afraid he's away.'

'Again? Then he is behaving very badly!'

'That was the opinion I was going to give,' the girl answered. 'That some were behaving better than others.'

'If,' Arthur cried, 'you mean me—'

'There, enough,' said her father. 'Be silent, Betty. You've no business to be here.'

'Still, people should behave themselves,' she replied, her eyes sparkling.

Arthur had his answer ready, but Ovington forestalled him.



'Very good, Rodd,' he said. 'A word on the side of caution is never out of place in a bank. But I am not blind, and all that you have told me is in my mind. Thank you. You can go now.'

It was a dismissal, and Rodd took it as such, and felt, as he had never felt before, his subordinate position. Why he did so, and why, as he withdrew under Arthur's eye, he resented the situation, he best knew. But it is possible that two of the others had some inkling of the cause.

When he had gone, 'There's an old woman for you!' Arthur exclaimed with heat. 'I wonder that you had the patience to listen to him, sir.'

But Ovington shook his head. 'I listened because there are times when a straw shows which way the wind blows.' He looked grave.

'But you don't think that there is anything in what he said?'

'I shall remember what he said. The time may be coming to take in sail—to keep a good look-out, lad, and be careful. You have been with us—how long? Two years. Ay, but years of expansion, of rising prices, of growing trade. But I have seen other times—other times.' He shook his head.

'Still, there is no sign of a change, sir?'

'You've seen one to-day. What is in Rodd's head may be in others, and what is in men's heads soon reflects itself in their conduct.'

It was the first word, the first hint, the first presage of evil; of a fall, of bad weather, of a storm, distant as yet, and seen even by the clearest eyes only as a cloud no bigger than a man's hand. But the word had been spoken. The hint had been given, and to Arthur, who had paid a high price for prosperity—how high only he could say—the presage seemed an outrage. The idea that the prosperity he had bought was not a certainty, that the craft on which he had embarked his fortune was, like other ships, at the mercy of storm and tempest, that like other ships it might founder with all its freight, was entirely new to him. So new that for a moment his face betrayed the impression it made. He looked disturbed. Then he told himself that the thing was incredible, that he started at shadows, and his natural confidence rebounded. 'Oh, damn Rodd!' he cried—and he said it with all his heart. 'He's a croaker by nature!'

'Still, we won't damn him,' the banker answered mildly.

'On the contrary, we will profit by his warning. But go now. I have a letter to write. And do you go, too, Betty, and make tea for us.'

He turned to his papers, and Arthur, after a moment's hesitation, followed Betty into the house. Overtaking her in the hall, 'Betty, what is the matter?' he said. And when the girl took no notice, but went on with her chin in the air as if he had not spoken, he seized her arm. 'Come,' he said, 'I am not going to have this. What is it?'

'What should it be! I don't know what you mean,' she retorted.

'Oh yes, you do. What took you—to back up that ass in the bank just now?'

Then Betty astonished him. 'I didn't think he wanted any backing,' she said, her eyes bright. 'He seemed to me to talk sense, and some one else nonsense.'

'But you're not——'

'A partner in Ovington's? No, Mr. Bourdillon, I am not—thank heaven! And so my head is not turned, and I can keep my temper and mind my manners.'

'Oh, it's Mr. Bourdillon now, is it?'

'Yes—if you are going to behave to my friends as you did this afternoon.'

'Your friends!' scornfully. 'You include Rodd, do you? Rodd, Betty?'

'Yes, I do, and I am not too proud to do so. Nor too proud to be angry when I see a man ten years younger than he is slap him in the face! I am not so spoiled that I think everyone beneath me!'

'So it's Rodd now?'

'It's as much Rodd now,' her cheeks hot, her eyes sparkling, 'as it was anyone else before! Just as much and just as little. You flatter yourself, sir!'

'But, Betty,' in a lower tone, 'little spitfire that you are, can't you guess why I was short with Rodd? Can't you guess why I don't particularly love him? But you do guess. Rodd is what he is—nothing! But when he lifts his eyes above him—when he dares to make eyes at you—I am not going to be silent.'

'Now you are impertinent!' she said coldly. 'As impertinent as you were mean before. Yes, mean, mean! When you knew he could not answer you! Mean!'



And without waiting for a reply she ran up the stairs.

He went to one of the windows of the dining-room and looked across Bride Hill and along the High Street, full at that hour of market people. But he did not see them, his thoughts were busy with what had happened. He could not believe that Betty had any feeling for Rodd. The man was dull, commonplace, a plodder, and not young; he was well over thirty. No, the idea was preposterous. And it was still more absurd to suppose that if he, Arthur, threw the handkerchief—or even fluttered it in her direction, for dear little thing as she was, he had not quite made up his mind—she would hesitate to accept him, or would let any thought of Rodd weigh with her.

True, he believed Rodd to be caught by her. He had noticed the cashier's eyes following her on the rare occasions when she had shown herself in the bank; and the man's impertinence had roused his ire. But that was another matter. Except as a thing to laugh at, he could not believe that the clerk's feeling was returned, or that Betty thought of him. It would be too ridiculous, even if he had never paid her attentions himself.

Still, he would let her temper cool, he would not stay to tea. Instead, he would by and by ride his new horse out to the Cottage. He had not been home for the week-end; he had left Mrs. Bourdillon to come to herself and recover her good humour in solitude. Now he would make it up with her, and while he was there he might as well get a peep at Josina—it was a long time since he had seen her. If Betty chose to adopt this unpleasant line, why, she could not blame him if he amused himself.

#### CHAPTER XIV.

THERE was another who had desired to see Josina that day, and had spent some hours in the attempt to speak with her. For a time after the Squire had driven away, Clement had sat staring after him, and in his rage had wished him dead. He had prepared himself for opposition, he had looked to be repulsed—he had expected nothing else. But in the scene which his fancy had pictured, his part had been one of dignity; he had owned his aspirations like a man, he had admitted his insufficiency with modesty, he had pleaded the power of love with eloquence, he had won even from the Squire a meed of unwilling approbation.

But the scene, as played, had run on other lines. The old man had crushed him. He had sworn at him, refused to listen to him, had insulted him, had treated him as no better than a shop-boy. All of which had cut to the quick. For Clement, born after Ovington had risen from the ranks, was college-bred; he was not a poor man, he had his pride and his self-respect, and humiliated, he cursed with all his soul the prejudice and hide-bound narrowness of the Squire and all his caste. For the time he was more than a radical, he was a republican. If by a gesture he could have swept away King and Commons, lords and justices, he would not have held his hand.

It took him some time to recover, and it was only when he found himself, he hardly knew how, upon the bridge at Garthmyle that he collected himself. Even then he was not quite himself. He had vowed that he would not see Josina again until he had claimed her from her father; but the Squire's treatment, he now felt, had absolved him from this, and the temptation to see her was great. He longed to pour out his mind to her, and to tell her how he had been insulted, how he had been treated. Perhaps, even, he must say farewell to her—he must give her up.

For he was not all hero, and the task before him seemed for the time too prodigious, the labour too little hopeful. The Hydra had so many heads, and roared so fearfully that for a moment his courage sank before it—and his love. He felt that he must yield, that he must see Josina and tell her so. In any event she ought to know what had happened, and accordingly he put up his horse at the inn and made by a roundabout road for their meeting-place by the brook.

There was but a chance that she would visit it, and in the meantime he had to exercise what patience he might. His castles in the air had fallen and he had not the spirit to rebuild them. He sat gazing moodily on the rippling face of the water, or watched the ouzel curtsying on its stone; and he almost despaired. He had known the Squire to be formidable, he now knew him to be impossible. He looked down the stream to where Garth, lofty and fortress-like, raised its twisted chimneys above the trees, and he shook his fist at it. Remote and islanded on its knoll, rising amid ancestral trees, it stood for all that the Squire stood for—governance, privilege, tradition, the past; all the things he had not, all the things that mocked him.



The time passed wretchedly and Josina did not come, and by and by he left the water-side. He crossed the high road, and scrambling up through the skirt of trees that clothed the ascent to the limestone wall, he gained the glaxis of smooth turf strewn with boulders, from which it lifted its precipitous face. Here, seated above the tree-tops, he could look down on Garth and command its approaches, he could see who came out and who came in. But he had no better luck. No flutter of petticoats, no sun-bonnet issuing from the door cheered his eyes, and the house, keeping its secrets, seemed still to defy him. Nevertheless he grew cooler. By degrees composure returned, until he began to be thankful that he had not seen Josina, and augmented the anxiety which she must be suffering.

He lingered there, savouring his melancholy, until the sun went down behind the hills, and then, attacked by the pangs of hunger, he made his way back to the village inn. Here he satisfied his appetite on such home-baked bread and yellow butter and nut-brown ale as are not in these degenerate times; and for wellnigh an hour he sat brooding in the sanded parlour surrounded by china cats and dogs, such as, they too, would be of value nowadays. At length with a heavy heart—for what was he to do next?—he rode out of the yard, and crossing the bridge under the shadowy bulk of the squat church tower, he set his horse's head for home. It was nearly dark.

What was he to do next? He did not know, but as he rode through the gloom, the solemn hills falling back on either side and the darkening plain widening before him, he took courage; he began to consider, with some return of hope, what lay before him, and how he must proceed—if he were not to give up. Clearly he must face the Squire, but it must be in the Squire's own house, where the Squire must hear him. The old man might insult him, rave at him, order him out, but before he was put out he would speak and ask for Josina, though the roof fell. There should be no further mistake. And he would let the Squire know, if it came to that, that he was a man, as good as other men. By heaven he would!

He was not all hero. But there were some heroic parts about him, and he determined that the very next morning he would ride out and would beard the Hydra in its den, be its heads ever so many. He would win his lady-love or perish!

By the time he had come to this decision he was half-way

home. The market traffic on the road had ceased, the moon had not yet risen, the night lay quiet and dark about him. Presently as he crossed a wet, rushy flat, one of the loneliest parts of the way, he saw the lights of a vehicle coming towards him. The road at this point had not been long enclosed, and a broad strip of common still survived on either hand, so that moving on this his horse's hoofs made no sound save a soft plop-plop where the ground was wettest. He could hear, therefore, while still afar off, the tramp of a pair of horses driven at a trot, and it occurred to him that this might be the Squire returning late. If he could have avoided the meeting he would have done so, though it was unlikely that the Squire would recognise him in the dark. But to turn aside would be foolish. 'Hang me if I am going to be afraid of him!' he thought. And he touched up his horse with his heel.

Then an odd thing happened. While the carriage was still fifty yards from him, one of the lights went out. His eyes missed it, but his brain had barely taken in the fact when the second vanished also, as if the vehicle had sunk into the ground. At the same moment a hoarse cry reached his ears, followed by a clatter of hoofs on the hard road as if the horses were being sharply pulled up.

Clement took his horse by the head and bent forward, striving to make out what was passing. A dull sound, as of a heavy body striking the road reached him, followed by a silence that seemed ominous. Even the wind appeared to have hushed its whisper through the rushes.

'Hallo! What is it?' he shouted. 'Is anything the matter?' He urged his horse forward.

His cry was lost in the loud crack of a whip, he heard the horses break away, and without farther warning they came down upon him at a gallop, the carriage bounding wildly behind them. He had just time to thrust his nag to the side, and they were on him and past him, and whirling down the road—a mere shadow, but as perilous and almost as noisy as a thunderbolt. There was no doubt now that an accident had happened, but before he could give help he had to master his horse, which had wheeled about scared by the runaways; and so a few seconds elapsed before he reached the scene—reached it with his heart in his mouth—for who could say with what emergency he might not have to deal?



Certainly with a tragedy, for the first thing he made out was the form of a man stooping over another who lay in the road. Clement drew a breath of relief as he slipped from his saddle—he would not have to deal with the crisis alone. But as his foot touched the ground, he saw the stooping man raise his hand with something in it, and he knew instinctively that it was raised not to help but to strike.

He shouted, and the blow hung in the air. The man, taken by surprise, straightened himself, turned, and saw Clement at his elbow. He hesitated; then, with an oath, he aimed his blow at the new-comer.

Clement parried it, rather by instinct than with intention, and so weakly, that the other's weapon beat down his guard and cut his cheek-bone. He staggered back and the villain raised his cudgel again. Had the second blow fallen where it was meant to fall, it would have finished the business. But Clement, aware now that he fought for his life, sprang within the other's guard, and before the cudgel alighted, gripped him by the neckcloth. The man gave ground, tripped backwards over the body that lay behind him, and in a twinkling the two were rolling together on the road, Clement striving to beat in the ruffian's face with the butt-end of his whip, while the man tried vainly to shorten his weapon and use it to purpose.

It was a desperate struggle, in the mire, in the darkness—a struggle for life carried on in a silence that was broken only by the combatants' breathing and a rare oath. Twice the two rolled over one another, and once Clement, having the upper hand became aware that the fight had its spectator. He had a glimpse of a ghastly face, one side of which had been mangled by a murderous blow, glaring at them with its remaining eye. He guessed rather than saw that the man lying in the road had raised himself on an elbow; he heard a gasping 'At him, lad! Well done, lad!' then in a turn of the struggle he lost the vision. His opponent had him by the throat, he was undermost again—and desperate. His one thought now was to kill—to kill the brute-beast whose teeth threatened his cheek, whose hot breath burned his face, whose hands gripped his throat. He struck again and again, and eventually, supple and young, and perhaps the stronger, he freed himself and staggered to his feet, raising his whip to strike.

But the same thing happened to him which had happened to his assailant. As he stepped back to give power to the blow, he

fell over the third man. He came down heavily, and for a moment he was at the other's mercy. Fortunately the rascal's courage was at an end. The man got to his feet, but instead of pursuing his advantage, he snatched up something that lay on the ground, and sped away down the road, as quickly as his legs could carry him.

Clement recovered his feet, but more slowly, for the fall had shaken him. Still, his desire for vengeance was unslaked, his blood hot, and he set off in pursuit. The man had a good start, however, and presently, leaving the road and leaping the ditch, made off across the open common. To follow farther promised little, for in a few seconds his figure, dim and shadowy, melted into the darkness of the fields. Clement gave up the chase, and turned back, panting and out of breath.

He did not feel his wound, much less did he feel the misgivings which had beset him when he came upon the scene. Instead, he experienced a new and thrilling elation. He had measured his strength against an enemy, he had faced death in fight, he felt himself equal to any and every event. Even when he stooped over the prostrate figure and saw the mangled and bleeding face turned up to the sky it did not daunt him, nor the darkness, nor the loneliness. The injured man seemed to be aware of his presence for he made an attempt to rise; but he failed, and groaning would have fallen back on the road if Clement, dropping on one knee, had not sustained his head and shoulders on the other. It was the Squire. So much he saw; but it was a Squire past not only scolding but speech, whom he held in his arms and whose head he supported. To all Clement's questions he made no answer. It was much if he still breathed; even now it might be a corpse that the young man held in his arms.

Clement glanced about him, and his confidence began to leave him. What was he to do? He could not go for help—he might have to go far—leaving the old man lying in the road; yet it was equally impossible to do anything in the dark, either to ascertain the extent of the Squire's hurt, or to use means to stanch it. The moon had not yet risen, the plain stretched dark and black about them, no sound except the melancholy whisper of the wind in the rushes reached him. There was no house near and it was growing late. No one might pass for hours.

Fortunately when he had reached this stage he remembered that he had his tinder box and matches in his pocket, and he



fumbled for them with his disengaged hand. With an effort, still supporting the old man's head, he got them out. But to strike a light and catch it in the huddled posture in which he knelt was not easy, and it was only after a score of attempts that the match caught the flame. Even so, the light it gave was faint, but it revealed the Squire's face, and Clement saw, with a shudder, that the left eye and temple were terribly battered. But he saw, too, that the old man breathed and was conscious, for he uttered a groan, and peered with the uninjured eye at the face that bent over him. 'Good lad!' he muttered, 'good lad!' and he added broken words which conveyed to Clement's mind that it was his man who had attacked him. Then—his face was so turned that it was within a few inches of Clement's shoulder—'You're bloody, lad,' he muttered. 'He's spoiled your coat, the d—d rascal!'

With that he seemed to slip back into unconsciousness, as the light went out. It left Clement in a strait to know what he ought to do, or rather what he could do. Help he must get, and speedily, if he would save the Squire's life, but his horse was gone, and to walk away for help, leaving the old man lying in the mud of the way seemed inhuman. He must at least carry him to the side of the road.

The task was no light one, for the Squire was tall, though not stout; and before Clement stooped to it he cast a last look round. But darkness and silence still wrapped all, and he was gathering his strength to lift the dead weight, when a sound caught his ear, and he raised himself. A moment, and joy!—he caught the far-off beat of hoofs on the turf. Someone was coming, approaching him from the direction of Aldersbury. He shouted, shouted his loudest and waited. Yes, he was not mistaken. The soft plop-plop of hoofs grew louder, two forms loomed out of the darkness, a horse shied, a man swore.

'Here!' Clement cried. 'Here! Take care! There's a man in the road.'

'Where?' Then, 'Confound you, you nearly had me down! Are you hurt?'

'No, but——'

'I've got your horse. I met him a couple of miles this side of the town. What has——'

Clement broke in. 'There's bad work here!' he cried, his voice shaky. Now that help was at hand and the peril was over,

he began to feel what he had gone through. 'For God's sake get down and help me. Your uncle's man has robbed him and, I fear, murdered him.'

'The Squire?'

'Yes, yes. He's lying here, half dead. We must get him to the side of the road at once.'

Arthur slipped from his saddle, and holding the reins of the two horses, approached the group as nearly as the frightened beasts would let him. 'Quiet, fools!' he cried angrily. And then, 'Good heavens!' in a whisper, as he peered awe-stricken at the injured man. 'Is he dead?'

'No, but he's terribly mauled. And we must get help. Help, man, and quickly, too—if it is to be of any use. Shall I go?'

'No, no, I'll go,' Arthur answered, recoiling. What he had seen had given him no desire to take Clement's place. 'Garthmyle is the nearer, and I shall not be long. I'll tie up your horse—that'll be best.'

There was an old thorn-tree standing solitary in the waste not many yards away: a tree destined to be pointed out for years to come as marking the spot where the old Squire was robbed. Arthur tied Clement's horse to this, then together they lifted the old man and carried him to the side of the road. The moment that this was done, Arthur sprang on his horse and started off. 'Back soon,' he shouted.

Clement had not seen his way to object, but it was with a heavy heart he resigned himself to another period of painful waiting. He was cold, his face smarted, and at any moment the old man might die on his hands. Meantime he could do nothing but wait. Or yes, he could do something; chilled as he was, he took off his coat, and rolling it up, he slipped it under the insensible head.

Little had he thought that morning that he would ever pity the Squire. But he did. The man who had driven away from him, hard, aggressive, indomitable, asking no man's help and meeting all men's eyes with the gaze of a master, now lay at his feet, crushed and broken; lay with his head on the coat of the man he had despised, dependent on him for the poor service that still might avail him. Clement felt the pathos of it, and the pity. And above all, his heart was sore for Josina. How would she meet, how bear the shock that a short hour must inflict on her?

He was thinking of her, when, long before he had dared to



expect relief, he heard a sound that resolved itself into the rattle of wheels. Yes, there was a carriage coming along the road.

No one could deny that Arthur was capable. He had come upon the Squire's horses, which had been brought to a stand with the near wheel of the curricule wedged in the ditch. He had found them greedily feeding, and he had let his own nag go, and had captured the runaways. He had drawn the carriage out of the ditch, and here he was.

'Thank God!' Clement cried, going a few steps to meet him. 'I think that he is still alive.'

'And we've got to lift him in,' said Arthur, more practical. 'He's a big weight.'

It was not an easy task. But they tied up the horses to the thorn-tree—they were pretty quiet by this time—and lifting the old man between them, they carried him with what care they might to the carriage, raised him, heavy and helpless as he was, to the step, and then, while one maintained him there, the other climbed in and lifted him to the front seat. Clement got up behind and supported his shoulders and head, while Arthur, first tying the saddle-horse behind the carriage, released the pair, and with the reins in his hands scrambled to his place.

The thing was done and cleverly done, and they set off. But they dared not travel at more than a walk, and never had the three miles to Garthmyle seemed so long or so tedious.

They were both anxious and both excited. But while in Clement's mind pity, a sense of the tragedy before him, and thought for Josina contended with an honest pride in what he had done, the other, as they drove along, was already calculating chances and busy with contingencies. The Squire's death—if the Squire died—would work a great change, an immense change. Things which had yesterday been too doubtful and too distant to deserve much thought would be brought within reach, would be his for the asking. And he was the more inclined to consider this because Betty—dear little creature as she was—had shown a spirit that day that was not to his liking. Whereas Josina, mild and docile—it might be that after all she would suit him better. And Garth—Garth with its wide acres and its rich rent-roll would be hers; Garth that would give any man a position to be envied. Its charms, while uncertain and dependent on the whim and caprice of an arbitrary old man, had not fixed him, for to attain to them he

must give up other things, equally to his mind. But now the case was or might be altered. He must wait and watch events, and keep an open mind. If the Squire died——

A word or two passed between the couple, but for the most part they were silent. Once and again the Squire moaned, and so proved that he still lived. At last, where the road to Garth branched off, at the entrance to the village, they saw a light before them, and old Fewtrell carrying a lanthorn met them. The Squire's absence had alarmed the house, and he had come thus far in quest of news.

'Oh, Lord, ha' mercy! Lord, ha' mercy!' the old fellow quavered as he lifted his lanthorn and the light disclosed the group in the carriage, and his master's huddled form and ghastly visage. 'Miss Jos said 'twas so! Said as summat had happened him! Beside herself, she be! She've been down at the gate this half-hour waiting on him!'

'Don't let her see him,' Clement cried. 'Go, man, and send her back.'

But, 'That's no good,' Arthur objected, with more sense but less feeling. 'She must see him. This is women's work, we can do nothing. Let Fewtrell take your place and do you go for the doctor. You know where he lives, and you'll go twice as quick as he will, and there's no more that you can do. Take your horse.'

Clement was unwilling to go, unwilling to have no farther part in the matter. But he could not refuse. Things were as they were; in spite of all that he had done and suffered, he had no place there, no standing in the house, no right beside his mistress or call to think for her. He was a stranger, an outsider, and when he had fetched the doctor, there would, as Arthur had said, be nothing more that he could do.

Nothing more, though as he rode over the bridge and trotted through the village his heart was bursting with pity for her whom he could not comfort, could not see; from whose side in her troubles and her self-arrangement—for he knew that she would reproach herself—he must be banished. It was hard.

*(To be continued.)*



## OPEN PATHS.

PICTURES OF WILD LIFE IN ENGLAND.

BY E. L. GRANT WATSON.

## I.

*March 17.*—These churches of The Marsh are evidence of the harmony which, in past years, man has attained with Nature. They mark a phase, and are the accomplished sign of his humility. If they fail, as indeed they do, to express, or in any way symbolise, the aspiring of his adventurous spirit, they speak eloquently of a clear steadfastness. It is the humility and steadfastness of the peasant, honest and open-hearted. The little church of St. Mary's, near Dymchurch, is one of many entirely satisfactory examples. It is in perfect harmony with the sun-bathed, wind-swept land. Here is no gaudy glass pretending to attain to what it is not. The unadorned, pale-green windows are pure and translucent. The edifice is *filled* with light. An austere, yet gentle, spirit is reflected from the white-washed walls and from the simple fresco which decorates them. There are no signs of affluence, of super-decoration, or vulgarity. It is evident that the spirit of commercialism has not yet entered. Here it is still possible to pray. Within the simplicity of this structure there are no mind-created mysteries, no subtleties of perception. This is a house of refuge; it is filled with the presence of a beguiling and indulgent hope.

*March 20.*—The country is reminiscent of Cambridgeshire, though in place of meandering rivers and fifteen-foot hawthorn hedges, there are straight dykes with skimpy willow-willsows, irregularly ranked. Here is the same flatness of earth, and with it a feeling of emancipation; the same wide sky. A narrow road bends from the hills down to the borders of Romney Marsh. It leads between pale green fields, and, on each side, is edged by dykes in which the sky is reflected, blue and white. Plovers make commotion in the air, the beat of their quills is audible as they swoop and fall, crying their plaintive cry. In the willow bushes by the roadside are long-tailed tits.

How irresistible is water in any of its forms! I can seldom pass

over a bridge that spans either stagnant or running water without wanting to pause and look down into the life that moves on or under the surface ; and now I am attracted by the wide dyke that stretches along the roadside. I can cross by a plank bridge, and so have the sun behind me and be better able to see into the depths. A marvellous scene is revealed in the clear water. The dyke is about four feet deep, and, from the bottom upwards to the surface, and for a distance of twelve to fifteen feet, there rise terraces, battlements, bastions, cities piled upon cities, domed temples, masses of architectural forms all agglomerated into one pale, semi-opaque mass of frog-spawn. The surfaces bulge towards the centre of the dyke in folds of trembling jelly. Upon every surface there are tadpoles which are even now emerging. Where the spawn touches the surface, they form a black, wriggling paste, half an inch thick. I sit down to watch this marvel of fecundity. I have seen masses of frog-spawn before, but never in such abundance. Here the forces of life have run to their farthest limit ; one of the poles between which all being fluctuates has been reached. The urgings of maternity have here attained their fullest significance. I am reminded of the Indian temple at Madura, of all architectural forms the most sexual and the most female. I remember the terraces, the symbolic figures, and the all-pervading suggestion of fecundity. A fecundity which will turn to its own ends all forces of idealism, of differentiation, of mentality.

In the midst, the mass stirs. In from among the spawn and the seething tadpoles a head is thrust up. Its bronze eyes stare vacantly skyward, and the small, round nostrils open and close. Here is one of the mothers, the manufacturers of the astonishing abundance. She is encompassed, wholly enveloped by her infinite progeny. As she gazes with that inscrutable stare skyward and gives a low croak of praise, it is not difficult to believe that she is filled with satisfaction.

The frogs and their spawn are not the only inhabitants of this watery microcosm. Upon the edges of the sagging paunches of jelly there are perched several well-fed specimens of the great water beetle. These fierce-looking insects, lenticular in shape, and from an inch to an inch and a half long, sit complacently to a feast piled mountains high. Now and then, one of them seizes, with a languid movement, upon a newly-emerged tadpole, takes a few bites, and allows the black fragments of yet living flesh to float away. From time to time they swim with easy powerful strokes to the surface,



and there, suspended tail uppermost, inhale the air. Then back to the feast slowly, with profound assurance.

