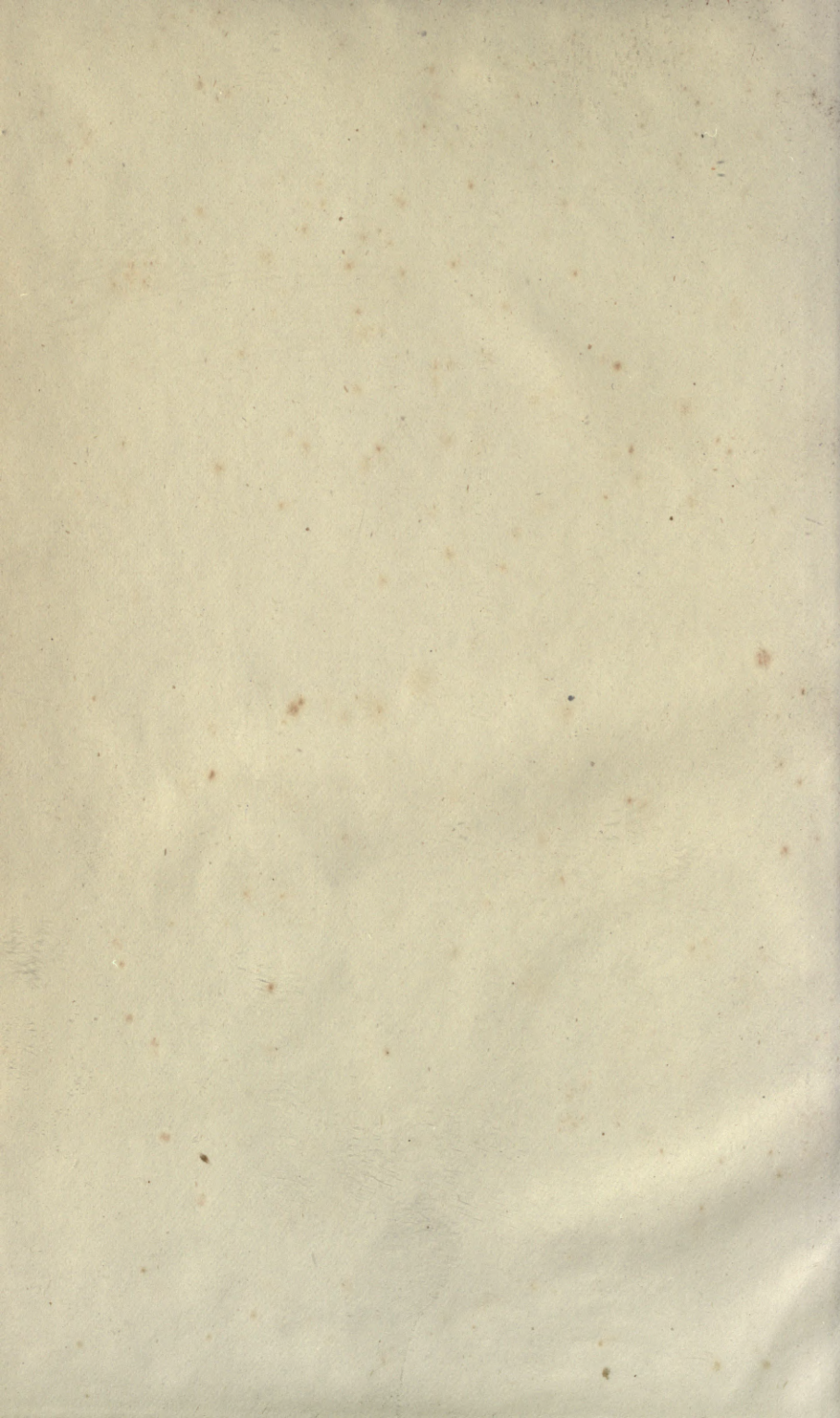
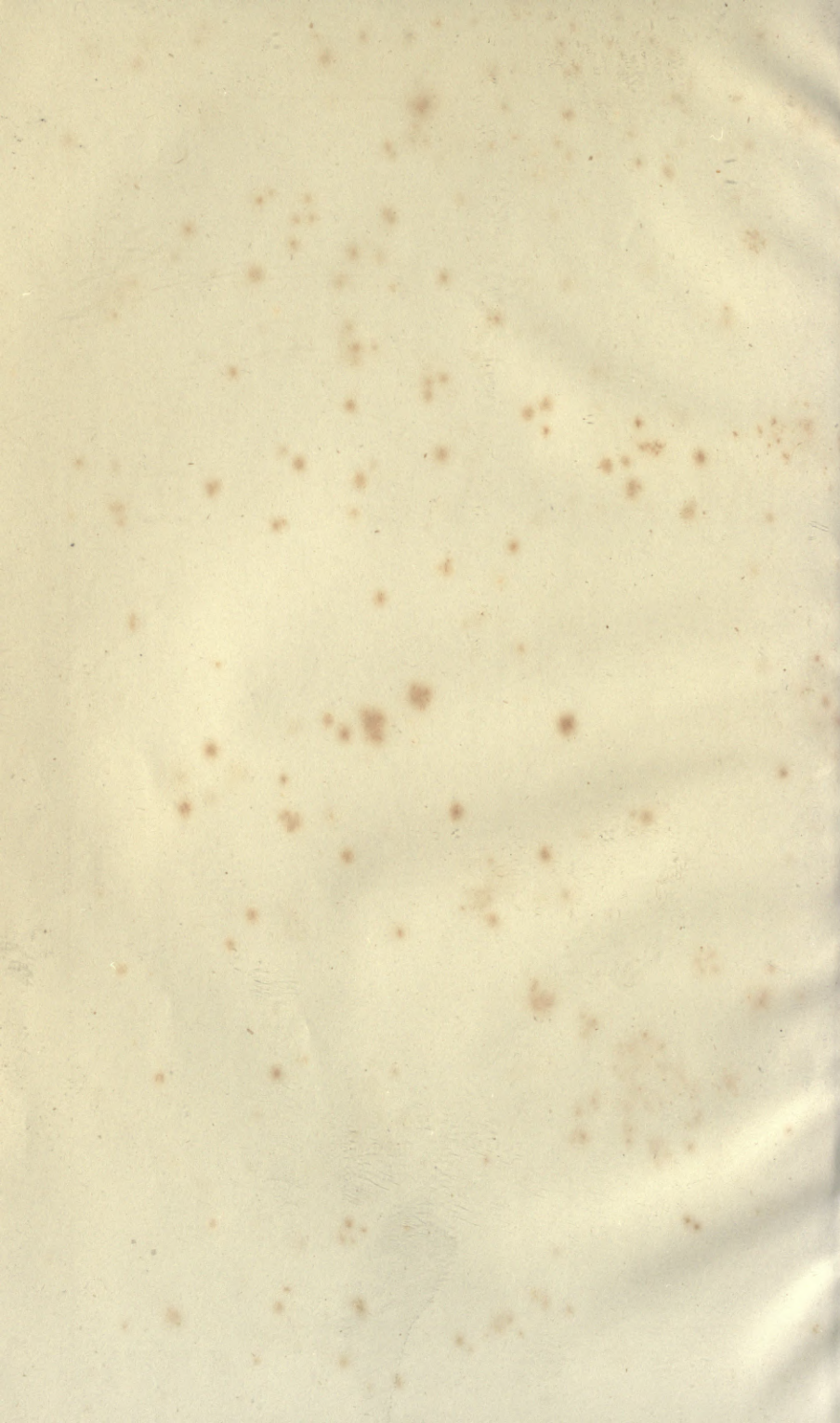


Mary Keen.



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NEW SERIES

VOL. XI.

JULY to DECEMBER 1888

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THE
CORNHILL MAGAZINE.

JULY 1888.

A DAY OF MY LIFE IN CHAMBERS.

BY A BRIEFLESS BARRISTER.

FICTION, in her theatrical wardrobe, has two changes of raiment, in one or other of which she invariably arrays the briefless barrister to present him to the public. If he will not be a bright butterfly fluttering in the sunshine of Mayfair, briefless but happy, he must make up as the broken-down old man with bowed shoulders and frayed shirt-cuffs, whose opportunity never came, or came and was missed. These two are the only conceptions which Fiction, in her poor old conventional way, can form of the great class to which I belong; but I repudiate them both, and why? I am no creature of Fiction's fancy, but a real living thing with a wig and gown and bands, and a certain capacity, if not opportunity, for hard work.

And so it comes to pass that day by day I go down to my chambers, and sit there from ten o'clock till six—that is to say, if I do not leave earlier. Now sitting is an excellent position, and altogether desirable if you have been standing, say, for three hours in the pit of a theatre; but sitting pure and simple, without even the consolation which cheers the barn-door fowl, that something will come of it, is very hard work.

Not but what I am rather proud of belonging to the profession. It is nice to be able to give out that you're 'at the Bar,' if you do it with discretion. To young ladies (without brothers) and elderly squires you may say it in a tone of voice that suggests intimacy with the Attorney and Solicitor General, and a nodding acquaintance generally with all the Judges on the Bench, and

this creates an impression; but, to the world that knows, you use a deprecating accent, accompanied by a slight shrug of the shoulders, as if to disarm suspicion that you are conceited enough to think that you can get on. Mothers, when they speak of you in the early days of your career, generally adopt the first manner, as mine did on a particular occasion to a gentleman of her acquaintance, who answered, 'Ah well, he can always be sure of two hundred and fifty a year at that.' My mother was delighted, and eagerly asked for the recipe. 'By giving it up,' was the reply, and since then she has moderated her tone.

But to return. It is not without a certain sense of importance that I enter my chambers of a morning and inquire of my clerk (a boy of fourteen summers, who will recur, as we say of decimals) if there are any letters or papers for me. Three circulars are on my table, and the 'Law Reports' have arrived—two paper volumes arrayed in distinctive colours, one of them in a blue cover, the other looking as if it had been dipped in gooseberry fool or æsthetic wall-paint. The 'Law Reports,' to a barrister, are the next best thing to a brief. He can con them over, mark them with a blue pencil, write references in the margin, and otherwise make pretence to be bringing his mind to bear on a question of law. This little imposition is immensely helped by frowning the brows, and pursing up the mouth till the lips are eliminated and the corners turned down, and the whole feature made to resemble, as much as possible, a well-marked-out bowling crease. This occupation lasts for about an hour, and then it begins to pall. I rise and go to the window. Now, if my professional outlook is a poor one, it will bear no comparison with the outlook from my windows, which is dismal. On the left-hand side is a wall—a steep ugly wall of new brick, unrelieved by any window whatsoever. It is the back wall of a huge new building which towers above my tenement (and makes my chimney smoke, by the way). Why it should have no windows is not apparent; perhaps my landlord has a right to ancient lights, which condemns them to latter-day darkness; architecturally and socially, it would be preferable that it should have windows. On the other side is much the same thing, but lower, so that the eye is met by more roof and less wall. In front is much the same thing again, but varied by more windows. On the roof two men are engaged in putting up a pole, presumably to carry telegraph wires. Their principal business seems to be to shout to a third man on the

ground ; he shouts back again, and they shake their heads ; then he rails in his mouth with his hands, and screams ; the men on the roof, by pantomimic gestures, convey to him that they still do not hear ; so the third man, after two more vain attempts, by which he succeeds in disturbing everybody within hearing who wishes to be quiet, suddenly conceives the exceedingly cunning plan of going a few steps up the ladder and so getting within earshot.

The space enclosed between these walls is a rectangular yard, about the size of three or four lawn-tennis courts. It was once turfed, but the huge building on the left, already alluded to, as it rose and rose buried the little oasis with bricks and rubble, as Mount Vesuvius, when it erupts, smothers the country at its base with lava. Distance—a considerable distance—would lend enchantment to this view.

Turning from the window, I sit down to write a poem for a magazine that shall be entitled ‘A Barrister’s Outlook.’ I have no claim, it is true, to be considered a poet, or even a stringer together of words that rhyme—anyone will tell you that—but barristers are supposed to be literary, especially the briefless ones. Their sisters say to friends, ‘Oh no, Charlie has not had any briefs *yet* ; he writes for the papers.’ They never specify what papers. Perhaps Charlie does not tell them. If solicitors refuse to tap us, then the good wine of our understanding must run off at the spigot of authorship, as George Eliot puts it. But hark ! A knock at the outer door. Can it be a client ? ‘A Barrister’s Outlook’ disappears into the waste-paper basket—shall we say, not for the last time ?—and the ‘Law Reports’ are in hasty requisition. The boy of fourteen knocks at the door, and ushers in an elderly gentleman, carrying a black bag. His appearance is more that of a Nonconforming cleric than of a solicitor. His trousers are black, his coat has been so. His neck, the spot to which the eye in such cases naturally turns for information, affords none ; what might be a stock may equally well be a collar half-hidden by the coat, but the black bag is reassuring. He will not take a seat, but, placing the bag upon the table, pulls out a black linen case, constructed after the fashion of an envelope with a flap falling over ; the inside is divided by a partition like a two-stall stable, and contains in either stall a volume in claret cloth with red edges. ‘A little book of my own,’ he explains ; ‘my own idea. The principle you will understand at once—it is very simple. “Correlative Coincidences” I call it—Shakespeare anno-

tated. You will observe that wherever, in the brains of another author, I have been able to trace the same rivulet of thought as rippled through the mind of our greatest of bards, I have placed the quotation below, in the form of illustration, comment, or rider. Thus, to the celebrated lines in "Richard the Third"—

"My conscience hath a thousand several tongues,
And every tongue brings in a several tale,
And every tale condemns me for a villain—"

you will see appended a—commentary, shall we call it? from the Scripture—

"The tongue can no man tame: *it is an unruly evil.*"

If the other quotations are all as apposite as this, the work must be one of great value. I tell him this gravely; he is immensely pleased. These, it appears, are the last two volumes of the series. Shall he say the whole series for me at five-and-twenty shillings, or these two volumes at ten? It had been good for me if that unfortunate remark about the appositeness had never been born; he thinks I meant it. This is what comes of trying to be sarcastic. It would never do to tell him now that it was only my fun. Think how flat it would sound; besides, he might abuse me. No, he has me fairly hooked, and the only hope of escape is to—wriggle off. I am trying to explain that my Shakespeare is already annotated with parallel passages collected by myself from my own reading, but the little man will not let me have my say. Knowing by experience that if you would land your fish you must not give him breathing time, he dashes in again, confident that the book is exactly what I want, and not admitting the possibility of a doubt that I shall take it. I do. It has not been successfully wriggled by me, and he has me safe in the landing-net. Shamefacedly my fingers steal to the pocket of my waistcoat and arrest half-a-sovereign on what they know to be a false pretence, and hand it over to the custody of the little man, who presently bows himself out backwards, the ill-omened black bag being the last thing to disappear. Then, when I am in full flow of cursing my weakness—my abject, miserable weakness—he pops in his head again to say that he is not quite sure whether he had sufficiently pressed upon my notice the other volumes, and this in the tone of a host apologising to his guest for not having asked him if he would take another glass of sherry before joining the ladies. Absolutely distrusting my powers of resistance, I make a dash for my hat, and only by wild assertions of being already late for an

important engagement do I get him out of the room, when I replace my hat upon its peg and sink back exhausted into a chair.

My clerk—I like to call him my clerk, the term reflects importance upon myself—is, as I have already said, a boy of some fourteen years of age, who has been turned out by the School Board presumably fit to do such light work as is involved in the correct spelling of words of two syllables, and the solving of arithmetical problems that postulate an acquaintance with multiplication and division. He sits alone in a little antechamber at the receipt of custom, or rather, to put it correctly, where custom should be received, and his duty is to usher clients to my presence. This does not employ all his time, and the intervals he spends in producing strange noises with his tongue, like the opening of ginger-beer bottles, or in playing a species of fives with an indiarubber ball, a game which is so far unlike the month of March that it comes in like a lamb and goes out like a lion. At first you can barely detect it; the ball itself seems aware that this is a stolen indulgence, and falls delicately, fearful of being returned to the second-class society of a broken knife, a clammy bull's-eye, and sundry pieces of string in the pocket of its lord and master's inexpressibles; but anon the excitement of the thing carries away both player and playee (forgive the legal termination), there is a scramble, a sound of staggering footfalls trying to recover, and down falls either a chair or an ink bottle, or my clerk himself, if not all three; and then I go out like a lion too—— It has been done; order is restored for the nonce, and wise words have fallen once more upon unfruitful soil. I think he regards me with a kind of contempt. He ought to be in a position to swagger to other clerks of 'our clients,' as one coachman will to another of 'our 'osses,' and my having no clients humbles him among his fellows, as the coachman is humbled whose master only 'drives single.'