The water is seething with life. Newts swim languidly from among cress leaves, and swallow large mouthfuls of water-fleas. The water-fleas dance in spring ecstasy in the warm sunlit water. Measurers skim the surface, and whirligig beetles entangle, one with another, their intricate involutions. For the first time I see diving spiders, not the small red mite, which is common enough, but a spider, a size larger than the common house-fly, who carries down with him a bell-shaped globule of air.

But my glance is attracted back with fascination to the masses of spawn, to the seething tadpoles and to the bronze eyes of the mother frog, that look so steadily into the sky. The new-born tadpoles lie in thousands upon the outer edges of the great edifice built of their brother and sister eggs. Their black tails wriggle helplessly, and the water-beetles continue their feast. For a moment one is tempted to see something ghoulish in these prodigious eaters that wait to devour the new-born innocence. But this human weakness is no true valuation. These beetles are as necessary to the healthy survival of frogs and tadpoles as are the infusoria upon which the tadpoles feed. They are as necessary, and not only in a materialistic and utilitarian sense, but they have also a certain spiritual significance. I am not using the word in its usual anthropomorphic association, but rather to designate the mystical polar relationship between complementary forms of life: the balance not always, at first sight, obvious. The beetles exist because of the tadpoles, and the tadpoles exist, every bit as much, because of the devouring beetles. I cannot imagine the one without the other. The opposite poles are held in equilibrium, and the lazy gormandisers are an outward symbol, a triumphant expression of the frog's prodigious fertility. They hold the weighted balance even. For her part the mother frog is unconcerned; she continues to look at the sky; she is confident in the instinctive assurance that she has produced enough . . . enough.

*March 27, Easter Day.*—Blue-bells are not yet broken into flower, though their green shoots, together with a forest of dog's mercury, carpet the woodland, and in part hide the sere leaves of last year. For a long while I have sat listening to the robin's song. In this quarter of the wood robins are the only birds that are singing; there are three of them that, from not distant perches, from time to time, with short outbursts, break the comparative

silence. A cole-tit now comes to join them, but only for a short while does he call his sharp, insistent tche-ee, tche-ee, tche-ee.

I notice that there is movement among the blue-bell leaves at a few yards distant: little quick, consecutive jerks. It is not a mouse that is moving—something larger and something that moves nearer to the ground. For a time I suspect it is a mole, close under the surface, and I wait thinking that he will soon show himself.

I see another disturbance of the same nature, and another, and another. I can hear now a faint scraping on dead leaves. Then, lifting itself from among the green stems, there looks out a narrow, swaying head, and I catch the characteristic, pale-yellow ear-marks of a grass-snake. He slides rapidly nearer. I can see two distinct loops moving over fallen branches; the interval between is lost in a dip of the ground. It is a curious stream of movement, like running water, but harder, firmer, but yet like water seeming to pass into itself. I hear now the never-to-be-mistaken rasp of a snake's scales. As he passes close within a foot of my boot, his forked black tongue shoots out as if feeling the air for safety. His movements are deliberate and rapid, and in a few seconds he disappears amongst a clump of chestnut saplings. And now the ground seems alive with snakes. They are moving in all directions, winding their long lengths amongst the green shoots. They are all about the same size, two foot to two foot six long. They are, I think, last year's young snakes, and not yet mature. Some move fearlessly close to me. They radiate out as if from a centre, and in a few minutes have lost themselves in the undergrowth. I notice that none of them have yet shed their winter skins, and it seems probable that they have but just emerged from their place of hibernation.

It is a fitting day of sunshine and warmth for such an emergence, and little wonder, that coiled together in some hole, they should have felt upon their scaly skins a spell so deliberate and powerful. In the silences between the robin's song, the magic holds its tense, concentrated and yet expanding sway. Is it a wonder that, in times when men lived closer to the earth than they do now, they should have imagined gods and goddesses, nymphs and fauns? The spirit of the spring becomes for me like the presence of an unseen personality. A slumberous figure is risen out of the earth. It is heavy and full of peace, invisible yet to be perceived, pale yet untroubled. Suddenly the eyelids are raised. Imagination stabs at the heart, and in that eye-wink there is revealed life's awakening vigour, also an intolerable weight of languor. A glimpse is given



of the massiveness of earth, complete, self-contained, substantial, and, potent as the forces which bind and mould the soil, there is the assurance of earth's eternal resurrection. The eyes close, the vision vanishes; the imagination fails, slack under the spell, the senses tremble. Of such quality have been all visions of resurrection. The graves are now opened, and the substance of the gods retransmutes itself.

*April 4.*—At Chapel Bank there is a beautiful and inspiring burial-ground. I do not know whether it is still used; it has the appearance of being deserted, and one doubts the probability of men coming so far from the beaten highways to bury their dead. On the edge of Romney Marsh the bank rises with a gentle gradient to more than seventy feet. It stands an island outlier from the inland hills, and its green banks overlook the surrounding marsh. Wind-swept ash trees grow upon the flat crown, but I did not suspect till I had climbed almost to the summit that they were the guardians of a human burial-ground. Many of the graves are very old; some are of the last century, the head-stones dating back a score of years, others are but sloping mounds almost sunk into the earth. . . . A rough dilapidated fence still encloses them. A wind blows freshly from the east, bending the brown, coarse tufts of grass, and making a cold music in the boughs.

In solitude this island-population remains separated from the world of its kind. Yet if these souls still survive and have cognisance, they are surely not dissatisfied with their bodies' resting-place. Years pass with the slow rhythm of the seasons; the days and nights follow each other like drops of falling water. I imagine the sun rising eastward over the marsh, and lighting the head-stones and the rounded graves with the first slanting rays. These sleepers are unvisited save by the sheep and the hares. The days pass. The clouds of sunset cast their tinted reflections, and, as the twilight falls, the wind stirs the grass. At night the stars, in remote splendour, light the black dome of infinity. Nature's harmony in space and time is complete. The bones of these men lie confidently and at rest. All adornments and superfluous relics of life have fallen away; only a few letters and names on the head-stones remain.

The wind blows coldly, and I, who still have flesh on my bones and restless thoughts in my brain, move further till I can lie sheltered, under the brow of the hill, in the long grass.

Two hares are chasing across the opposite flats. They run in and out between the tussocks of rush. As I watch through my

binoculars, they come rapidly nearer. The male follows the female. She moves just ahead of him at a quick run, and doubles with quick turns. He almost touches her, but she keeps a bare length ahead. They are now within sixty yards of where I lie, and are running along the edge of a dyke. The female pauses suddenly, crouches low with ears back, the male leaps upon her, and, in a scurry of passion, holds her embraced. Again she runs a little distance, but not far, and again they mate together; she runs off, doubling and twisting. She half leaps, half scrambles through a dyke, the male following within a few inches. Their game carries them away out of sight, but they return to cover the same ground. Sometimes they pause, nibbling a few leaves, watchful of each other; then on a quick impulse, the female darts away, the male following as before. For more than an hour the game continues. They mate more times than I can remember. At last they seem tired. They sit close together, the male has his forefeet placed upon the shoulders of his mate. It is a gentle posture.

In the distance I sight another hare. He sits alert with ears up. Now he comes galloping along. He checks for a moment, then, with tremendous speed, rushes upon the two lovers. Two bodies leap into the air; I can hear a single sharp click of hind legs brought together, then all three dash away at full gallop.

Other hares make their appearance. There are races in which I lose my original couple. The spring weather is in their blood; they gallop lengthening and hunching their bodies in a wild harmony of speed. Often they go far out of sight, but they return to the shelter of the hill, sometimes separately, sometimes in pairs. From time to time they sit high on their haunches, their long ears erect. They think nothing of dashing through the wide dykes; their hair hangs wet and sleek. Unconscious of past and future, they are filled with the genius of irreflective joy. The delight of cold air and bright sunshine suffices.

Watching these wild creatures in their wild delight, I am convinced that the pain of life is hidden from them. Death and suffering are but an unconscious dissolution. They live without volition, and how well they manifest their vitality, how beautifully they maintain harmony. I envy their absence of conscious will. And as I watch, my thoughts go back to the graves on the hilltop. Do men really believe in eternal life, and do they mean by that eternal consciousness? The thought follows: is not consciousness but one of the stages in the process, and is it beyond the power of



men to live *without* volition, a life transmuted, transcending the illusion of time? Is such a possibility close at hand, though veiled, or is it only to be approached through the doors of death? And what significance can there be in an eternal life, if it is not a life without volition and without self-consciousness?

*April 10.*—As I look at the pageant of nature, opposing views present themselves. First comes the desire to find universal law. This element of will can be traced in the history of all religions; it is the foundation of dogma, and, in a wider interpretation, the impulse towards science. Man looks at the world about him and finds a pattern. He can see but little, but that little he stamps with the print of his own perception. In this manner he works toward the discovery of himself. The world of natural phenomenon takes significance from man, the beholder. He cannot get beyond his senses; they are the origin and only source of his knowledge. The more he looks into life the more he discovers his own proportion; the universe takes its significance from man. All the seemingly external world is man's intimate heritage, and is contained within his nature. The individual who seeks the woods, the hill-sides or the open sea, and there would find rest, probes deeper into the universal nature of mankind. There is no evolution; the pattern is already complete, nothing can alter its eternal form. It waits to be discovered. All that is, is contained in the nature of man.

There exists, with equal significance, the opposing view. Men are but atoms, passing and dying, blown upon by a *senseless* wind. All things are fortuitous, without end and without beginning. 'A little reasonableness, a seed of wisdom scattered from star to star. . . . For the sake of folly, wisdom is mixed with all things!'

*April 22.*—I was walking beside a stream whose bed was cut some four feet below the level of its banks. Robins, wrens, willow-warblers and chaffinches were singing in the little copse that bordered the stream. A cuckoo, some distance off, was calling occasional notes. A sudden plunge and splash in the water made me pause. It was only a water-vole, but from the disturbance and noise I suspected more than one. I sat down to watch, and remained perfectly still. For some time there was no sound but the song of birds and the rustling of mice among dead leaves. An unusual rippling down stream caught my attention. The ripples issued from behind a snag sticking up in mid-water. Then, from behind the snag came a small, dark body swimming rapidly against the current, which ran swift and shallow. My first thought was that it

was a young vole, but I saw at the next glance that it was a shrew mouse. I lost it from view under a bank, but the next moment the little creature landed opposite on a low shelf of alluvium. I had never before seen so fat and well-looking a shrew. Its black fur, like the finest sealskin, was fluffed out so that it looked almost round. The little tapir-like nose turned this way and that, snuffing the air, and the white, silver fur under the chin positively shone. The little fellow had a good look at me, he was not more than three yards distance, but, seeing that I was motionless, concluded that I was not to be feared. Then, to my surprise, he made a long-searching dive. He dived not only under the water, but under all the debris of leaves and twigs that lay at the bottom of a small pool. I could follow his course by the movement and air bubbles, though I could not see him. After traversing a zig-zag of several yards, he came up sleek and dry. He rustled about amongst the leaves for a few seconds, then dived again. He dived several times, and I concluded that he was searching for insects, caddis-fly larvæ and such like, on the bottom of the pool.

By this time the water-vole had come from under the bank. He was sitting on the steep, opposite slope about a foot above the water. I watched his manner of feeding. He nibbled some bark from a blackthorn twig, then ate a celandine flower, then a bit of dry leaf. He moved cautiously along the bank and ate some grass, had just a taste of wild garlic, then methodically and without hurry consumed the whole of a large leaf of meadow-sweet. He then, as if satisfied for the time, began to clean himself. My attention was now attracted back to the shrew mouse, who had climbed the bank and was scratching a space for himself amongst some dry leaves.

At what next happened I was indeed surprised. This smallest and most insignificant of our British mammals lifted up its little voice in what I can only describe as a song. This could not be called mere squeaking. It was well sustained, with a cadence of its own repeated several times. The song, for I insist on calling it a song, was of about the same length as the simple roundelay of a chaffinch, but subtler and very faint and shrill. I watched and listened, doubting, at first, my impressions. Unmistakably the sounds came from the mouse, and, as unmistakable as any bird's song, this was a song of happiness and thanksgiving for the returning life of spring. Sometimes the notes were so faint that I could hardly hear them, at others there was the peculiar squeak of a



mouse, and at others a sound like the gentle sliding of silver coins one over another.

The water-vole, after tidying his already perfectly tidy fur, continued his simple vegetarian repast. When I moved to go further on my way, he was terribly alarmed and fell with a splash into the stream. It seemed to me then, as it has often seemed before, a sad thing that men should carry this curse of inspiring fear whenever they move into the woods. All mammals and birds look with suspicion upon us. We are the only creature thus universally feared irrespective of our natural prey. Indeed, those animals upon which we live are now all domesticated, and with unlimited confidence, and all too limited reason, do not fear the hand that feeds them. It is the wild creatures upon which we do *not* prey which fear us. Is this because of our ape-like arms and our prehensile hands which can grasp and throw stones, or is it our restless, wanton brains that make us the enemy of all wild things? Have we not with justice been called the fiercest animal under the sun, and do not wars, industrial and military, remind us of the fact; or do we need to read in histories of how Tartars blinded all slaves, or in the newspapers how modern governments confine in solitary prisons their fellow men? If there is any truth that a man carries an aura about with him, and that each man shares in the aura of his race, is it to be wondered that we are feared by species less powerful and fierce? It is a curse, and a heavy curse, whose weight is not widely enough appreciated, that we should be held so universally in dread.

Sometimes one or other of us will attempt to pierce this covering, woven of apprehension and distrust, under which we move; a St. Francis or a Jesus will stand free, recognising with fearless logic the sanctity of life, but for the most part we are entangled in a web of criminality of which we are hardly conscious, and from which we cannot escape.

*April 23.*—I was woken last night by a nightingale. It was the first I had heard for some years. In South Dorset, where I had lived last summer, nightingales do not sing. The previous summer I had spent in London—ill-spent, no doubt. The notes came with the surprise of a new delight, and with remembered happiness of childhood. They opened a wide road leading back into a world of quick sensation, of joys, appreciated unconsciously, of boyhood's rapt pauses of reverie and contemplation. As I listened to those notes so surprising in their mingling of pain and joy, yet so familiar, I knew then,

and was grateful for the good fortune of having lived most of my life far from towns or cities. My earliest remembrances are of birds, moths, beetles, caterpillars, of hay-fields, of hedge-rows, of streams and of bathing-pools. As I listened I felt again the quality of my boyhood. I remembered the prayer-time at school on summer evenings: the big hall, the green wooden benches and the boys hitting each other with psalm-books—myself one of the most aggressive—the shuffling into seats . . . the silence, . . . the long piece of music, Beethoven, Chopin, or Brahms, that preceded the service, the great yellow walls of the hall, the deep blue evening sky, more blue for the contrast; then, mingling with the music, and, in the intervals, loud, beseeching and aspiring, the notes of a nightingale. I remembered a night expedition, strictly against rules, the wood, dark and mysterious, the branches against my face, my pyjama legs wet with the dew, my black sand-shoes soaked with it, and the water squelching cold between my toes; unexpectedly close at hand, alarming in its nearness, that terrible, beautiful voice. I remembered the awe, the sudden fear, and the sudden adoration.

Pictures half separate, half merged came to me, and I knew that I had enjoyed the purity of youth. Of the years between, the ardours, enthusiasms, conflicts, victories, and defeats . . . defeat and the unexpected recompense of defeat—they have their places; but this I know for certainty, that for me, however it may be for others, the food of life, the food which generates spiritual power, comes from what I can describe in no other words but the inspired in nature: the vivid expression of vitality in beetle or plant or bird; the living of life for life's sake, the acceptance of the mingling of joy and pain . . . the irreflective praise.

*April 26.*—In a winding valley beside a stream lie hop-gardens. The poles have been planted within the last few days, and men are fastening the coarse twine which binds them into ranks. There are women here also whose work it is to tie shorter strands, which hang down from the poles, to iron hooks planted in the earth. The young hops are beginning to stretch upward their slim, snake-like heads.

These gardens are planted on the old-fashioned plan, but across the stream, the other side of the thick fence, there is a field supplied with overhead wires, quite up to date; 'a beautiful sight,' one of the women assures me. I follow her directions, across the plank bridge, and find indeed a strange and unexpected quality in the dense, regular, and mechanical weaving of chestnut-brown string.



The web-work stretches in long lines, rising to the hilltop ; and through it, the distant trees upon the sky-line have a fantastic appearance. From the octagonal pattern of the overhead wires, the threads descend in taut, criss-cross interweavings. The young hops are here sturdy and well advanced ; some of the leading shoots have already found support and are climbing the cone-shaped funnels made by the twine.

The sight of such orderliness, so much controlled growth, is striking enough, but too mechanical to be wholly satisfying. Something in the nature of man rebels (or is certainly bound ultimately to rebel) against orderliness or regularity. The 'laws' of growth in nature, though approximating toward mathematical formula, are never mathematical. Life remains uncertain, not to be measured. It is only a small part of the character of man, a peculiar seriousness of spirit, blunted always to finer issues, that can tolerate for long any exact form of symmetry or order. When this seriousness shows itself, whether in the rendering of material, in philosophy or art, inspiration is always lacking ; and these straight, well-dressed fields, with their complexity of wire and string, have the air of serious purpose. There is no natural gaiety here, no wistful quality of sadness.

Beyond the hop-gardens where the valley opens out, a hill rises steeply. Woods cover the flank and crest ; towards these, across fields scattered over with rabbits, I make my way and penetrate into the woods.

Among the firs, oaks, and chestnuts, the undergrowth is not very thick. The sunlight easily finds a way through the budding branches. The ground beneath is carpeted with a luxuriant growth of blue-bells. They shine a living azure ; they are like the sky, only more vivid, more intense. Over the rounded sides of knolls, into hollows and along level places, they press in their legions. They are all moving, swaying close to one another, as if in conclave. And far up the hillside, as far as the eye can see, hundreds of thousands of them reflect and transform the light. So wide an extent of colour catches at the heart, making it beat faster. In the distance, the misty azure has a half-transparent quality, as if the earth had indeed been turned into air and sky. Near at hand the separate flowers bend humbly yet joyfully amongst the luxuriant greenness of their straight leaves. On each stalk the bells hang suspended ; the intervals are perfect in irregularity, and on each flower the petals curl back in short, crisp spirals.

The spaces between the boughs, different, in the stillness of the wood, from the outer air, are filled with a sweet, heavy scent, and with the hum of insects. As I gaze at the carpet of blue flowers, I feel a heart-stirring expectation, a surprise and a wonder. Here gaiety and sadness blend harmoniously. This unconscious vegetable growth fills me with a kind of envy ; I would fain forget that I live a separate, individual life. To stand still, rooted in the earth, yet to move imperceptibly from seed to flower, from flower to seed, seems a consummation devoutly to be wished. The mood lasts but a moment ; life, diversified and never at rest, finds in the beauty of these flowers, in the gay assemblage of their buds, in the wistful sadness of their distant numbers, but one amongst her infinity of symbols. She does not speak frankly, she whispers and beckons only. For these the earth is divided ; the dead leaves of last year are pushed aside ; the green shoots appear ; the bud looks upward ; the flower bends its head ; the petals wither as the seeds form and swell. The hillside, brown with last year's sheddings, is suffused with delicate green ; it catches the blue of the sky, making it more intense by the immediate contact of earth ; blue turns to green again, green fades to brown, and the harmony is complete.

*(To be continued.)*



*DEMOS AND THE CLASSICS.*

BY F. W. H. BASEVI.

DURING the past few years there has appeared in the literary and educational press occasional mention of incidents which suggest an approaching change among manual workers in their attitude towards education. University lecturers, it appears, when addressing audiences of working men have sometimes been surprised to find, not only that they take a lively and intelligent interest and display a capacity to criticise Greek and Latin books with evident appreciation, but also, though more rarely, that some among them can read their favourite authors in the original tongue. Correspondence resulting from these accounts has indicated that this accomplishment is not so rare as might be supposed, and that among working men there is a demand, small as yet but growing, for increased facilities to study the dead languages. In Scotland, as is well known, educational attainments of this nature have long existed even among the poorest of the people. But whereas among the Scots it may be suspected that the original inducement to take up these studies was an ambition, perhaps unfulfilled, to enter the Ministry, or in some other way to better their position, in England there appears, as yet, to be no motive ulterior to personal gratification.

This phenomenon has been ignored by the champions in the educational war which science wages on the classics. At the very moment when the older universities, clearing decks for action, have discarded Greek fire in favour of modern weapons of precision, and when Latin may at any moment go by the board, a section of the working classes is demanding a share of what has always been regarded as a monopoly of the well-to-do. It is a phenomenon worthy of study; for it cannot be explained as the assertion, in a new guise, of social as well as political equality: nor is it merely a matter of vain display like the unused parlour, the unread library, and the untouched piano. The parlour was furnished, and the piano bought, in times of prosperity with surplus cash involving little self-denial; while the gaudily bound collection of books, like a row of guardsmen in full dress, is a standing proof of pertinacity on the part of some glib commercial traveller. But a knowledge

of Greek or Latin can only be acquired by prolonged study carried on after a hard day's work. It involves effort, and self-denial, and continuous exertion : it implies sincerity of purpose.

But although among those who demand facilities to study Greek and Latin there may be no conscious political motive, the political result may prove to be in the highest degree important and beneficial. Though yet so slight as scarcely to have aroused attention, the movement is interesting because it implies a break with the immediate past, and a reversion to older ideas. In other branches of knowledge labour, though hostile to the dominant middle-class, has meekly followed its intellectual lead. Notably is this so in economics, and in political theory based on economic doctrine. But this new interest in the classics indicates distrust, as yet perhaps unconscious, of middle-class ideals and a tendency to adopt those of the old landed aristocracy. For it is the middle-classes who have cast down the gods of Greece and Rome, and set up in their place a golden calf ; who have discarded the philosophy of the ancient teachers and adopted a materialistic philosophy of gain ; who have imported the methods of the market-place into the council chamber, and substituted instruction for education. This, then, is the problem : why is Labour, the humble follower of the middle-classes in all other branches of knowledge, turning against its masters on the question of the classics ?

Before this question can be answered it is necessary to understand clearly why a classical education has never been held in great esteem by financiers, merchants, manufacturers and members of the scientific professions, who combine to form the intellectual and social leaders of the middle-class, and give the tone to all the rest. The attitude of these leaders has always been a little contemptuous. A knowledge of Greek and Latin, in their eyes, is not a training for life, but an accomplishment, differing in degree rather than in nature from 'dancing, deportment and the use of the globes.' It is moreover an accomplishment which is rarely accomplished ; so the years devoted to it are years wasted. Bagehot the banker sums up the opinion of his associates when he speaks of Eton boys who derive from the pain and suffering of several years, not exactly an acquaintance with Greek and Latin, but a firm conviction that there are such languages. The gibe is not without foundation : with the vast majority of public school boys the charge is substantially if not literally true. But, as will appear later, it has no bearing whatever on the question.



Reasoning *a priori*, a very dangerous thing to do, we might say that there must be something good in a system of education which has sufficed for the governing caste during a considerable and not inglorious part of the history of our land; and not of our land only, but practically the whole of Western Europe. The obvious reply to this would be that what was enough for the simpler needs of past centuries will not serve to-day. Wherever scientific method has been substituted for the slipshod systems of our forefathers progress has resulted. It is therefore desirable in the interest of the individual and of the community that everyone should receive a training which tends to encourage an attitude of mind habitually scientific.

Speaking impartially, the scientific school appears to be getting the best of the argument, though this may be due not so much to the strength of their position as to the weakness of their opponents. For unfortunately it cannot be denied that the cause of the classics has suffered as much from the arguments of friends as from those of opponents. Indeed, the worst enemies of a classical education are numbered among its most enthusiastic supporters. Enthusiasm distorts their vision: the picture they display before our eyes is a bad picture: the composition is wrong and the drawing is weak: it is sentimental, picturesque, often merely pretty, like a coloured illustration in a Christmas number. Their arguments run mainly on four lines: three of which are false, and one, though true, misleading. First, and worst, come those who claim that only by teaching Greek and Latin can we teach English pure and undefiled. This miserable argument is repeated by every ponderous pedagogue who rushes into print. If it leads anywhere it leads us to condone the incompetence of Shakespeare and to understand why his verses are so pitiful and paltry. Poor fellow! With small Latin and less Greek no wonder that he failed! And as for Keats, we are tempted to exclaim, like the lady in the story—but substituting for her query a note of exclamation—‘What are Keats!’ What, indeed! Because a man may acquire a mastery of English through the study of Greek and Latin, therefore he cannot acquire a mastery of English except through the study of Greek and Latin. This in all its shameful nakedness is the argument of pedagogy.

Next in unimportance come those who claim that the study of the dead languages is a valuable mental training. Let this be admitted; and it may yet be said, almost with equal truth, that anything which involves more than a mere effort of muscle or

memory serves also as training for the mind. Madame Montessori, indeed, asserts that the most powerful spur to mental development comes through the sense of touch, while Winckelmann and his admirer Lessing insist on the necessity of manual work—the actual fingering of concrete objects—at least as a corrective if not as a stimulus. So without denying the usefulness of dead languages, it may be claimed that many other subjects might be substituted without disadvantage, and perhaps with gain. Among others may be numbered mathematics and any of the experimental sciences whose use in after life must turn the balance in their favour, unless other and weightier reasons can be found to support a classical education.

Yet another band of enthusiasts, who may be called the fine-art school, find reason for the faith that is in them in the softening and refining influence of literature. This is an argument far more respectable; and assuming that there is nothing in the English language which can be compared with the masterpieces of Greece and Rome, or that the best which England has produced is too limited in quantity, the argument would appear, at first sight, unanswerable. Few if any will be found to deny that great prose and great poetry are peers of all the arts in their ennobling influence on human life. Their appeal is not restricted to our understanding: they permeate the deepest recesses of our moral and emotional nature; and by nourishing our instincts, which govern our actions, they influence our feelings, our deeds, and even our very thoughts. But in order to enter into the minds of those who wrote two thousand years ago, what power of historic sympathy is required; while to appreciate the beauties of an alien tongue needs far more than the smattering which is all that the average young man obtains. Jewelled and pellucid Latin and the vowelled harmonies of Greek may afford an abiding joy to the scholar who seeks for hidden beauties as an artist explores the luminous shadows of Velasquez; but for the ordinary man who can scarcely read Caesar's Commentaries without a crib, they are but an object of display or a subject of regret.