I had ideas once, large-hearted, philanthropic ideas, of a system of education, of winning a young clerk's heart, and binding him to me for life by golden chains of gratitude. The whole thing lay mapped out before me; my pupil was to take an intelligent interest in his work, the interest shortly developing into an insatiable appetite; there were to be difficulties at first, difficulties which should thaw, melt, and finally disappear in an atmosphere of patient kindness, and these happily removed, education was to—

well, was to stride like a giant refreshed with wine. I cannot, at this moment, be quite sure where I got the notion from, whether it was from a Sunday-school story book, or from one of the Universities' settlements in the East End of London; all I know is that I could never get it to work, nor my clerk either for that matter. 'Appleboy,' I say (he is called by his surname to give him self-reliance), 'Appleboy, bring me your sum-book.' He brings it resentfully, a small paper book, purporting to be arranged for Standard V. It is clear he wishes me to understand that barristers' clerks are not schoolboys. I turn over the leaves and find that we are due to begin Practice. How you do Practice I have not the vaguest remembrance; at least it is going too far to say not the vaguest, for in some undisturbed pigeon-hole of my brain there is the dusty remembrance of a schoolroom, and a slate, and three parallel straight lines drawn with a ruler; the ruler, if I remember right, had other functions besides drawing lines (on the slate that is); and then a very laborious method of producing a result which might have been arrived at much quicker by short cuts instead of parallel straight lines. However that may be, the straight lines are now my sheet-anchor. Never mind what you do with them, if they are there, the sum must be Practice, the only question being how to use them. Find the value of forty-seven pigs at seven pounds, nine shillings, and elevenpence halfpenny. 'You see,' I explain, 'you put the forty-seven pigs at the head of the columns' (this sounds like a military operation with the commissariat in the van), 'then you multiply them by seven, and by nine, and by five and a half, and add it all up; you understand?' He says he does, evidently with a view of getting back to his fives, and retires with orders to be diligent, and a short homily on the advantages of learning arithmetic as a step to rising in the world.

Ten minutes of comparative calm, spent on my part in the adding of two more lines to the 'Barrister's Outlook;' two lines is a perceptible increase, gladdening to the heart of a young poet, but the easy flow of inspiration is brought up short by an obstacle in midstream, and, like the course of true love, no longer runs smooth for want of a suitable word to rhyme to 'patience.' I go doggedly through the alphabet, thus: atience, batiencie, catience; if only there is a word it shall work in somehow;—yatience, zatience; there is no word, and the progress of a great poem is at a standstill. As for destroying a line once happily brought forth after much travail, do not suggest such a thing.

And then I fall to speculating whether it may be that the real poets are ever reduced to this extremity. Imagine the Laureate running up the scale of the alphabet, checking off the letters on his fingers, to find a word that will rhyme, and then pressing it into the service neck and crop; only that when Laureates find it difficult to suit themselves, they can dispense with rhyming altogether, and leave it to the particular society which worships them, whether at Girton, Somerville Hall, or elsewhere, to point out such little eccentricities as the peculiar beauty of their style; but your fledgling fetish is worshipped by no dervishes. Truly the path of genius is hard, and stony withal to the feet of those that climb.

My soliloquy, having reached this point, is interrupted by the fall of something heavy in the antechamber, and then, almost before the sound has died away, the door opens, and Master Appleboy appears, holding his sum-book in one hand and his exercise-book in the other. He has evidently thought it a strategical move to assail me first, and divert attention while the ink, which he has probably upset, burrows away out of sight into the carpet; that article of furniture, once red, resembles nothing so much now as a huge blotting-pad. He hands me the exercise-book and remarks that he doesn't know how to go on; he has put the pigs down as I told him, but doesn't know what to do next; that picture of a pig in the right-hand bottom corner was designed to assist his imagination. I put my pencil ruthlessly through the portrait, and reverting to the forty-seven arithmetical pigs, ask, 'What is the next thing to be done?' 'Reduce them to ha'pence,' he suggests. 'Reduce what to ha'pence?' 'The pigs.' His expression is one of density, flavoured with a kind of furtive impudence. 'Yes'—this is very sarcastic—'and how do you reduce pigs to ha'pence?' He looks puzzled for a minute, and then suggests selling them. 'Go and do it, then!' I shout, and he leaves the room not one whit abashed, to resume the occupation of playing fives or cutting holes with his pocket-knife in anything that comes handiest. So much for my philanthropic ideas, and the progress of education like a giant refreshed with wine. The giant has had too much wine, and his movements are of the circular or rotatory order, which do not advance.

Another knock! Delightful sound, pregnant with possibilities. Once more the waste-paper basket is in requisition; the 'Law Reports' are not instantly visible, but the 'Chronological Index to

the Statutes' will do just as well, and flies open at the heading 'Benefice—Simoniacal Presentation.'

I hear my name pitched in an interrogative key, and feel strongly moved to cry out, 'Yes, all right, I'm here,' but fortunately remember that my cue is to be absorbed in 'Simoniacal Presentation.' Down goes my head into the book, the door opens, an expression of abstraction steals over my features as I raise my eyes to welcome a solicitor. A pretty piece of acting, quite an artistic study, but thrown away. It is not a solicitor. You knew that all along, you say. Yes, gentle reader, but then you are not a briefless barrister, building castles in the air: your heart does not throb at a knock on the door, unless, indeed, you suffer from heart disease or an uneasy conscience, which I cannot suppose.

Not a solicitor: what then?

A man of seedy appearance, who, if not an omnibus conductor, which he mostly resembles, may possibly have been turned out by Nature as a cheap specimen of a travelling tinker, a greasy man with a shifty cunning eye, and a manner the obsequiousness of which is only one degree removed from impertinence, equally prepared to cringe or to bully, as circumstances might direct. He hopes he is not disturbing me, but has taken the liberty of stepping up just to bring to my notice his famous polish, a bottle of which he produces, and which he thinks he may say, without fear of contradiction, will bear comparison with—I interrupt here to ask him what on earth he supposes I want with polish. He disclaims hastily any notion of having suggested that I should *buy* his polish: from his tone you might gather that my chambers were a sort of international exhibition, and he a gold medal exhibitor. A pause, and then he murmurs, as if to himself, something about its being splendid for furniture. Your impostor with something to sell never begins by asking you to buy in so many words; he merely wishes to show you the article as a personal friend, because he knows you will appreciate it; then, if you show your appreciation by wishing him good-morning, he begins to feel sure that only an immediate purchase will save you from the misery of a lifelong regret.

I tell him that I don't clean my own furniture, I pay an old lady downstairs to do that, and he had better interview her upon the subject. The idea of the old lady downstairs seems distasteful to him, and he does not budge, but, keeping his eyes well on the ground, is attracted apparently by my Day and Martin. 'It's

wonderful stuff for boots,' he says in a tone of mingled soliloquy and command. I mention the fact that I don't clean my own boots either. Then ensues another pause, in which he says nothing, and seems to be taking root in the carpet. I am comparing him to the importunate widow, and wishing that I were an unjust judge, in which case he would most certainly be committed for contempt or abuse of the process of the court. His eyes have strayed to the bookcase. 'That 'd take a beautiful polish,' he says, 'a bee-ootiful polish,' he repeats, stroking his dirty hand down a mahogany pillar, 'you'd be surprised.' And, without waiting for permission, draws a very filthy rag from his pocket and breathes on the wood by way of preliminary. It does not affect him that I take no notice, and pretend to be engrossed in 'Simoniacal Presentation.' His breathing is very audible as he prepares the way for more polish; if I were the books I should object. It is very annoying, this, to have your room taken possession of by a dirty vagrant with a polish, who refuses to go; I should not wonder if he offered to anoint my head with it next. 'There!' he exclaims, 'I told yer 'ow it'd be. Splendid, ain't it?' I grunt out a sort of sulky acquiescence, whereupon he offers, if I am not satisfied, to do the other too. He has evidently no intention of going now, and the worst of it is that I feel myself at his mercy; he has acquired the right to remain by virtue of uninterrupted possession, and must be bought out. I put sixpence on the corner of the table nearest the door, as you offer a carrot to a jibbing horse to tempt him along the way he should go. He pockets the coin as if he were doing me a favour, but does not go. I point out to him that I am busy. He apologises, and explains that the price of the polish is eighteenpence; its real price is two shillings, but he is willing to make a reduction in my—— 'Hang you and your polish!' I shout, now fairly roused. 'Who, do you suppose, wants your beastly polish? Be off!' And he is off, through the antechamber and down the stairs with a rapidity that is certainly wonderful, and makes me wish I had been sensible enough to raise my voice before.

I console myself by boxing the ears of my clerk for doing nothing, and ask him what on earth he means by letting in any one except solicitors, to which he mutters under his breath, snivelling, that at that rate the door might as well be kept locked right away, so I pretend not to hear what he says. I have come off badly this morning.

All the morning gone. No work done, if you except two lines of a poem, and those not rhyming, and no solicitors interviewed.

‘Seven hours to law,’ writes Sir William Jones, ‘to soothing slumber seven: ten to the world allot——’ Oh, upright judge! oh, learned judge! the world shall have one now. There have been men who have given less than its appointed share to law; nay, during the season, have put slumber too on short commons, but the world is no more to be trifled with than General Picton of famous memory, and the world just now says ‘luncheon.’ Now luncheon as a meal has a position and an individuality peculiarly its own. It is the pocket aneroid of the mental system at mid-day. Coffee, roll, and butter signifies depression; grilled bones and Bass points to a settled calm; between the two lies the chop, and a rise or fall for the afternoon depends in this case very much on the quality of the viand: a good chop will coax a doubtful temper back to reason, a bad one is a very cyclone for disturbing the coasts in the afternoon. In my present condition a chop represents the state of the atmosphere, and it is much to be desired, in the interests of Appleboy, that that chop should be a good one.

Behold me then seated at a small marble table doing battle with sundry plethoric flies that will settle on my head. Flies are a great nuisance; it must be that they have no ambition to be popular in their generation, or they would adopt a less pushing demeanour. Butterflies are so different, they like admiration and flirt with you at a distance, but the bumptious familiarity of the blue-bottle entitles him to be widely disliked. A desperate sortie made with the hope of dislodging the enemy from a position which he has taken up on the bridge of my nose is so far successful as to clear that eminence, but dislodges at the same time the cruet-stand on the table, which falls with a crash to the floor. The mustard-pot vents its feelings upon my trousers in the descent, while the pepper and salt are scattered broadcast. I wish I had let the fly alone; such victories, like Malplaquet, are worse than many defeats.

The waiter hurries up with his napkin. He flicks the pepper and salt right and left along the floor, producing convulsions of sneezing from an old tabby cat which was prowling under the seat in the hope of scraps; then, before I can stop him, dabs the cloth down upon my trousers, and makes the second state of those garments incomparably worse than the first. ‘Thank you,’ I say,

‘that will do, you’ve improved them immensely.’ There must be something wrong with my sarcasms, they never seem to get home, and he answers cheerily that he doesn’t think it will show much *now* (with an emphasis on the ‘now’), and recommends having them washed when I get home. I look him over, wondering vaguely what he knows about washing; his face and hands are very dirty, his shirt front is the colour of an envelope that has been through the post, and his tie may have done duty as a bandage for a wounded finger. His clothes are one mass of stains of all sizes as close together as the islands in the Ægean Sea, while a new yellow splash near the left armpit marks the return of his napkin after fatigue duty on my trousers. There should be a covenant in every lease of restaurants providing for the white-washing and papering of waiters, just as much as for painting the woodwork. If ever I get to the top of my profession I will see to it.

This idea has a mollifying influence which enables me to eat my chop with a better grace than at one time seemed probable, and when my bill is paid, including an item for cruets, Appleboy’s prospects of an intempestuous afternoon have improved considerably, if only the mustard plaister on my nether man does not prove too constant an irritant.

On my return to chambers that young gentleman is sitting awkwardly on a corner of his chair very much out of breath; he explains this by saying that he has just been poking the fire, but a single glance round his office puts it beyond a doubt that my advent has interrupted an exciting game of fives; right hand against left probably, the former conceding two points; at least that, I know, used to be the handicap from a glowing account which he once accidentally left in my room purporting to be a true description of the match for the championship written for the ‘Sporting Life.’ I charge him with it, but he repudiates the suggestion with scorn, and stops further discussion by informing me that the postman has left a packet in my absence—— Yes, there it is, a long white envelope directed to ‘——, Esq., Barrister-at-Law.’ Nothing illegal—I mean to say other than of a legal nature, was ever found in an envelope of that build. Hurrah! a case for opinion perhaps, or a statement of claim to draw, or a brief in a county court. But it will not do to seem too eager, even to myself, it looks so like inexperience, so I draw up my chair to the fire, and sitting down with my legs crossed take up the packet

casually, as if such arrivals were of daily occurrence, but having got so far I can carry out the little deception no longer, and in an instant my anxious fingers have possessed themselves of the contents. The first thing to meet my eye is the main enclosure, with the words 'Draft Copy of Agreement for Lease' endorsed on the back. Capital, so far; a squabble doubtless between landlord and tenant. Which am I for? I wonder. Ah, here's a note:

'DEAR EDWARD' (that doesn't sound like a solicitor),—

'My maid Sarah, who, as perhaps you know, is leaving my service, after being with me for twenty-three years, to take care of her now decrepit father, has just taken the lease of a cottage at Peckham. Would you, like a good boy, run through the copy, which I enclose, and see that they are not cheating her.—Ever your affectionate

'AUNT MATILDA.

'P.S.—Be sure to see that there is a proper understanding about drains. They are so important.'

'Appleboy,' I say, solemnly putting on my hat, 'if anyone calls for me, say I've gone to attend a funeral.'

Who could stop in chambers after that? There is a straw which is not the first, and it breaks the camel's back.

THE DEAN'S SISTER.

THE days on which the Peninsular and Oriental steamships touch at Malta are days of mortification to the ordinary guests at Durnsford's. For a few hours the white corner house with the green shutters is given up to Babel. A crowd of people, fussily important because they are bound to the East or from the East, pour into the hotel, talking loudly in the passages—about Shepheard's or Colombo—and driving into corners the timid residents, to whom yesterday Durnsford's was a home. They engross, these newcomers, the jalousied windows, they monopolise the shady balconies, and standing on these turn up their noses even at Government House. As for the luncheon table, they swoop down upon it like harpies, and drive the waiters crazy. Beppo resigns himself to tears. Angelo, a man of sterner stuff, locks himself into the china closet, and utters dainty oaths in *lingua Franca*.

All this occurs on an average once a week; and as often, the hotel lions, with certain exceptions, become lions couchant and passant. On a certain Friday in last February the storm raged about the house with quite phenomenal fury; and there were two exceptions, and two only. They were the Dean of Dromore and his daughter. It was strange. No one took their places. No one opened the window behind them, or snatched away the dish while their hands hung fateful over the ripest mandarin, or did any of the things to them which drove common people—nay, even Lady Druitt and her niece—to beat an early retreat.

But then the dean was one of a thousand; a man of portly, handsome presence, tall, fresh-coloured, clean-shaven. His manner smacked of Eton, and command. Blue-jackets and marines looked after him in the street, and the former spoke of him as 'that there king.' At the Union Club it was whispered that good judges had taken him for President Grévy, the Cardinal Legate (in *muftibus*), and the Bishop of Gibraltar. It was certain that he had condescended to the Governor, and set the Admiral right on a point of tactics.

Even now, as he sat chatting with an old friend who had come in by the 'Surat,' he had an indulgent smile for the saturnalia

that reigned about him. But he was otherwise unmoved by it. 'And so you are going to India for another spell of duty?' he was saying.

'Yes, it is better than being laid on the shelf,' the colonel replied. 'And you? You are taking life easily, I suppose? How long have you been here?' His eyes strayed as he spoke to someone sitting opposite him.

'How long?' the dean said, noting the direction of the glance with a covert smile. 'A month, more or less. The place suits me. That is my daughter you are looking at, by the way.'

'She is, is she? Then you have an uncommonly pretty daughter!' the old soldier retorted bluntly. 'Much trouble with the subalterns, dean?'