But is English literature so poor that we must go elsewhere in search of nutriment? Macaulay, whose admiration for the ancients bordered almost on idolatry, has recorded his opinion:—

'The claims of our language,' he writes, 'it is hardly necessary to recapitulate. It stands pre-eminent even among the languages



of the West. It abounds with works of imagination not inferior to the noblest which Greece has bequeathed to us ; with models of every species of eloquence ; with historical compositions, which, considered merely as narratives, have seldom been surpassed, and which, considered as vehicles of ethical and political instruction, have never been equalled ; with just and lively representations of human life and human nature ; with the most profound speculations on metaphysics, morals, government, jurisprudence, and trade ; with full and correct information respecting every experimental science which tends to preserve the health, to increase the comfort, or to expand the intellect of man. Whoever knows that language has already access to all the vast intellectual wealth which all the wisest nations of the earth have created, and hoarded, in the course of ninety generations. It may be safely said that the literature now extant in that language is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together. . . . The literature of England is now more valuable than that of classical antiquity.'

This is the opinion of a man who during his residence in India resumed the classical studies suspended during parliamentary life, and in that short period of three and a half years read Plautus four times, Xenophon's *Anabasis* thrice, Thucydides, Lucretius, Velleius Paterculus, Sallust, Ovid and Livy each twice ; besides Sophocles, Plato, Aristotle, Euripides, Caesar, Catullus, the letters of the younger Pliny, the Odes of Horace and the 'Thebais' of Statius.

The arguments of the fine-art school are little weightier than those of the schoolmasters ; but the third line of defence is manned by sturdier troops—the Old Guard, the Humanists. These have always been the mainstay of the classicists ; but, unfortunately, among those who use their arguments, many fail to understand their meaning. It happens, only too often, that the word *humanities* is used in a sense implying little more than sympathy. Perhaps the assonance—*humanity, humane*—confuses the ear and the understanding, and like a dominant chord in music, blending two keys, facilitates the transition. Too often it is used to mean no more than a pleasurable recognition of human qualities in other men past or present ; and as such it has its value. But for this we do not need to go to Greek or Latin. It abounds in English literature ; or if our palates crave for foreign spices, we can find it almost everywhere—in Grimm's *Fairy Tales*, for example, or in the translation of a Norse saga. In these, as elsewhere, we shall

often stumble on some unexpected flash of human nature which bursts on us suddenly like a kindling flame, and rouses momentarily a warm glow of recognition of our kinship with the past and a deeper flash of insight into the souls of our neighbours.

Pleasant as this sensation is, it is not all, nor even the most valuable part, of the service rendered by the humanities. Nor does it explain the predominance which Latin held in the educational system of a class born to rule. As astrology preceded astronomy, and as alchemy was chemistry in embryo, so the humanities were, and still are, the precursor of psychology. But whereas alchemy and astrology, after serving their purpose in the progress of human thought, have vanished into the limbo of discarded errors, the humanities have not yet been displaced. The time will come, but it is not yet, when scientific method will replace the unsystematised and empiric knowledge which is all we have to guide us in dealing with our fellow men. But psychology is in its infancy : it has no laws : its definitions are disputed : its theories working hypotheses : and its wisest exponents are those who hold their judgment in suspense. Some day psychology will replace the humanities, as chemistry has ousted alchemy ; but meanwhile we must be content with what we have, and make use of it as our fathers did before us. And what we have is found in its best, most useful, form in Latin, which constituted all that for many generations was considered worthy of the name of education. If we bear in mind the fact that the humanities are unsystematised, unscientific psychology, we shall understand why they were so long regarded as the most valuable preparation for life by the members of an hereditary aristocracy.

The history of England has been written in two characters— one hieratic, the other demotic. The former is the monopoly of specialists who restrict themselves to the intensive study of one period or movement. But though their work is of the highest value it has little immediate influence. General or narrative history, on the other hand, supplies all the knowledge which the ordinary man possesses. It is the product of partisans and schoolmasters : it is written with a political bias by partisans, and by schoolmasters with a utilitarian eye fixed subserviently on examiners. It begins with the reign of William the Conqueror. Between England in 1065 and England in 1066, according to popular belief, there is a great gulf fixed. Green endeavoured to



bridge this gulf, only to fall a victim to the German myth, and dig a gulf yet deeper some few centuries farther back. Popular imagination pictures a conquest as the advance of a mighty army, marching shoulder to shoulder in one unbroken line which stretches from end to end of the invaded country. This picture is wholly false. All conquests, in a greater or a less degree, are sporadic. Although the organised resistance of the aborigines is overcome, only small areas, at first, are actually occupied, and it is from these spores that the power of the conqueror spreads, slowly, gradually, and attended almost invariably by some degree of union with the conquered race.

The popular illusion that there are breaks in history is due, in part, to the hypnotic influence which outstanding characters, events and dynasties exercise over the imagination, and partly to the deplorable custom of dividing books into chapters. Biology and anthropology acknowledge no break, and Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has done great service in helping to secularise the idea of continuity in history by insisting on the importance of nearly four centuries of Roman occupation, with all that this long period implies in the mixture of blood, and the diffusion of Roman civilisation. Wars and conquests, revolutions and social upheavals alter the distribution of wealth and cause much suffering and misery. But so do famine and epidemics. Indeed the failure of the monsoon in the Punjab and the ravages of the tsetse-fly in Central Africa cause ruin and devastation incomparably more severe than the most terrible iniquities of man. Yet there is no break. Nor was there at the battle of Hastings; and still less during the Saxon invasion. New rulers governed, and a new aristocracy partially replaced, and subsequently mingled with the old. Among the lower ranks of society a similar movement occurred. But life went on much as it did before, with little more change than is incurred to-day when a family moves from one street to another. They have new neighbours, but still meet many of their old acquaintances: they continue to pay rates and taxes though to a different collector; but their breakfast hour is not changed, nor generally is the work whereby they earn a living: they continue to eat and drink, to marry and to give in marriage, as though nothing of importance had disturbed their lives. There is much truth in Doctor Johnson's dictum that public affairs vex no man.

To avoid misunderstanding it may be well, before proceeding further, to define the word 'aristocracy'; for anthropology has not

yet evolved a language of its own, and is still compelled to use words whose outlines are obscured by a nimbus of associations. As used here, the term implies the members of a ruling class which rules by right of conquest. This right, throughout the agricultural era, involved the ownership of land, or at least a claim to occupation, and the duty of performing certain social functions.

After conquest comes rule ; and the first care of a successful invader is to maintain the peace. In countries deficient in means of communication this can only be achieved by setting up throughout the land local authorities with large, almost autocratic, powers. This the Normans did in a rough-and-ready but sufficiently effective way known as the feudal system. It was not perfect, but the rapid growth of prosperity which followed its introduction shows that it was not unsuited to the conditions of the age. Both conquerors and conquered were subject to its rules ; and as there was little difference in race or civilisation between them they soon intermarried—but class with class. The ruled continued to till the soil, and the rulers kept the peace so that the soil might be tilled. Neither performed their functions with any great skill if judged by modern standards ; but they did something, and some of them at least did their best.

The spheres of action open to the ruling classes were government, both central and local, diplomacy, the army, and the Church. Of these, for a long period, the first and the last were intimately connected. The Church of Rome, grasping in one hand the keys of St. Peter and in the other the sceptre of the Caesars, exercised many of the functions, and occupied in Western Europe the position which had pertained to the patrician families of Rome. Its highest posts, though always open to men of outstanding ability in any rank of life, were most rapidly and easily attained by men of high social standing ; and the authority which its prelates acquired in the State was maintained, not so much by their piety, which was often inconspicuous, as by their power of ruling men. The *lingua franca*, which permitted intercourse between the governing classes of all Western Europe, was Latin, which placed at their disposal all the accumulated wisdom of the patrician rulers of the Roman Empire. Thus the Church of Rome—whose highest dignitaries belonged mainly to the governing classes, and were connected by the closest intimacy and blood relationship with other members of that class who ruled the armies and shared the high offices of State—was the inheritor not only of the Christian



doctrine, but of the wisdom and philosophy of a patrician caste which had governed a vast empire with conspicuous success. Though religion lent them a mysterious and terrible support, it was the wisdom acquired from Latin literature which guided them in their dealings with men.

Latin provides what is not to be found in the literature of any other tongue. It contains everything which served for centuries to educate successive generations of a caste born to rule : a class consciously superior to the mercantile and labouring population, strongly practical, intensely patriotic, and so convinced of its superiority that it could regard without irritation the crude beliefs, the ignorance, stupidity, and weakness, and even the cupidity and dishonesty of those whom it was born to govern. In matters of government in peace and war they were experts, imbibing from infancy, not only the special knowledge, but more important still, the attitude of mind which was to serve them when they grew to man's estate. Their whole education was directed to one end, and all their relations and associates were engaged in one task—government.

Concurrently with the spread of education, an education almost restricted to an acquaintance with Latin literature, came the decline of the power of the Church of Rome. But by that time the position of Latin was established. Some knowledge of it was considered an essential part of the mental equipment of a gentleman. Greek never attained to that position. What was valuable to a ruler in Greek literature had already been absorbed into Latin : the rest was a matter of taste, of connoisseurship. But a man who could not quote a line or two of Latin to illustrate his meaning showed that he had not acquired the rudiments of education needed by those whose business it was to rule. Above all, it was wisdom, not knowledge, which a ruler needed. Knowledge could be furnished by subordinates : indeed, that was the function of subordinates, one which became in course of time more and more important. But, at least in England, there has always existed a strong aversion to putting the specialist into positions of authority. The business of the expert is to advise, not to decide ; and decisions, we believe, are best made by those whose minds are unbiased by specialism, but whose training has taught them to balance pros and cons.

We see, then, how wide of the mark was Bagehot's gibe. It was not the aim of the great public schools to turn out scholars,

except indeed a few to be the schoolmasters of the next generation ; but they did provide an education. The sons of the ruling classes passed their most impressionable years in an atmosphere of the classics, translating, and hearing others translate, the books which had formed the minds of rulers. This saturation in the very spirit of a governing caste tended to give them an attitude of mind free from cant, free from the hot passion of the fanatic ; and in order to achieve a wise tolerance, encouraged that superficial pose of superiority, even of cynicism, which was so unintelligible and so hateful to the earnest middle class.

If the man in the street were asked to explain the origin of the Conservative and Liberal parties, he would describe the former as descended from the Tories and the latter from the Whigs. As a statement of what occurred within the Houses of Parliament this definition is not without an element of truth. But it is utterly misleading. Whigs and Tories, though holding different views on Church and State, and on many other matters of policy which are now of little interest to any but historians, were both composed of the landowning classes, their dependants, and their hangers-on. In their internecine feud the Whigs accepted the alliance of a new and powerful interest whose rise began in the latter half of the eighteenth century. These allies were the manufacturing and trading classes in whose hands the wealth of the country was rapidly accumulating. For a while they hung together ; but the union was never a happy one, for their personal interests were divergent. The middle class belonged to the towns ; while the Whigs, like the Tories, belonged to the country. Both Whigs and Tories suffered by the abolition of the corn laws : both had an hereditary understanding of the working classes in the country and were instinctively more democratic than the middle class. Finally the alliance was broken : the middle class gained control of the party, and most of the Whigs went over to the Tories. The incidents which gave them the opportunity were the Eastern Question and Home Rule ; but the tendency to split had been evident long before.

Cobden defined what he calls ' the middling classes ' as those engaged in trade and manufacture : he admitted that their aim was social and political advancement, and he owned that they were not democratic in their views. In the early part of the nineteenth century they were fighting for their own hand, and were



not concerned with, indeed they were opposed to, any extension of political power to the working classes. The concurrent agitation of the Chartists was repugnant to them. They opposed all combination among workers. They consistently opposed—even Bright opposed—all legislation tending to improve the condition of the workers, such as the limitation of hours, and control of child-labour. Their vision was restricted to the walls of the factory and the counting-house, and they never looked through the windows at the world outside. Their ledgers and their balance-sheets afforded them all the inspiration they needed, and as long as the balance was on the right side all was well in the best of all possible worlds. To support and confirm them in their convictions a vast body of theory was built up.

‘All social historians,’ says Mr. Graham Wallas, ‘who treat of the nineteenth century are agreed as to the practical evils which resulted from the intellectualist bias of utilitarian politics and economics. The horrors of the early factory system were prolonged by the authoritative doctrine that both parties in any industrial contract might be trusted to secure their own interest; while those who “believed in Political Economy” tended to inhibit their own disposition towards pity for the victims of industrial processes, because of a confused theory that disinterested pity either did not exist or existed without any scientific right to do so.’

It was this class which established its powers in the course of the nineteenth century. It organised, it administered; but it had never governed. It gave us the shibboleth ‘a business government,’ but did not realise that there could be any inherent difference between the management of a great firm and the ruling of a country. Not only was it without the tradition or the inherited aptitude to govern, but it dealt with men solely in their capacity as workmen, or, to use their own expression, ‘hands.’ The term is highly significant. Within the factory and the shop efficiency demanded the minutest regulation of actions and movements; and the workers were regarded, not as men, but as highly complicated and not very efficient machines. They were not human beings who love and hate, desire and loathe, with ambitions, hopes, and fears; but tenders of machines who come to perform special operations, and then to vanish till the engine starts again next day. Their ideal workman had no personality: he was either capable or incapable. That he had rent to pay, a family to feed, and a soul to be saved was no affair of theirs.

It was not that their policy was deliberately callous or cruel, but a man cannot help regarding with favour conditions in which he prospers. And they consoled themselves for the suffering, which they could not avoid seeing, by the belief that it was not merely inevitable, but only temporary. Increasing markets would encourage manufacture, which in turn would abolish unemployment. England was then the only manufacturing country in the world, and if she could keep her start other countries would not be able to compete, and would remain agricultural. They looked with complete faith to trade, especially free-trade, as the means by which an era of perpetual peace and prosperity would be introduced into a troubled world.

Efficiency, smooth-working, being the essential of success in business, remained their ideal in public affairs. The tendency to minute regulation which they carried into the art of government is essentially opposed to the older method of the aristocracy, which is well defined in the Chinese proverb, 'Rule a country as you cook a small fish; that is, don't overdo it.' Thus, when they acquired political power they were handicapped as much by what they had as by what they lacked. Not only were they without the instincts and traditions which the older governing class had acquired: not only did they not breathe within the family circle the atmosphere which rulers need to breathe, but a bias towards the methods which had served so well in the accumulation of wealth made them apply the same standards to public affairs. Their touchstone was 'Does it pay?' and by extending the significance of the word 'pay' they developed the utilitarian doctrine. This touchstone was the test of everything, including education.

Education, according to the middle-classes, was preparation for the great struggle for success in business, a necessary preliminary for a career, and they looked to the school and the university to provide their sons with a training directly aimed at improving their chances. The need of the man who had to earn a living, who would have to organise and administer a factory or a commercial house, or who, taking to law or medicine, must be more expert than his competitors, was knowledge, practical and useful knowledge highly specialised. Except for those who were going to be schoolmasters or clergymen—respectable but quite unprofitable occupations—the dead languages were of no practical use, and to acquire a mere smattering of them was mere waste of time. Some acquaintance with Greek and Latin might reflect credit on the young



man's relations, and be a subject of legitimate family pride ; but it must not be taken so seriously as to interfere with instruction ; and it must be left in the hall with the hat and umbrella before entering the counting-house.

Labour to-day is following the track which the middle-classes blazed one hundred years ago—the path which leads to political power ; and it finds itself opposed, as the middle-classes were, by the man in possession. Will Labour, in its struggle, display the same patience, the same restraint, and, above all, the same determination to prepare itself for the great position at which it aims ? Or will it allow itself to be swept off its feet by hot-heads ? ‘Beware,’ says Lord Beaconsfield in ‘Vivian Grey,’ ‘beware of endeavouring to become a great man in a hurry’ ; and the warning applies with equal force to whole classes as to individuals.

But though the immediate aim of Labour is the same as that of the middle-classes a century ago, their habitual outlook on life is so very different that it may lead to different ends. Indeed the working-classes in many of their instincts approximate far more closely to the landed aristocracy of old than to the merchant and the manufacturer. This unison of tone between what are usually regarded as the two extremes of the social scale is not so surprising as it may first appear. The causes are many, but only one or two can be considered here. In the first place the daily occupation of the working man is less interesting than that of the man in business, especially since the craftsman gave place to the skilled workman, and home industries were displaced by organised specialisation in great factories. An American ‘efficiency expert’ relates how, when visiting a factory, he came upon a man engaged in tending a machine which stamped out bits of metal.

‘What are you making ?’ he inquired.

‘H. 14’ was the succinct reply.

‘What is H. 14 ?’

‘This is.’

‘What is it used for ?’

‘I don’t know.’

‘How long have you been at the job ?’

‘Seven years.’

But not only is the work less interesting, it is also less absorbing. The energetic and pushing man of business must

always be alert in and out of working hours. He can never tell what chance remark dropped in private conversation or what paragraph in a newspaper may show him an opportunity to extend his business. But when the workman downs tools he is finished for the day. His life is then his own to do what he likes with. No thought of H. 14 disturbs his relaxation. His life is not so bounded by economic formula. Life is something to be lived; and his only economic trouble is the painful necessity of being economical.

Yet another characteristic of his life inclines the working man to adopt the outlook of the old aristocracy. These were not troubled about how to earn a living; their future was assured. The eldest son inherited the estate; the younger sons, to supplement their patrimony, had the certainty of employment in the great services of the State. What certainty was to them, uncertainty is to the workman; and the extreme difference produces like effects, as great cold gives the sensation of burning. For the average workman, provided he is reasonably skilled and reliable, employment and unemployment are matters over which he has little or no control. They depend on the great cyclical movements of trade; on booms and slumps and world-wide influences; and this inability to control his destiny makes the workman disregard the future and live more wholly in the present than is possible for the provident middle-class. 'Take no thought for the morrow' was never a popular maxim in business.

Finally—and here we come in direct contact with education—it takes less time to train a youth for the highest class of skilled labour than to prepare him for a business career, or for one of the scientific professions. Except, then, for the fact that poverty requires the workman's son to begin at an early age to earn his living, there would be time for him to receive real education as well as practical and useful instruction. Hitherto Labour has produced few men of outstanding merit in public life. Great talent has been more conspicuous in business, in art, and more rarely in science; and those who have risen in these branches have usually been absorbed into the middle class. The dearth of original thinkers in politics is probably a passing phase due to the restricted numbers engaged in this pursuit. Outstanding ability is always a 'sport,' a variation from the normal type, and much seed must be sown to produce one specimen.

But two movements of recent date may be expected to extend



the area from which political thinkers and leaders can be drawn—namely, the reduction in the hours of labour, and the spread of higher education. What the boy must perforce neglect, the grown man has leisure and opportunity to acquire. So far, Labour has been obliged to accept, in the way of education, what it finds to hand; and this has been written by, and for, the middle classes. But it has accepted with misgivings. Orthodox middle-class doctrines have not resulted in the economic and social millennium which was promised. In despair many have turned to unorthodox middle-class doctrines: socialism, communism, syndicalism, and anarchy—to anything, indeed, which holds out promises of better things. Provided they are reasonably logical they are accepted at their maker's valuation, regardless of the fact that a logical deduction can be drawn from false premises.

There is, however, in the British race an inherent tincture of conservatism which makes it look back before going forward. If the middle-class doctrines of the past century and a half have failed, what about the earlier system which they replaced? It was founded on the rock of human nature; it embraced a wider outlook; it was not purely industrial; it did not confine its reasoning to economics; it had regard to all that makes up life, and not only life within the factory walls. This system was developed in the literature of Greece and Rome; it contains the wisdom of generations of specialists in the art of government. Cannot this wisdom be applied to the problems of the present day, and serve to guide us until psychology becomes a science? If the demand for a classical education continues to spread among the working classes, it may happen that the stone which the middle-class builders rejected will once again become the head of the corner.

### THE FIDDLER.

DALMAIN village lies a few miles from Forfar town in that part of western Angus where the land runs up in great undulations from Strathmore towards the Grampians; and it is tucked away, deep down in a trough between a couple of these solid waves. A narrow burn slips westward to the Isla through this particular trough with the roughest of rough country roads alongside it. The two together pass in front of the small collection of low white cottages which forms the village. There is just room, and no more, for the little hamlet, and from their southern windows the dwellers in the kirkton of Dalmain can see their kirk perched on the bank above them where the shoulder of the next wave rises in their faces. In the dusky evenings of late autumn it looks like a resident ghost with its dead white sides glimmering through the yellowing trees that surround it. It is the quietest place imaginable, and no doubt it was quieter still in the days of which I am writing; for the 'forty-five,' with its agonies and anxieties, had passed by nearly forty years back, and though the beadle was still lame from a sword-cut, the old man's limp was all that was left to show any trace of that convulsion of Scotland to the outward eye.

It was on one of these October afternoons of 1784 that two men sat talking in Dalmain manse; one was the minister, Mr. Laidlaw, and the other was an Englishman who had arrived a few hours earlier. The latter had never seen his host before, and had crossed the Tweed a few days since for the first time. He had just started upon the business which had brought him from Northumberland and the stir of Newcastle into this—to him—remotest of all possible places.

The minister was a plain, elderly man with pursed lips which gave him the look of being a duller person than he actually was, and his companion, a good many years the younger of the two, alarmed him by his unfamiliar accent. The Englishman had a pleasant, alert expression. He was leaning over the table at which both were sitting, one on either side.

'I know that his name was Moir,' he was saying. 'That is all I know, except that they were seen together in Glen Aird soon



after Culloden, and that my cousin Musgrave was badly wounded in the side. I have discovered from the records of his regiment that there was a Moir in it, a native of Dalmain. I can only guess that this man is the same. No doubt I have set out on a wild-goose chase, sir, but I thought it might be worth while to make the experiment of coming here.'

'It is a matter of an inheritance, you say,' said Mr. Laidlaw, pursing his lips more than ever and raising his eyebrows. 'I got that from your letter, I think?'

'It is. We are a Jacobite family, though we are not Scots—there are many such in the north of England—and this officer in the Prince's army, whom, of course, I never saw, made my father his heir. He had nothing to leave, as a matter of fact,' he added, smiling.

'Then, sir, I would remark that it is no very easy to see your difficulty,' observed Laidlaw drily.

'There is an answer to that. It has only lately been discovered that he had an interest in a foreign business which has never paid until now. His share of the profits should come to me, as my father is dead and I am his only son. But it appears that I cannot claim the money until my cousin Musgrave's death is legally proven. It is barely possible that he is still alive, for it is about forty years since he disappeared, and he has made no sign, though his wife was living until six months ago.'

'He would be an old man too, no doubt?'

'He would be nearing eighty by this time.'

There was a pause.

'You tell me that there are still some of the Moir family left in this parish,' continued the Englishman.

Laidlaw cleared his throat. 'I doubt you may not find much to help you,' he said. 'It is curious that you should choose this time for your search. It is not just a fortunate one; for though, as I have said, I shall be happy to serve your interests, I fear it is little I can do. There are two persons of the name of Moir in this parish, two elderly bodies. One is at this moment dying—indeed, she may be dead by now. She has been unconscious these few days, and it is for that reason that I am not beside her: my ministrations are useless.'

'I see,' said the Englishman, his face falling; 'of course I could not trouble her in the circumstances.'

'It is not that, sir, for I should be glad to give you what

hospitality I can till she was able to see you ; but she is a strange creature—both are strange. The dying one has been slightly deranged in her mind since she was a young lass—for the last twelvemonth she has been completely so—and the younger sister, Phemie, is a very extraordinary character. The bairns are feared of her, and some of the more foolish of my congregation take her for a witch, though I tell them such things are just havers. She seems to have no ill-will at anybody.’

‘ But what is wrong with her, then ? ’

‘ She will speak to nobody. Months at a time she will keep the house. I have only been a short while in this place, just three years past, and in that time she has been twice at the kirk on the Lord’s Day, no more.’

‘ There must be madness in the family, sir, I should think.’

‘ I believe not,’ replied the minister. ‘ She is thrawn, that’s all –twisted, as I suppose you might say in England.’

‘ And are there no male relations ? ’

‘ I understand there was an older brother, but he left Dalmain long ago. I have heard no more than that.’

‘ If my cousin and the man Moir fled together after the battle of Culloden, the same fate may have overtaken them both. I admit that my chances of discovering the truth are not promising.’

‘ That is true enough,’ said Laidlaw, ‘ but we should wait awhile before we despair.’

‘ But I cannot trespass indefinitely upon you, Mr. Laidlaw——’

‘ You’ll need to bide a day or two, sir ; I shall be happy if you will. I am not much company for you, I know,’ he added diffidently.

‘ You are only too kind ! ’ exclaimed the other. ‘ I have heard many a time that Scotland is a hospitable country, and now I see it. I am very fortunate to be here with you instead of hunting a dead man by myself.’

Laidlaw coloured a little. He was a shy man and a humble one.

‘ And now,’ said his companion, rising, ‘ I will not waste your time with my affairs. You are probably busy at this hour. I will go for a stroll and see something of this place before dark sets in.’

He walked to the window, which was open to the still October air.

‘ Surely that is someone tuning a violin,’ he said, turning round



to the minister. His face was bright. 'I am something of a musician myself,' he added.

'Oh!' exclaimed Laidlaw, jumping up, 'I had forgotten! You have come at a good time, sir—the great Neil Gow is here!'

'And who is he?'

'Presairv's!' exclaimed Laidlaw, growing, as he always did, more Scottish under astonishment, 'did ye niver hear o' Neil Gow?'

'I have not had that advantage,' replied his guest, becoming correspondingly English.

'He is the greatest fiddler in Scotland!'

'Indeed!'

The minister was oblivious of any humour but his own. 'This is a chance an English body might not get in a lifetime! It's many a long day since he was here. It was the year of Culloden, they tell me, before they had put the plough on thae fields west o' the kirkton. There was a green yonder below the braes o' broom that was a fine place for dancing. The English soldiers were about these parts then, at the foot of the glens, waiting for the poor lads that were seeking their homes after the battle, but they danced, for all that. Neil was a young lad then. There's nobody here but the beadle minds of it. But he'll never forget yon days till they take him to the kirkyard.'

'Indeed,' said the Englishman again.