The clergyman laughed softly. 'No, no. Not much. Mary is a good girl—a very good girl.'

'And that is your son talking to her?'

'My son?'—with surprise. 'Oh, dear, no!'

'Ah!' replied the colonel slowly, and with a peculiar intonation, 'not yet?'

The dean shook his head in gentle repudiation of the idea. But his eyes twinkled.

'Who is he?' asked the other.

'He is brigade-major here, a Major Macdonald,—Andrew Macdonald.'

'Ha! A son of Lord Macdonald of Glenmore, is he not? Eldest son?'

'Ye-es,' the dean admitted grudgingly. 'I believe he is the eldest.' And if his friend chose to pat him on the shoulder, and to chuckle somewhat rudely, why he could not help it. For this was no common colonel, but a man with half the alphabet before his name or after it; a man not lightly to be repulsed. Yet, some seeing him, a mean and meagre little creature, pawing the dean, and knowing nothing of all those letters, went away sorrowfully, forced to think that even this lion had not escaped with his dew-claws uncut.

After lunch, the quartette went out to stroll on the Barracca. As they passed along the Strada Reale by the lace and silver shops of the Borgs, many eyes followed Mary Young, and endorsed the gallant colonel's opinion. Her face possessed that shy brightness—not of the eyes alone, for that you may find under many an unsightly Maltese hood—which is the charm of a girl at once

healthy and sensitive. Her clear complexion, perhaps her wavy brown hair, were her father's; but the soft lines of a mouth that seemed ever trembling on the verge of tears or laughter were her own. She wore a sailor's hat, and a tight-fitting, jaunty-tailed jacket, and she carried a stick.

For Major Macdonald, though he twirled his moustache—it was reddish, and his face was freckled—and swaggered a little as he passed the club, he made but a poor show. He had no longer a will of his own, and the men at the club window knew it. He had lost his heart, and Mary knew it. He had nothing to say, and thought himself inexpressibly stupid. He made no resistance even when the dean presently shook him off; but went away to mope alone. But courage, major! Perhaps someone found the gallant veteran's wit and wisdom a poor substitute for your stupidity; and was scarcely sorry when the boat which bore his knightship to his vessel was lost among the score or so that were darting this way and that, like so many green and blue dragon-flies at play on the rippling surface.

The father and daughter stood awhile, looking over the Quarantine Harbour, and debating whether they should pay a certain call at Sliema, the suburb beyond it. They had just decided to do so, when Mary espied Davies, the dean's servant, hurrying towards them. 'What is it?' asked the dean, when the man had come up with them.

'Your sister has arrived, sir!' he replied breathlessly.

The dean looked down at him a moment, a faint expression of amusement on his face; and such was the kindly criticism of his attitude that the painter of his portrait could have wished for no better opportunity. 'I am glad,' he said at last, in measured accents, 'I am glad that you are not given to gossiping, Davies.'

The servant looked astonished, as he well might, and coloured. But he answered, 'Yes, sir,' and touched his hat.

'I say, Davies, I am glad that you are not given to gossiping,' repeated the dean blandly, 'because if you were you would have learned, though you have not been with me long, that I have no sister. And consequently that it is impossible there should be any sister of mine at—the hotel, I think you said.'

'Well, sir, she—I mean there is a lady lunching in your room, sir. I was told to let you know that she had arrived,' the man explained.

'Lunching in our room!' cried Mary, her curiosity aroused.

'Good gracious, papa! do come. It must be someone who knows us very well.'

'If Davies' story be correct,' replied the dean, with ominous meaning, 'it must be someone who knows us *very well*. We will go and do the honours.'

They started on their climb up the narrow Strada San Marco, while the servant, puzzled and chapfallen, toiled slowly up the steep pavement behind them. 'Who can it be?' asked Mary softly.

'My dear,' answered her father with a tinge of asperity, 'how can I tell? And what does it matter? I do not think that we have many friends of whom we have reason to be ashamed.'

Arriving at the hotel they found Angelo awaiting them on the stairs. His southern face was aglow with eagerness to please. 'Your Excellency's sister has descended here, sare,' he cried, effusively rubbing his hands as he prepared to go before them to their sitting-room. 'She was too late for the *table d'hôte*, and the crowd—ah, my eyes! it was tremendous! She takes a chop and tomato sauce in your Excellency's room.'

A chop and tomato-sauce! And in their room! The passage was dusky. The dean's face—perhaps it was better so—could not be seen. And he said nothing. But probably he thought a great deal. Probably he was not altogether unprepared for the sight which met his eyes when Angelo threw open the door. A tall, middle-aged lady, dressed in black, was sitting at the table facing them. Her long black cotton gloves lay by her plate. Her fan and sunshade were also on the white cloth. She looked up nervously, saw them, and rose. There was a smell of gravy in the room.

For all this, we have said, the dean was prepared. But not for what followed—for the intruder's immediate advance with hands outstretched. 'Fergus!' she exclaimed; and then, as he still stood motionless, she repeated piteously, 'Fergus! Surely you will say that you are glad to see me!'

The dean's gaze roving over her took in her full florid cheeks, her beady black eyes, her soaring bonnet; and it must be confessed that he blanched. He fell back a step. 'I think,' he said with stiff politeness, 'that there is some mistake here, madam. My name is Fergus, it is true. But I do not think that I have had the pleasure of seeing you before.'

'Of seeing me before?' she cried. 'Why!' and she lifted her hands in astonishment, 'you do not mean that after all these

years you will not forgive and forget? That you will not let bygones be bygones, even now?’

‘Years! Bygones!’ the dean repeated incredulously, puzzled and confounded, if his manner might be trusted. ‘I assure you most seriously that I do not understand you, my dear lady. To the best of my knowledge we have never met. Pray tell me for whom you take me.’

‘For my brother, Fergus Young—for the Dean of Dromore, of course,’ she replied so positively that Mary was startled. ‘And so that is my niece? Mary, dear girl, you will speak to me? But there, you never knew your Aunt Alice.’

The dean’s face grew suddenly purple. ‘The woman is mad!’ he gasped. ‘Stark, staring mad! She says she is my sister. I have no sister.’

‘You had one, and I am that one!’

‘I had one, and she died years ago!’ he answered, not as speaking to her, but to the room.

‘Died? To you, you mean,’ the woman replied with a grating laugh. ‘Come, get off your high horse, Fergus. That is all over twenty years ago. Do not disown me now.’

‘Disown you, woman!’ the dean cried passionately—he was by nature a choleric man, and he could stand it no longer—it was too ridiculous. ‘I never owned you!’

She eyed him a moment with a queer smile, while Mary watched them both. Then with a kind of dignity the woman gathered up her gloves and fan. ‘Very well,’ she said placidly, making as if she would pass them without more words, and go out, ‘be it so, brother.’

‘You still say that I am your brother?’

‘I do. You know you are,’ she replied calmly.

The dean choked, recovered himself, choked again, and finally spluttered out, ‘Then you are an impostor, madam! I say you are an impostor! And I shall expose you without mercy. It is my belief that you are trying to obtain credit in this hotel by the use of my name.’

‘Nonsense, Fergus!’ she rejoined in the tone of a maiden aunt reproving an unreasonable schoolboy. ‘You know that that is not so. I have money and can pay for everything. The waiter will bear me witness that I directed him to put my luncheon down to No. 9. That is my number. You will know where to find me should you change your mind, brother.’

She disappeared. And there could be no doubt with whom lay the honours of the field. If ever a cleric longed for a layman who might give his feelings uncanonical expression, it was the dean at that moment. 'Well!' he exclaimed, dropping into a chair. 'Well!' getting up again as if he had sat on a pin, 'I never heard of such impudence! Never! I could scarcely have believed it, if an angel had told me a woman could be so brazen!'

'But, papa,' said Mary, standing by him, perplexed and frightened, 'do you think that she is mad?'

The dean shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands.

'Or—or—— There can't be two deans of Dromore?'

He shook his head vaguely, walking to and fro; as if he would be responsible for no statement or fact after this. There might be two popes of Rome. He would not say.

'Aunt Alice,' Mary said musingly. 'Of course Aunt Alice died twenty years ago.'

The dean stopped in his walk and glared at her.

'You—you had a difference with her, papa, had you not?'

The dean seemed like to choke again. 'Let us understand one another,' he said grimly. 'Do you suspect me of denying my own flesh and blood, my girl?'

'Oh, no, no, papa!' she declared.

'Then why ask that question? But I will answer it. My sister made a foolish marriage. I did have a quarrel with her. I was reconciled to her later. I was, I thank heaven! on good terms with her when she died. Now, are you satisfied? Perhaps I should add that I was at her funeral.'

'Forgive me, papa,' Mary said. 'But now we know one thing. We know her to be someone acquainted with Aunt Alice at that time.'

'Then what is her object?' cried the dean desperately. 'After what has passed the people at the hotel will not give her credit—on my account at all events! What is her object?'

Mary shook her head sagely. 'Perhaps we shall learn presently,' she said. And she rang the bell and gave her father a cup of tea.

They dine somewhat early at Durnsford's, in order that they may go in comfort to the opera; for Valletta boasts an excellent house built by Barry, and nightly bright with all manner of uniforms. When the dean and Mary entered the dining-room that evening, followed by 'her Major,' as Miss Drutt called him, the

eyes of two of the three sought the lower end of the long table at which new-comers always took their seats; and it must be confessed that the dean's face grew brighter. The lady in black was not present. He took his seat and spread his napkin with a sense of large relief, and looked about him placidly. And then—and then in the twinkling of an eye all his comfort fled away. There was that terrible woman almost opposite to him. No doubt she had used his name to procure a seat 'up higher.'

Positively the dean quailed. There was that in her florid cheeks, in the ridiculous square of black velvet on her head, in her quivering earrings, above all in the defiant glances of her eyes, which appalled him. She was talking loudly. He heard her drop an h. He shuddered at the thought that she had called herself his sister. His! He plunged his spoon into the soup and ate savagely.

'Ah! could you tell me,' his neighbour presently said low in his ear—Macdonald was an excellent fellow, but he had a trick of humming and hawing—'who that—er—very singular woman is, seated opposite us?'

'No,' replied the dean steadily, appearing to take little notice, while Mary blushed to the tips of her fingers. 'I have no idea.'

'Er—with his eyeglass up—'such a very strange woman! Do you not think so, Miss Young? To be here, you know?'

Mary murmured something which the major could not catch, for the woman in question was speaking loudly. 'Yes, it is a dreadful thing to be estranged from one's family!' she was saying. 'I should know it if anyone does.'

'I did not know—er—that such people had a family,' was the major's muttered commentary.

'But,' the lady in black continued, 'what I never would have believed is the unkindness I have received from my family abroad. My own brother——'

'Er—she is quite a character!' said the major. He turned to the dean, but found him inattentive. 'Quite a character,' he continued, 'er—Miss Young.'

'Oh, quite,' said Mary faintly.

Then the major, who was not a fool, his manner notwithstanding, detected something amiss in Mary's tone. Looking up quickly he found her colouring and confused, and saw something was wrong. He wondered amazedly what it was, but groped in

vain, and gradually forgot the incident and its cause in murmuring matters more interesting to himself if not to her.

But it chanced that after dinner he lingered behind the dean a moment. There were only Angelo and Beppo in the room when he rose.

‘Who is the lady in black, who sat—er—there, and talked so loudly, Angelo?’ he asked, moved only by lazy curiosity.

Angelo shrugged his shoulders and spread out his hands, while his curly hair sped down to his eyebrows and back again. ‘Well, sare,’ he answered, ‘she says—but there! Pouf!’ And again his scalp made a forced march.

‘Well, what does she say?’

‘She say she is the sister of the English gentleman you dine with.’

‘What?’ incredulously, emphatically. ‘What?’

‘She say so. He say no,’ with indifference.

‘Impossible!’ Major Macdonald cried.

‘She say so. He say no,’ repeated Angelo with a superb shrug.

The major paused a moment to take it in—to take in even the idea of it, and moved away in a maze. Of course the report was preposterous, absolutely so. He had the dean’s word for it that it was not true. And yet—and yet the dean’s stiffness and Mary’s embarrassment when their attention had been called to this woman had not escaped him. He sent some excuse to the dean by one of the servants, and hurried to his quarters. If the truth must be told, he felt very uncomfortable, being the man he was.

For he had one weak spot in his character, had Andy Macdonald. He feared one thing to excess, and that was scandal. That the breath of it should come near him or his! Pah, the thought sickened him. He was Scotch; proud, honest, not very dull. He had never himself done anything of which he was ashamed, nor to the best of his belief had his people. He was manly in his way. He loved Mary Young much, but he feared scandal more. Poor Mary!

However she knew nothing yet, whatever she may have thought of his sudden indisposition. Nor did she or her father even hint at possibilities until the next afternoon. Then, as they were driving to the Gymkhana—the fortnightly garrison sports—in one of those pony chaises the hire of which seems so

ridiculously low, the dean said, 'I suppose Macdonald will be here to give us tea?'

'Oh, yes, I think he said so,' Mary replied hurriedly. But her face fell. The drive, hitherto a triumph for her, had lost its savour, or she her zest.

On reaching the course they went at once to the stand reserved for the officers' friends, and she was quickly surrounded. But all the homage in the world was nothing to her now unless Andy Macdonald was of the party. And he had not come.

He appeared presently, but in company with the Druitts, and ill at ease. Even when he left them and came to her there was a stiffness in his manner which she had no difficulty in interpreting. Yesterday his passion had shown him shy and awkward, but today he was silent and morose—a conscience-stricken man. And Mary knew, poor girl, that something of her mastery over him was gone.

But she hid her pain bravely. She sat with the Druitts at one of a dozen little tea-tables that were set out before the stand, and made believe to be the gayest of the gay. Her train of subalterns never dwindled, the hum about her never died away, her laugh never quavered. She looked into the major's troubled eyes and gave no sign. The dean stood on the outskirts of the group, his teacup in one hand, his saucer in the other, his head delicately poised, and felt happy again in the full enjoyment of the sunshine and laughter and prettiness about him—felt himself. He was even laying down the law to the colonel, when there broke in upon their chat a third—a Major Ritherdon, one of Macdonald's brother officers and a steward of the sports. 'Dean,' he said warmly, after a word of greeting, 'why did you not write for another ticket?'

'Another ticket!' the dean repeated. 'For what purpose? You were good enough to send me two.'

'For your sister,' replied Ritherdon in perfect innocence.

'For whom?' Unfortunately the dean spoke so loudly that a score of ears in his neighbourhood were opened, and half as many tongues grew silent. 'For whom, Major Ritherdon?'

Of course Ritherdon saw that something was wrong. 'Well, she—I did not learn her name,' he stammered. 'Only that she was your sister, my dear dean.'

'And you have brought her in here?' the dean cried roundly. He had thought that in this sacred enclosure at least he would be

safe. 'Then let me tell you, sir, that she is an impostor! An impostor!' he repeated in wrath. 'I have no sister living. I have never seen the woman before, Colonel Watts.'

'Oh, Fergus, laddie!' cried a shrill voice.

The dean turned as if he had been shot, and found that terrible woman, black gloves and all, at a table behind him. 'Oh, Fergus, laddie, don't be unnatural!' she cried.

Purple went the dean's face. 'Woman!' he thundered. But there. What he said more was lost—lost and swallowed up along with propriety, good manners, and everything else in the inextinguishable peal of laughter which went up to the Maltese heaven. 'Oh, Fergus, laddie!' The woman's words as applied to the portly dignitary, her tone of exaggerated pathos, and the huge black-bordered handkerchief she waved—all fed the flame. Even Mary laughed. Only two stood within hearing and were grave. They were the dean himself, whose rage was boundless, and Major Macdonald.

Suddenly, as suddenly as it had arisen, the laughter died down, and was succeeded by an awful silence. It is well that society does not often forget itself; the return to sanity is so dreadful. What was anyone to do? Apologise to the dean? Turn the woman out? Go on as if nothing had happened? No one knew; and Mary Young saved them the trouble of thinking long.

She rose. Something—perhaps some face on which her eyes had fallen—had driven the laughter from her lips, so that as she put her chair aside she looked as handsome as ever, but also a little stately. 'I think,' she said, holding out her hand to the colonel, before her father had regained his voice, 'if you will excuse us, papa shall take me away, Colonel Watts. We two will have our laugh out at home.'

Half-a-dozen voices were raised at once in humble protest. But the one for which the girl was listening was not among them, though Andy Macdonald's heart was full of pride in her. He would have had his wife behave exactly as she had behaved, if the thing could have happened to his wife. But then there was that 'if.' Such things had never happened to the Ladies Macdonald.

Yet the general feeling was with Mary, though the Druitts, her dear friends, might sneer. Thanks to her courage the dean's dignity had come through the ordeal almost unscathed. The

interloper, whom some of the 'young uns' had begun to 'draw,' was left to herself, and presently withdrew.

By that time the dean and Mary were at home. She had kept her face turned from him during the drive, and they had not exchanged a word. But when they stood in their sitting-room they looked at one another.

'Papa,' Mary said, her voice breaking, and the tears rising to her eyes, 'what is this? Whatever does it mean?'

'My dear,' he answered, with humility wonderful for him, 'I know no more than you do.'

'But—but you see what it is doing?' she said piteously.

He could only nod; and she went to her room and cried her eyes out.

The dean took her words, and rightly, for an appeal. But he was as a bull in a net. He felt himself entangled, and resented the flimsy web which foiled him, yet he did not see how to free himself. He might have had recourse to the law, but he did not know how it could help him. He might have explained matters to Andy Macdonald; but the major had not spoken, and the dean was proud. He might have fled before the enemy and left Malta; but if he did this he must give up all hope of the attachment between his daughter and Macdonald coming to a happy issue. And that he could not face, for already he feared that her cheeks were losing their roundness. He had taken to watching her stealthily. He saw that she was apt to be thoughtful when they were alone, however proudly she might have queened it in the Strada Reale a few minutes before. Or she was over gay—so gay that he was not deceived for a moment. Or she avoided his eyes; and at this his heart grew hot, and he longed to fall upon Andy Macdonald.

But this was impracticable. The man had not committed himself. And besides, to give him a black eye might not be the best way to rub out the dark stains that were gathering under Mary's.

Would anything do any good? That was the question. Gradually the dean came to think that one thing only would, the removal even now of the cause of the mischief. The woman in black was still in the hotel. Since the fracas at the Gymkhana the Youngs had taken their meals in their own room, but again and again, in the hall or on the stairs, the dean had seen her and been made to shudder by her jeering laugh, or some wild word

thrown after him. The poison she distilled made the place loathsome to him.

There was but one way then. He could not justify it to himself, and it was dangerous; but fate provided him with the opportunity, and he let himself be tempted.

It happened some days after the sports. He was strolling disconsolately among the rocks, *quantum mutatus ab illo*, and was near the Sliema battery, a tolerably solitary spot, when he met the woman alone. She was close to the water's edge, and he went to her and spoke without preface. 'Madam,' he said, looking sternly at her, while she first started, and then smirked at him, 'I am aware that you are only here to annoy me.'

'No, no; to regain your affection, brother,' she said in a mincing way that sorely tempted him to strike her.

'Well, you do annoy me,' he answered dispassionately. 'I do not know what your motive may be, but I presume it is connected with money. Well, money you shall have. I am prepared to give you a hundred pounds if you will take yourself off to-morrow.'

The proposition was an abrupt one, and her face changed surprisingly. But he read in it none of the triumph for which he looked, only fear and suspicion. 'It is a trap,' the woman said, looking up at him with her beady eyes. 'It is a trap!' But as she said this a second time her fingers began to clutch one another greedily.

'I do not wish to entrap you,' rejoined the dean, 'and I have no witnesses. However, those are my terms; if you refuse them I shall myself leave to-morrow. That is all.'

'I am not extorting money,' she said, asserting it sullenly after a long pause. 'You will remember that. I have asked for nothing.'

'I shall not prosecute you,' he rejoined dryly, 'if you keep out of my way in future.'

'I will promise to do that,' she answered briskly, 'and glad. There! I will take it,' she continued after a momentary hesitation, closing her lips tightly, as if she knew of some risk and were prepared to run it. 'When will you pay me?'

The dean paused to think. 'To-morrow at noon,' he answered, 'and here. But only after I have seen your luggage in the hall, and learned that you have given up your room.'

'Right!' she said shortly, and nodded and went away at once.

'Right? I hope it is not all wrong,' he groaned, as he went

his way to the Sliema landing-place by another road, and even then, seeing her on the steam ferry, had to take a rowing boat to cross the Quarantine Harbour, or go in her company.

Still he tried to assume the old *aplomb* now, assuring himself that his troubles were over. But he could not quite compass it. He was not broken to subterfuges and intrigues. Essentially an honest man, he failed to combine them with his natural dignity. When he stole away next day—half an hour late—to the rendezvous, he had the air of a whipped dean.

He came upon his accomplice before he reached the shore, at the corner of some gardens close to the battery. The woman was returning in anger, thinking he had deceived her, but her face cleared on seeing him. 'Well,' she said roughly, 'have you got it?' She had dropped all pretence now of being a lady.

He glanced round to see if they were alone. How he hated the whole thing! And then he handed the packet to her. She counted the notes slowly, he eyeing her the while with aversion. 'Yes, they are right,' she said, going a pace or two from him while she put up the packet; and then turning again. 'You will see no more of me. I should have left you in peace to-day, whether or no, old gentleman.'

This was not pleasant hearing, but the Dean did not answer; for one reason, because a man had appeared in the road behind her, and within earshot. If she had looked up as she stepped away before turning to utter that last bit of ill-nature, she would have seen this man. But she had not looked up, and now she walked straight into his arms, and recoiled with a faint shriek.

The new-comer took her by the shoulder, and gave her a slight shake.

'Yes,' he remarked coolly, 'I have got to hear about this, my girl—all about it. What has this gentleman been giving you? And why do I find you living at the hotel like a lady while I have been away?'

She began to cry, answering nothing, and the stranger's face grew red. 'Perhaps you will explain?' he said, turning with a kind of ferocity to the dean. 'Now, sir!' He was sturdy and middle-aged, wearing a semi-uniform, and apparently was not a gentleman. He was out of temper now, and altogether an ugly customer to tackle. Anyone could see that.

Nevertheless the dean answered quietly, 'It is her business,' but he breathed hard.

‘Her business? She is my wife!’ was the startling reply.

‘Your wife is she?’ the dean exclaimed briskly. ‘Then perhaps you will tell me who you are? And how your wife comes to be passing herself off as my sister?’ This was a relief—the discovery of a man in the matter: at first.

‘My name is Snell,’ the other answered curtly. ‘I am a non-commissioned officer in the Stores Department. And now that you know who I am, I will trouble you to tell me what you were giving my wife.’

‘Some money—a hundred pounds,’ the dean answered frankly; wondering in his innocence whether he were going to get it back.

‘A hundred pounds!’ the stranger stammered, ‘a hundred pounds!’ And then the dean’s eyes were opened, and his face grew hot.

‘Stay, stay!’ he cried pitiably, for the other was clenching his fists with an unmistakable purpose, ‘you misapprehend me altogether. Indeed you do, my good man. I am the Dean of Dromore. My name is Young. Your wife, with what motive I am quite unable to explain, has been troubling me by passing herself off as my sister.’

‘As your sister!’ incredulously.

‘Certainly,’ the poor dean affirmed. ‘And to rid myself of the annoyance, I perhaps foolishly gave her a hundred pounds, as you saw.’

‘To do what?’

‘To go away.’

‘To go away? And you dare to tell me this, you reprobate!’ the soldier cried furiously. ‘Do you think that story will wash—that—that pack of lies? You, a dean, and tell me to my face that you offered my wife a hundred pounds to go away? Shame on you, old man! Shame! I say.’

Ah, if any of the subalterns in the —th whom his manners had oppressed could have seen the dean then! ‘Oh, dear, dear! this is very terrible!’ he murmured tremulously, looking about him for help. ‘I assure you, my good man, you are quite wrong.’

‘Wrong? I will soon show you who is wrong!’ cried the sergeant vengefully; ‘and——’

But the catastrophe was averted. ‘Er!’ ejaculated someone who had just turned the corner of the garden wall, ‘er—what is the matter, dean? What is all this?’

The speaker was Major Andrew Macdonald. The sergeant pulled himself up and saluted—a machine once more.

The major had come upon the scene in the nick of time—only just in the nick of time—and yet the dean could not thank him—could for the moment do no more than smile feebly upon him and wave his hand in deprecation, while the sergeant stiffly related his wrongs, or the wrongs he fancied.

‘But,’ said the major, after listening a moment in silence, ‘do I understand, dean, that you really gave the woman a hundred pounds?’

‘Yes,’ the dean admitted. ‘She will tell you—— Why, the woman is gone!’ in surprise.

‘Oh, yes, she has gone!’ the soldier retorted bitterly, his wrath, which the presence of the officer had partially suppressed, flaming up again. ‘She has taken her money and her instructions, old gentleman, and gone! Deuce a doubt about it! And where are you going to meet her? That is what I would like to know!’

‘Be silent, Snell,’ said the major. But when he had said that he did not see his way any farther. He stood looking at Mary’s father gloomily, assured of his guilt. To give a hundred pounds to a pure impostor seemed to his Scotch mind an incredible piece of folly—a thing which no man in the dean’s position, and of his years would do. ‘Why, you might have gone away yourself,’ he murmured, following out this train of thought, and perhaps calculating the expense of a removal to Algiers or Cairo.

‘I wish to heaven I had!’ the dean ejaculated earnestly. But he could scarcely tell the young man why he had not adopted that course. He could not explain, to him, his hopes about Mary—hopes now dashed to the ground and shattered beyond repair. Poor Mary! For the only doubt left in Macdonald’s mind turned on the nature of the tie between the dean and this woman. Were the soldier’s suspicions correct? Or was this vulgar Mrs. Snell really the dean’s sister—a sister shamefully disowned and ill-treated? Was this dull non-commissioned officer the dean’s brother-in-law? Macdonald shuddered at this, thinking of the escape he had had, and roused himself from a darkling scrutiny of the offender to say brusquely, ‘Now, Snell, you had better come with me for the present. Good-day.’

The last words he flung at the clergyman as he turned, and nothing more. But they did the dean good. The sense of his

folly had up to that time paralysed him. Now, aware that his position was really serious and that something more than folly might be imputed, he felt all the righteous indignation which a false charge confers on its victim. For a few minutes anger kept him from feeling miserable, or from thinking of Mary. But as he neared the hotel the sense of personal failure crushed him. A week ago he had been free from care. Then this thing had arisen—in its origin an absurd trifle; now so magnified by his imprudence, that the rest of his life might be spoiled by its shadow.

He loitered here and there to take breath as he climbed the steep staircase of a street, and looked up from time to time at the narrow wedge of deep blue sky which roofed it. But he saw nothing. All the beauty Valletta had held for him yesterday, all the pleasure its peeps of sea suddenly disclosed when least expected, its quaint houses, its airy walks on rampart and bastion had given him, existed no longer. He crept up to his room a shaken man, and, glad to learn that his daughter was out, sat at the table gazing on its cold polished surface with eyes wide and sightless.

The dean sat thus, probably for half an hour—a week it seemed to him, looking back on it with loathing afterwards. And then a hasty knock at the door recalled him to himself. He looked up.

‘Come in,’ he said hoarsely. ‘Well, what is it?’ he continued, his face darkening as he saw who his visitor was, and rose to confront him. ‘What is it, Major Macdonald?’

‘Er—an apology. An abject and miserable apology,’ was the answer. The young man stood before him turning his hat in his hands, looking unhappy, and much ashamed of himself, and not a bit priggish now. ‘I have hurried here to offer it for myself and for others—who should have been here in person, for they are more in fault,’ he added with a touch of viciousness.

‘Perhaps you had better explain,’ said the dean with *hauteur*. But hope was springing up fast within him.

‘It was all a hoax, sir. Some of those young fools in the —th got it up,’ Andy replied impetuously. ‘They had a fancy that you rather—well, rather sat upon them, you know, and they wanted to take you do——er, to have a return match, you see, and they put Mrs. Snell up to playing her part, finding that she had known a bit about you years ago.’

‘And was the acquisition of my hundred pounds part of the plot?’ the dean asked wrathfully. But he knew in his heart that his anger was only a pretence.

‘Oh, no! of course not. It shall be repaid at once. The woman took advantage of us all there. She is not too good a lot, I suspect, and has given Snell trouble before. But the fellows did not know that, or they would not have had anything to do with her. She had only been out here a few weeks, and being known to few, suited their plans exactly.’

‘Umph!’ the dean snorted. ‘And were you in this precious conspiracy, Major Macdonald?’

‘Certainly not!’ Andy hastened to answer with humility. ‘They did not say anything to me—er—because—— Miss Young is not at home, I suppose?’ with a change of subject, sudden, but fairly intelligible.

‘No,’ said the Dean carelessly. ‘I think she has gone as far as the Barracca. Well, I hope I shall hear no more of this foolish business.’

‘You may depend on that, sir,’ said the major. And then he took himself off with commendable tact.

Of course his legs—or his heart—took him to the Barracca; that great dismantled building on the highest point of Valletta, from which, as from a terrace, some of the noblest views in the south of Europe are to be enjoyed. There, gazing down on the life and colour of the Grand Harbour, all the stir and bustle of which came up softened by distance—the distance of depth only—even as the same distance dwarfed the ships of war and the thousand tiny craft at her feet, he found Mary. She was standing in one of the embrasures, leaning on the iron railing, engaged in contrasting, it may be, this day and another. For when he spoke, she started, and did something to her eyes before she turned.

‘Oh, Major Macdonald!’ she exclaimed, with a suspicious quiver in her voice. ‘How you startled me!’

But there. Neither of them has ever confided to me exactly what passed between them. And though I guess—nay, I know, for the eternal fitness of things cannot be pushed aside even to accommodate a Macdonald—that our friend the major had at first a very sorry time, and was for some miserable minutes spread-eagled, so to speak, in that lofty embrasure, a mark for his own scorn, yet all is well that ends well. Perhaps the lesson did

him good. Perhaps it did not. Perhaps it only relieved a young lady's feelings, and solaced her pride. At any rate it was given, and it was brought to an end. And this, at least, is beyond doubt, that three very happy people sat down to dinner that evening in a certain private room at Durnsford's. The dean, indeed, had good reason to be satisfied. He never heard again of his pseudo-sister, or his indiscretion. The joke had been carried too far even for its players. Mrs. Snell clung obstinately to her hundred pounds. Her husband declined to interfere. It was out of the question that the dean should suffer. So the youngsters of the —th had to put their hands in their pockets, and find about twenty-five pounds apiece. And that was what their jest cost them.

ARTHUR SCHOPENHAUER.

(FEB. 22, 1788—SEPT. 21, 1860.)

I.

THREE or four years before his death, in 1860, Schopenhauer was asked if he had given anyone particular sanction to prepare and publish his biography. He replied briskly in the negative: 'I will neither write it myself, nor do I wish it written. I will not expose my private life to satisfy the curiosity of a cold and malevolent general public.' While he lived his wishes were respected. But within a few months after his sudden death Dr. Frauenstädt and Dr. Gwinner, the two men who, from different aspects, probably knew more about him than anyone else in the world, and Dr. Lindner, an admirer of the second rank, sent forth records of him and his works in books the revised editions of which aggregate nearly 1,400 octavo pages.

A few words must be said about these authorities, on whom we depend mainly for the substance of this paper.

Dr. Frauenstädt was (to use Schopenhauer's own phrase) his chief apostle and arch-evangelist. In other words, he had so saturated himself with the teaching of Schopenhauer that he was the best possible substitute for the philosopher himself, and his prime interpreter. He was on the literary staff of certain influential German papers, and, urged by Schopenhauer, used his opportunities to the utmost to disseminate and gain appreciation for his master's philosophy. He was in all essentials Schopenhauer's very obedient servant, and no new teacher could have desired a more exemplary disciple.

Dr. Gwinner, on the other hand, was Schopenhauer's medical attendant during the last years of his life. He was also one of his executors, and thus had control over the precious unedited papers and letters which survived their owner. Schopenhauer's more philosophical biographers reproach Dr. Gwinner with his superficial acquaintance with their master, and it is no doubt true that his knowledge was medical rather than psychical. But, thanks to the materials in his hands, his biography is the most interesting life of Schopenhauer extant. He does not spare his subject's

foibles, and his narrative of the last days of the philosopher is especially valuable.