'Ay, he was lying in his bed in a house that looked on the green with a wound in his leg, though his wife tell't everybody it was typhus, to keep folk from going in. It was June month, and the broom was out on the brae. They said Neil was daft; the beadle could hear him from where he lay, skirling and laying on the bow. He kept them dancing till it was too late for a man to see the lass he danced with, and his arm was that stiff he had it tied up next day when he left Dalmain; and a callant had to go with him to carry the fiddle. But time flies, sir. Likely there'll no be a lad dancing to it the night that ever heard him play before. I am a Dunkeld man myself, so I am well acquaint with him. He's playing at a dance at the Knowes farm. Knowes' wife is a niece of Neil's.'

The Englishman unstiffened. There was something he liked in the contrast between Laidlaw's black clothes and sober face and the enthusiasm in his voice.

'Then you do not disapprove of dancing?' he said.

'Toots, no! And suppose I did, what would it avail me in Perth or Angus?'

‘ Are they great dancers here ? ’

Laidlaw gave an impatient snort. There seemed to be many things his travelled-looking guest had not heard of.

‘ I will certainly go and hear your fiddler,’ said the Englishman. ‘ But, sir, you must come with me.’

Laidlaw sighed. ‘ My sermon is heavy on my mind,’ said he; ‘ I must follow you later—but it’s a pity.’

While this conversation was going on in the manse a little group was assembled in the kitchen of Phemie Moir’s cottage, where the beadle of Dalmain kirk stood with open psalm-book in the middle of the room. He was a lean, lame old man with aquiline features set in a fringe of white whisker, and he was sending his stentorian voice into the faces of the men before him. The place was full of rough figures, roughly clothed. Two women were in the kitchen, but only one was visible, and she sat by the hearth. The other lay behind the drawn curtain of the box-bed let into the wall; for she was dying, and had nearly got to the end of what was proving to be a very easy business. The elders had gathered together this evening to give point to Margaret Moir’s passage into the next world, and were well embarked on the psalm following the prayer they had offered. A shadow of officialdom impelled the singers to hold their books breast-high and to keep their eyes fixed upon the page, though the dimness of the crusie at the wall turned their action into a pure piece of romance. It was romance and officialdom mixed that made those who had no books look over the shoulders of those who had; for none could see and all had the metrical psalms by heart. They went about their work with a disinterested unanimity that levelled them all into a mere setting for the beadle, Phemie, and the unseen figure behind the curtain.

No stir nor sign came from the drawn hangings of the box-bed, and though the most tremendous event of human life was enacting itself in that hidden space sunk in the wall, the assembly seemed to be entirely concerned with keeping up the gale of psalmody. Even Phemie, who neither sang nor prayed, and to whom the approaching loss must convey some personal significance, remained detached and impassive, with the tortoiseshell cat at her feet. The animal alone appeared to be conscious that anything unusual was going forward, for it sat bolt upright, looking with uneasy, unblinking eyes to the bed.

In the middle of the fourteenth verse, the last but one of the



dragging psalm, the cat rose and walked with slow, tentative feet towards the wall. It sprang up on the seat of a chair at the bedside and disappeared behind the short curtain; whilst the singers, aroused from their preoccupation by the movement of the stealthy creature across the flags, wavered a moment in their tune.

Before a man had time to do more than nudge his neighbour the cat had leaped back into view and made frantically for the door, where it crouched, miaowing and scraping at the threshold.

The verse faltered and fell, and a faint breath of disquiet went over the singers; they were dumb as the beadle limped across the kitchen and, drawing back the wisp of hanging stuff, peered into the dark, square space that opened behind it like a mouth. There was a moment's silence; then he turned to them again.

'Sing on, lads,' he said, 'anither verse'll land her!'

The elders struck up once more. They sang steadily to the end and then stood back with closed books and shuffling feet. The beadle released the terrified cat. The company filed solemnly out, leaving him and Phemie in the kitchen—only two now; that hidden third presence was gone.

The woman stood by the bed.

'Aye, she's awa', she said.

Her sister had been practically dead for the last twelve months, a mere mindless puppet to be fed a little less regularly than the cat, a little more regularly than the hens.

The beadle looked on, silent, as his companion drew the sheet over the dead woman's face. His legitimate part in the event was to come later. Then he also went out, crossing the small rapid burn which divided Phemie's cottage from the road. Under the overhanging weeds it was gurgling loud, for it had rained in the hills and the streams were swelling.

He stood looking up and down the way. Voices were floating towards him from the Knowes farm. He had done what he considered was required of him as an official, and relaxation was his due. Also it was unthinkable that anything, from a kirk meeting to a pig-killing, should go on without him at Dalmain. He clapped his psalm-book into his pocket and turned towards the Knowes, for, like the Englishman, he heard the fiddle tuning. He had worn a completely suitable expression at the scene he had just left, and as he drew nearer to the steading it changed with every step; by the time he had kicked the mud from his feet at the threshold of the big barn, which was filling with people from all corners of this and

neighbouring parishes, he wore a look of consistent joviality. His long mouth was drawn across his hatchet face, and he held it a little open like that of a sly old collie dog.

The barn was roughly decorated with branches of rowan nailed here and there against the walls, and the scarlet berries of the autumn-stricken leaves were like outbreaks of flame. The floor was swept clean and a few stable lanterns were hung from rafters, or set upon boxes in the angles of the building; the light from these being so much dispersed that it only served to illuminate such groups as came into the individual radius of each. The greater part of those who stood about waiting for the dancing to begin were dark figures with undistinguishable faces. There was a hum of talk and an occasional burst of laughter and horseplay. At the further end of the place a heavy wooden chair was set upon a stout table. 'Knowes,' the giver of the entertainment, loitered rather sheepishly in the background; he was of no account though he was a recent bridegroom; for it was his wife's relationship to the great fiddler who was to preside this evening which shed a glory on his household and turned their housewarming into an event. He was an honest fellow and popular, but the merrymakers had no thought for anyone but Neil.

The position that Neil Gow had made for himself was a remarkable one. There was no community in Perthshire, Angus or the Mearns that did not look on him with possessive affection. He played alike at farmhouse dances, at public balls, in villages and bothies, at the houses of lairds and dukes; he met every class and was on terms of friendship with the members of each. He had humour and spirit, and though he was entirely outspoken and used a merry tongue on every rank and denomination among his friends, his wit and good sense and the glamour of a fine personality allowed him to do so without offence. He was accustomed to speak his mind to his great friend and patron, the Duke of Atholl, as well as to his guests. 'Gang doon to yer suppers, ye daft limmers,' he had once cried to the dancers at Atholl House, 'an' dinna haud me here reelin' as if hunger an' drouth were un kent i' the land!' Many a poor man knew Neil's generosity, and many a richer one in difficulties; out of his own good fortune he liked to help those less happy than himself. He had an answer for everybody, a hand for all. He was a self-made king whose sceptre was his bow and whose crown was his upright soul and overflowing humanity.



At last the group inside the barn door dispersed, and Neil, who had been the centre of it, shook himself free and went over, his fiddle under his arm, to the table beside which a long bench was set that he might step up to his place. He would begin to play alone to-night, for his brother Donald, who was his violoncello, had been detained upon their way.

'Aye, sit doon, twa-three o' ye, on the tither end o't,' he exclaimed to a knot of girls who were watching him with expectant eyes; 'ye'd nane o' ye get yer fling wi' yer lads the nicht gin I was to turn tapsalterie!'

They threw themselves simultaneously upon the bench, tittering, and he stepped up on the table, a tall, broad figure in tartan breeches and hose. His hair was parted in the middle and hung, straight and iron-grey, almost to his great shoulders, and his cheekbones looked even higher than they already were from the shadows cast under them by the lantern swinging above. There was no need for the light, for he carried no music and would have scorned to depend on it. His marked eyebrows rose from his nose to the line that drew them level along the temples above his bright and fearless eyes. His large, finely-cut mouth was shut, his shoulders back, as he surveyed the crowd below him. A subdued murmur rose from it. The company began to arrange itself in pairs. He smiled and stood with his bow hand raised; he was just going to drop it to the strings when Donald Gow came in.

When the Englishman had left the minister to his sermon he made his way slowly to the village. He was in no hurry, for though his host had stirred a slight curiosity in him about the fiddler, he was principally interested in seeing what it was that this unsophisticated little world, of which he knew nothing, had magnified into a marvel. The thought of it amused him. It was a kindly amusement, for he was a good-hearted man who liked his fellow creatures as a whole. The rotting leaves were half fallen and their moist scent rose from under foot, a little acrid, but so much mixed with earth's composite breath that it was not disagreeable. A robin hopped alongside at a few yards' distance with the trustful inquisitiveness of its kind. The fiddle had begun, but he was too far from it to hear plainly, and it sounded muffled, as though from the interior of some enclosed place. One or two faint lights were showing in cottage windows across the burn. The gurgling voice of the water made him feel drowsy. He was in the humour which makes people lean their folded arms on gates, but he could

not do that, for there were no gates here; rough bars thrust in across the gaps in unpointed walls a couple of feet from the ground were the nearest approach to gates that he could see. How much poorer it all looked than England, and how different! He knew that it was a wilder place over which his cousin had fought, and he thought of the wounded fugitive tramping this comfortless country with the vanished and problematical Moir. He feared, as he had said to Laidlaw, that he was on a wild goose chase. He felt a stirring of pity in him for the dwellers in this lost, strange backwater, and it seemed no wonder to him that a common fiddler should arouse so much delight, even in a moderately educated man, such as he took Laidlaw to be. As the dusk fell it grew chilly, so he went to the Knowes farm and found his way among the stacks to the barn door. The dancing was now in full swing, so he stood unnoticed by the threshold, looking in.

The lights were flickering in the draught created by the whirl of the reel which was in progress, and men and women of all ages between sixteen and sixty seemed lost to everything but the ecstasy of recurrent rhythm that swayed them. The extraordinary elaboration of steps amazed the Englishman, and the dexterity of feet shod in heavy brogues. He could not follow any single pair long enough to disentangle their intricacies of movement, for no sooner did he think he was on the way to it than the whole body of dancers were swallowed up in collective loops of motion, and then were spinning anew in couples till the fiddle put them back in their places and the maze of steps began again. The rhythmic stamping went on like the smothered footfall of a gigantic approaching host; not so much a host of humanity as of some elemental force gathering power behind it. It gripped him as he listened and felt the rocking of the floor. His eyes were drawn across the swinging crowd, the confused shadows and the dust of the thickening atmosphere to what was the live heart of it all.

The largest lantern, high above, hung direct from its rafter over the head of Donald Gow as he sat on his wooden chair with the dark, dim-looking violoncello between his knees. Before him on the broad table stood Neil, the light at his back magnifying his size. His cheek was laid against his violin, his right foot, a little advanced, tapped the solid boards, as, pivoted on his left one, he turned to and fro with the fluctuations of the tune, swaying now this way, now that, his eye roving over the mass that responded, as though hypnotised, to the spur of his moving bow. It was as



if he saw each individual dancer and was playing to him or her alone ; as if his very being was urging each one to answer to his own abounding force and compelling the whole gathering to reflect every impulse of his mind. The stream of the reel poured on, throbbing and racing, leaping above the sonorous undertone of the violoncello, but never, for all the ardent crying of the string, leaving the measured beat of the matchless time. Now and again, at some point of tension, he would throw a short, exultant yell across the barn and the tumult of ordered movement would quicken to the sharp inspiration of the sound.

The Englishman stood with beating pulses and every nerve and muscle taut, gazing at Neil. He loved music, and had toiled patiently and with a measure of success at the violin. He knew enough to recognise his technical skill, yet the pleasure of recognition, so great even to one with less knowledge than he possessed, was forgotten in the pure rush of feeling, the illumination cast upon his mind by which intangible things became clear. He seemed to understand—perhaps only for a moment—the spirit of the land he was in, and the heart of the kinsman whose track he was trying to follow, whose body lay, perchance, somewhere among those hills he had seen before him, guarding the northern horizon, as he neared Dalmain. For a moment he could have envied him his participation in the forlorn cause he had espoused. The love of country, which was a passion in the race around him, which, unexpressed in mere words, poured out of the violin in this master-hand, was revealed to him, though he could only grasp it vicariously. As he stood, thrilled, on the brink of the whirlpool, its outer circles were rising about his feet. The music stopped suddenly and Neil threw down his bow.

He awoke as from a dream and drew back. One or two people, aware for the first time of a stranger's presence, looked at him curiously, but most of the dancers were crowding round the table where Neil was now sitting in his brother's place.

'Na, na,' he was saying, 'I'll no win doon till I hae a drink. Man, Donal', awa' wi' ye an' get a dram to us baith.'

The Englishman went back to the stackyard ; he wished Mr. Laidlaw had not stayed behind, for he did not mean to return to the manse till he had heard Neil play again. He was an intruder, which was a little embarrassing to him, and he felt his position would be bettered if he had someone to speak to. But the scraps of talk he heard did not encourage him to address anyone because

he was not sure of understanding any reply he might get. Soon a small boy came out of the barn and paused in surprise to look at him; he was apparently of an inquisitive turn of mind, for he hung about examining every detail of the stranger's appearance. He bore the scrutiny for a few minutes.

'What is your name, my lad?' he inquired at last, reflecting that it would not matter if he did look like a fool before this child.

The boy made no answer, but backed a step, open-mouthed. The question was repeated, and this time produced an effect, for he turned and ran, as though accosted by an ogre.

He did not stop till he was clear of the stackyard, but when he reached the road he stood still. He had been told by his mother to come home before dark, and when he had first caught sight of the Englishman he was debating whether or no he should obey her. He was now put out at finding himself on his way there, and stood irresolute, pouting and kicking his heels in the mud. Looking back, he saw a figure moving among the stacks, and the sight decided him. He set off resentfully, cheated into virtue: a situation that was hateful.

He had no mind to hurry. If he was diddled by an unfair chance into respecting his mother's orders he was not going to interpret them literally. Everything was close together in the kirkton of Dalmain, and though he was just out of the farm gate he was not a dozen yards from the first cottage in the row. The fiddle had begun again, and he could hear it very plainly, and the shouts and thudding of feet; it was almost as good as being in the barn, if only there were something to look at. He began to amuse himself by building a little promontory out into the burn with the biggest stones he could collect. He had often been forbidden to do this, and he was glad of the opportunity of being even with Fate. When he had been at it for some time, and even disobedience began to pall, he looked up and noticed that a bar of light was lying upon the water, falling on it from the window of a cottage down stream. Bands of shadow were crossing and re-crossing this in a strange way, as if some movement were going on behind the window-panes. He jumped over the burn, crept along by the harled wall and, crouching by the sill, peered in.

When the elders had left the Moirs' house and the beadle had betaken himself to the Knowes, Phemie sat on by the fire, like some commonplace image of endurance, seemingly stupefied. Another woman might have been aroused by the entrance of



neighbours drawn by the news of what had happened and ready to help in those duties necessitated by a death that the poor share so faithfully with one another. But she had no neighbours in the fuller sense of the word, and the few with whom she had even the slightest communication were enjoying themselves not a furlong from her door. Her thoughts had gone back—far back; years and years back—to the turning point of her obscure life. She saw it dimly, across the everlasting monotony that had closed down on her and hers at that last time upon which she had taken her place among her kind. Secrecy and servitude to the stricken creature who now lay rigid upon the box bed: these had been her lot. Servitude was over, but her tardy freedom conveyed little to her, and secrecy—long since unnecessary, though she had never grasped the fact that it was so—clung to her as a threadbare, useless garment. Her solitariness would be no greater. The doors of her prison had opened, but she could not go free because of the fetters she wore.

She got up at last and threw some fuel into the grate. The flame rose and she tried to collect herself. There were things she must do. She went to the outhouse that opened from the back of the kitchen and got a bucket to fill at the burn. This she carried out to the water, but as she stooped with it, it dropped from her hands. The sound of leaping, compelling reel-music cut its way from the Knowes farm to her ears. A blind fiddler had once said that he could tell the stroke of Neil Gow's bow among a hundred others, and Phemie Moir knew who was playing. She clasped her hands over her face and fled indoors.

The lethargy that had enveloped her was gone, snatched away as a wayfarer's cloak is snatched from him by the wind. She began to run to and fro, crying out, now lifting her arms over her head, now thrusting them forward; her sobs filled the kitchen though her eyes were tearless. She had slammed the door behind her that she might not hear the fiddle. Once she paused by it, not daring to open it, but laying her ear to the edge of the jamb, in the hope of finding that it had ceased. It was going on steadily, and she turned the little shawl she wore up over her head and ran back into the outhouse to get further from the sound. But a broken plank in the thin wooden walls brought it to her afresh, and she rushed back again and sank upon the chair she had left by the hearth.

When she was a little quieter she returned to the door to listen,

the tension of fear upon her. It was at this moment that the urchin, creeping along outside, stumbled over the fallen pail. The sudden noise shattered the temporary quiet of her strained nerves and let loose the unreasoning demon of her terror again. She ran up and down between the walls like a frenzied thing.

The boy crept nearer. It was now dark enough to conceal him from the inmate of the house so long as he did not approach his face to the deep-set panes; he was having his fill of wonders to-night, and he watched her, fascinated. He had heard no word of Margaret Moir's death. Phemie was a person he had seldom seen at close quarters, because his home was at a short distance from the kirkton, and the garden of her cottage, beyond which she rarely ventured, lay behind it, out of the sight of passers along the road. But he knew from the children he played with that there was something disquieting about her, and that the minister had rebuked a friend of his mother's for saying that she was a witch. What he now saw woke the horrid suspicion that it was the minister who was in the wrong. His sense of adventure in gazing at her thus was great; only the wall between them gave him the courage to indulge it. The cat, which, since the beadle had let it out, had been skulking restlessly about the roadside, came, a particoloured shadow, out of the darkness and thrust itself between his feet. He was not sorry to have a homely living creature so near him. He was about to touch its warm head with his fingers when his eye fell upon the bed. There was no more to see on it than the square space revealed, but that was enough. There is something about the lines of a dead figure not to be mistaken, even by a child, particularly by a child bred up among the plain-spoken inhabitants of a countryside. Panic-struck, he plunged through the burn, and made as hard as he could for the cheerful commotion of the Knowes. The cat stood looking after him, its back arched, recoiling a little, like a gently-bred dame from some unforeseen vulgarity.

The fiddle had stopped and Neil had gone out to get a breath of fresh air and to gossip with his niece, whom he had not seen since her marriage. Several of the guests were in the stack-yard cooling themselves, but the hostess and the fiddler sauntered out to the roadside where it sloped to the village. The boy almost ran into them, weeping loudly, blaring, after the manner of unsophisticated childhood.

'Maircy, laddie! What ails ye?' exclaimed the young woman.



‘Phemie’s daft! Ragin’ daft—the wifie’s deid!’

His words came out in an incoherent burst of blubbering, and to Knowes’ bride, who had been a bare ten days in the place, the name conveyed nothing.

‘Lord-sakes!’ she cried, ‘what is’ t? Wha is’ t?’

He pointed down the road.

‘Ragin’—roarin’ daft doon yonder—whaur the licht is—gang doon the brae an’ ye’ll see it yonder!’

‘But wha’s deid?’ cried the woman, ‘is’t a murder?’

‘Aye, aye—she’s deid! Phemie’s ragin’ mad!’ bawled the boy, gathering excitement from his companion’s trembling voice, and only concerned for someone to share his emotions.

She poured out a string of questions, and as she grew more insistent, his tale grew more difficult to follow. She looked round for her uncle, but by this time he had started for the village to investigate for himself.

‘Oh, Uncle Neil! dinna gang!’ she wailed; ‘like as no, ye’ll be murder’t yerself!—Come awa back, Uncle Neil!’

Hearing his steps die away in the darkness, she rushed through the stackyard with the headlong run of a startled fowl. ‘There’s a puir body murder’t i’ the kirkton!’ she shouted as she went.

The words ran from mouth to mouth. In a few minutes the main part of the company was on its way down the brae, leaving behind it a handful of nervous women, some men who had discovered the fountain-head of the whisky, and Donald Gow, whose instinct, probably from years of attendance on a bigger man than himself, was always for the background.

Neil strode into the kirkton, making for the light pointed out by the boy. Most of the cottages were darkened, but Phemie’s uncurtained window shone like a beacon; he did not stop to look through it, fearing that he might be seen and the house barred against him. He pushed open the door and stood still, completely taken aback. There was no sign of disorder, nothing to suggest a struggle. Phemie, exhausted by her own violence, was sitting at the hearth, her body turned from the fire; her elbows were on the chair-back, her hands clasped over her bowed head. At the click of the latch she looked up and saw him in the doorway. She gave a terrible cry and ran towards him.

‘Neil Gow! Neil Gow! Div ye no mind o’ me?’

His amazement deepened. Death, whose presence he realised as he looked about him, had come quietly here, as he comes to most

houses ; but he supposed that bereavement must have turned the brain of the desperate creature who clung to him.

‘ Whisht, wumman, whisht ! ’ he exclaimed, ‘ whisht noo, puir thing.’

‘ Hae maircy on me, Neil Gow ! ’

‘ Whisht, whisht—I’ll awa an’ get the minister to ye.’

But she only held him tighter ; he had not believed a woman’s hands could be so strong. He did not like to force them open.

‘ Ye mauna seek to tell him—ye winna ! ye winna hae me ta’en awa ! ’

‘ Na, na, na. Wumman, what ill wad I dae ye ? ’ he cried, bewildered. ‘ I dinna ken ye. I’m no seekin’ to hurt ye.’

‘ Oh, Neil Gow, div ye no mind o’ playin’ on the auld green o’ Dalmain ? It’s me—it’s Phemie Moir ! ’

The name ‘ Moir ’ arrested him. He turned her round to the firelight, gazing into her face.

‘ Moir ? ’ he said. ‘ Is it yersel ? ’ He could hardly trace in it the features of the young woman he remembered.

‘ Moir,’ she said. ‘ Jimmy Moir was the lad ye saved frae the sodgers—him an’ the tither ane—my bonnie brither. Neil Gow, ye’ll save me—ye winna speak o’t—ye winna let them tak’ me noo ! ’

‘ Hoots ! ’ he exclaimed. Then, looking into her anguished eyes, he realised the depths of her simplicity ; the cruelty of that ignorance whose burden she had borne these two score of years. He was silent, seeking for words with which to bring conviction to her warped understanding, to overthrow the tyranny of a fixed idea. There was a sound of feet outside, and both he and she looked towards the window. Beyond the narrow panes a crowd of faces were gathered, pressing against them. She tore herself from him and ran to the door. She turned the key just as a hand outside was about to lift the latch.

Neil drew the curtain across the casement, and taking her by the arm, led her to the hearth.

‘ See noo,’ said he, ‘ sit ye doon. There’s naebody’ll touch ye. They’re a’ freends. Will ye no believe me ? ’

‘ I hae nae freends, Neil Gow—man, ye dinna understand.’

The tears came at last, and she rocked herself to and fro.

‘ Ye fule ! ’ he exclaimed, ‘ is there no me ? Was I no a freend to ye, yon time ye mind ? ’

‘ Ye was that—ye was that,’ she murmured.



‘An’ wad I tell ye a lee?’

The latch rattled again.

He went to the door and opened it. Someone pressed up against him and would have entered. He was flung back.

‘Awa!’ he cried, ‘awa wi’ ye a’! There’s nane murder’t here. There’s jist a dune body that’s dee’d in her bed. There’s nane o’ ye’ll hear the soon’ o’ my fiddle the nicht gin ye dinna leave the puir crater that’s greetin’ in-by in peace. There’s jist the minister that’ll win in, an’ nae mair!’

There was an irresolute collective movement, but the beadle pushed himself forward.

‘Na, na,’ said Neil, simply, filling the doorway with his bulk. The beadle was pulled back by several hands. The sensation was dying down, and a dance without music was a chill prospect.

‘We’ll see an’ get Donal’ to play,’ said the beadle, angrily.

‘No you,’ replied Neil.

‘Here’s the minister,’ said a voice.

Phemie’s dread seemed to have left her. She sat quietly listening to what was going on round the doorstep; an unformulated hope was glimmering in her mind like dawn on a stretch of devastated country. She could hear the people dispersing and returning to the Knowes and the minister’s subdued murmur of talk with the fiddler outside. It went on till the two men came in together. She was dumb and still.

‘Ye’ve naething to fear i’ this warld,’ said Laidlaw, dropping into the vernacular; ‘I’d tell ye the same, if I was to tell’t ye frae the pulpit.’

And he put his hand on her shoulder. She laid her head against his arm, like a child.

It was a full hour later that Laidlaw returned to the manse. He had stayed some little time at the cottage after Gow went back to the Knowes to finish his evening’s work. One half of his mind was full of the story he had heard pieced together by Phemie and the fiddler. He was a thoughtful man, with sympathies stronger than many who knew him were inclined to suspect, and he was deeply stirred by the obscure tragedy which had dragged on, unrealised by himself, ever since he had been called to Dalmain. He blamed himself. His sense of his own limitations, a healthy quality in most people, had been a stumbling-block to him; for he had taken the discouragements received in his timid efforts to know more of

Phemie as proofs of how little he was fitted to deal with her. He envied people like Neil Gow : people whose masterful humanity carried them full sail into those waters where their fellow men were drowning for want of a rope. The other half of his mind was amazed by the prank of a coincidence that had brought the Englishman here to meet the one man necessary to him in his quest.

He hurried home, hoping that his guest would soon return ; in the crowd at the farm he had noticed his presence, but lost him in the sudden scare which dispersed the party. He entered the little living-room to find him.

‘ You look perturbed,’ said the Englishman. ‘ Certainly you have no lack of incident in Dalmain. I’m truly glad it was a false alarm.’

‘ I have much to say to you,’ began Laidlaw, sitting down.

‘ Well, before you begin, let me have my turn. Perhaps you thought me sceptical when you spoke of Neil Gow, and I will not deny that I was. I was a fool—since I have heard him I know how great a fool. And now, sir, go on and I will listen. My mind has been lightened of a little of its conceit.’

His frankness struck some sensitive chord in Laidlaw. Perhaps the minister’s reserve was shaken by the sharp contact with realities to-night, perhaps stirred by sympathies he saw in others.

‘ I am glad you came here,’ he stammered. ‘ I should be glad to think—to hope—I have got some information for you, sir. Your cousin was lost sight of here ; he reached Dalmain.’

‘ You have got news of him ? ’

‘ Something. Little enough ; but I have heard a strange tale from Neil Gow.’

‘ From Neil Gow ! ’

Laidlaw nodded.

‘ Margaret Moir died this evening, and a little laddie saw her through the window and came crying some havers to the Knowes. Her sister was nearly wild, poor soul, and the bairn got a fright—but you were there, no doubt ? ’

‘ I saw there was a disturbance, but I stayed where I was.’

‘ The door was locked when I arrived,’ went on Laidlaw, ‘ and Gow was with her. But he got her quiet and I went in-by. You’ll mind that I told you he was here the year of Culloden, playing on the old green ? It was three nights before that dance that Jimmy Moir, who was the brother of these two lassies—as they were then—



Margaret and Phemie, came to Dalmain with a wounded officer—likely the man you are seeking—and they hid themselves on the brae in a cave that is there, in amongst the broom. You can see it still; the bairns play at the mouth of it often enough, though I do not think they go far in. I have never been to it myself, but they say it runs a long way into the hillside. Moir got into the kirkton, without being seen, to tell his sisters, and Phemie and Margaret went out in the dark to bring them food and water; but there was no one in the place knew they were there, not even the beadle, that had been fighting himself, for he was lying ill in his house. The English soldiers were all about the country. The officer was so bad with his wound they could not get forward to the coast, and the day Neil came he was shouting and raving in a fever. You could hear him at the foot of the brae, Phemie says, just where the dancing was to be, and the lassies made sure the poor fellows would be discovered. They got short shrift in those times, you see, sir.'

'But would anyone have given them up?' asked the other.

'Aye, well,' said the minister, 'whiles a man's foes are they of his own household, and they said there were some in the kirkton that favoured King George. But Phemie was bold and went to seek Neil Gow. He was a young lad then, but she told him the truth and he said he would play till he had no arms left before anyone should hear aucht but his fiddle. When I spoke of that dance to you not a couple of hours syne, little I thought how much it concerned you.'

'Nor I, indeed.'

'Margaret was a puir, timid thing and Jimmy was all the world to her. She stopped at home her lane, but Phemie went out and danced till the most o' them were fou with whisky and Neil had played them off their legs. She waited till the last were gone. There was no crying from the broom when she went home. It was an awesome night for her, but it was the ruin of Margaret. She lay ill a long while, and when she rose frae her bed her mind was never the same again.'

'But the men—what became of them?' asked the Englishman, getting impatient to reach what was, for him, the main point.

'The days were long in June-month and Phemie had to wait for dark to go back. She found the place empty.'

'And did no news ever come? Was nothing more heard?'

'Nothing, sir. Nothing.'

The other made a sharp exclamation of disappointment.

'It has been a wild goose chase after all,' he said at last.

The progress of Laidlaw's detailed history had raised his expectations and he was half resentful at finding it end, for all the difference it would make to him, where it had begun. But he was too just a man to let the other see it.

'I am greatly to blame!' cried the minister, with sudden vehemence. 'Here am I, a servant of men's souls, and it was left for Neil Gow to loose Phemie Moir from her martyrdom while I went by on the other side! Aye! but I am an unprofitable servant!' he exclaimed, seeing the other man's astonished face; 'that poor creature shut herself up with her sister and would thole nobody near them for fear some word should slip from the daft body and Moir be traced. Then, as time went by, her heart failed her and concealment grew in her mind like a poisonous weed, and she took the notion that, if word got out, the two of them would have to suffer for what they had done. Fear sat down with her to her meat and fear lay down with her in her bed. The years passed on, but she was too ignorant to ken that the world changes with them and old things go out of mind. People wonder that she's not like other folk—they wouldna wonder if they knew! She was feared that Gow, who had stood friend to her, would let out what he kent, and fail her. Poor foolish wife, the man had forgotten her till he saw her, and then she had to tell him before he remembered! But when she heard his playing again she was fairly demented.'

His face changed and he turned away. '*Mea culpa*,' he faltered. He had not much Latin, but he understood that.

'I fear the burden has shifted to you, my poor friend,' said the Englishman gently.

It was on the forenoon of the morrow that Laidlaw, the beadle and the Englishman stood up to their middles in the broom. The pods were black in the green mist of stems. About their feet rabbits had riddled the earth. The outcrop of rock had broken open in the hillside to be roofed with the turf of the overhanging brae and swallowed by the sea of broom and whin and the ash-coloured blur of seeding thistles. Interlacing whin-roots lurked about the burrows, traps for human steps. When they had climbed to their goal the three men stopped to get breath, and turned to look at the kirkton below them. Westward, through the creek cut by the burn to the Isla, they could see the indigo blue Sidlaws with such lights as seem only to fall upon Angus bathing their undulating shoulders.



Each man carried a lantern, and when all were lighted they went crouching, one after another, into the cave. In a few paces they were able to stand up and look about them.

Both Laidlaw and the Englishman had gone late to sleep on the preceding night, and the latter, lying thinking in the dark hours, turning over in his mind all he had heard, had come to a definite conclusion. He told himself that no man with a serious body-wound, exhausted by days of wandering and ill enough to be shouting in delirium, could escape on foot from a place in which he had once laid down. A man may go till he drops, but when he falls he will not rise again in circumstances like these, far less escape unseen. But Moir could accomplish what was impossible to his companion.

‘I believe Musgrave to be lying up there in the hillside,’ he had said to Laidlaw that morning.

‘But——’ began the minister.

‘Yes, sir, I know what you would say; I know that village children play there, in the cave, at times. For all that, Moir left him there. But he left a dead man.’

The minister stared at him, incredulous.

‘But Phemie went next night. She would have lit a light there,’ said he.

‘She saw no one *above ground*. You said that when Neil Gow had stopped playing and she went home to her sister, all was quiet. Depend upon it, Musgrave died in the small hours, as sick men will; Moir buried him next day and escaped at dusk.’

‘But he had no tools,’ objected Laidlaw, unconvinced.

‘If the rock is hollowed deep and there is sand and loose earth choking much of it, he did it. A man in his case makes shift to use anything.’

‘He maybe had his dirk,’ suggested the minister, his doubts a little shaken.

‘He is there, sir,’ said the Englishman; ‘believe me, he is there.’

And now Laidlaw was sitting at a little distance from the cave on a bare patch in the tangle. He had come out of its heavy atmosphere to leave room for the Englishman and the beadle, who were working inside with the pick and shovel the latter had brought up from the kirkyard. The opening tunnelled some way into the hill, narrowing as it went, but in one place at which the rock fell back in an irregular recess, they had resolved to make their experi-

ment. The shine from the lanterns had cast up the faint outline of a mound. This decided them, this and the belief that a man engaged in a work like Moir's would get as far from the entrance as he might.

The minister looked a little less harassed. His shyness of the Englishman's accent had gone. Like many people whose days are spent in remote places, he was intensely surprised at seeing the human side of a stranger, and he still doubted that the outer world contained others of a similar sort. His face grew a little wistful as he remembered that they would go down the hill to part at its foot. The Englishman would ride to Stirling to meet the Edinburgh coach. He fell to musing. The early autumn sunshine, warm and very clear, and the healing quiet of the braes were pleasant to him. He could see his small world lying below like a plaything on the floor. In his vigil last night he had burnt his tallow till within a short time of daylight, for his sermon had been interrupted by the clamour that had arisen and he was fain to finish it. He was not much of a preacher and the task of writing it was a weekly load upon him. He had got up early too, and gone to Phemie's cottage; for there was something he wanted to say to her, and his self-distrust made him eager to put this also behind him, lest he should lose courage. But his visit was accomplished and he was now more at ease. His eyes closed wearily; they ached this morning from his midnight labours as his heart had ached last night from his own shortcomings. But now he forgot all these as he dozed among the broom and the fluffy thistledown. . . .

He awoke to a touch on his shoulder. The Englishman was beside him. For a moment, bewildered, he could not recollect where he was nor how he had come to such a place.

'Look,' said the other, who was holding out a little discoloured silver snuff-box, 'his name is on it. We have found him.'

In the kirkton of Dalmain the two men bade each other good-bye, but said it as those do who are to meet again. The Englishman wished Musgrave to lie under the wall of its spectral kirk; and when the necessary steps should be taken to establish the dead man's identity, his skeleton, clothed in the rags of his tattered uniform, would be carried from the bosom of the hill that had sheltered it for so long and committed by Laidlaw to the earth.



‘I believe you are less troubled than you were last night,’ said the Englishman, leaning from his horse as they parted. ‘I should be happy to know it.’

The minister’s plain face brightened.

‘I have seen Phemie already,’ he replied; ‘she is to come to me to take care of the manse—my serving-lass is just a silly tawpie——’

The rider pulled up a little later upon the southern brae and turned to look back. On the northern one, two dark figures were doing the like. The taller of these, seeing him, took off his bonnet and stood holding it high in the air. It was Neil Gow.

VIOLET JACOB.

## LITTLE CAT.

*Little cat, little cat,  
 Black and silky as the hat  
 That I left behind in town  
 When I thought of running down  
 And indulging in bucolics  
 With the bumpkin and the clown—  
 While you emulate the frolics  
 Of a boneless acrobat,  
 Have you ever thought of this,  
 Or do you ever think of that?*

WHEN of yore Primeval Cat  
 On the crest of Ararat  
 Gave a leap of satisfaction  
 At the moment of escaping  
 From some weeks of forced inaction,  
 Filled with histrionic gaping—  
 Pseudo-meditative blinking at the First Arkaic Rat—  
 (And another speculation  
 That demands examination  
 Is the nature of their diet  
 In that period of quiet)—  
 From the fact that Early Cat  
 Fell immediately chasing  
 Prehistoric Mouse or Rat,  
 Do you think I'm right in tracing  
 The Origin of Instinct in a Species, little cat?  
 Have you ever thought of that,  
 Little cat?

I can trace upon your face  
 An objection, little cat;  
 It is fit that I admit  
 Your correction, little cat:  
 Your ancestor, you say,  
 Was built another way,



And ran no risk of getting  
 An unnecessary wetting ;  
 But undoubtedly preferring  
 To sit comfortably purring  
 In a brown (or tabby) study  
 All aloof in the dark on the roof of the Ark,  
 (For the ground was very muddy,  
 Being sodden and much trodden  
 By the hooves of the beeves  
 And the feet of the neat)—  
 So he sat, little cat,  
 In the grooves of the eaves,  
 Looking down upon the struggles of the proletariat.—  
 You were right to mention that,  
 Little cat.

But his nerves received a jog  
 When he met Primordial Dog ;  
 He was hardly apprehensive,  
 But, assuming the defensive,  
 Tried a novice hand at bluffing  
 By instinctive caudal fluffing,  
 So that each particular  
     Hair  
 Stood up perpendicular  
     There,  
 Incommoding in each crevice  
 Primal *Streptococcus brevis* :—  
 Or, to be more scientific,  
 An emotion non-pacific  
 Freed a primitive hormone  
 From a gland to him unknown.  
 Which the prospect diabolical  
     Of rough-and-tumble tussles,  
     With guttural effervescence  
     And a semilunar spine,  
 Caused to actuate each follicle  
     By circumjacent muscles—  
     Hence capillary horrescence,  
     Like the fretful porpentine.—  
 (Do you know your Shakespeare pat,  
     Little cat ?)

I see you're not attending,  
 So I'd better make an ending.  
 But for your volatility  
     We might have had a chat  
 About Adaptability  
     To Food and Habitat;  
 Dethroned the theoretics  
 In the matter of Genetics,  
 Dismissed the laws of Galton, and had Mendel on the mat;  
 I should like to have restated  
     (With the usual caveat)  
 The problem long-debated  
     Of the Common or Hearth Cat—  
 Noctambulant beneath the moon,  
 Or cataleptic at high noon,  
 Yet still remote, unfriended,  
 Independent unattended,  
 Just sponging on the Family for commissariat :  
     Cat errant, cat siestic,  
     But how and why DOMESTIC ?  
 No, neither Muse nor Mouser can completely answer that.  
     *Verbum sat.*,  
     Little cat !

F. S.



### THE THREE FIGHTS OF MR. JOHN GULLY.

ON Tuesday, October 8, 1805, a great crowd of people on foot and on horseback, including H.R.H. the Duke of Clarence, afterwards King William IV, poured across the Sussex Downs towards Hailsham from London on one side and Brighton on the other. They had come to see a fight between two young men from Bristol, Henry Pearce and John Gully.

Everybody knew Pearce, 'scientifically denominated the Game Chicken.' The peerless Jem Belcher, having lost an eye in playing rackets, had retired. Joe Berks, on the strength of his three fights with Belcher, had then arrogated to himself the title of Champion, but had been beaten by Pearce 'in two dreadful combats,' first in an impromptu set-to at night, for which the Chicken had been pulled out of his bed in Soho; secondly, in a pitched battle on Wimbledon Common. Cart and Elias Spray, the coppersmith, had also fallen before the science, strength, and 'unimpeachable bottom' of the Chicken, who was now the undisputed Champion of England.

Of Gully, on the other hand, few knew anything definite. He was destined to win three Derbies, to be a colliery owner and a member of Parliament long after the poor Chicken—no one's enemy but his own—had taken to dissolute courses and been 'respectably interred.' All that was known at present was that Mr. Fletcher Reid, a pugilistic Mæcenas, thought so well of him that he had paid his debts, acquired as a 'respectable master butcher,' taken him out of the King's Bench Prison, and matched him straightway against the Chicken. Other candidates for the championship had climbed the ladder more gradually. They had been heard of as milling some indiscreet gentleman who had made a few remarks to them in a public house, and their first set battles had been for no more than a guinea or two. Gully had none of these credentials. Somebody did say, indeed, that he had thrashed a big bully for unfairly setting a dog at a bull, but the most interesting rumour related to his time in the King's Bench. Pearce, who was a friend of his, had come to see him, and to cheer him up suggested a set-to. It was Gully's bearing in this friendly match that had inspired Mr. Reid to risk his money, and Gully himself to

'the temerity of raising himself to the dignity of a hero at one stride, by attacking the justly renowned and mighty Chief of England.'

The fight was originally to have taken place in July, but the affair was enveloped in mystery. Virginia Water was appointed; then came a rumour that the fight would be at Chobham. The crowd made its way there to find a ring, but no men in it. The magistrates had got wind of it, so it was said, and Blackwater was the place. Once again the cavalcade set out across country, but there was no fight—nothing but stories of a 'cross,' and bets were off. Whatever had happened, the Chicken's friends were still ready to back him for six hundred guineas to five. The Sussex magistrates were complaisant: a twenty-four foot ring was made close to the village of Hailsham, and into it at one o'clock Gully threw his hat and stepped after it. Everyone looked eagerly to see what manner of man was this dark horse from the west country, and the Duke of Clarence stood up in his stirrups and craned his illustrious neck over the big ring of spectators. The fact that he had seen the fight was one that 'this bursting, bubbling old gentleman with quarter-deck gestures' was often wont to refer to afterwards with pride and enthusiasm. 'God damn it, sir,' he probably began, and related the story at considerable length. The names of all the other onlookers history does not record, but we may guess at some of them. There were the amateurs and noble patrons of the ring, the Barrymores, Apreecees, Mellishes, and Berkeley Cravens. Perhaps there was the famous Captain Barclay of Ury, declaring that he could have trained the men far better than anyone else on his own system, and, if so, he was probably right, as he showed when he trained Tom Crib for his second fight with the negro Molineaux. Jem Belcher was almost certainly there, with his famous yellow handkerchief round his neck, for both men came from his own Bristol, and it was he who had introduced Pearce to the Fancy. There was, as we shall see, John Jackson, the friend and 'corporeal pastor and master' of Byron, who had now retired some years from the ring. He 'practically realised the position of a gentleman,' and was granted by Pierce Egan in Boxiana the courtesy title of 'Mr.' There may have been Dan Mendoza, and, if he was there, we may be sure he scowled at Mr. Jackson, who had caught him by his long black hair in their fight at Hornchurch, unhandsome treatment which the great Jew fighter always bitterly resented. There



were many other lesser celebrities of the ring, fighting paviours and coachmen and weavers, their names now long since forgotten, who then walked about and were worshipped in such minor degree as their fame warranted.

Into the ring then stepped John Gully. He was now twenty-two years old, a fine athletic figure of a man, with an air 'calm but defiant,' 6 feet high and 13 stone. The Chicken, who followed, was probably some five years older: he was about 5 ft. 9 in. in height, 12 st. 10 lb. in weight, with a big chest and powerful rounded limbs. And now the fight began. It lasted one hour and ten minutes, during which fifty-nine rounds were fought, and Gully, though beaten in the end, gave the Chicken some anxious moments, and showed himself a brave man and a boxer already skilful, though with something of his art yet to learn. After some preliminary manœuvring Gully aimed a tremendous blow at Pearce and missed. The Chicken in return knocked him down, and the two went to their corners, with the betting three to one on the Chicken. By the sixth round it had risen to five to one, for Gully had gone down several times. He was still 'full of gaiety,' but nearly every round had ended in the same way. With the twelfth and thirteenth rounds, however, the tide seemed to be turning; Gully got home with some good hits, notably one on Pearce's mouth, though in the end he overbalanced and fell. In an old copy of 'Boxiana' there is an asterisk opposite the account of the twelfth round, and at the bottom of the page in faded handwriting this note: 'Pearce's lip was split by this blow. "What do you think of it now, Pearce?" said Jackson to him. "The thing will never hurt nobody, if he can't hit harder than that," replied Pearce.' The note is signed 'J. J.' Who he was I do not know—not John Jackson, I am afraid. I like to think he overheard the words at the ringside, and that they heartened him when he was feeling anxious about the five to one he had laid on the Chicken. Doubtless some of Pearce's supporters were very uneasy, for by the seventeenth round the odds had shortened to six to four. Gully, full of fight, twice got home on the Chicken's left eye, and in the eighteenth 'torrents of blood were flowing from Pearce.' The Chicken's eye was so swelled that he could see but little out of it, and realizing that he could not win the fight out of hand, he was now cautious and on the defensive, while Gully followed him round the ring.

Till the twenty-fifth round the fate of the Chicken and the

championship hung in the balance. Thenceforward he improved and steadily took the upper hand. He was not yet out of the wood, for in the thirty-third round Gully got past his guard and nearly closed his right eye, so that he had now no sound eye left him. But two rounds later came what was probably the decisive blow. Gully was once more pursuing Pearce round the ring when he was driven back by 'a terrible blow in the throat.' There still remained no less than twenty-six rounds to be fought, but the issue was not much longer in doubt. Gully became covered with blood flowing from one of his ears; his head was horribly swelled and distorted, his eyes invisible. There was not much hit in either man now, but all there was was in the Chicken. Gully had nothing left but his undaunted courage. It carried him through to the fifty-ninth round, when his friends insisted on his giving in, much against his will.

Gully had covered himself with glory. Pearce always declared he was the best man he ever met, a compliment which Gully returned later by saying that Jem Belcher could never have beaten Pearce if he had had four eyes instead of one. No one was likely to challenge the man who had almost fought the redoubtable Chicken to a standstill, and in fact Gully did not fight again for two years. Meanwhile the Chicken was challenged by his old friend Jem Belcher, who insisted, in a foolish fit of jealousy, on coming out of retirement. Once again Mr. Fletcher Reid betted against Pearce and lost his money. Belcher was not the man he had been; the Chicken won in eighteen rounds, and was so little distressed that at the end he leaped in and out of the ring and turned head over heels. Poor Jem Belcher! The pitcher had gone once too often to the well. The Chicken made no such mistake. He never fought again, and retired with record untarnished. The temptations of fame, however, were too much for him and his health gave way. Crib, another west countryman, had not yet come to the maturity of his skill—it was not till 1809 that he beat Jem Belcher—and Gully was now in effect, though not as it appears in name, the Champion, a curious situation for one who had fought but a single fight and lost it. He was prudent, sober, and well mannered, and laid the foundation of his fortunes by 'commencing innkeeper.'

At length, in 1807, his peace was disturbed by a big Lancashire man, Bob Gregson by name. Gregson afterwards followed the universal custom and kept a prosperous inn, Bob's Chop-house



in Holborn. More unusual, he wrote verse, and very bad verse too, being in some sort a pugilistic poet-laureate, and breaking out into a long poem about Crib and Molineaux, called 'British Lads and Black Millers.' He was a few years older than Gully, and in the intervals of being captain of the Liverpool Wigan Packet, had successfully mowed down the fighting colliers of Lancashire. According to Pierce Egan he had been offered a Commission in the Army, but found the life too expensive. At any rate, he came in search of fame to London, and there he and Gully met in a public-house, and seem to have snarled and growled at one another like two strange dogs. Finally Gregson, to show how strong he was, picked up Gully under his arm and threw him on the ground. Thereupon a match was made. Gregson was 6 ft. 2 in., prodigiously strong and heavy, but his skill was clearly not so well thought of, for the betting was strongly on Gully.

The fight was fixed for October 14, near Newmarket. On the day before, Captain Barclay, who was one of Gully's backers, performed one of his famous athletic feats. He ran a foot race against Abraham Wood, the best professional runner of the day. The two were set to try who could run farthest in twenty-four hours, Wood allowing twenty miles start. The Captain stuck methodically to his six miles an hour, and Wood, after gaining some miles on him, suddenly and mysteriously gave up, to the fury of his backers. Whatever his motive it was not the Captain's fault, who drove to Six Mile Bottom early next morning quite fresh and in the best of humours to see the fight. So did a great many other people, and a desperate fight it was.

To begin with, Gully had all the best of it, and at the end of the second round the odds were twenty to one on him. By the end of the eighth the odds were actually on Gregson, who had closed one of Gully's eyes with a blow so fierce that he had been within measurable distance of being counted out. After twenty-five rounds both men were so beaten and bloody and weak, their hands were so knocked to pieces, and Gully's left arm was so completely useless to him, that the two could scarcely do more than fall on one another, and he might ultimately win who chanced to fall on top. At last Gully, staggering and exhausted, pulled himself together for a blow feeble in itself but strong enough for its purpose. Gregson fell, and could not come up to time. Gully tried with a pitiful jauntiness to jump out of the ring, then fell

and lay prone and speechless. He was carried to where Gregson lay in a coach to shake hands with him, after which he was so utterly prostrate that for several hours it was feared he would die. He did not, however, and next day he was well enough to make a triumphal progress along the race course at Newmarket in Captain Barclay's carriage.

Gregson was burning for revenge. 'Mr. Gully,' he wrote, 'It is the wish of myself and friends that I should try my fortune with you in another battle.' Gully was equally eager and equally terse. 'Mr. Gregson,' he answered, 'I shall not delay a moment in returning to town to make the necessary arrangements as to time and place.' The match was made accordingly for the 10th of May, 1808, and it became generally known that the fight was to take place near Woburn, by the Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire border. Unfortunately, however, Lord Buckingham, Custos Rotulorum of his county, did not approve of prize fighting, and displayed all the energy of Mr. Nupkins in the classical instance of the Middlesex Dumpling and the Suffolk Bantam. He published a notice that all steps had been taken to prevent the riotous assembly by high constables, petty constables, and other peace officers, and he caused the Dunstable volunteers to be called out. That gallant corps stood to arms early on Tuesday morning the 7th of May. Their drums were beating, their flags flying, and the burgesses of Dunstable rushed to their windows in their night-caps in the belief that the French had landed.

Despite the magistrates and the volunteers, hundreds had come and were still coming down from London. Beds were two guineas a night—many slept on inn floors or in carriages—horses were obliged to stand uncovered, and this endured for two days and nights, during which the intended battlefield remained a secret. By five o'clock on the morning of the 10th, a ring had been formed on Ashley Common, and Richmond the black fighter was placed in a strategic position to act as a finger-post. The carriages rolled up, the crowd grew and grew, and then came the inevitable rumour that the magistrates were on the track. While still the people murmured and wondered, up galloped Dan Mendoza in a smart green coat on a blood horse. There would be no fight, he said, at Ashley.

However, if Bedfordshire and Buckinghamshire were closed, there remained a third county of Hertfordshire not far away, for it was the custom to fix on a site near the borders of as many



counties as possible, in case of interference by someone with too nice a conscience. Gregson and Gully were wrapped up in great coats and bundled into carriages and, escorted by a guard of honour of over a hundred noblemen and gentlemen, were driven over the Herts border to Sir John Sebright's park near Market Street. The rain poured down and the huge and motley crowd in every conceivable form of vehicle was drenched. It was a seven-mile journey too, and many a smart gentleman was grateful to make it jolting in a brick cart. By the time the park was reached and the ring formed, the rain stopped, and after a curtain-raiser in the shape of Tom Crib and Horton, Gregson and Gully took the field in white breeches and silk stockings. They fought in their stocking feet because, it seems, Gregson had spikes in his shoes.

The beginning was dramatic. For nearly five minutes, according to Egan, the men circled round one another, sparring for an opening. Gully retreated round the ring till he reached the point where he had entered it, and his seconds anxiously put their hands over the stakes, fearing that he might be driven on to one of them by his opponent's fearful blows, and break his ribs. But it was not Gregson who at length went in to hit, but Gully. Down went the hero of Lancashire, and up went the odds on Bristol. For seven rounds there was little in it, but after that Gully's superiority was unquestioned. Some of the amateurs had believed that the greater skill which Gregson was supposed to have acquired during the winter would turn the scale; but it was Gully, not Gregson, that had improved. By the fourteenth round Gregson was almost blind. In the seventeenth he made a vain and furious rush at his adversary; then turned his back, as if dazed, and made for the ropes, only to be mercilessly pursued. He struggled on for seven more rounds, when Gully gave the *coup de grâce*, a smashing blow under the ear. The winner there and then left the ring for ever, and was borne home in triumph in Lord Barrymore's barouche.

The next day, assiduous, civil, and modest, he was serving in his own bar parlour at the Plough, in Carey Street, the many patrons who came to drink the health of the Conquering Hero. At about the same moment 'a reputable man, recently a toy man in Holborn,' was found not far from the scene of the fight, in a lane leading from Dunstable to Hempstead, with his throat cut. He had backed Gregson for £600.