Lastly, Dr. Lindner was Schopenhauer's 'doctor indefatigabilis.' As editor of the powerful 'Vossische Zeitung,' he was in his own province even more respectable than Frauenstädt as a coadjutor to the philosopher. When Dr. Oxenford's celebrated article in the 'Westminster Review' assured to Schopenhauer the fame for which he had been sighing nearly forty years, Lindner translated and printed it verbatim (only excising that part of it which might have impressed readers unfavourably about Schopenhauer as a man), so that the subscribers to his journal might know of the genius in their midst, so long neglected by the German people. 'They take me for dead, or an antediluvian fossil, do they? The rascals! But wait a little. I will show them even now that I am not dead!' It was for Dr. Lindner to tell all men that Arthur Schopenhauer was still alive, and likely to live for some time to come. Schopenhauer knew the priceless worth to him of a company of men upon whom he could depend for the promulgation of his principles. Hence the enthusiasm with which he, as a septuagenarian, encouraged Frauenstädt, Lindner, Becker, Bahr, Weigelt, and others, to continue in the course of study they had begun. His perseverance was rewarded. In 1856 the oldest of his disciples, a district judge named Dorguth, eighty-five years of age, died with the word 'Schopenhauer' on his lips. At that time he was also receiving letters almost daily from new pupils, praising him as something superhuman, or beseeching his guidance across the desert of life. It was proposed to establish a chair of philosophy in the Zurich University for the enunciation of his teaching, one of the proposers being Richard Wagner. Elsewhere his philosophy was made the thesis of a course of lectures. He was requisitioned to sit for his bust and his portrait in oils. The 'Illustrirte Zeitung' put him in its pages. The very last letter he wrote was a calm and deliberate reply to the epistle of a couple of students in a military training school, who beg him to tell them how they may attain to the deliverance of the Will. The boys confessed that they had read and re-read his writings with immense admiration, that the truthfulness and honesty in all his pages had won their entire and deep affection; they asked his pardon for daring to address him without permission from the authorities (who would not have granted it); and entreated him to write to the *poste restante*.

These various successes made Schopenhauer reflect more hopefully about the future. 'When I think upon the profound effect of my philosophy among the unlearned, among business people, and even among women . . . thoughts about the part I shall play in the year 1900 come to me such as I cannot impart to you by letter.' At the outset he had believed his philosophy to be too esoteric for general appreciation; hence this remark. Again: 'My band of personal enthusiasts is now numerous enough to give me assurance that some day my philosophy will play a part in the world equalled by no other philosophy, ancient or modern. It is due to the power of truth and the importance of the subject.'

In the following pages we will try to give a true portrayal of the 'philosopher of Frankfort,' after his own utterances and confessions, and the witness of those who knew him.

Schopenhauer's life falls conveniently into three epochs. He was born in 1788, and in 1818 he completed his philosophical masterpiece. Of this work, in his old age he averred that, 'inasmuch as it explains the riddle of life, it may be called a revelation, inspired as it is throughout by the spirit of truth. 'The World as Will and Representation' may well, therefore, mark the end of the first epoch and the beginning of the second epoch of Schopenhauer's life.

From 1818 to 1831 Schopenhauer travelled in Switzerland, Italy, and the German States, tried to establish a philosophical school in Berlin, and became daily more and more misanthropic as the time lengthened between the publication of his work and the harvest of fame to which he looked as part of his reward. This was the very bitter second epoch of his life.

In 1831 the cholera visited Berlin, and carried off the great Hegel. Schopenhauer was 'Choleraphobe by profession.' Moreover, he hated Berlin, no less for its climate and society than for the humiliations it had brought upon him. He fled to Frankfort, upon Humboldt's recommendation. Here he lived for the remaining thirty years of his life, solitary, contemplative, and apparently resigned to the neglect which seemed destined to be his portion equally in the present and the future. But this resignation was only apparent. He once compared himself in his Frankfort retreat to a lion sitting still in its cage, and storing all its power of spring for the one tremendous moment when the bars should open before it. Thus when, in his old age, the recognition he had so hungered for came to cheer him to the end, his moroseness largely left him,

or was metamorphosed into a terrible dogmatic insistence on his own philosophical infallibility, and both in his letters and intercourse with his admirers and votaries he developed the gaiety and sprightliness of a young man. But by this time he had taught himself to look for little real comfort outside himself: 'Men of genius' he said, 'stand to the rest of the world like a schoolmaster towards his charges.' In one sense, therefore, his fame came too late to profit him. And so he died in 1860, and ended the third period of his life's history.

II.

'The moment a man of genius understands his own worth, he perceives the lack of worth in others.' These words of Schopenhauer's are important, as justifying him, according to his own belief, in his attitude towards his fellow-men after he had written his masterpiece. For his own sake, it is a pity the fruit of his intellect ripened so early in his career. There never was a man so saturated with intellectual conceit, so convinced of his kinship with the mighty dead, and so inexorable in his contempt for the common herd, as Arthur Schopenhauer. He venerated, in a measure, Plato, Descartes, Hume, and Kant, but in the practical part of his philosophy he claimed to supersede them all. When his hair was white, and he was of an age when the judgment is at its soundest, he could turn the pages of his book and talk of his 'immortal chapter' on comparative anatomy, and term another chapter 'a pearl' and 'a diamond.' For his disciples in distress he had but one grand specific: 'Study my philosophy.' Yet he was not willing at all times to do battle for this teaching of his, which he held to be so valuable a donation to the world: objections thereto were confessions of ignorance or weakness of understanding; and he did not always care to enlighten the ignorant or fortify the weak of intellect. 'You are wrong in saying that a philosophy dependent upon experience like my philosophy must with further progress in our knowledge of nature suffer modification. If so, it were a system of physics, not metaphysics. My philosophy can never suffer modification.' He writes thus to Frauenstädt, but his mood on this occasion was complaisant. At another time he treats his high priest less civilly. Having well buffeted him for his obstinate freedom of thought, and discontent with this or that explanation which Schopenhauer had tendered him

in reply to his criticisms on important details in the philosophy, he continues : ‘The worst of it is that I perceive the fine time and labour which I have devoted to the answering of your two previous letters is quite lost, and that of all I have said and quoted you have taken hardly any notice, so that you may go on undeterred in your quite enthusiastic absurdity. . . . Your eyes are as deaf as my right ear. . . . If you persist in bringing your doubts before the public [Frauenstädt has prepared an elaborate criticism of his master’s teaching, and sends him the manuscript to read] to show that you applaud my philosophy without being able to understand it, I can as little hinder you from doing it as advise you to do it. Only let *me* have no more of it; I am tired of troubling myself with misunderstandings and misinterpretations, and can use my good time better than in cleansing Augean stables. I therefore return your commentary unread, and earnestly beg you to spare me all further doubts and reflections. For, having once given to the world my philosophy, with great art and unexampled lucidity, I am really not disposed to discuss with you, over again, *ex abrupto*, now this, now that dogma, in epistolary correspondence.’ Surely it may be assumed that the bonds of respect between disciple and master which survive such tests as this must be founded on something stronger than mere dilettanteism!

As for Schopenhauer’s relation towards other men—the Philistines who reject all moral guidance whatsoever—it was an intense contempt, mixed with not a little fear. Indeed, he accepted Chamfort’s saying, that ‘the fear of man is the beginning of wisdom!’ In his eyes, therefore, distrust was the best armour a man like himself could wear in association with other men. For to be loved of men one must resemble the common type of man; and ‘What,’ Schopenhauer asked himself, ‘what is there in common between such a man as me and the first man I see in the street?’ With Leopardi, he believed that most men are as wicked as they need be. Bonaparte, for example, was no worse a man than other men. He was impelled by the customary motives, and differed from the majority of men only in the possession of energy and will of extraordinary power. Moreover, in Schopenhauer’s eyes, society is a pernicious restraint upon the individuality of highly gifted men. ‘So-called good company,’ he says in the ‘Parerga,’ ‘includes excellences of every kind except mental; these are ever prohibited. It conjures us to show

boundless indulgence towards folly, absurdity, and stupidity; personal superiority must ask its pardon, or else go into hiding; for mental superiority is offensive merely by its presence. Hence, society called good has not only this defect—that it gives us men whom we can neither like nor praise—but it permits us to see how restricted our nature is, for in order to live in harmony with others we must blight or disfigure our own individualities.’ When quite a young man he tries to argue the matter towards a more kindly issue, but even then the bias of his mind asserts itself. ‘Take note of this, dear soul,’ he writes in his diary . . . ‘because you know that only he can please you who behaves towards you in a friendly manner, and that no one will continue to do this unless you in your turn please him, and that you can do this only by behaving in a friendly way towards him: because you know this, act in such a way that from a mental friendliness may proceed gradually a true friendliness. Your own weakness and subjectivity make such deception necessary. This is really an analysis of courtesy, though I could carry the investigation still deeper.’ On this subject let the philosopher speak once again, and then one may the more readily forgive him that as an old man he held contact with other men to be a contamination. ‘A genius,’ he writes, ‘does not come into existence for his own behoof, but for the good of mankind. Apart from the enjoyment the genius has in his own powers, he is but the crossbearer of mankind. . . . I have thus borne my cross all my lifetime, and felt the burden of it.’

After reading this, one is naturally curious about the manner and hardships of Schopenhauer’s life, even though it be well understood that the trials attendant upon crossbearing are spiritual rather than material, like the visible circumstances of a man’s life.

III.

The son of an upright merchant of Dantzic, and later of Hamburg, Arthur Schopenhauer was destined by his father to succeed him at the desk. But from the first Schopenhauer hated the thought of a commercial life. Scheming thereby to shake these scruples out of his head, the father took him on a prolonged tour through the chief states of Europe, in the course of which he spent six months in a school at Wimbledon; but instead of being impressed with the opportunities of trade suggested by the

different cities and nationalities of Europe, the boy chose rather to fasten his eyes on those evidences of sin and suffering which are never to be looked for in vain. His father would have had him record the data of population, staple products, peculiar requirements, and so forth, of the different provinces they traversed; but the boy preferred to puzzle himself with cogitations about the why and wherefore of the distress and afflictions of the people of this or that village or canton. The consequence was that at the end of the two-years' tour Schopenhauer was quite convinced that he was made to be something better than a merchant. Yet what could he do in opposition to the decree of a strong-willed parent? With a weary heart, therefore, he began his apprenticeship to trade, and when his father died, accidentally or by his own hand, a few months later, out of respect to his memory, the boy continued in the career chosen for him until he could bear the nauseous life no longer. At the age of eighteen he now went to school again, and mixed with boys much his juniors. From school he proceeded to the Universities of Göttingen and Berlin, and in 1813 he received the diploma of a doctor in philosophy. The thesis which procured him his doctorate was his famous 'Essay on the Fourfold Root of the Principle of Sufficient Reason.' The vital part of this recondite essay is that where he seems to regard the theological doctrine of Free-will as dead and buried, and enunciates the law of moral predestination, 'whereby every human being and every brute must, when the motive appears, perform the only act which accords with the inborn unalterable character.' We say 'seems' advisedly, for he afterwards denied that his philosophy had a fatalistic tendency. At this time his 'better consciousness,' or conscience, impelled him towards a life of asceticism. In such a life he saw that renunciation of the Will and abnegation of Self which he believed to be best for the man who was so unfortunate as to be born. But he soon had to confess his own weakness: he could indicate to others the road of salvation though he could not himself follow it.

It was in Dresden, between the years 1814 and 1818, that Schopenhauer brought his 'Opus Magnum' to the light. For long, he said, he walked about the streets, like one inflated: so grave a boon to mankind did he conceive the work in his head to be. It was all planned and ready before he took pen in hand to elaborate it. At times during his labour he was almost transfigured as to his face: 'What manner of man is this?' strangers

asked when they met him. One man of peculiar discernment exclaimed, 'You have either done something great or purpose doing something great!' His letter to Brockhaus, the king of publishers, on March 28, 1818, gives an idea of the esteem Schopenhauer felt for his production when it was ready for the press—

'My work is a new philosophical system, new in every sense of the word; not merely a new presentation of old materials, but a series of ideas coherent in the highest degree, such as never yet has come into the head of any man. The book in which I have worked out the difficult task of making my system comprehensible to others will, it is my firm conviction, be one of those books which are the source and occasion of a hundred other books. . . . The value I put upon my work is very great, for I regard it as the complete fruit of my existence. For the impression which the world makes upon an individual mind, and the re-presentation by which the mind, after due training, confirms or verifies that impression, is always accomplished in the first thirty years of life—all later work is but a development or elaboration of it.'

The great book had the fate that usually befalls great books—it was neglected by the public—so that after a few years the bulk of the edition was remade into pulp. Schopenhauer's impatience and anger with his contemporaries for not appreciating the spiritual food he offered them waxed intenser every year. Though he had early taught himself that for the wayfarer in life no commodity is more useful than a good stock of resignation, he never could resign himself to the career of silence that seemed forced upon him. 'To my knowledge,' he wailed, 'there is not in my whole book a single instance of humbug,' and yet the German people will have none of me. Eventually it was clear to him that this neglect was the natural consequence of his greatness. 'If a pedlar offer hairpins to men and pipebowls to women he gets laughed at for his stupidity; but how much more foolish is the case of the philosopher who brings Truth to market and hopes to dispose of it to mankind!' 'I feel as little disposed to intermeddle in the philosophical disputes of my epoch as to go and join in the squabbles and brawls of the mob in the street.' 'To philosophise to order, and teach philosophy as a means of obtaining money and position, seems to me like going to communion to assuage one's hunger and thirst.' 'The number of years which

intervene between the publication and the recognition of a book stand for the number of years by which the writer has outrun his coevals.' Thus he consoled himself as best he could. And when, twenty-six years later, he with difficulty published the second volume of 'The World as Will and Representation' as a corollary to the first, both he and his publisher had so little hope about its favourable reception that he deliberately discards all appeal to his own generation: 'Neither to my contemporaries, nor to my compatriots, but to mankind I commit my now completed work, in the confidence that it will not be without value for them.'

When the arrangements for publication of 'The World as Will and Representation' were completed, Schopenhauer betook himself to Italy. Here he moved from city to city, in supreme solitude for the most part, but quaffing the cup of life to the dregs. In his native country he had already got a reputation for eccentricity that was not likely to befriend him when he found himself among his fellow-countrymen in Rome and elsewhere. He was feared for his saturnine wit, and disliked for his roughness of conduct and uncivil dogmatism in argument. The estrangement between himself and his mother, the well-known novelist and *littérateur* of Weimar, was still more detrimental to him, though in truth for this his mother was to blame at least as much as he. Hence he was likely to be left to the loneliness he seemed to prefer. But we have it on record from the home letters of a German youth named Karl Witte, then sojourning in Rome, that he was less black than he was painted: 'I have been about with Schopenhauer a good deal,' writes this boy of eighteen. 'During the whole time I have noticed nothing bad in him. Indeed, I have discovered many virtues in him, among which his absolute love of truth is not the least. There are many prejudices against him here, especially about his relationship with his mother, which I have done my best to remove. . . . With his paradoxes he has made enemies of almost all the Germans here, and I am repeatedly warned about my excursions with him.' In fact, Schopenhauer seems to have had a mania for running counter to the predilections of people. And when we find that he used one occasion of intercourse with a number of his fellow-countrymen in a Roman café to proclaim his opinion that the German nation was the stupidest of all nations, and that it had gained a preponderance over other nations merely by its irreligiosity, we can as little wonder that he was not a favourite as that he was straightway

greeted with cries of indignation and wrathfully expelled by his compatriots from their midst. He was like a man born out of due time. Throughout this middle era of his life, when he perfected his knowledge of the objective world, he was in sympathy with no one, and the book into which he had poured in full flood the whole force of his genius lay, cloaked in dust, disregarded, in the warehouse of the publisher. 'But,' he asked himself, 'what after all is this Fame that I crave for?' It is an existence 'in the head of others—a wretched arena—and the happiness it gives is ephemeral. The most mixed company assembles in its temple—soldiers, ministers, mountebanks, jugglers, and millionaires—and these are all more genuinely esteemed than the philosopher, who is valued by a mere hundred of them at the most, and from all the rest receives mere words of praise.' He could also condemn himself that he had ever left the serene and secure middle path of life to become a prey to aspirations that proved to him how far he was from the goal of self-abnegation, which was the portico to a holy and happy death. For 'whenever you are entirely filled and possessed by self, whether in the shape of joy, triumph, desire, or hope, or in the guise of frantic grief, anger, rage, fear, mistrust, or excess of any kind, then are you in the Devil's claws.'