Never again did John Gully fight in or out of a ring, but for

another dozen years or so we hear of him as assisting at great fights. Shrewd, cool, and level-headed, never like Jack Randall, 'fuller of blue ruin than good manners,' he knew on which side his bread was buttered, and made few mistakes. No doubt he lost money when Jem Belcher was beaten by Tom Crib, for he was Jem's second, and backed him. Even so, he would have won if he had not been too eager and found for once someone to over-reach him. In the eighteenth round Crib fell exhausted. It seemed impossible that he should come to time. Gully offered Bill Warr five to one that Belcher had won. 'Done,' said the crafty Warr, and insisted that the money be staked there and then. This took but a minute, but it gave Crib time to recover and he won in the forty-first round. Gully took that lesson to heart, and was not caught betting against Crib again. He was in Tom's corner in his second fight with Molineaux at Thistleton Gap, and when the black went down for the last time Crib and Gully danced together 'a kind of Scotch reel' of victory.

In 1820, twelve years after he had beaten Gregson, we hear of Gully at the famous fight at Newbury between Bill Neat and the Gas Light Man. The betting had been all on the Gas, who by the sheer ferocity of his onslaught and the right hand that he called 'the grave-digger' had carried all before him. Nothing, said the Fancy, could withstand one so terrible. Not so Gully, who sagely remarked that 'if a fine, young, strong man of fourteen stone could not defeat a twelve-stone boxer, then there was no calculation on prize milling.' And he was right, for Big Bill Neat 'made a red ruin' of the Gas Light Man in a fight which Hazlitt has described for us. 'Mr. Gully,' Hazlitt wrote, 'is almost the only cool, sensible man amongst them, who exercises an unbiassed discretion, and is not a slave to his passions in these matters.'

He had, as you see, become 'Mr. Gully' by this time and was steadily working his way up. Soon after he had quitted one ring he entered another and became a betting man. His old patrons befriended him, and he received 'the best commissions' from the Duke of Queensberry, Colonel Mellish, Lord Foley, from Mr. Fox himself. He possessed every quality for success: an iron nerve, a cool head free from prejudice and, so says *Baily's Magazine*, 'high mathematical powers of calculation.' By 1812 he owned horses of his own, though none of any great account till a good many years later. In 1827 he bought Mameluke, the Derby winner, from Lord Jersey for £4000. It was not a lucky purchase. In one race



there was alleged to be a conspiracy against him and his horse, in which the starter was involved, and when Matilda won the St. Leger he is said to have lost £40,000. On the other hand he had many great coups. Three times he won the Derby: with St. Giles in partnership with Ridsdale in 1832, with Pyrrhus the Second in 1846, with Andover in 1854, this time in partnership with Mr. Padwick the famous money-lender. In Pyrrhus's year he also won the Oaks with Mendicant, an almost unique achievement.

The other horses that he owned and the races that he won, the collieries he bought, the twenty-four children that he begat, the duel that he fought, or more probably did not fight, with Mr. Osbaldeston—all these things may be found by those who like them, in out-of-the-way little nooks of sporting literature. In 1832 he became a member of Parliament for the town of Pontefract, near his home at Ackworth, and remained in the House some years, though he said but little when he got there. A pleasant if malicious story, probably quite untrue, relates that when he was on the hustings some one asked his opinion of the decalogue. Hastily enquiring what this meant, he was told that it was 'Another name for flogging in the Army,' whereupon he declared that he would vote for its entire abolition.

Such a man as John Gully must have made enemies, but they have, with one negligible exception, kept silence, whereas his admirers became at intervals almost lyrical in his praise. 'Here is John Gully,' cries the *Sporting Magazine* in 1834, two years after he had won the Derby and the Oaks and become an M.P. 'Here is John Gully, an admirable specimen, physical as well as mental, of one of the finest objects in the creation, an honest man.' And there sure enough he stands, an upright, handsome figure, clean-shaven, with just a dignified suspicion of whisker, a high white stock, a coat with a velvet collar, and one hand extended as if to shake those of the free and independent electors of Pontefract. Elsewhere we come across him as a fine rider and supporter of the Badsworth Hunt, dining with Lord Fitzwilliam and coming up the staircase 'a beautiful girl in green velvet on either arm,' dispensing an elegant hospitality at his rooms in Newmarket, brooding in calculating silence over a big cigar, and, far pleasanter than all of these, talking of his fighting days with candour and simplicity.

The latest picture of him shows him as an old man of seventy-

eight, two years before he died. He is a little less upright than before, and a black bow has supplanted the stiff white stock. His hair is snow-white, but the eyes are dark and full of fire, and the mouth beneath the rather long upper lip seems to shut with a snap. It is a cold, unromantic, rather ruthless face, full of strength and character. He frightens me a little as he looks straight at me from under those fierce eyebrows. I wonder if he ever thought gratefully of the Chicken, who had helped to take him out of prison, battered him up the first rung of the ladder and then died, sick, poor, and miserable, fifty-two years before.

BERNARD DARWIN.



## JONAH.

## I.

*Tota haec de pisce Jonae disquisitio vana videtur atque inutilis.  
Prisca fides facta sed fama perennis.*

(Old-fashioned people believe it as literal fact, but the story will be famous for ever.)

THERE are few more interesting places in London than the corner of Hyde Park, near the Marble Arch, on Sunday noon. Within a few yards one may hear an impassioned tirade against capitalism, an exposition of the errors of Romanism, a defence of the Catholic Church, an appeal for the rights of women, the singing of the old familiar hymns, the earnest repetition of the time-honoured evangelical phrases, eager discussion on social, political, religious questions of every kind; but the largest crowd is usually gathered round the Secularist lecturer who hopes to destroy the Christian religion, making great sport with his sarcastic references to the inordinate salaries and big palaces of pampered bishops and to the antiquated professions of belief in Balaam's ass and Jonah's whale. It is a curious irony of fate that the most humorous yet most earnest and effective attack on a cruel and narrow-minded theology, and the most beautiful adumbration of a broader and happier faith to be found in the whole range of literature, with but one exception, has been made a butt for the ribaldry of those who in modern times profess to be exponents of liberal thought. Hearing the dismal old jeers about the size of the fish's gullet and noting the lecturer's utter inability to understand in the least what the prophet who wrote the book of Jonah really meant—an inability apparently shared by some modern Churchmen: even so able a scholar as Dean Inge appears to regard it as a useless fairy tale—I was reminded of a scene several years ago in the library of the house of an old friend, which, in view of certain recent utterances, seems worth recalling. He was then over sixty-five years of age, and had just retired from an important position in the public service. In what follows I have deliberately altered names and one or two statements about family matters, as I am anxious

that no one should recognise a person about whose intimate life at home I could not otherwise venture to write. The three or four people who may recognise to whom I am referring were such intimate friends that no question of improper disclosure can arise. His wife had died many years before, leaving only one child, who was married to an official occupying a high position in the Indian Civil Service. They had two children, who had been sent home to be educated—a boy, always called Dick, who was then nearly eight years old and attended a day school, and Ruth, a child still under six. Their father and mother had only recently returned to India and left the children in England. They always spent a part of the year at their grandfather's house. Although their father never entered into argument of any kind on theological subjects, and rarely even spoke of them, he held very strong views, and had given definite instructions that the children were never to be taken to any place of worship or to receive any religious instruction. The care of the children had been entrusted to an experienced and well-educated nurse. She was attached to the Primitive Methodists and regularly attended their chapel, but at their father's request she had promised that she would not take the children to any place of worship, nor talk to them on religious subjects. She had, however, insisted that she could not take charge of them unless she were allowed to teach them to say a prayer morning and evening, and to this the parents had assented. She was devoted to the children, but did not spoil them.

On the evening to which I refer, I was writing in my friend's library. He had been rather unwell, and was sitting in an easy chair by the fire, reading, I believe, a translation of the Book of Jonah by Professor Duhm of Basle. He certainly belonged to no religious body. I do not think that even his most intimate friends knew what his religious beliefs were, if, indeed, he had any. Some called him a 'confirmed sceptic,' and owing to this and to a singular likeness in personal appearance to the great Frenchman as we see him in prints or busts of the time, some of us nicknamed him Voltaire, although I believe he did not altogether enjoy the comparison. It is curious that amongst his acquaintances were three or four distinguished Churchmen and also an eminent Non-conformist minister, who often discussed theological matters, and especially questions of Biblical criticism with him, and I found that, although he was not a professed scholar, they were astonished at the extraordinarily full and accurate acquaintance he had with



the Bible and at his insight as a critic. Curiously, he generally seemed to lean to what may be called the conservative or traditional view. His legal training in his early life—as he had practised at the Bar for a few years, and at one time seemed likely to succeed in that profession—made him somewhat contemptuous of the mode of handling evidence adopted by many of the higher critics. He would certainly have dismissed Strauss's theories 'with costs,' because of his manner of manipulating the evidence and ignoring anything which did not square with pre-conceived theories.

I vividly remember the Sunday night, about six o'clock—how the children came running into the room: 'Grandfather, tell us a story!' and I can give a fairly accurate account of the conversation that passed. Ruth jumped upon his knee and laid her curly head against his velvet jacket; Dick sat on the arm of his chair.

*V.* What sort of story?

*D.* Oh! something like that about the wooden horse you told us last week.

*R.* Or about the drefful giant with one eye that lived in the cave. I think it's lovely hearing about very drefful creatures. Grandfaver, are you reading a story out of that book?

*V.* Yes. Shall I tell it you?

*D. and R.* Do, please.

*V.* Once upon a time there was a prophet—

*R.* What's a poffet?

*D.* Think I know. Saw a picture when I went to tea at Jim Reid's: a man lying dead at the roadside, and they called him a prophet, and there was a lion sitting by that had killed him because he didn't do what he was told.

*V.* Then we'll say a prophet is somebody who is told to do something, or has a message to give. The name of the prophet I am going to tell you about was Jonah, and he lived in a country a long way off among the hills. He was told to go across a desert, a tiresome journey, to where there was a broad river and a big town, perhaps as big as London, with lots of great buildings, temples, and palaces. It was called Nineveh, and it is all covered up now with sand; but people have been digging there and have found all sorts of wonderful things. I'll take you to see some of them at the British Museum one day next week if you like. They were very wicked people in that city, so Jonah was told to go and tell them that they must change their ways and behave better, and

if they didn't, that big city would all be destroyed in a very few days.

*D.* Who told Jonah to go ?

*V.* My book says Jahweh.

*D.* Was Jahweh a great king on a throne—with lots of soldiers ?

*R.* Did he know Jonah quite well ? Had he a grand crown on his head ?

*D.* Was he king of that great city and other countries too ?

*V.* The people who lived where Jonah was said that Jahweh had brought them to that beautiful country, after they had been slaves in another country, all through a dry and dreadful desert, and given them food to eat and water to drink, and had led them for a long time and taken care of them and helped them against all their enemies till they came to a lovely country where there were lots of grapes and fig trees and fruit, and flowers, and thick honey, and high hills and deep valleys.

*D.* He wasn't exactly like a king then, was he ?

*R.* Could Jahweh do just what he wanted ? Was he very strong ? Do tell us what he was like to look at.

*V.* It seems very strange, but they said that nobody had ever seen Jahweh.

*D.* Then did they have pictures of him, or beautiful statues ?

*V.* No. Nobody had ever seen Jahweh. They said that they mustn't have any picture or statue—partly, perhaps, because nobody knew a bit what he was like ; only they said he had always taken care of them, and was angry when they were wicked and pleased when they were good.

*D.* Perhaps he lived on top of a high mountain out of sight, or up in the sky like what you told us about Zeus. Did he send a messenger to Jonah, like you told us Zeus sent Hermes ?

*V.* The book doesn't say exactly, so I'll go on with the story. Well, when Jonah was told to go to Nineveh, I think he was perhaps frightened what those people would do to him if he told them they were wicked and must repent ; or perhaps he thought that if he went Jahweh might change his mind after all and not destroy the town, and that he might be made a fool of : so, instead of going across the desert to that big city, he went the other way down to the sea and got into a ship going in just the opposite direction.

*D.* Did Jahweh punish him then ?

*V.* Well, the story says he made a great storm in the sea.



(Here followed a thrilling description of the storm and the action of the sailors.)

So they took Jonah up and threw him into the sea, and thought then that as they had got rid of the wicked man the storm would stop : and so it did, and it was quite calm again. The sailors were rather sorry for Jonah, but they were very glad to think that now they'd get safe home.

*R.* Was poor Jonah drowned quite dead ? I'm very sorry for him, though he was naughty and didn't do what he was told.

*D.* Perhaps he could swim, and got to a desert island like Robinson Crusoe.

*V.* No, I don't think he could swim, because he didn't live near the sea, and they had no swimming baths then, and there was no island near. But the story says something wonderful happened, because Jahweh sent a big fish or whale or something like that, so that when Jonah fell into the water, the big fish came and opened its mouth and swallowed Jonah just as he was, and swam about with him inside it.

*R.* Was it a drefful fish, Grandfaver, with big eyes and teeth ? Did it frighten Jonah very much ?

*D.* It can't be a true story, can it, Grandfather ? What you told us about the wooden horse was different. People might make a wooden horse too big to go through a gate, but there isn't any fishes that would be just there when they threw him into the water and that could swallow him down whole without hurting him.

*R.* That's silly, Dick. Jahweh could feed those people and find them water. Jahweh could do anything. Just as easy make a big fish if he wanted to take care of Jonah.

*V.* Well, Dick. What would you have done if you'd been Jahweh and really wanted Jonah to do what he was told and go to that big city ? Those people said Jahweh made the stars and the moon, so they would think he could make a big fish just as well. Well, anyhow, the story says that the fish swam about with him inside it three whole days, and he was very unhappy because it was all dark and he had nothing to eat, and he didn't know what would happen to him. But after three days the fish swam up to the shore and threw him right out of its mouth on to the shore where the water was shallow, and he struggled up through the waves across the sands, and up the hills. I suppose some one must have given him something to eat. But he went up to his

home and he said, 'It's no use trying to get away from Jahweh,' and decided that he would go straight away to that big city and tell them they mustn't be wicked any more, and if they were, the town would all be destroyed in a very few days. So away he went across the desert and came to Nineveh, and walked about and stood up at the street corners and preached and made speeches to the people, telling them about the wicked things they had been doing, and that the town would all be destroyed if they did not do better. And when the king of the city heard about it, he sent word to tell them that they mustn't do wicked things any more, and that they must be very sorry for all they had done, and that all of them must be quite different, and that then, perhaps, the city would not be destroyed. Then Jahweh decided not to destroy it, and Jonah was very angry, quite furious, and told Jahweh he had made a fool of him. (Here he read Duhm's humorous translation, and then followed the story of the plant that grew up in a night and withered next day.)

. . . So when that castor-oil plant all withered there was no more shade, and the sun was very hot; and Jonah was very angry indeed, and said: 'Much better be dead than sitting here by the roadside when it's so hot, and I've been made a fool of. Nothing is going to happen to those people.' So Jahweh said to him: 'Don't you think it would be much more dreadful if this big city had all been destroyed and the people had all been killed; and there are hundreds of little children there who never did anything wicked, besides lots of cattle?' And that is the end of the story.

*D.* I don't think much of Jonah; he might just as well have been drowned when they threw him into the sea.

*V.* Well, you see, Jahweh thought differently.

*D.* Anyhow, Jahweh was a real good sort.

*R.* Don't say that, Dick; it's not proper. Jahweh was very wonderful and very great; mustn't talk that way about Jahweh. I do wish I could have seen him, because he could do all those wonderful things and make big fishes just when he wanted, and could have killed all those men in a minute, but he wouldn't. Are you quite sure, Grandfaver, nobody ever did see him? Was he very old then?

*D.* Does the story say where he lived? I like to look at a map when we have a story and see all about the places. I've got a map upstairs, and I like to look at it and see pictures of the places you tell us about.



V. Now, I can't tell you any more to-night; it's quite bed-time. Just look behind that curtain for two little boxes.

R. Chockies?

V. Yes. Only two each to-night; but I suppose you'll each give one to nurse. So off you go. I'll perhaps tell you some more stories on Tuesday.

R. Aren't you coming up to the nursery, Grandfaver?

V. Well, when you're ready for bed I'll come up.

R. Then, can we play Jabberwock?

Half an hour later I heard the children calling, and V. ran upstairs. In a few minutes I heard screams of delight and pretended terror, and the sound of V. jumping on the floor.

V., when he came down, said: 'Isn't it difficult under children's cross-examination to tell no lies and to hide no truths? I hope I haven't, but I don't feel at all sure. If the children could have ventured to have asked questions as freely of a Bench of Bishops as of me, I wonder what the answer would have been. But the children can't say all they think. I expect it would be a wonderful revelation if we knew all they thought and felt when they hear that strange old story. I am seriously inclined to think that the book is verbally inspired, and I hope the critics will prove right who say it was the latest book of the Old Testament. Was it not a real stroke of genius to think of that fish as a way out of a difficult situation? How delighted the writer must have been when he thought of it, and how natural that ever since it should have appealed to the imagination of generation after generation of those who had insight, and been the subject of ribald mockery to the dullest minds!'

I happened to go into the nursery next evening and found the children playing. They turned to me eagerly, asking me to come and see their new game. Dick ran up to me, saying: 'We're playing at Jonah and the whale. Just watch while the whale swallows me up.' Down by the side of the nursery wall a long green curtain with white spots had been arranged to look like the back of a fish or dragon with a long tail. It was drawn over a packing-case just big enough for the boy to creep into. The nurse was away for the evening, and the children had been down into the pantry and brought up two silver decanter stands, which they had fixed over the end of the packing-case to represent the creature's eyes. Ruth was sitting behind a curtain on the top of a chest of drawers, dressed up in every piece of odd finery she could find,

with a gilt paper crown taken from a cracker, and as I came in I heard her saying very gravely: 'Jone, go to Nineveh.' Then the whole drama was re-enacted. The table had been turned on its back on the floor to represent a ship; Dick jumped upon it, and began rocking it about to represent a storm, and then tumbled out on the floor and dived head-first into the case and began to groan.

I thought it best to leave them there for fear of awkward questions, which I should have found it difficult to answer, and I doubt whether the full answer has yet been found.

## II.

I have hesitated whether to add the two following incidents, but as my old friend has since passed away, nothing I write can affect him now. The last time I saw him, except once about an hour before his death two years afterwards, was when he was staying with the children at a cottage at Sandwick, near Howtown on Ullswater. He had rowed across with them to Aira Force to meet me, and as they started back a storm of wind and rain came on, sweeping down over the lake from Catchedicam. All three were in the wildest spirits, quite 'fey,' as they say in Scotland, when the waves splashed over the boat. I watched them until they were more than half-way across, and then it became too dark to see. Though he was then about seventy, I never saw a boat better handled in rough water. He had wrapped Ruth in his Norfolk jacket, and was rowing in thin flannels, soaked to the skin. They all seemed to be enjoying a romp with nature.

Ruth died about three years ago in India, and when I recently showed what I have written to Dick, who is now grown up, he made some slight corrections where my memory was at fault, and said: 'Certainly no one will recognise us. I love anything recalling the dear old Granddad, and possibly other people may be interested in the story. He always set me thinking.'

Two days after that visit to the nursery, I was again writing in the library when the children came in at their usual time and I heard Ruth say to her Grandfather: 'I got a secret.'

'Well, what is it?'

'Last night I had a vevy bad pain, but nurse was poorly and I would not wake her, so I said my hymn about "little lamb to-night," and then I thought I would like to talk to Jahweh



and ask him somefing, so I said : “ Do you care for little birds as well as for those cows and sheep ? ” I fink he nodded his head, but it was all dark and I could not see him. So I asked why he let that naughty pussy kill the dear little robin that used to come to the window ; but he did not say anything, so I asked him : “ Are you very fond of little boys and girls, ’cos I got a horwid bad pain ? Won’t you make it better ? ” I just waited a bit, and then I fell fast asleep and didn’t hear whether he said anything. Perhaps he’ll tell me if I ask him to-night. Do you fink he will ? I should like to see him.’

Just then the nurse came in, and for once V. seemed glad that Ruth was called away promptly to bed.

As soon as she had gone, Dick said : ‘ I suppose it’s all just a make-up fairy tale about Jonah and Jahweh. If Jahweh could make that queer fish, and the castor-oil plant grow up in a night, and do anything he wanted, he would have made Jonah go straight to Nineveh at once ; and why did he make those people and let them annoy him by being so wicked ? Of course there couldn’t be anybody, if he cared for the children and the animals now, and could do what he wanted, would let those beastly black cats tear little birds to pieces and children have bad pains. Ruth was quite good all day yesterday, and had only one tiny bit of cake at tea. And last week, when I went to school, I saw a poor little ragged girl crying in the road ; she said she had been beaten and was very hungry, so I gave her my penny to buy a bun. I don’t believe there ever was any such person as Jahweh.’

V. waited a minute or two without speaking, and then we heard nurse calling to ask if Master Dick was ready to come upstairs. He went at once, and V. turned to me—we were so intimate that I was not always sure whether he was talking to himself or to me—and said : ‘ May I be forgiven ! *ὅς ἂν σκανδαλίση ἓνα τῶν μικρῶν τούτων καλόν ἐστὶν αὐτῷ μᾶλλον εἰ περίκειται μύλος ὀνικός. . .*

Though I was much attached to him, I felt him to be at times strangely morbid. His way of quoting the Greek Testament, which he seemed to know by heart, appeared perhaps pedantic. Though he admired the Authorised Version, and though I often heard him discuss theological questions, I never heard him quote from the New Testament in English. He said it was too familiar, and that translation introduced another risk of misunderstanding, and once remarked that the Pauline Epistles in the Revised Version were often quite unintelligible to him. Some words, too, most

frequently used in theological discussion he scrupulously avoided ; out of respect for his memory I forbear to mention them. I once asked him why he did so, and he simply quoted :

‘ And my Melpomene replies,  
A touch of shame upon her cheek. . . .’

(You know the rest.)

I stayed on with my friend a week longer—over Christmas Day, but was usually out in the evenings. I was with him, however, on Christmas Eve when the carol singers came round. It was a cold, snowy night, and the boys, who were singing remarkably well, were brought into the hall and given some hot cocoa and sweets. The two children were delighted with ‘ King Wenceslas,’ and with the tune of ‘ Adeste Fideles,’ which was sung last, before the boys left. As soon as they had gone, Dick and Ruth came to their Grandfather and asked him to tell them what the last song was about.

V. ‘ You can read it, Dick, if you like ; the book is on the second shelf the other side of the fireplace, and the song is No. 9.’

Dick took it, looking much puzzled as he read slowly to himself, while Ruth said : ‘ I heard what they sang, and they said “ ’dore him ” very often. Do tell us, Grandfaver, what “ ’dore him ” means.’

Unfortunately, I had to go out at that moment to dispatch a telegram before the office closed, and did not return for half an hour. Ruth was just saying ‘ Good-night !’ Her eyes were beaming and her cheeks glowing with delight. ‘ That was the loveliest story of all, Grandfaver. Did you keep it specially for Kissmas ?’ ‘ Yes, perhaps. Now, good-night. You will find your stockings hanging on the end of your beds in the morning, if you go to sleep quickly.’ They ran upstairs. V. seemed unconscious of my presence, and I heard him saying to himself as he stared into the fire :

*ὅς ἂν μὴ δέξηται τὴν βασιλείαν  
τοῦ θεοῦ ὡς παιδίον οὐ μὴ εἰσέλθῃ  
εἰς αὐτήν. . . .*

‘ Let us dress for dinner. I am expecting ——’ naming one of the judges ‘ and Canon ——.’ All three were in brilliant form that evening, and I never heard more amusing talk or droller stories ; but I will not give the guests away by mentioning their names.

ALFRED HOPKINSON.



## THE SALESWOMAN.

BY DOUGLAS WALSH.

### I.

THIS story is really a warning to innocent, unsuspecting man. Fifty years ago when, according to grandmother, girls were young ladies and not hard and unwomanly as they are now, it was necessary for a writer to warn the poor but virtuous maiden against the wiles of the handsome but wicked young Squire. To-day all the squires are selling their estates—oh, what an age for auctioneers!—and it is one's duty to caution trusting manhood against that cunning young thing, the modern girl. Unfortunately, like all my stories, the moral gets rather muddled. But that's the gist of it.

Be war-arned in ti-ime . . . as they sang in 'Dorothy,' wasn't it? Have a care—pray beware—tum-ti-tum.

*'Second-hand Sunstar two-seater car for sale. Only driven eight thousand miles. Perfect mechanical order. Bodywork as new. Dynamo lighting. Self-starter. Spares. £350, no offers.—"The Limes," Streatham Hill.'*

'That seems rather what I'm looking for,' thought Leslie Markham, and cut the advertisement out of the *Motor* with his penknife.

He took a taxi to 'The Limes.'

He was a tall young man, with a keen, intelligent face. Winchester and Balliol and all that sort of thing. Dark-brown twinkling eyes. Curly hair. He reminded the parlourmaid who opened the door to him of one of her favourite heroes on the films. Luckily she did not tell him so.

'I've called about a car that's advertised for sale,' he explained in a pleasant voice.

'Yes, sir. This way, sir.'

She showed him into a black and apricot drawing-room, a really charming apartment. Leslie thoroughly approved of it, having a distinct feeling for beauty.

The door opened, and a girl came in.

She had on a dress which was like a good picture frame. It

didn't seem to matter, and yet it showed the subject off. Her eyes were blue, her hair golden, her features irregular but alive. Photographed she would have taken no prize in any beauty competition. But looked-at she was delightful—a companionable, fascinating personality of, say, twenty-one or two.

'You've come about my car?' she said in a voice as likeable as the rest of her.

'Yes.'

He betrayed no surprise at learning that it was her car.

'It's in the garage. If you'll come this way I'll show it to you.'

He came that way.

'There she is,' said the advertiser. 'She does thirty miles to the gallon . . . Well, twenty-five,' she smiled, as Leslie raised his eyebrows.

He examined the body-work. He lifted the bonnet and looked at the engine. He shook the front wheels. He tested the steering for play, and found some, but not too much.

'I can see you know something about cars,' said the smiling watcher.

'Do you mind if I jack up one of the back wheels?' he enquired.

'Not at all.'

She whipped a jack out of the tool box and began to do the work herself.

'Oh, I say—let me,' he protested.

But she wouldn't.

He made a rough test for wear in the cardan shaft or undue noise in the differential. And she handed him a piece of waste on which to wipe his hands.

'Now I suppose you'd like to try her on the road?' she suggested.

He nodded, and she pressed the self-starter pedal.

The engine did not 'turn over.'

'Afraid my battery's rather run down,' she apologised with another smile.

Leslie smiled, too. 'Trust a lady-driver to run her battery down sooner than go to the fag of swinging her engine,' he thought.

Gallantly he forestalled her at the starting-handle, and the engine started on the third pull up.

She took her place at the steering wheel.

'You don't mind if I drive?' she said winningly. 'You see, you might . . .'



'Smash her up, eh?' he helped her out. 'Go ahead.'

'No flies on *her*,' he thought. 'She's running this job just as a man would, and that's how I'm going to treat her, too!' And he gave her a sideways glance of genuine admiration.

'Pulls well, doesn't she?' she murmured, changing slick from first to top. 'She's in first-class order.' Pause. 'Mind you, I don't say in one or two details she couldn't be improved . . .'

'Oh, of course,' he agreed. 'A second-hand car is a second-hand car.'

'Exactly.'

Presently, when they got out of the traffic, she tapped the speedometer with a slim finger to call his attention to the fact that it was registering forty.

'I shouldn't have thought we were doing so much,' he commented.

'Oh, she's very well sprung, and holds the road splendidly,' said the saleswoman, slowing down.

'There, what do you think of that?' she enquired triumphantly.

They were crawling along at six miles an hour on top gear. The engine was quite happy, and the cardan shaft was not clanking.

'Jolly good,' said Leslie.

'I'll just take her up a hill to show you how she climbs.'

But when they tackled the hill the climb was rather a fiasco. They got up, but only after a big struggle and considerable grating in the gear-box, finishing at a crawl on 'first.'

'Sorry,' she apologised. 'I missed my gear.'

The young man beside her smiled.

There was just the least trace of patronage in that smile.

This, he thought, was where you would expect a lady driver to let herself down. Changing up was easy enough, but changing down . . .

He felt quite sorry for her, and decided that she must be more nervous than he had imagined.

She turned the car at the top, and they coasted down.

'I suppose you won't want her now?' she sighed contritely. 'Afraid my driving's put you off.'

Leslie felt even more sorry for her.

'Oh, not at all,' he answered with some embarrassment. 'Er—how about letting me take her up the hill for myself?'

The advertiser shook her charming head.

'It's not usual when you buy a second-hand car for anyone but the seller to drive, is it?' she said gently.

He had to admit that that was so. If one let every Tom, Dick or Harry who came to look at a car try his hand at driving it, obviously its value might suffer.

'Sorry I made such a mess of that climb. Where shall I put you down?' she went on, with a brave recognition of the fact that the deal must be off and a polite pretence that she wasn't disappointed.

Leslie looked at her sideways. Her humility touched him.

'It wasn't the car's fault,' he said quietly. 'I'm going to buy her all the same!'

Her head jerked round, and she flashed him a sudden dazzling smile.

'If we can come to terms,' he added firmly, telling himself again that although she was so young and charming he wasn't going to be anything but business-like. No, by Jove, he wasn't even going to be afraid to talk figures with her, just because she was a woman. He would treat her exactly as he would treat a man with a car for sale, he told himself . . . and didn't know that he was telling himself a lie.

'I'll give you three hundred for her,' he offered.

'Three fifty is the price,' she answered in a delightfully business-like tone.

'Split the difference. Make it three twenty-five?'

'No. My advertisement said "no offers." Three fifty.'

'Oh, very well. Three fifty,' he gave in.

'I've got an instruction book. That will tell you all you want to know about the oiling. Is there anything else you'd like to ask me?' she enquired as they made their way back.

He put a few questions, and they talked car till they pulled up in front of 'The Limes' again.

'Tell me your name, and I'll come in and write a cheque,' said Leslie, hoping she would ask him to lunch.

'Oh . . . I thought you'd brought notes . . . They told me on no account to take a stranger's cheque,' she objected.

Leslie smiled. He didn't know who 'they' were, but he admired her business-like attitude.

'Quite right. You can't be too careful,' he agreed. 'I'll bring you the cash to-morrow.'

'Couldn't I drive you to your bank and settle it now?' she suggested.

'Wouldn't that be troubling you too much?'



'No. I'd rather. Then if anyone else comes along I can tell them the car is sold, and not have to keep them hanging about.'

'Very well. Let's go to the bank.'

He was delighted to be going for another little ride with her. And what he wanted to tell her was that she was the daintiest and most charming business-woman he had ever come across. But somehow he did not dare. Something about her seemed to be saying all the time: 'I'm a seller—you're a buyer—and personalities are barred.' But saying it delightfully, saying it in a way that only made him admire her the more.

The car moved off again, and on the way they came to another hill.

She boggled it dreadfully, and Leslie felt thoroughly sorry—for the car. It hurt him to hear a gear box so badly treated.

'She's very interesting, and fairly cautious in traffic, but rotten, simply rotten, at changing gear,' he thought.

She went into the bank with him. He cashed his cheque, handed her the money, and took a receipt.

She produced her own stamp, and by that he knew how completely emancipated she was. The test of whether a girl is really modern or still a little bit old-fashioned is whether or no she carries her own stamps.

'Florence Armstrong—what a charming name,' he thought a trifle fatuously, as he scanned her receipt.

'You'll let me drive you back?' he suggested—for it was his car now.

'Oh no. Thanks, awfully. Don't trouble.'

'I should love to . . .'

'It's very kind of you, but I'm not sure I'm going straight back. Good-bye. Thanks very much. Hope you'll get on with her all right.'

She held out her hand, and he had to take it. He was so disappointed at his summary dismissal that he was a little belated in raising his hat. For a second or two he stood there watching her gracefully striding away. Then he got into the car.

## II.

She had sold him a pup, as the phrase goes.

In five minutes he knew it.

Blue eyes, golden hair, unobtrusive dress and fascinating

personality notwithstanding, she had done him down as neatly as . . . well, as neatly as he might have hoped to do her down had the position been reversed.

In spite of his experience, in spite of all his care, in spite of his determination not to allow her sex and her charm to influence him, he had paid her at least a hundred pounds more than her car was worth . . . in cash, which there could be no getting back.

The gears were dreadful. The third speed was quite worn out and the second did not engage properly. He blushed for shame at the noise he made when he tried to change, and a passing 'bus-driver called out something hurtful and unkind—something about going 'ome and learning to drive a pram.

By slipping through them very quickly or, better, by jumping from first to top, the state of the gears could be camouflaged. She, he remembered, had jumped from first to top. But when one tried to change down, the truth was revealed in all its grating hideousness.

'Fool that I am, I thought she couldn't change gear properly,' he groaned, and cursed himself for not having taken the cover off the gear-box.

But examining gears that run in grease is a very messy operation. And he hadn't cared to get himself too filthy in the presence of that vision. He had preferred to trust his ear, never dreaming that one so daintily feminine could be clever enough to . . . er—to take advantage of him as he would have taken advantage of her.

For that was what it came to.

The morals of one with a horse or a car to sell are something apart. There is a weak spot in most people's honesty. Many an elder of the church has jumped off a 'bus rejoicing because the conductor has overlooked asking for his three ha'pence. One must take the world as one finds it. And when it comes to buying and selling horses and cars, the only safe rule is: believe nothing, take nothing for granted, and trust nobody, not even a Bishop. Why, I know a man who bought a second-hand limousine from the Bishop of . . . but perhaps to say more would be libel.

There were other things wrong with that car. Once it was in his own hands Leslie spotted them all. But you are spared the details for fear this story grows too technical.

The point is that she had done him, and he saw how, in every respect but one.



There was one thing that puzzled him. Good slow running on top gear is an impressive test of an engine's condition. She had driven that car at six miles an hour on top. When he tried, he stopped the engine. With him the very lowest speed at which she was at all happy on top was fifteen.

'How on earth did she manage it?' he asked himself. And gave the answer up.

You are wrong if you picture him in a rage against her. He wasn't. The person he was angry with was himself. He had pitted his wits against hers, as buyer and seller always do, and she had won. All he could do was to admit it and grin and bear it. She had allowed him to make all the examination he wanted to: she had herself suggested that the deal was off when they failed at the first hill. He had only himself to blame.

'A mug, that's what I was,' he told himself. 'I let her do me—just because she was a Woman.'

He had hit it at last. Had she been a man he would certainly have looked inside the gear box, mess or no mess. Had she been a man he would have insisted on her trying that hill again or allowing him to. But as she was a Girl he had told himself she couldn't change gear: he had put the failure of the self-starter down to the ways of her sex: and he had paid her what she asked because he admired the business-like way she stood out for it.

Yes, he had been a mug, he told himself again and again. And he deserved all he had got. But he would like to know how she had managed that six miles an hour on top. That was the one thing about the matter that he could not understand.

### III.

It cost him sixty-two pounds eight and three to have that car put in order—engine and self-starter overhauled, two new speeds in the gear-box, new set of accumulators, etc.

Then he was fairly pleased with her, and asked a lady-friend to give her a name, a lady-friend to whom he had told all that had happened.

She suggested 'Florence,' with a knowing smile.

So he christened her Florence, shortened to Florrie when for some reason the car chose to run better than usual, as cars will.

He often thought of the girl he had bought her from, and

longed to see her again. At times he even considered whether he might not boldly call at 'The Limes' and ask for her. But he didn't quite see how he could. What excuse could he give? What reason had he for intruding upon a young lady whom he had only met once on a strictly business occasion? To reproach her for having bested him? That wouldn't be sporting. To tell her how pleased he was with his bargain now he had spent sixty-two pounds eight and three on it? That would be silly.

Yet he wanted to see her—passionately he wanted to see her. The memory of that hour and a half they had spent together seemed undying in his mind. Her face, her figure, the sound of her voice, her calm, competent manner—these things haunted him. That black and apricot drawing-room, her smile, her refusal to let him drive her anywhere when the bargain was completed: every detail of their one and only interview remained with him, and the hope ever in his mind was that some day he might meet her again.

Twice when somewhere near her district, he drove out of his way, round by 'The Limes' on the chance of seeing her.

The second time he slowed down the car and pointed out the house to his companion.

'That's where she lives—the girl who did me in the eye,' he said. 'Wish she would come out . . .'

'Don't be a chump,' was the companion's reply. 'What would be the good of having a row with her now?'

'I don't want to have a row with her,' he replied, and drove on.

But at last Fate was kind. In that way she has—that way that makes a self-respecting artist wonder at times what on earth the Management can be thinking about—Fate arranged a meeting that was neither more nor less than an impossible, old-fashioned coincidence utterly unworthy of any modern writer.

Miss Armstrong herself held out her hand as a sign to him to pull up when he was actually about to drive past her and her new car in a lonely country lane.

'I say,' said the well-remembered voice. 'Could you be so kind as to lend me a pump? My pump connection has just burst. I've had a puncture, and my spare wheel's not been touched for months, and the tyre's almost flat.'

Leslie leapt out, his heart beating a little fast, his eyes excited.

'Certainly,' he said. 'Glad to meet you again, Miss Armstrong.'



She looked surprised.

'Oh,' she exclaimed, as recollection dawned. 'I thought there was something familiar about your car. It's my old Sunstar. You bought her from me, didn't you?'

It was the car she had recognised first—not Leslie. But what did he care? They had met again at last.

'Yes, that's right,' he laughed, and began to pump up her tyre for her.

'I've been longing to see you again,' he said breathlessly when the task was done.

She smiled—non-committally, a shade stiffly.

'There's something I want to ask you,' Leslie went on. 'It's been on my mind ever since. How *did* you manage to make that car do six miles an hour on top the day you sold her to me?'

A sunny smile—the smile he knew so well—irradiated Miss Armstrong's face.

'That's tellings,' she purred.

'Do tell me,' he pleaded, so earnestly that she felt it impossible to refuse.

'Very well.' The smile was now a positive beam. 'I found it out by accident. When I first began to drive I was always forgetting to take my hand-brake off . . .'

'Oh, I see how it was done now,' he burst in excitedly. 'You opened the throttle a little and put your foot on the foot-brake. That was the trick, wasn't it?'

'Yes. You can go as slow as you like that way with a little practice. Of course, when I was a novice I used to stop the engine altogether, but so long as you don't keep the brake on too hard . . .'

 The sentence tailed off in another smile.

'I'm so glad you've explained,' he cried gratefully. 'It's worried me no end. I nearly called at your house to ask you about it! I say, may I introduce you to my wife? Mary, this is the Miss Armstrong I bought our car from!'

'I've always wanted to meet the girl who got the better of my husband,' smiled Mary Markham, offering her hand. 'You don't know what a lot of good you did him, Miss Armstrong. He bought the car for our honeymoon tour, and we only got it put in order just in time. But I'm bound to say since it's been done up it has never given us a moment's trouble—has it, Leslie?'

'No—she's not bad . . . now,' he admitted cheerfully.

'He asked me to christen her, and I called her Florence, after

you!' his wife added. 'I didn't want him to forget you, you see!'

The two women exchanged a look.

Well, that's the story. And as far as I can see the moral is: If you want to buy anything from one of those unsexed modern minxes, you'd better employ your maiden aunt to carry out the negotiations. But I'm not very clear about it, because I'm afraid the maiden aunt would be done, too. I have an uncomfortable suspicion that the only thing to do with them is to let them have their own way with us. After all, Man always has been done by Woman one way or another—and it's waiting to find out which way it is that makes life worth living.



## LA PAZ.

BY LIEUT.-COL. C. P. HAWKES.

IN Teneriffe, most fortunate of the Fortunate Islands, there stands a little town set high a thousand feet above the sea on the foothills of the Peak, whose lower slopes, rolling up behind it with the gradations of Pedro Gil and the Montana Blanca marked out in bluish shadows, swell upward past the encircling basin of the Canadas—smaller volcanoes shaped like rising fish with gaping mouths, and grouped around the Peak as suns round Saturn, forming a dam of rock, a protection to all the valley from the lava-streams—until they culminate in the mighty pyramid of the mountain which the Guanches called 'The Peak of Hell.'

The Summit, dazzling in its cloak of snow alike by moonlight and the noonday glare, in the flames of sunset seems to be made of molten metal; *casa de Oro* the people call it when its snow is turned to gold by that celestial alchemy.

All round are little townships—Realejo Alto, with steep houses piled up like a mountain village in the Apennines, and separated by a deep barranco from its lower counterpart, Realejo Bajo; Icod el Alto, near the brink of the dark cliffs of Tigaia, the long sweep of whose outline hides all but the very cone; Matanza, the place of slaughter, where the Guanches met with, and massacred, their Spanish conquerors; and San Juan de Rambla, whence came the best of the Malmsey wine, sack such as Francis drew for Falstaff and Prince Hal at the Boar's Head in Eastcheap.

Lower down are the fumaroles, black heaps of cinders, upheaving rounded contours like the breasts of a recumbent giantess. Villa Orotava is the name of this old Spanish town, untouched by all the passing years. Before the conquest it was the capital of the Mencey, the Guanche Prince of Taoro, chieftain of eight thousand warriors, who, after election to his sovereignty in council of his assembled peers, swore on the arm-bone of a former king to lead his people with justice and with courage. Holding the bone aloft, he cried 'I swear it by The Bone, on this day on which you have made me great!' This oath he took in the council-chamber formed by the hollow trunk of the great dragon-tree of Taoro—which for six thousand years reared its heavy foliaged head,

buttressed by countless naked roots descending from its branches—in the Tagoror, the sacred place of assembly of the nation. Later, the conquering Spaniard, most ruthless of evangelists, said Mass within this tabernacle tree and the Tagoror became a hidalgo's stately garden.

The town has steep and rambling streets of cobbles, inimical to motors, but worn by the hoofs of many generations of oxen, mules, and donkeys. Old houses flank these streets—the homes of ancient Spanish families of long descent and dignity, including some of Irish lineage, with histories of Jacobite ancestors who left their country after the Treaty of Limerick sooner than bow to William the Dutch usurper. The perspective of the streets is broken by deep balconies, decorated and often frescoed, with cunningly-wrought upper work and lattices of old and beautiful carving; most of the woodwork of a rich soft green, with great green shutters, half-closed like drowsy eyes. The houses have tiled roofs and old stone doorways, with a deep fringe of shade from the overhanging balconies washed in on the mellow plaster of the walls above them, and old iron-studded doors of quaint design, with little posterns hung on great carved hinges—through these one catches glimpses of patios with cool tinkling fountains, of splashes of rich coloured blossom with deep contrasting shadows, and of creeper-clad wooden stairways leading to spacious shady balconies.

Everywhere are trees and flowers; walls and woodwork are covered with purple bougainvillea, with wisteria, and with the soft grey-green of the plant called Pico de Paloma. Red poinsettias bloom garish in the patios, with stocks and lavender, carnations and verbena, lilac and cineraria; and the Lena Noel, or convolvulus, growing down the trunks of great umbrageous trees; and arum lilies sanctifying dark corners overgrown with fern. Of spires and domes of churches there are many; here is the beautiful church and convent of San Domingo, and not far off the Iglesia de la Concepcion, where is still the silver altar plate from Old St. Paul's, dispersed by Cromwell's Ironsides when purging that house of God of 'baubles.' Many little chapels there are, shrinking within their covering of trees, cypress and myrtle and orange. On the feast of Corpus Christi processions from these churches walk through the streets on brilliant carpets of flower petals, arranged in elaborate designs over the cobblestones.

Few people move about the streets: some dignified householders in dark capes with their graceful folds; some peasants in



mantas, blanket-cloaks of wool. The women glide along with a quick swaying walk, wearing tiny saucer-shaped straw hats on which are poised great earthen pots of classic shape or heavy loads. Beneath the hat a black kerchief enfolds the head, with flying corners, or drawn closely like a shawl. In poorer houses the girls sit at their doors busy with the *Calado*, a rough drawn-thread work. All have black eyes and hair, with olive faces of a finely-chiselled gravity, lighted up from time to time by a quick smile; the men with a blue bristle on the cheeks and chin.

The type seems purely Spanish, of that fine never-changing Iberian cast traceable in Spanish art through Velasquez, Ribera, Goya and Fortuny down to the moderns, Zuloaga and de Zubiaurre, and to be seen in most of the work of our own half-Spanish Philpot. Indeed, Francisco José de Goya y Lucientes would seem to have designed the Orotavans; for at each corner one meets figures which might have stepped straight out of the canvases of that Madrileño roisterer (though born at Fuentetodos), who had the very spirit of Spain in his brush; left once for dead in the streets of Madrid with a *navaja* between his shoulder-blades; pupil in a cuadrilla of Toreadors; lover of a Duchess; and first of the Impressionists, to whom Delacroix, Manet, and Rignault owed the inspiration of their work.

Here and there one hears the thrum of a guitar, and always the gentle splash of running water and the occasional clangour of a church's bell, calling to the minds of such as heed it the sacrifice of Christ. The smell of the burning of retama charcoal and the heavy scent of orange-blossom pervade the atmosphere. Out of the town the broad white *carretera* leads down the slope, fringed with prickly pear, agave, and cactus, and shaded by oleanders and eucalyptus trees, their bark in rags and tatters. High-banked lanes branch outward beneath feathery junipers, leading to fincas or banana plantations. The people say that the banana came from Guinea, where it had been transplanted from Eden after the Fall—the tree of knowledge of good and evil, expelled with man's first parents, who, disobedient, peeled and ate of its fruit. (One of its Latin names, indeed, is *Musa Sapientum*.) A few miles down the road, with but one turning-off, one comes to the little chapel of Santo Amaro, where is said a yearly Mass, and whence is carried in procession to the sea the image of the Saint, with fireworks and incense, down the long avenue of cypresses. Close by it stands the outer gate of the Casa de la Paz.

The House of Peace : not the peace of torpor, of inanition, of indolence bred of a heavy exotic listlessness, fruitful of lethargy, but the peace of beauty and a serenity induced by the calm effort of the cycle of Nature, marvellous *metteur-en-scène* in this theatre of glorious colour-effects ; enhanced by the work of man's hands so fitting to its environment as to harmonise in perfection with its loveliness. An old Spanish house, green-tiled, with plastered walls, embowered in flowers, flanked and delineated by a proscenium of leafy trees, built on the edge of noble and sheer precipices, the fine ruggedness of whose architecture is half-softened, half-emphasised by the subtle gradations of colour of the strata, ranging from tawny yellow to the warm red of a blood-orange ; dominated on one side by the mountain's exaltation, and with the background of a sea and sky of quivering blue. Such is the garden of La Paz, the home of peace and of contentment of the soul.

Two cypresses stand sentinel on either side of the green doorway in the old plastered wall, through which opens a vista of a wide pathway with, on one side, a border of flaming scarlet blossom, topping a myrtle hedge, and opposite, a garden-wall smothered in flowering creeper. The house lies beyond. A flight of rounded steps leads from a forecourt to an inner pleasure with paved walks and trim yew hedges, the work of a former gardener from Portugal, who brought with him the remembrance of the formal hedges of his home by the Tagus.

A larger flagged terrace is beyond, facing the Atlantic down the perspective of a cypress avenue. Over the door is carved in stone an ancient coat-of-arms, and graven on its scroll are these words—'HIC EST REQUIES MEA.' Fitting inscription ! for, sitting in quiet upon this terrace surrounded by a rosy loveliness and fronted by the sea, a peace descends upon the soul, divine in its perfection as the peace of God. The house was built in the seventeenth century by a certain Walsh, one of those Irish exiles of whom mention has been made. His arms, carved over the house door, also appear in the church of N.S. de la Peña de Francia in the Villa. His family intermarried with another exile clan, the Calogans, to one of whom, the Marquis de la Candia, La Paz belongs.

The garden viewed from the terrace is full of blended colour ; long hedges of *Bandera d'España* in Spanish colours of scarlet and yellow, and *Poyos*, double walls with flowers of every hue planted in the space between ; brilliant orange *bignonias* cover the



pergolas and the wall-tops, while in the crannies of the cliffs, from the foot of which sounds the eternal thunder of the Atlantic rollers, the candelabra-plant throws out its great square leafless columns topped with scarlet flowers.

On the terrace day by day some years ago there used to sit a piquant figure. A spare gaunt man of later middle-age, with black sombrero and the funereal clothes of a Spanish gentleman of the old school; his face a perfect oval, identical with that of Vandyke's Charles the First—the eyes deep with fatalistic pathos, the nose straight and clean-cut, a full voluptuous mouth, pointed beard, and an upturned moustache. Half Italian and half Scot, his name was Rothesay, and he claimed to be a descendant of the Young Pretender, who, in the later stages of his decadence—so the story ran—had loved a young girl of the Campagna. Most certainly his face bore the Stuart mark in every lineament, and the belief that he was of the blood royal obsessed him to the point of monomania. He lived in an old house in the Villa near the convent of San Domingo, with a Spanish wife—a resigned-looking elderly woman whom he called Pilar, and an old bent couple who looked after them. In the afternoon of every day he would take his hat and cane and ride down to La Paz, where he would hitch his horse in the shade and sit for hours upon the terrace, a white rose in his fingers, gazing seaward and musing upon the tragic issues of his House.

He had few friends and neither paid nor received visits. Nowhere else he went, save occasionally to La Laguna to consult some learned work in the library of San Augustin—for he was a scholar, and had published in Madrid some notes on Horace and an edition of Catullus. Further, he had spent much time in research into the ethnology of the Guanches and the history of the Spanish conquest of the Islands, and was reputed to be one of the few living men acquainted with the secret of the whistling language of the Isle of Gomera, southward of Teneriffe, where men can talk by whistling over a distance of four miles or so.

His only social diversion was to ride in the *Corridas de Sortiga* (tilting at the ring) when they took place in the barranco Martianez or in the grounds of the Taoro hotel. There he would ride, sitting erect in his close-fitting black clothes upon his long-bodied, ewe-necked pony, with its gay saddle-cloth and stirrups hooded like a picador's, and would spear the rings, and win the embroidered ribands from whose ends they hung, with as much success as the

young caballeros of the Villa or the foreign bloods of the Grand Hotel and the Puerto.

*Pobrecito!* One day he failed to return from his accustomed visit to La Paz, and was found, quite dead, still sitting on the terrace there, his lifeless eyes to seaward, and a white rose, its petals scattered, dropped from his nerveless hand. His spirit had found peace. They should have buried him there, near the chapel of Santo Amaro, where masses could be said for his soul, and upon the headstone of his resting-place should be engraved the words old Walsh its builder had carved above the threshold of La Paz more than two centuries ago :

‘ HIC EST REQUIES MEA.’



## THE GILBERTIAN IDEA.

BY H. ROWLAND-BROWN.

THE genius of W. S. Gilbert is a thing apart ; his place in English letters unique. In his art as a librettist he has no predecessors. He has had many imitators, but no successors. As soon as he found himself, he came at once into his own ; he saw, and conquered, and now after the lapse of some forty years his place in popular esteem and in the more eclectic world of letters is firmly established. The recent revivals in London of the earlier Savoy operas, 'Savoy' being a convenient if not strictly accurate term to cover the series from *Trial by Jury* to *Utopia Limited*, have stimulated curiosity as to their literary evolution, especially in regard to the almost mysterious transformation of Gilbert from a writer of burlesque after H. J. Byron, and a more or less conventional playwright at first strongly under the influence of Robertson, into a librettist of extraordinary skill, working on purely original lines. The mental processes which gave birth and expression to his real genius—the satiric genius of *Topsy-turvy-dom*—are revealed, however, in the pages of a note-book—sole survivor, it is to be feared, of many—kindly placed at the disposition of the writer. Gilbert made away with his papers ruthlessly. He kept neither unfinished nor completed manuscripts. The final copy was usually bestowed on the *prima donna* or other artist whose interpretation of his characters happened to commend itself ; the rest, with all notes, were committed to the flames. And, with this one exception, he left to our knowledge no literary remains other than correspondence with friends and collaborators. The exception is illuminating. Sandwiched between sketches and rough copies of several successful comedies are a number of 'Ideas' for a projected play, or musical play to be entitled *Topsy-turvy-dom*, which 'Ideas' embody practically the whole scheme of wit and wisdom afterwards expounded in the Savoy operas.

Gilbert has told me that *The Yeomen of the Guard* was his favourite, and that technically he considered it his best. He also said that Phoebe's song, 'Were I Thy Bride,' was written to demonstrate that the English language properly treated was as tuneful

as the then fashionable Italian and German. The suppression of the sibilant, here and generally, denotes the master craftsman. For melody, perhaps, he had an indifferent ear ; but he had a dominant sense of rhythm, and the true artist's joy of bending his verses to a thousand metres and conceits. Granted his serious lyrics are conceived in mockery, still, their appeal is to the heart, a quality rare in his work, which partakes far more of the faery, the freakish, the Gay-like *quod est absurdum*, or in other words the serious treatment and logical development of ridiculous premises. But in our many discussions of the subject I never heard him mention Gay, whose *Beggar's Opera*, by the way, was written as a skit on the Italian opera absurdities of his day, just as Sullivan's music of the Savoy operas is often a parody—more beautiful than the originals—of the Italian composers. Yet, I have no doubt he was familiar with Gay's method, for he was a close student of dramatic composition, and could recite from his wonderful memory whole pages of long-forgotten plays, extravaganzas and burlesques.