But it was not only in the ardour of his longing for fame and personal honour that Schopenhauer had to confess that his life did not harmonise with his teaching. Theoretically he was a deadly opponent of marriage or concubinage. According to his philosophy, the author of a new being is a perpetuator of the guilt of the world. He has surrendered to the cravings and impulses of his physical organism instead of following his 'better consciousness,' purifying his originally evil nature by a life of abstinence, and fitting himself for the happy extinction which is the reward of the consistent denier of the Will to Live. In his terribly destructive chapter on the 'Metaphysics of the Love of the Sexes' he undermines all the tender romances which have sought to invest love with a glamour divine rather than human and material. 'The growing inclination of two lovers for each other,' he says, 'is but the insatiate Will to Live striving on behalf of new phenomena. To this cruel or rather indifferent demon it is nought that the man and woman he urges together are by their circumstances, temperament, or intellect quite unsuited for a life of harmony. What is that to it? If they will perform its bidding and con-

tribute to the stock of the world they may shift for themselves as to happiness.¹ Happiness, forsooth! As if that were any concern of the Will to Live—an essentially blind impulse!’ Hence, according to Schopenhauer, ‘happy marriages are well known to be rare, just because it lies in the nature of marriage that its chief end is not the present but the coming generation.’

No wonder, therefore, that Schopenhauer never married. In Venice he nearly forgot himself, but fortunately, as he afterwards esteemed it, he was suddenly recalled to Germany, and the fetters were broken. To some it may seem that the harsh, irascible old bachelor subsequently revenged himself for the solitude of his bachelorhood by excessive bitterness against womankind: ‘Marriage is a debt contracted in youth and paid in old age.’ If that be so, said he, I will have none of it. For, otherwise, he considered that old age was by no means the unhappy time of life it is generally held to be. The man is then at his calmest and discreetest; the passions, which are the curse of life, are then extinct or well under control. Again: ‘The married,’ he said, ‘bear the full burden of life, the unmarried but half of it.’ Perhaps, however, his chief reason for dismissing the thought of matrimony was intellectual. He himself claimed to be a very

¹ The following characteristic record of a dialogue between two painfully enlightened lovers was found among Schopenhauer’s papers after his death. It was probably written before the appearance of Darwin’s *Origin of Species*; indeed, other of Darwin’s conclusions were foreseen by Schopenhauer.

‘*Daphnis*: I want to contribute an individual to the next generation, and I think that you could give him what I lack.

‘*Chloe*: I have a similar desire, and I, on my part, think that you could give him what I have not. Let us see!

‘*Daphnis*: I contribute tall stature and muscular strength. You have neither.

‘*Chloe*: And I plumpness of body and very little feet, in both of which particulars you fall short.

‘*Daphnis*: From me he will get a delicate white skin, which you have not.

‘*Chloe*: I can give him black hair and eyes, whereas you are fair.

‘*Daphnis*: I offer him an aquiline nose.

‘*Chloe*: And I a small mouth.

‘*Daphnis*: From me he may inherit courage and good-nature, but not from you.

‘*Chloe*: I can give him a fine arched forehead, wit, and understanding. From you he could not inherit these.

‘*Daphnis*: An upright figure, good teeth, and sound health he will receive from us both. Really, I think we can endow the future individual with an excellent portion, and therefore I long for you more than for anyone else.

‘*Chloe*: And I also for you.’

personification of truth and honesty in his life and utterances; but these virtues he denied to women. Why is man endowed with the capacity for a beard? he asked. To hide his mouth, which would else betray his processes of mind, and leave him helpless before an adversary. But why has woman no beard? Because 'with her, dissimulation and command of countenance are inborn.' Moreover, with Hume, he believed that love or tenderness is as enfeebling to the mind as, on the other hand, pride and vanity are invigorating to it. But Schopenhauer's weakness must be indicated. Even while he was writing the book that was designed to be a champion for universal celibacy an illegitimate child was born to him in Dresden; and he confessed to Frauenstädt that during his life in Italy he had had his weaknesses. After his death, a cast of his head was sent to Dr. Scheve, a celebrated phrenologist, who had not known Schopenhauer in life. 'This man cannot have been a woman hater!' exclaimed the phrenologist, when he examined the cast in detail; 'he was rather the very opposite.' The inference, of course, is obvious—that Schopenhauer's burning words are the outcome of intense experience.

Schopenhauer returned from his first visit to Italy in great anxiety of mind. His business agent had failed, and for the moment it seemed that the philosopher would be thrown on the world to fight for bread in file with those very professors of philosophy at whom he was never tired of girding and scoffing as *Brodprofessoren*. 'Independence and leisure,'—these were the two boons which he esteemed invaluable for such men as himself; and both were imperilled. To his mother and sister, who were also implicated in the disaster, he wrote to say that he was ready to share with them the little money that he actually possessed. But, thanks to his pertinacity and quite remarkable business tact, he was able to protect his interests very efficiently. The defaulter was his own godfather, who had held him at the font thirty-two years previously, and whom he assured that he was now of an age when he could use his hands and legs in self-defence. 'Should you shelter yourself under the plea of inability to pay,' writes the godchild to his parent, 'I will prove the contrary by the famous method which the great Kant introduced into philosophy in order to demonstrate man's moral freedom: viz. the decree of "shall" against "can." In other words, unless you pay of your own accord, you will be sued on the bill. You see

that it is quite possible to be a philosopher without being therefore a fool. . . . That you and Herr A—— [partner in the firm] may again be prosperous is my sincere wish, and I shall always be rejoiced to hear of it; but your happiness must not be raised on the ruins of mine. Your children may yet roll past me here in their carriages, while I, an old worn-out university professor, go panting along the roads. Happiness and blessings attend them if they are not in my debt.' Schopenhauer stuck to his determination to accept no composition for the money due to him, and his documentary security was of a kind that supported him in his claim. But it was long before the matter was settled, and in the meantime he began to lecture in Berlin. His efforts were apparently as little to the taste of students as to his own taste. During one session he addressed an audience of three—all doctors. A later session numbered but five, including a riding master, a dentist, a bill broker, and a captain. It was clear that he did not touch the sympathies of younger students, and yet his introductory lecture had not a little sterling substance in it. The following paragraph marks his test for philosophical aptitude: 'In order to be able to say what disposition for philosophy a person has, I must know how he thinks of the past, the present, and the future—whether as very different conceptions or as almost the same—whether his consciousness is so deeply immersed in this stream of time that he himself is carried away with it, or whether in viewing the passage past him of the stream of time he looks upon it in wonder as something extraordinary. The commonplace man, who sees nothing in the world to wonder at, clearly needs no philosophy to explain the world to him. . . .' But as soon as he was assured that a competence—small but sufficient—would still accrue to him from his godfather's estate, Schopenhauer suspended his lectures *sine die*, and went off abruptly into Switzerland. This was the beginning of another series of travels, from which he did not return until 1825. It is noteworthy that throughout both his Italian tours, Schopenhauer took trouble to associate with men of no nationality except the English. His early school experiences in the house of the English clergyman at Wimbledon had disgusted him as a boy, and to the last he was very envenomed against the English clergy, whom he charged with express stultification of the people. But now he was never better pleased than when mistaken for an Englishman. He lived as much as he could in English fashion,

spoke and thought in English, kept his account books in English, read the English papers, and bought English goods. In a letter, written in 1829, addressed to the reviewer of an English magazine, he pays us similar compliment, though the compliment must be shared with the climate. 'Without intending any flattery, I sincerely believe the English nation to be the most intelligent in Europe, and accordingly we find the climate of England knowing neither our chilling cold nor our scorching heat, but being truly temperate.' This extract may also give an idea of Schopenhauer's knowledge of our language.

The six years between 1825 and 1831 were, perhaps, the very gloomiest period of Schopenhauer's life. There is little to say about them. He lived alone, turned his back upon society, and was only nominally a lecturer at the University. The cholera came to his relief in 1831, when he left Berlin for ever.

IV.

In Frankfort Schopenhauer soon determined to spend the rest of his days. For a time his inclinations wavered between Frankfort and Mannheim; but he drew up a list of the advantages of the two places, and finding those of Frankfort to preponderate, he went thither from Mannheim. That more English travellers were to be met in Frankfort than in Mannheim was one plea in favour of Frankfort.

He lived in lodgings, with no company except his dog. At one time he did not leave his room for two months, at least as much because of his depression of mind as ill health. For diversion he depended upon his periodical walks in the neighbourhood of the town, the theatres, and concert rooms. 'A man who does not frequent the theatre,' he said, 'is like a person who dresses without a looking-glass.' Occasionally, at the *table d'hôte* where he was to be seen daily, he astonished his fellow-men by his conversation, but with subtle intention he would abruptly put an end to the interest he had excited: by some piece of deliberate rudeness he let it appear that he was under no obligation to make himself agreeable. The few people who knew anything about him spoke of him merely as an eccentricity, the son of Joanna Schopenhauer. But he carried the mark of his individuality upon his brow. Travellers passing through Frankfort did not forget their glimpse of him, seated in cold isolation, his piercing

blue eyes betraying the ardour of his nature behind the silence and reserve which he assumed among strangers. Indeed, he made it a rule to talk with no strangers at table except Englishmen. Even with them it is probable that his own words were often put into force: 'I frequently talk with men as a child talks to its doll. The child knows well enough that the doll does not understand it, but by an agreeable personal self-deception it procures the pleasure of communicativeness.'

But his misanthropy, or rather, as he termed his state of mind, his 'anthrophobism,' was shown at least as strongly in all the routine of his daily life. A noise in the night made him spring out of bed, and grasp the dagger and pistol which he always kept within reach. As a protection against thieves he mislabelled his deeds and valuable papers: his coupons, for example, were tied and marked as 'Arcana Medica,' or placed among old letters and newspapers. He kept his spare gold under the inkstand of his writing-desk. He would have shuddered to risk his throat at the hands of a barber. In his walks about the town he carried a small leathern cup, which he used for slaking his thirst at the street fountains. After using his pipe he locked the bowl and mouthpiece out of sight. Out of doors he never breathed freely until he was in the more solitary environs of the town. 'One need only look at the faces of people,' he used to say, 'to learn how to be ashamed of one's race;' and he applied to himself the old words—'The more I consorted with men, the less of a man I became.' It was inevitable that under such stress of conduct his heart, which early in life was warm and sympathetic to excess, should now chill and harden. For what, in short, was the scheme which Schopenhauer put before himself, on the fruition of which his contentment in life depended? To live tolerably, you must be self-centred; to live happily (assuming this is possible) you must live to the full bent of all your capacities, bodily and mental. There must be no pruning of the individuality by family ties, and on the other hand even pleasure itself must be indulged in prudentially—with due regard for consequences, reaction, and so forth. In fact, be a spectator, not an interested actor in life; though occasional incursions into the arena may be recommended, so you secure your retreat, and allow no obstacle to hinder your return thither. Now, such a state of consistent spectatorship is of course egotism absolute. The sympathies must congeal under the habit of it. A common man

trained in this school becomes a vivisectionist of the most barbarous stamp: between human suffering and stage moans he sees but a difference of degree; and therefore the former do but kindle in him a more lively sense of professional interest than the latter. All appeals for pity, all arguments on behalf of the reality of the misery of multitudes, he meets with the maxim that there is compensation everywhere, or with an unabashed rejection, 'I care for no one but myself. Why, then, should I deprive myself of a little comfort that these may eat?' Such must become the ordinary man who makes Schopenhauer his *vade mecum* in life. And yet, as the culminating lesson, this 'philosopher of Frankfort' tells his disciples to aspire to self-sacrifice, and even self-obliteration! Preach vegetarianism to hungry wolves! True, one can conceive that a spectator who is nothing else may from sheer weariness long to close his eyes now and again, and that repeated indulgence of this kind may after a time bring him to a state of intellectual torpor like that of a man besotted with drink. But the common beer-bibber has claims upon respect (slight though they be) which are wanting to an intellectual reprobate of this kind. He does not always go deliberately to his doom: he struggles and falls, and fights a losing battle to the very end. And this gradual snuffing out of the individuality, this slow death in life which is the lot of the exact devotee of Schopenhauer, this Occidental Nirvana, is taught by the same man who says, 'Above all things, be true to yourself; be yourself!' Schopenhauer declared that it was impossible to serve truth and the world; and so, in the interests of truth, he decreed the destruction of the world through the annihilation of individuals!

And how did this hard and in many respects incongruous philosopher linger through the hours of the days that separated him from the eternal oblivion he longed for?

Like Kant, whom he took for his model in domestic matters, Schopenhauer was very regular in his habits. Winter and summer he rose between seven and eight, and sponged himself all over with cold water. In his ablutions he took particular care of his eyes, holding them open while he bathed them repeatedly: this, he said, strengthened the optic nerves. Having dressed, he made himself some coffee, previous to beginning intellectual work. On no account would he allow himself to be disturbed before noon: the morning hours were too precious for that. At twelve o'clock his maidservant knocked at the door.

He then took up his flute and played for half an hour. At one o'clock he went off to the hotel for dinner, which he always ate with a very good appetite. At table, as we have said, he was not generally complaisant; but if the conversation was interesting he immediately aroused himself and joined in it with signal effect.¹ As a rule, however, the officers and others who habitually dined at the hotel talked of subjects he cared nothing about. Day by day for a long time he used to take a piece of gold from his pocket and put it by his plate: he tacitly bargained with himself to pass the money to the poor-box if his neighbours did but once talk of anything except their horses, dogs, and amorous conquests.

After dinner Schopenhauer returned to his room, took coffee, and rested for an hour, reading literature of a light kind. Then, whatever the weather, he started for his constitutional, attended by his poodle, and smoking a cigar. He walked briskly, on the principle that '*omnis motus, quo celerior, eo magis motus,*' using a bamboo stick, with which he had a trick of beating the ground smartly from time to time. When outside the city he liked to stop now and then, and through his eye-glass look at this or that feature of the landscape. Ordinarily he was averse to conversation out of doors, because it obliged him to open his mouth, whereas in the air he thought it more healthful to breathe through the nose.

His walk over, he re-entered his study, and, having given the poodle a plate of meat, he amused himself with the 'Times' and certain other newspapers and reviews, until it was time to go to

¹ The following extract from one of Schopenhauer's letters to Frauenstädt contains a pleasant bit of self-portraiture:—'When I entered the supper-room the other evening a gentleman uprose and introduced himself to me as Professor E—, of H—. His exterior is not bad; he has *tournaure*. But I could not bring about a regular connected conversation, for at every word he travelled off at a tangent to tell some tale which had nothing to do with the matter. Opposite to us sits a *quidam ignotus*, cigar in mouth, and a beard under the cigar. First he listens to our conversation, and then interferes in it. I, in accordance with my invariable tactics, answer him not a syllable. E—, on the other hand, enters into it, and the discourse between the two becomes so lively that they seem to forget me. I use the time to consume my half-chicken and drink my pint, and then I rise up suddenly, rejoicing that I have had the honour of making the Herr Professor's acquaintance. He could not quite hide his surprise and embarrassment, but asked permission to address me when we meet again. I transfer the privilege to you, if he should come to Berlin. We were together hardly one hour, most of which I spent in eating. Thus he uses his opportunity.'

the theatre or a concert-room. But latterly his pleasure in this respect was much lessened by his deafness, the one infirmity of his life. He taught his disciples that music was the best of cleansers for the mind, and the world knows how Richard Wagner, his devoted follower, has turned this teaching to account. He always listened to Beethoven's Symphonies with his eyes shut, and left the room immediately afterwards, to preserve the impression unweakened. At other times, between eight and nine, he again visited the hotel and supped lightly on cold meat and wine. Two glasses of Rhine wine were generally enough to excite his sensitive brain; hence he laid down the agreeable law that the quality of a man's brain is shown by his drinking capacity or incapacity. At supper he was most disposed to talk, and when in the vein he held his listeners spellbound until far into the night. In his old age the penalty of fame came upon him; he was constantly badgered to speak. But he was not a man to dissemble his humours, and so in one of his letters he remarks gaily that he has just outwitted a literary lady, who had thought to inveigle him into conversation, 'to pay her bill by reproducing' his 'chatter.' Quite late in life, before going to bed, he read a little of the 'ever-holy text of the Vedas,' and thus comforted in spirit, he closed his eyes and slept generally for eight hours without a break. Such was the daily routine of Arthur Schopenhauer's life for more than a score of years. He cannot be charged with luxuriousness of living, although, thanks to his able administration of his property and the ultimate sale of his books, he was, before he died, in good circumstances; but, on the other hand, he can as little take to himself what credit may appertain to a life of self-denying asceticism.

Besides his library and his poodle (or rather succession of poodles, with one common name for esoteric use, that of Atma, or soul of the world), the most notable of Schopenhauer's domestic surroundings was a bust of Kant, procured for him by Frauenstädt. For the last ten years of his life this stood on his writing-desk. Portraits of Goethe, Kant, Shakespeare, Descartes, and others, were on his walls. In 1856, however, he prepared a niche for the effigy of a man whom he was then impelled to honour even more than he honoured Kant—viz. Buddha the Magnanimous. An amusing passage of arms occurred between him and his landlady when this Buddha was unpacked. His landlady was a devout Catholic, with an orthodox shrine in the corner of her room, and

she was disposed to sneer a little at her master's divinity. 'He sits like a tailor!' she remarked when the bust was set upon its altar. But Schopenhauer cut short her sarcasms: 'You rude person!' he exclaimed, turning upon her in great wrath, 'have I ever abused *your* Lord God that you should speak in that way of the Victorious-Perfected?'

In spite of the rugosities and confessed blemishes of his character, there is something not a little pathetic and invigorating in the picture of this lonely, much-defamed, and much-defaming man, fast tending towards the grave, finding nightly solace in the lamplit pages of the Vedas and the mild face of the good Gautama.

V.

From the year 1853, when, in the 'Westminster Review,' Dr. Oxenford introduced this 'bold, eccentric, and terrible writer,' as he calls him, to the English public, until his death in 1860, Schopenhauer found increasing enjoyment in life now that his fame had come upon him. Those *Brodprofessoren*, whom, in spite of their assumed disdain of him, he charged with secret and fearful study of his works to their profit, were now at his feet. Yet he did not scruple to treat them as St. George treated the prostrate dragon. Hitherto his birthdays had been anniversaries devoted to sombre reflection. Now he received gifts and letters of congratulation. One disciple took the trouble to ascertain that he was born on a Friday; and this was held to be a significant fact. His seventieth birthday was celebrated as a festival of peculiar interest. Among the presents on this occasion was a silver tankard with the inscription, 'Only truth stands the test: it alone endures: it is the imperishable diamond.' An admirer buys an oil-painting of him, and promises to build a house for it. 'This,' says Schopenhauer, 'will be my first temple.' A gentleman writes to him from Haarlem, saying that his philosophy is to him like a Bible; he goes to it with the happiest results in every moment of sadness or distress. Another devotee avers that he had seen Schopenhauer in a dream before making his acquaintance. He is even accessible to professors and pastors of the Lutheran faith. From one of the latter he receives a curious tribute of respect. 'He has sent me a bundle of epigrams, &c. with the remark that no newspaper nor publisher will take them.' Nor are public honours wanting to complete his satisfaction, though

he haughtily rejects the proposition of becoming a member of the Berlin Academy: they had despised him throughout his life; he had lived without them; he could die without them. If they were in want of more members, they might bestow the honour upon half-a-dozen lieutenant-generals. As for him, he would have the honour of—remaining as he was. But perhaps the strongest proof of the old philosopher's influence was found in the army. Many officers wrote to him, and accepted his teaching with enthusiasm.

Up to the last year of his life, Schopenhauer's health was excellent. To be sure in 1853 he could write to Frauenstädt as follows:—'Yesterday I was ill for once, with a cold in the stomach, and had to sit in, thinking of death, as befits my age; but today I laugh at it, and am going out, and hope yet long to be, your friend, A. S.' But on his sixty-eighth birthday he was lusty and exuberant as ever. 'I still run like a greyhound, am very well, blow at my flute every day, in summer swim in the Main (which I did last on September 19), suffer from no ailment, and my eyes are as good as when I was a student.' Save his deafness, he had nothing to complain of. And again on his seventieth birthday, when one of his disciples reminds him that he has reached the limits of life, he eagerly contests the point: 'The holy Upanishads say in two places, a hundred years is the term of man's life. That is my comfort.'

But Schopenhauer was not destined to live to be a centenarian. In the spring of the year 1860, to his surprise and displeasure, he was warned unmistakably that his body was getting out of gear. A difficulty of breathing compelled him to shorten his walks, and otherwise disturbed him. Dr. Gwinner advised him to breakfast in bed, but Schopenhauer would not surrender: he rose, took his cold bath as usual, and declined to vary the routine he had imposed upon himself. In September of the same year an attack of inflammation of the lungs much weakened him, and yet thus debilitated he insisted upon receiving visitors and continuing the final revision of his philosophical work, then in the third edition. But by this time he was convinced that he had not long to live. His talk with Gwinner was of a boding kind. He did not fear death, he said; for the corruption of the body he cared nothing; but what would happen to him, he asked, if, after all, spiritual existence was not a myth, and his soul were to come under the hands of Hegel and the other professors of philosophy

whom he had so vituperated during his life? It was a whimsical fancy, but he seems to have set it forth in all seriousness. If only he could live until he had finished his work! But he could find enlivenment in the self-assurance that the worth of his philosophy was well evidenced in the reception that had been given to it by so many honest men and women, to whom it was welcome as a substitute for the old religion of Christianity. He would like to have felt certain that death for him meant annihilation; but he could not believe it; he had not been sufficiently a denier of the Will to Live to have merited this boon.

He spent the evening of the third day before his death in talking to Gwinner in this way. The doctor tried to cheer him out of his presentiments, but he only partially succeeded. Three days afterwards, entering the house at an early hour, he found Schopenhauer lying upon the sofa, dead: a spasm of the lungs had seized him just as he was about to sit down to breakfast. It was such a death as he had hoped for.

Schopenhauer was buried as befitted him, with no pomp. No relative, and only two or three of his disciples, followed him to the grave. But he was fortunate in having the funeral oration pronounced over his body by a pastor of singular magnanimity, who knew and reminded his hearers that they were doing the last honours to a man of genius and a man of extraordinary robustness of character. Never was the spirit of Christianity better shown forth than in the words of this good priest over the man who had discarded and opposed the religion of Christ.

‘. . . Our friend’s teaching was like the cut of his coat, quite out of the fashion—and so it will remain! . . .

‘. . . To the common eye he was a misanthropist; but, little as he esteemed men, he felt for them, and was full of sympathy. . . .

‘. . . May the soil rest lightly upon him! Peace be to his ashes!’

When Gwinner asked him where he wished to be buried, Schopenhauer replied, ‘It is all one—they will find me!’ And thus he rests in the Frankfort Cemetery, and his grave is indicated by a common headstone, with the simple inscription: ‘Arthur Schopenhauer.’

In conclusion, we may say that in his lifetime Schopenhauer was more charitable than he cared to take credit for being, and that the bulk of his property after his death went to charitable

purposes. How far his predictions about his own importance will be fulfilled it is impossible to say; but a bibliography of him, recently published, covers nearly a hundred pages. Some people think Schopenhauer to blame for the leaven of anarchy, and also point to him as the prime cause of the suicidal mania, in his country. Yet no error could be more radical. In politics he asked for order before everything; and he left a large sum of money for the orphans and widows of the soldiers who died in defence of order during the outbreaks in Frankfort in 1848. The other charge against him is equally irrational, for he has demonstrated in his works that of all criminal beings the suicide is the most criminal.

We need say nothing about Schopenhauer's teaching in general. There are many strong spirits who, having 'eaten their spiritual bread with tears,' thankfully accept it as a staff to lean upon. It is like a dry wind straight from the ice of the pole—piercing indeed, but bracing to those who are robust enough to breathe it. But most men, who really go through life spiritually unmoved, would laugh at Schopenhauer and his philosophy.

'What! is it possible?' shouted the phrenologist to whom the cast of Schopenhauer's head was sent after his death. He had never seen such monstrous development, believed he was being imposed upon, and confessed that he almost felt afraid of the thing. So with the philosophy of the philosopher of Pessimism!

A CELIBATE'S WIFE.

THE Rev. Peter Lillingston was exceedingly popular amongst his parishioners. And deservedly so. Had he not, at his own expense, re-seated the church, laid down the most elegant tile floor, kept the parish supplied for years in all the newest designs in altar-cloths, and generally done everything that the most model rector could do? Never was there a pastor who was so generous to his flock, or who presided over the church in such a truly liberal spirit.

But he had one fault, though his parishioners did not perceive it. He was ready to sell his soul, or anything else that he possessed or did not possess, for one particular object.

Souls (so spelt) are not, generally speaking, marketable commodities. Much misapprehension is shown on this point. It is true that Faust had an opportunity of regaining his youth at the price of his soul, and he not unnaturally accepted the offer; but I believe I am justified in stating that his is the only recorded case of a man obtaining valuable consideration for that article. Yet in all ages there have been numbers of men who, overlooking the fact that their souls are of value only to themselves, have offered them for sale. Some have been ready to sell them for gold; some for love; others for fame.

The Rev. Peter Lillingston followed a different line. He was ready to sell his soul for what he considered religion. He delayed sending his boys to school from year to year that he might restore the parish church; he kept his house as comfortless as a gaol that he might gild and decorate the chancel; he starved his children to buy altar-cloths.

He was blessed with a small income and a charming wife, who was considerably his junior, for whom he had provided in case of his decease by insuring his life. His wife, although not by any means averse to divine worship, did not agree with an entire sacrifice of home duties to parish popularity; but the rector never hesitated to sacrifice any of her comforts to his darling church. With him charity began and ended abroad.

For instance, Mrs. Lillingston was devoted to music, and while

permitting her zealous husband to sell the dining-room furniture to endow the 'Burglars' Sunday Evening Society' with an exhaustive library, and to melt down the family silver to make offertory plates, she had always managed to retain a beautiful grand piano, which had been given her before her marriage, the strings of which had metaphorically wound themselves round her heart. One day, however, on returning from a week's visit to her relations, she found the piano gone, and in answer to her tearful inquiries she was informed that it had been sacrificed to a worthy object. A few months later her husband proudly showed her what he was pleased to call the 'Lillingston Vestry,' which had been built with the proceeds of her worldly instrument, and was warmed with a gas-stove which Mrs. Lillingston had herself purchased for the nursery.

From this instance of the many acts of fanaticism committed by the Rev. Lillingston it will be understood that his parish popularity increased in inverse proportion to the strength of his family affections. One result to the children of their father's idiosyncrasies was that they grew up to be practically atheists. They understood at a very early age that all their comforts and joys were sacrificed to the parish, and this started them in life with a prejudice against religion; and when, as they grew older, they saw all their innocent pleasures frustrated by the illimitable claims of Mother Church, their aversion to that institution became unconquerable.

It was well known about two years ago that the Rectory drains were sadly out of order. But the leaders of the Local Board, being for the most part churchwardens, were not so indelicate as to allow their pastor to be troubled about such worldly matters, knowing, as they did, that so long as the church was dry and clean the Rector would care little though his own house stood in a swamp.

But something less exorable than sanitary inspectors brought the matter to light. Disease is no respecter of persons. Mrs. Lillingston's youngest child—a baby of three years—sickened, and the doctor who was at length called in declared a month at the seaside to be absolutely necessary.

This news was great trouble to the Rector. He had his eye just then upon a new thing in lecterns—a magnificent design in polished brass of an impossible bird standing on one claw, and holding a kind of exaggerated shepherd's crook in the other, while it balanced the enormous book on its back as if it was performing

on a tight-rope. This little article was priced at about 80*l.*, and it became a question between the lectern on one side and the month at the sea on the other.

A terrible conflict ensued in the reverend gentleman's mind. He thought the matter over for nearly three weeks, which his wife spent in incessant watching by the sick child's bed.

One night he dreamt he saw the brass bird fighting with the child, thrusting the crook down the baby's throat, and finally crushing it under the Bible. He awoke in a fright, with the resolve that the child should go to the sea that very day, and hastened to his wife to tell her of his decision. He peeped in, and saw her kneeling at the bedside. It was in the early morning, and a ray of cold grey light fell on the white baby face upon the pillow. He had delayed too long. The child was dead.

Sorrows never come singly. For the next three weeks Mrs. Lillingston, who had fallen ill on the day of her child's decease, lay on the brink of death in a raging fever. Then at last the clergyman began to feel the stings of remorse as he watched by his delirious wife's bedside night after night; for he was really fond of her, though his love had been swallowed up in his one absorbing passion. For the first time in his life it gave him no pleasure to enter his beautiful church and feast his eyes on the rich walls and windows. He resolved in future to spend what he could afford on his family, and not sacrifice them entirely to the church. He felt—though he could hardly believe it—quite a loathing for such things as reading-desk and reredos. The new lectern was ordered—though not paid for—so that could not be helped. But he determined never again to spend his private money to gratify his parishioners.

The crisis passed, and gradually Mrs. Lillingston recovered, till, after three months at the seaside, she was almost herself again. Gradually, too, her husband began to forget his good resolutions, and feel once more a hankering after albs and stoles and stained-glass windows. But first there was the lectern debt to be got rid of. The money that was to have been paid for it had all been spent on Mrs. Lillingston's illness. The Rector was a good customer of the church furnishers who had supplied it, and they would not press him for payment for a long time yet. But the bill had been sent in.

About five years previously the Rector had surprised and delighted the parish by presenting the church with a magnificent

peal of five bells. Nobody knew where he had got the money from, and nobody cared except Mrs. Lillingston. When she inquired about it, she was told not to interfere. This beneficent gift had gained the Rector enormous *kudos*. Three deputations, with banners, had called on him at separate times, thanked him in the heartiest manner, and then gone round to the back door and compelled Mrs. Lillingston to provide them with beer. The local papers were surcharged with laudatory leaders. The curate had preached the most fulsome sermon on the subject, and the bishop had written to the rector to express his sincere approval of the gift. The bells were continuously rung—by tyros—for almost a whole week, and the deaths of three infirm old ladies who lived near the church were hastened by the process.

When the Rev. and Mrs. Lillingston returned from the seaside after Mrs. Lillingston's illness, it was found that the large bell had got somehow shifted and could not be rung. It was suggested by certain evil-minded persons that some one who lived near the church, feeling that their brains were being drummed away by the continual pealing the whole of every Sunday, as well as Tuesdays and Fridays and every Saint's day, had induced some hireling to ascend the tower at night and disable one of the bells. This suggestion was dismissed with the contempt it deserved. How could any one, however near the church he was fortunate enough to live, ever grow tired of hearing the beautiful bells that dear Mr. Lillingston had presented to the parish?

Be that as it may, the bell had got wrong, and it remained to put it right. But before sending for men to do it, the Rector took upon himself to ascend the tower and examine it, late one afternoon and all alone. Now the monks who built our old churches seem to have taken a fiendish delight in making the ascent of the towers as perilous as possible. This was no exception. The staircase began in the most respectable way. There were nice square stone steps for a little distance, and up went the reverend though corpulent gentleman as merrily as could be. But after it had wound twice round it became perfectly dark for a while, and as one of the steps seemed to have worn quite away, the Rector came down with his knees on one step and his forehead on another in the most undignified manner imaginable.

After this he proceeded more cautiously. The stone steps came to an end, and were succeeded by wooden stairs, worm-eaten and crumbling away. Up he went, past the great clock that ticked

so loudly that it seemed as if it was shouting to warn him to go no higher, till he came to a shaky ladder which led up to the belfry. This ladder wanted mending sadly. Several of the rungs had fallen out, and consequently the Rector had to stretch his legs considerably to step from one to the other. However, he reached the top in safety, although feeling rather nervous, for he had not been in the belfry for many years, and it seemed somewhat alarming. There was a strong wind blowing, and the wooden shutters rattled and the bell-axles creaked as if they were living things. The longer he stayed the more frightened he felt, and the less inclined to commence the downward journey. He looked through the narrow shutters and wished he was back in his house, which he saw below, with the children playing in the garden. It is a far more difficult thing to climb down than to climb up; and this is unfortunate, for whereas an ascent is generally voluntary, one often has no choice whether to descend or no. This is what struck the Rector as he looked down the ladder; and the more he looked at it the more dangerous it seemed.