The fairy had developed early in him, the perverse fairy of the 'Bab Ballads,' themselves the wellsprings of so many of the operas—Gilbert's own creation, Gilbert himself. Even as long as he was under the spell of Robertson, writing plays in orthodox form, the fairy peeps out in the words and actions of his characters. Indeed, with some half a dozen exceptions in the long line of his original plays, Gilbert seems incapable of portraying a real woman. Mrs. Van den Burgh in *Charity* is the nearest approach he ever made on his own account. Phœbe in *The Yeomen of the Guard*, Clarice in *Comedy and Tragedy*, have human hearts, and there is in the gallery of irresponsible, impossible 'Bab' femininity, the unexpectedly human *Only a Dancing Girl*. The rest are fairies *pur sang*, as often as not, with a strong dash of the minx in them.

This peculiar quality of Gilbert's genius was reflected in the man himself. He was at once the least emotional and artistically the most sensitive of men. I once asked him if he had written any love poems, and if so whether such poems were in existence. Gilbert assured me that he never had, even in his literary youth ; and added with a chuckle, 'Every line I ever wrote in verse was to order, and well paid for at that !' In nearly all his plays, other than *Broken Hearts* and *The Wicked World*, in the whole of the Savoy opera as defined above, the male interest predominates. When at last he went to the other extreme, and in his final opera,



*Fallen Fairies*, eliminated the male chorus altogether, the experiment was a failure for stage purposes.

His fairy plays proper introduced London to an entirely new form of dramatic entertainment, and it says much for the taste of the 'seventies that both *The Wicked World*—forty years later to reappear in lyric form as *Fallen Fairies*—and *Broken Hearts* were successful as well from the financial as from the artistic point of view. Incidentally, they show that Gilbert was as facile a writer of blank as of lyric verse. He is at his best in this respect in *Pygmalion and Galatea*, a play developed on a classic theme, it is true, but justly claimed by him as original. For Gilbert held, Shakespeare-like, that inspiration drawn from history, or the creatures of others' imagining, is no bar to the claim of originality; that a play is none the less entitled to be regarded as original if based on the ideas of classic or even modern authors. He writes in one of his prefaces :

'The Story upon which *The Palace of Truth* is founded is probably as old as the *Arabian Nights*. *The Princess* (mother so to speak of the opera, *Princess Ida*) is a respectful parody (later described as a perversion) of Mr. Tennyson's exquisite poem.

'It has been generally held, I believe, that if a dramatist uses the mere outline of an existing story for dramatic purposes he is at liberty to describe his play as "original."'

Gilbert was a great admirer of Dickens. He once told me that he never went away from home without one or other of the novels, and that being a poor sleeper he had the whole of them within hand-reach of his bed. Probably, not a little of the clever fooling of Rosencrantz and Guildenstern owes its inception to Mr. Wopsle and his transpontine interpretation of *Hamlet*—ever a favourite butt of Gilbert's wit, and more elaborately pursued in *The Mountebanks*. He had himself dramatised *Great Expectations*, but according to his own judgment 'with no success worth mentioning.' He tells an amusing story, however, of the ways of the censorship at the date of its production. The custom of the then Licensor of Plays was to delete irreverent words and insert in-offensive substitutes. From the line addressed to Pip by the returned convict, 'Here you are, in chambers fit for a Lord,' the word 'Lord' was struck out, and 'Heaven,' in pencil, put in its place!

Again, in the *Tale of Two Cities*, Mr. Stryver's self-examination

of himself before an imaginary Court on the subject of his offer of marriage to Lucie Manette foreshadows unmistakably the remarkable performance of the Lord Chancellor in *Iolanthe*, who wishes to wed Phyllis, his ward in Chancery :

‘ Argued with the jury on substantial worldly grounds—the only grounds ever worth taking into account—it was a plain case, and had not a weak spot in it. He called himself for the plaintiff, there was no getting over his evidence, the counsel for the defendant threw up his brief, and the jury did not even turn to consider. After trying it, Stryver, C.J., was satisfied that no plainer case could be.’

The Lord Chancellor had failed to convince himself in the first instance :

‘ I deeply grieve to say that in declining to entertain my last application, I presumed to address myself in terms which render it impossible for me ever to apply to myself again. It was a most painful scene—my Lord—most painful !’

but presently, encouraged by the rival peers for the hand of this ‘ dainty rogue in porcelain,’ he returns with the joyful news :

‘ Victory ! Victory ! Success has crowned my efforts, and I may consider myself engaged to Phyllis. . . . Eventually, after a severe struggle with myself I reluctantly, most reluctantly, consented’ to the application.

It may be a literary coincidence ; if so, the coincidence is sufficiently striking. But Gilbert, where such ideas were not absolutely spontaneous, and original in a stricter sense than he himself acknowledged, usually derived the motives of the libretti from his own earlier works. *The Mikado* indisputably sprang Minerva-like armed *cap-à-pie* from his brain ; no suggestion of a ‘ pre-Gilbertian,’ much less of a foreign, progenitor is to be found in its sparkling lines. In the other Savoy operas there is generally something of an echo of the ‘ Bab Ballads,’ or possibly of those farcical comedies contemporaneous with the older productions of the series. *Engaged* is pure farce and fun. Cheviot Hill of the many fiancées, and Belvawney (a Dickens name), his friend and rival, are surely prototypes of the greater Bunthorne and Grosvenor of *Patience*.

‘ Suppose—I won’t go so far as to say I will do it—but suppose for one moment I were to curse you ? (*Grosvenor quails.*) Ah ! Very well, take care.’



sounds very like the threat of Cheviot Hill when he demands of Maggie Macfarlane the whereabouts of her mercenary lover Angus.

‘CHEVIOT. Give me his address that I may go and curse him.’

MAGGIE. (*Kneels to Hill*) . . . Oh, sir, kind sir, have mercy on him, and do not—do not curse him, or I shall die.’

and Maggie is but a Lowland Ellen McJones Aberdeen. So Grosvenor kneels to Bunthorne to avert ‘a nephew’s curse,’ and Belinda Treherne is reincarnated in Phyllis of *Iolanthe*, Patience herself, and half a dozen other Gilbertian misses :

‘MISS T. I am glad, sir, that you are pleased with my modesty. It has often been admired.’

The satire is all fun and good fooling. Sometimes, it is true, and most notably in the lyrics, a shadow passes over the sunny landscape. Yet never so much as a shower of April rain follows with the fleeting cloud. The solemn funeral bell tolls ‘Bim-a-boom,’ but no one is or will be beheaded, and the next moment the joy bells are ringing, and—‘Brightly dawns our wedding day,’ ‘Fairest days are sun and shade,’ carol Angelina’s bridesmaids, but for the most part it is all sunshine; clean, fresh wit, with nothing of the suggestiveness which too often disfigured the jejune libretti of an earlier school. For this is Gilbert’s greatest achievement—that it can be written of his Muse, and written truly, as of his bright and beautiful English girl :

‘Her soul is sweet as the ocean air,  
For prudery knows no haven there.’

And further, can it be said of any other librettist of this or any other epoch that we read his works in the armchair with as much enjoyment and amusement as we listen to his lines and lyrics on the stage? They are not ‘the rinsings of a comic mind,’ in the pungent words of his criticism of a jealous rival. He was, indeed, a hard and fastidious worker. The libretti and dialogue were polished and repolished, and he invariably wrote more verses than the opera required that the composer might exercise a choice. For he realised, as so few writers of verse appear to do, that the lyrics suitable for music are seldom those poems classic in form with stanzas of uniform metre. The perfect libretto demands variety

of rhythm and metre, and he knew it. Like the Wandering Minstrel of *The Mikado* :

‘ My catalogue is long,  
Through every passion ranging,  
And to your humours changing  
I tune my supple song ! ’

The ‘ books ’ were original in every sense. The scheme of their topsy-turvydom is carefully outlined in the note-book to which allusion has already been made. The topsy-turvy ‘ Ideas ’ can be dated with some accuracy. They follow immediately a complete uncorrected MS. of *Charity*, produced in 1875 ; but *Topsy-turvydom*, the actual play, or opera-to-be (for the *Spirit of Parliament* is down to describe the kingdom of Topsy-turvydom ‘ in patter song ’), goes no further, alas, than the scenario of Act I, Scene 1. In the eight pages of ‘ Ideas,’ however, the Gilbertian system is revealed, and it is interesting to note that *Trial by Jury*, which may be said to have inaugurated the topsy-turvy era, appeared in the same year as *Charity*. The ‘ Ideas ’ are too copious for transliteration in full, but enough of them may be quoted to indicate the inner workings of Gilbert’s mind at this, the transition period of his art.

‘ Poverty is honoured—wealth despised. Ignorance is honoured—learning despised.

‘ Children are born learned, gradually forget everything until, as old men, they are utterly ignorant. Women are bold, men bashful. Vice is rewarded. Virtue punished. Judges administer injustice. Dishonesty is rewarded. Cowards are honoured, brave men elbowed aside. Therefore the most ignorant, the most vicious, the most lazy man is made Ruler. Women hate their husbands. [a truly Gilbertian inversion]. . . . Thieves are employed to arrest honest men.

‘ How can this idea be best exploited ? The scene may be laid in the Barbarous Islands in the Kingdom of Topsy-turvydom.’

The play (or opera) was evidently intended as a gentle satire on British self-complacency, and British institutions, which later found expression in less incisive form in *Utopia Limited*, or the *Flowers of Progress*. The House of Commons was to be singled out for target of Gilbert’s wit, just as in *Iolanthe* it was to be the House of Lords. The central figure of the play is John Swivel, Esq., M.P., who has just been returned for his Borough :



‘He is enthusiastic at the good he proposes to effect. He is a member of the most enlightened assembly in the world, a perfect epitome of the opinion and wishes of the Nation.’

In the sketch for Scene 1, the Spirit of Parliament appears to him in his library, ‘is delighted to hear that one member at least is actuated by independent motives,’ and, when Swivel protests that his sole motive is to benefit his Country, and asks how that may best be done, the Spirit suggests a visit to the land ‘where everything is conducted on precisely opposite political and social principles.’ Swivel readily assents, and asks if he may take his wife :

‘SPIRIT. Certainly. I should tell you that in that country you will have to walk on the ceiling with your head towards the floor.

SWIVEL. Oh!—Then I don’t think I’ll take my wife.’

He asks for further information about the place—‘Spirit, in patter song, describes Topsy-turvydom. Scene changes. Scene 2. Topsy-turvydom. Everything topsy-turvy.’ Here the MS. ends abruptly, and it is necessary to revert to the ‘Ideas’ to discover what sort of people the Topsy-turvyites might be—their manners and customs. Gilbert tells us. In a projected Court scene :

‘The Prime Minister—a most popular man—enters with top and hoop. He is received with hoots and groans, this being the topsy-turvy method of expressing applause. M.P. enquires why he is hooted in this way. Mentor explains that it is because he is so popular. He was raised to his present office because he is so unfit for it. Why raise him to an office for which he is obviously unfitted? Why? because this is topsy-turvydom. “Well,” says M.P., “I never heard anything like it before.” “No,” says Mentor, “you wouldn’t be likely to—in England.”

‘M.P. must go through certain adventures involving an encounter with such typical Topsy-turvyites as will best help the satire. So he gets involved in a breach of promise action, having taken a great fancy to a pretty woman, while alleged to be engaged “to another ugly one to whom he takes a great dislike.” The father of the ugly one (the Prime Minister) says he has noticed that M.P. has taken a great dislike to his daughter. . . . M.P. admits it. “You don’t admire her at all.” M.P. says, “Not at all.” “Then I am authorised to say that she has taken just such a detestation to you.” M.P. is wholly indifferent. “Then take her and be

unhappy! Eh! You hate her. She hates you. Marry and be wretched. It is the law of the land. Never!"'

Action for breach follows. 'M.P. is found to be sane, and is sentenced to be detained during the Royal displeasure.' M.P. appeals to Parliament, and asks where it is sitting. Mentor replies, 'Oh, all over the place.'

'SWIVEL. What do you mean?

MENTOR. What I say. Some are shooting—some fishing—some abroad—some yachting. You can appeal to them if you like.

SWIVEL. But don't they ever meet?

MENTOR. Well—now and then when there's no more fishing, or shooting, or yachting. How can a country require any laws during the fishing, shooting, and yachting season?

SWIVEL (*turns round to his Mentor*). I thought this was Topsy-turvydom. Why, I don't see much difference between this place and my own happy country.'

The idea is worked out with some elaboration at the end of *Utopia Limited*, where Utopia has been so effectively reconstructed and re-modelled after English institutions—so 'swamped by dull Prosperity'—that the islanders demand that the reformers, the Flowers of Progress

'Be sent about their business, and affairs  
Restored to their original complexion.'

Zara, the King's daughter, prompted by Sir Bailey Barre, declares that the most essential element of all—Government by Party—has been forgotten.

'No political measures will endure, because one party will assuredly undo all the other party has done, and while grouse is to be shot, and foxes worried to death, the legislative action of the country will be at a standstill. Then there will be sickness in plenty, endless lawsuits, crowded jails, interminable confusion in the Army and Navy, and, in short, general and unexampled prosperity.'

Utopia is delighted, and Gilbert, who was no politician, and once refused to vote for a candidate because his features on the canvassing card did not please him, certainly spoke his mind fearlessly, though in Topsy-turvydom. He himself could not endure to take life even in sport.



As a foil to the ignorant, childish, popular Premier of Topsy-turvydom :

‘There must be a Court Fool—a particularly clever philosopher—whom all despise. He is described as a very melancholy case. He was born without any knowledge at all, and he has gone on gradually improving himself until he has become the best-informed and most intellectual man in the kingdom.’

When Swivel eventually decides to return home, the jester

‘proposes to accompany him, for he has been told that learning is highly honoured there. M.P. tells him, on second thoughts he don’t know that he will be any better off in England.’

Space precludes further quotation ; but it may be regretted that the scheme was not carried to its logical-illogical conclusion, and the intended work completed. When these ‘Ideas’ were evolved Gilbert had yet to make good his claim as *the* librettist of first rank—a rank which once attained he was to maintain unchallenged for the rest of his life, and thereafter.

There is hardly one, however, of the ‘Ideas’ which was not destined to be used and expanded in his intellectual kingdom of topsy-turvydom ; and, it may be, he himself felt they were better distributed over a number of libretti than concentrated in one brilliant masterpiece.

A discussion of the genesis of the Gilbertian Idea would hardly be complete without some acknowledgment of Gilbert’s hereditary debt to his father, William Gilbert. It would be pressing his claim far to suggest that W. S. Gilbert owed more than the smallest part of his artistic equipment to his parent. In temperament the two men had much in common ; they often surveyed the literary horizon eye to eye. The son could illustrate the father’s work—*King George’s Middy*, and *The Magic Mirror*—with perfect sympathy ; just as later the father of Mr. Rudyard Kipling embellished his son’s word-pictures of India in a spirit wonderfully in accord with that of ‘*Kim*.’ The Gilberts were both artists, both of original minds and of kindred sensibility. But, whereas the father followed more or less the old conventional ways, the son struck out into paths of his own finding and adventure, cheered though not directed by the warm encouragement of the elder.

The times were ripe for his satire of our insular complacency ; the social atmosphere was congenial to his wit ; though at least

we had some excuse for self-satisfaction in the easy-going 'seventies' and early 'eighties' when 'Britain really ruled the waves' with a phantom fleet, when autumn sessions were few and far between, and income-tax was 2*d.* in the pound. The savage methods of a previous generation of ink-slingers were out of date; the gods appeared little inclined to make of our pleasant national vices instruments to plague us. John Bull's blissful outlook of superiority offered Gilbert just the objective he required for his gentlemanly arrows. 'His foe was folly, and his weapon wit.' He derided pretence, and made enemies only of the pretentious who, to change the metaphor, fitted such fools-caps as he fashioned upon their own precious heads. He presented society with the picture of a logical topsy-turvy world in contrast to its own illogically ordered system, and the medium employed appealed to it. Like the Athenians of the golden age, when an Aristophanes arrives to hold our foibles and follies up to ridicule, we are ready to applaud and laugh with the satirist, though we ourselves compose the material of his satire.

Gilbert invented this new medium for the exposition of his philosophy. The world laughed at itself as it laughed with him, and will continue to do so, as long as the Savoy operas remain to charm our ears and captivate our senses.



## BOOK - NOTES

MR. ARTHUR KEYSER has lived a life of exceptionally varied experiences, and in his book, *PEOPLE AND PLACES*, he allows us to share his memories. Beginning with "society" in London in the early 'eighties, he takes us to



MR. ROSS'S COMPOUND,  
CHRISTMAS ISLAND

Australia, Fiji, and New Guinea, before settling down to the serious business of administration in the Malay Peninsula, Borneo, and Somaliland. His sympathy with the people among whom he worked is obvious, and he earned and evidently enjoyed their confidence in return. This volume includes many good stories of people of all grades from the ex-Kaiser and great ladies of a bygone generation to the naked inhabitants of Fiji and the Malay Archipelago.

IT is interesting to note that Mr. Solomon J. Solomon, R.A., has recently painted a portrait of Viscount Lascelles. It will be remembered that he is the author and illustrator combined of *STRATEGIC CAMOUFLAGE*, in which he applies the principles of Art to the science of War.

IN his latest work, *HARMONISM AND CONSCIOUS EVOLUTION*, Sir Charles Walston follows an original line of thought. The first part of the book is devoted to the definition and explanation of philosophical terms and a general description of æsthetics, which—using the word in its wider sense—he finds to be the basis of all human conception. He proceeds to discuss the Harmonistic Principle, which he avers should be substituted for the æsthetic principle, and enlists the support of Biology, Physiology, and Psychics. A chapter entitled the "Arts of Meaning" is one of the most interesting in the book, and includes Sculpture, Painting, Lyrical Poetry, Drama, and Music.

THE CHURCH IN MADRAS, Vol. III.—1835-1860—by the Rev. Frank Penny, completes the story of the East India Company's affairs in the Presidency of Madras, by bringing it to the period when the Company surrendered its responsibilities to the Government of the Queen. It has been compiled from the Company's documents and from other public and private records which have not been drawn upon

before. The result as published in the three volumes challenges a complete change of opinion as to the ecclesiastical policy and action of the Company.

**A** RETURN to pre-war quality. Mr. Murray's Blue Fiction Library will shortly include the whole series of Henry Seton Merriman's novels, together with those of Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, Mr. Horace A. Vachell, Mrs. Kathleen Norris, Mrs. Allen Harker, Mr. Eden Phillpotts, and other popular writers.

**T**HE outstanding feature of Mrs. Gene Stratton-Porter's book, *FRIENDS IN FEATHERS*, is the delightfully intimate illustrations of bird life it provides. The photographic studies—no less than 130 in number—are character studies of native American birds in all stages of their lives from the time they emerge from the shell, until, fully fledged, they are ready for migration. A prominent nature lover and editor once said to Mrs. Porter: "That is not a woman's work," to which she retorted, "A human mother is best prepared to understand and deal with a bird mother." Perhaps this suggests the reason of her wonderful success.

**W**ITH the coming of the motor-car and cycle the charm and seclusion of remote England has nearly departed, and, because of the many intruders, the old kindly hospitality is rapidly vanishing. In writing *MY MOORLAND PATIENTS*, "A Yorkshire Doctor" explains that it is in response to the insistent demand of friends that he should place on permanent record tales he has told them of the moorland folk, with whose ways and speech his many years of practice on the Yorkshire moors have made him so familiar.

**T**HE PRIVATE DIARIES OF THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE have a history attached to them. Mrs. Smyth Windham,



THE EMPRESS MARIE LOUISE

grandmother of Lady Thompson—the owner of these diaries—became acquainted in 1836 with a Swiss governess, from whom she purchased these memoirs. All the governess knew of their history was that her brother, Monsieur Müller, was tutor to one of the Empress's pages-in-waiting when she escaped from the Tuileries. He picked up the Diaries from the floor, and gave them to his tutor some time afterwards. Their publication will throw a new light on the observant character of Marie Louise, and the diary of her honeymoon to the low countries is full of amusing incidents.

**A** THIRD EDITION of Sir Sidney Lee's expanded *LIFE OF SHAKESPEARE*, first published in 1915, is to appear shortly. Sir Sidney has brought his text up to date, and contributes a new preface in which he describes recent phases of Shakespeare's vogue and examines the results of the latest researches.



**T**HE scene of *DORMANT FIRES*, by Gertrude Atherton, is set for the most part in the San Francisco of the 'sixties. The heroine, Madeleine, is a flower of the proudest and most refined American aristocracy; but when curbed and somewhat crushed by the very restricted atmosphere of her home life, she meets an artist in letters and love comes, she follows the great impulse to the depths. The theme is well suited to Mrs. Atherton, who works it to the happy ending with a delicacy and charm of outstanding quality.

**F**ROM the pen of another American author, Miss Ellen Glasgow, we are to get a new novel, *ONE MAN IN HIS TIME*. The scene of this love story is, however, 3,000 miles nearer home. It is in Virginia, where lies the real seat of the proud American aristocracy. In her own charming manner Miss Glasgow shows that the War and the thing called Progress have penetrated even into this old-world State, and so we see the characters swayed alternately by the blustering forces recently let loose and the courtly influence which made the old times fragrant.

**W**HEN Mr. Stanley Weyman's novel, *THE GREAT HOUSE*, was first published after a silence of nearly twelve years, a reviewer in the *Daily Mail* said: "I really think it is the best of his many good stories. . . . It is rare for a writer to give up writing, and then to produce a work so fresh and vigorous." A cheaper edition of this fine novel of the fight over the Corn Laws is to be published by Mr. Murray shortly.

**U**LSTER'S STAND FOR THE UNION, by Mr. Ronald McNeill, M.P., is a history of the political struggle against Home

Rule, led by Sir Edward Carson in Ulster, from the passing of the Parliament Act to the opening of the first Ulster Parliament by the



SIR EDWARD CARSON

King in 1921. The book discloses secrets that should cause surprise in some quarters.

**A** FURTHER REPRINT has been called for of the late Sir Arthur Wollaston's *COMPLETE ENGLISH-PERSIAN DICTIONARY*. Sir Arthur spent many years in research and in collecting from newspapers and modern works as many terms as within reasonable time might be possible; and enjoyed the assistance in his work of Mirza Baker, a native translator of great knowledge. The work is an established monument to a man whose passing is mourned by many friends.

**I**N addition to the customary instalment of *OVINGTON'S BANK*, by Stanley J. Weyman, *THE CORNHILL* for May will contain an article on *HISTORY AND FICTION*, being the Sidgwick Lecture delivered at Cambridge, by G. M. Trevelyan, showing both why certain historical novelists succeed or fail, and

how fiction can make the past live, but does not make the facts live, which is the task of history. At the same time the creative imagination in literature provides all the colour and variety of life which, neglected by the older historians such as Gibbon, provide a new sphere for modern historians.

**IN MRS. GAMP AND THE KING'S ENGLISH** Prof. Ernest Weekley, by means of amusing and instructive parallels, illustrates the fact that Mrs. Gamp's favourite idioms and pronunciations were current in the everyday language of high-bred ladies early in the eighteenth century, and sustains the paradox that "standard English" rather than dialect is "corrupt English."

**JOEY JOANNE** is the true story of a pet swallow which fell from its nest and was brought up by hand. It was entirely tame and fearless, and, when set free, used to return at nights to its human friends, until it departed with its migrating fellows. Next year it did not return; only report came of a swallow having shown great tameness during migration. Can it be that its friendliness with man betrayed it to its undoing?

Sir Ian Malcolm, K.C.B., contributes another of his **PARIS CAUSERIES**, reflecting for English eyes the lights and shades of social life in the French capital, from a story of M. Briand to the tardy satisfaction of Voltaire's wish that France should honour Molière as England honoured Shakespeare.

**THE** purpose of the *Quarterly Review* is to study present events in the light of recorded experience; and, therefore, in its pages the past, the interesting present and the hopeful future are to be met in due relation. The April number will be found to fulfil this

principle. Among the articles will be a review of the recent **LIFE OF LORD RIPON**, with some personal reminiscences added by Viscount Esher; critical appreciations of the careers and personalities of the late Marquess of Salisbury and Viscount Bryce; the question of Egypt, the problems of Modern Industry and of Agriculture, separately dealt with; the Navy at the time of Napoleon and during the recent War; the Letters of Byron as revealed in Mr. Murray's recent edition—these and other interests are authoritatively treated in a Review which at once is able to speak with the authority of a hundred years, and yet is alert to the causes, conditions, movements, aspirations, of these hurrying, wonderful times.

**A** **THIRD EDITION** of **THE ROMANCE OF NAMES**, by Professor Ernest Weekley, M.A., is shortly to appear from the House of Murray. In this work the author applies the methods of modern philological research to the curious and often romantic history of surnames. That things are not always what they seem is shown by the fact that *Best* is for "beast" and *Black* sometimes means "white." Hundreds of names will be found to be derived from obsolete callings or from words familiar to Chaucer, but now either quite dead or struggling feebly in rural dialects.

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*These books are published by MR. MURRAY, and may be obtained from any bookseller. Mr. Murray will be glad to send his QUARTERLY LIST OF NEW BOOKS to any reader of THE CORNHILL MAGAZINE on request being made to him at 50A Albemarle Street, London, W. 1.*



## MR. MURRAY'S NEW BOOKS

### EDMOND WARRE, D.D.

Sometime Headmaster and Provost of Eton College. By C. R. L. FLETCHER, M.A. "He will go down to posterity as one of the greatest headmasters of all times. . . . A very vivid impression of the personality and the fine character of a man who, with Arnold, Thring, and Butler, perhaps did more towards the forming of English character at one end of the social scale during the last century than anybody else."—*Westminster Gazette*. Illustrated. **21s. net.**

### SOME REVOLUTIONS AND OTHER DIPLOMATIC EXPERIENCES

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