Suddenly the weathercock whirled round with a shriek so close to his ear that he started and turned round in a hurry to retreat. The first step of the ladder was a very long one, for the two top rungs were out. There was no rail to hold on to. He clutched hold of a bell-wheel to steady himself, and it swung round and terrified him by making the bell speak with a jarring sound. Then he knelt on the dusty floor, and sent one of his legs down to reconnoitre. It had been vaguely wandering about for some time, feeling for the ladder, when a bat in the roof started off for its evening exercise and brought down a lump of plaster on to the Rector's head. At this most critical moment he started violently, lost his balance, and went crashing down, through the lath and plaster floor of the clock story—down to the bottom of the tower. In his fall he caught hold of a bell-rope, and the bell answered with a tremendous clang. It was his death-knell.

The sexton, who was in the churchyard, hearing the bell ring and the thud of the body on the floor, rushed into the church and found the Rector in a dying condition. He was carried to the house and expired within an hour. As he lay dying, he was just able to speak to his wife.

‘Mary, I have been very very wicked to you—I leave you in great trouble—you must try and forgive me.’

‘I do forgive you everything. Are you thinking of the lectern

that is not paid for? We shall soon pay off that debt with the insurance money, you know.'

The dying man's face grew whiter than ever, and he clenched his hands convulsively.

'The policy—I sold it—five years ago—for the church bells.'

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The parishioners were very sorry when they heard that the Rector was dead; and still more so when they heard that his widow and five children were not only left utterly destitute, but saddled with a debt of 80*l.* for the new lectern, for this news seemed unpleasantly suggestive of subscription lists. A list was indeed opened, and half the lectern debt was paid off. Then they closed their purses and felt they had done their duty.

The present Rector is particularly proud of his bells; and for the number and variety of its altar-cloths and the general excellence of its decorations the church is unsurpassed in the whole county.

SOME TYPOGRAPHICAL ERRORS.

THE number of curious typographical blunders which from time to time have been committed is naturally very great. In most cases the errors have been simply absurd, but in some instances they have been of such a nature as to be fraught with serious consequences to the perpetrators of them.

Shortly after the invention of printing, the wife of a printer in Germany, whilst an edition of the Bible was in the press, on one occasion made a small, but important, change in the types. The sentence in Genesis in which it is declared that Eve shall be subject to her husband runs thus: 'He shall be thy lord' (Herr). This was altered to 'He shall be thy fool' (Narr). Many copies of the book got into circulation before the substitution of the one word for the other was discovered, for in black letter *Herr* and *Narr* much resemble each other. It is said that the practical joke cost the unfortunate woman her life, she having been condemned to the stake by the ecclesiastical authorities.

During the latter part of the last century an awkward mistake occurred in this country in printing the Bible. In this edition the word *not* was omitted in the seventh commandment. For this piece of carelessness the then Archbishop of Canterbury imposed a heavy penalty. The edition, so far as practicable, was called in and destroyed, and a fine of 20,000*l.* was inflicted upon the printers.

The Roman Catholic Missal issued in France was once the subject of a ludicrous blunder. By the accidental substitution of an *u* for an *a*, the word *calotte* (an ecclesiastical cap or mitre) was printed *culotte* (breeches). The error occurred in the directions for conducting the service, and the sentence as altered read, 'Here the priest will take off his *culotte*.'

Yet another illustration of the curious perversions sometimes made in the Scriptures by printers may be given. The late Reverend William Jay once published a sermon preached by him on the text, 'Skin for skin, yea, all that a man hath will he give for his life.' The printer made the last word to read *wife*. Mr. Jay corrected the blunder in the first and second proofs without the requisite alteration being attended to. When the author received

the last revise of the pamphlet, noticing that the erroneous word still made its appearance, he wrote on the margin of the page, 'This depends altogether upon circumstances; change your "wife" into "*life*."'

It occasionally happens that in a printing-office some of the types will fall out of the forme, and in replacing them mistakes are liable to occur. In an edition of 'The Men of the Time,' part of a paragraph referring to Robert Owen, the Parallelogram Communist, became disarranged, and the compositor, instead of reinserting the lines in their proper place, put them under the heading of 'Oxford, Bishop of,' which was the next alphabetical reference. The result was that the article began thus:

'OXFORD, the Right Reverend SAMUEL WILBERFORCE, Bishop of, was born in 1805. A more kind-hearted, truly benevolent man does not exist. *A sceptic as regards religious belief, he is nevertheless an out-and-out believer in spirit movements.*'

Directly the mistake was discovered the leaf was cancelled, but before this was done some copies of the book had got into circulation.

In Mr. Pycroft's 'Ways and Words of Men of Letters,' there is given a conversation with a printer. 'Really,' said the printer, 'gentlemen should not place such unlimited confidence in the eyesight of our hard-worked and half-blinded reader of proofs, for I am ashamed to say that we utterly ruined one poet by a ludicrous misprint.' 'Indeed! And what was the unhappy line?' 'Why, sir, the poet intended to say, "See the pale martyr in a sheet of fire"; instead of which we made him to say, "See the pale martyr *with his shirt on fire*."'

A frequent source of error is the substitution of one letter for another. Thus on one occasion the line

'So the struck eagle stretched upon the plain'

appeared in print as

'So the struck eagle stretched upon the *plate*.'

And in a poem in which the author had written: .

'For the dew-drop that falls on the freshly-blown roses,'
the printer made him to say:

'For the dew-drop that falls on the freshly-blown *noses*.'

In the case of misprints of the character of those above cited,

the first impression of the reader who sees them would likely be that the mistakes must have been intentional. But this conclusion is not necessarily the correct one, for a compositor seldom attempts to follow the sense of the manuscript he is putting into type. Indeed it is a proverb with printers that he who does this will never become a rapid workman. The idea is that it is the duty of a compositor to 'follow copy,' and that it is the business of the proof-reader to correct errors.

Sometimes, however, the printer will undertake to rectify a mistake into which he conceives the author has fallen, and not always with the happiest results. Thus a compositor, ignorant of the Greek mythology, came across the sentence, 'Shall reign the Hecate of the lowest hell.' This must be wrong, was the argument, for *cat* is not spelt with a final *e*; so the line was changed to read, 'Shall reign the *He cat* of the lowest hell.'

In this connection the writer may mention that in a story of his a similar emendation of the text was attempted by the printer. In the tale—the scene of which was laid in America—a hunter was represented as saying, 'I was as hungry as a painter,' this word being commonly used for panther in the Western States. Now the compositor evidently supposed that he had discovered a mistake, for why should a painter be more liable to suffer from hunger than people following other avocations? The phrase, therefore, was altered to *pointer*. In the proof sent the author the *o* was struck out and an *a* substituted for it. In the 'revise' the requisite alteration had not been made, and it was only when attention was called to the mistake for the second time that it was corrected.

Moore, in his diary, mentions that when he was in the United States he saw an American edition of 'Gifford's Journal.' In this work the author—whilst instituting a parallel between Horace and Juvenal—had used this language: 'Horace was of an easy disposition, inclining to indolence.' But the printer had converted the last word into *insolence*; thus spoiling the whole sense of the sentence.

The bad handwriting of some authors is the cause of many of the typographical errors which occur in their works. The manuscripts of Balzac, for instance, were almost illegible, and this circumstance, combined with the numerous alterations and interlineations with which they abounded, rendered the novelist the bugbear of the compositors employed in the offices where his works

were printed. In fact, the workmen were in the practice of stipulating that they should not be required to devote more than a small portion of their time each day to Balzac's copy, since, otherwise, the work—paid by the piece, as is usual—would not afford them a living.

The late Horace Greeley, the eminent American journalist, is another example of a man of letters writing an exceptionally bad hand. Not only was it most difficult for others to read his manuscript, but he himself, when a little while had elapsed since he had penned it, frequently found it impossible to do so. An anecdote is related of him that having, on one occasion, addressed a note to an *employé* discharging him for incompetence, the man, confident that no one was likely to decipher the execrable scrawl, had the assurance, when seeking another situation, to offer the letter in question as a testimonial received from his previous employer.

The illegibility of one line of the manuscript of 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' was the cause of an important error in the early editions of that work, and one which, oddly enough, not only escaped the notice of the author at the time, but also that of the critics until long afterwards. Indeed, even in Moore's edition of Byron's complete works, published in 1832, the error still remained uncorrected. In Canto IV., stanza 182 of the poem, Byron, speaking of the sea, was represented in the text to have made use of this language:

Thy shores are empires, changed in all save thee—
Assyria, Greece, Rome, Carthage, what are they?
Thy waters *wasted them* while they were free.

Some years ago the editor of a new collection of Byron's poems was struck by the inaccuracy of the statement embodied in the words italicised above. 'Where,' he argued, 'has the Mediterranean "wasted" the shores of any of the countries bordering upon it? On the contrary, it is well known to all geographers that this sea and the waters flowing from it have, in the course of the last twenty centuries, shrunk considerably within their ancient boundaries. This is more especially the case as regards the Adriatic, many places in Italy which were seaports in the time of the Cæsars now being situated some little distance inland. Now, it seems quite incomprehensible that Byron, who resided for a lengthened period in the south of Europe, should be so ignorant

of these facts as to commit himself to a statement utterly inconsistent with history. Consequently the most natural explanation of the error must be that there is a misprint in the text.'

The result of this reasoning was that the gentleman in question sought and obtained access to the original manuscript of the poem. A careful scrutiny of it proved that the third line of the stanza, as written by the author, ran thus:—

Thy waters *washed their power* while they were free.

This emendation makes good sense of a line which, as it formerly stood, was palpably inaccurate. In all the recent editions of 'Childe Harold's Pilgrimage' the correct reading is given.

MAMMOTH HUNTING IN SIBERIA.

THE mammoth has had exceptional good fortune among the unhappy company of extinct animals. Alone in the whole prehistoric world it possesses a name of which it need not be ashamed, a name which entitles it at once to naturalisation as an adopted citizen in all civilised modern languages. Nobody ever dreams of talking in polite society about the palæotherium or the enaliosaurian, about the *Æpyornis giganteus* or the *Plesiosaurus dolichodeiros*: those, we all instinctively feel, are bad words connected with questions which had better be discussed (if ever) 'in the absence of Mrs. Boffin.' But the mammoth has created for itself a recognised place in popular phraseology and popular literature; it is known as familiarly to the unlearned herd as the elephant or the rhinoceros, the jumping frog or the 'blue-faced gorilla.' Mammoth shows parade the country towns, though nobody ever heard of a mastodon entertainment, or even of an elephantine equestrian troupe; Mammoth Caves attract annually their thousands of visitors in the summer season, and mammoth concerns at the West End threaten to absorb the Lilliputian establishments of the steady-going, old-fashioned British shopkeeper. Why this one particular fossil animal should thus have struck the popular fancy with his personal attractions it would be hard indeed to say. The mammoth was not really so very much bigger than the common African elephant, and certainly nothing like as big as the Greenland whales, or as the gigantic land saurians of the secondary period. But the comparative shortness and native ring of the name he bore seems first to have recommended him for exploitation to the shrewd and practical American mind; for it was the Americans who took the lead in the adjectival utilisation of the word mammoth, and after being duly enrolled in the American language its adoption on this side of the Atlantic became of course, as usual, a mere matter of time. Whenever the great American people boom, the poor benighted Britisher must in due course boom after them. He may not individually like booming; he may make many wry faces at first, in the process; but boom he must in the long run, whether he like it or not. The English language at the present day is imported, like the corn, the cheese,

the tinned peaches, and the smoked bacon, direct from the original manufactories at Chicago.

Not, of course, that the name mammoth was an invention of Barnum, a splendid inspiration of the native American mind. It comes to us from Siberia via New York, and was first applied to the extinct member of the elephant tribe by the unsophisticated Tungusians of the mouth of the Lena. The origin of the name mammoth is in itself indeed a perfect romance of mingled folklore and natural history. From time immemorial, the heathen fisher-folk of the Siberian waste were accustomed to discovering among the silted rubbish of the river mouths the tusks and bones of a huge animal, which they naturally believed to be a sort of gigantic mole, because they never saw it alive above ground, but sometimes came upon its frozen remains deeply buried in the mud of the tundras or barren moss-morasses of their northern expanses. For this reason they called the creatures by the name mammoth, a name which I am credibly informed is the equivalent of mole in the Tungusian dialect of the Ostiak language. On this point, however, I would fain speak with becoming diffidence, because my own first-hand acquaintance with the Ostiak tongue is strictly limited, being in fact what the mathematicians ingeniously call a negative quantity. Tungusian, to say the truth, is just at present of little use in practical life; and therefore it is probably included in no scheme of teaching except in the alarming Cambridge curriculum for the higher education of women. Consider how valuable a knowledge of that subject, and of the text of Beowulf in the original Anglo-Saxon, must be to a person destined to fulfil the ordinary functions of a wife and mother!

Be that as it may, however, the word mammoth was long known as the name of a mysterious underground creature, whose tusks the heathen fishermen of the Arctic shore used to send to St. Petersburg, for the prosaic purpose of the manufacture of ivory. So greedy indeed is modern man of commercial products that not content with cutting the fresh tusks from the still living jaws of the fallen African elephant, he actually utilises the fossil remains of the quaternary epoch for the production of dress buttons and the turning of billiard balls. For aught I know to the contrary, the very penholder which is an accessory before the fact to my inditing of this present article may have been carved from the relics of some prehistoric elephant whose huge body yet stands unthawed among the frozen morasses of the Siberian tundra. But

the eighteenth century, little inquisitive in the remotely antique, and satisfied to attribute all fossil bones to the Noachian deluge, took small heed of the North Asiatic mammoths. It merely heard in a vague way that ivory tusks were imported from Siberia, and contented itself with sagely surmising that they were in all probability nothing more than very big walrus teeth.

At the same time, throughout all Western Europe, elephant bones of huge size were occasionally unearthed in the course of digging foundations for houses; and the artless antiquaries of the eighteenth century speculated with much perverted ingenuity as to how the elephants could ever have got to France or England. Some of the bones were found in Italy, and the sagacious antiquaries of the Tuscan Academy solved the problem by observing that elephants, as is well known, formed part of the equipment both of Pyrrhus and of Hannibal. Others were found in various parts of our more northern Britain, and these, to be sure, were rather more difficult for history to account for: but the ingenious archæologist was here again equal to the occasion; he suggested with much seriousness that the Romans had probably brought them over for the sports of the arena at York or Colchester. Such easy guesses satisfied to the full the uncritical spirit of the eighteenth century, and few people reflected on the bare possibility of a hairy northern form of elephant having once ranged over the entire expanse of temperate and arctic Europe and America.

Sometimes, too, the bones of mammoths were converted by too ardent and enthusiastic theologians into proofs of the literal correctness of Scripture, and surviving evidences of the universal deluge. 'There were giants in those days,' says the book of Genesis; and mammoth bones had at least the appropriate merit of being undoubtedly very gigantic. The giant of Lucerne, in particular, had a vast vogue in his own time; he was cleverly constructed by an ingenious but unscrupulous Basle professor out of some elephantine remains dug up from the drift in the immediate neighbourhood of the Swiss playground. By a skilful and judicious selective process, the guileful professor built up from the bones a mock-human skeleton, twenty-six feet high in its stockingless feet, and installed it in state in the museum of the Jesuits' College, where it held its daily levées with great success, and became the pride and admiration of the Lucerne populace. Unfortunately, however, one day a spoil-sport scientist of osteological tastes came to view the mendacious giant—no less

a person, in fact, than the great anatomist Blumenbach himself; and under his disenchanting gaze the son of Anak forthwith resolved himself with immense contempt into an elephantine fraud of the first magnitude. Still earlier, in 1613, the giant of Dauphiné had had an equally ephemeral local success; he was declared to have been one of the Cimbri who fought against Marius, and it was even decided by abstract reasoning that his original name and station was King Teutobochus; but in the end, this historical impostor also turned out to be nothing more or less than a perverted mastodon. Occasionally the bones of these various elephantine species were also attributed to the blessed saints, and carried round the fields in time of drought by way of propitiating the unkindly heavens.

It was not till the last year of the last century that the first entire mammoth was disinterred from the tundra, to the complete demolition of giants and antiquaries, and the profound delight of scientific inquirers. In 1799, at the very moment when a rash young man of the name of Bonaparte was upsetting the Directory and making himself incontinently into a First Consul, the people of Siberia were quietly rejoicing in the rare and unexpected luxury of a warm summer. In the course of this unexpected climatic debauch a Tungusian fisherman in the Lena district went out one day hunting for mammoth tusks, and was surprised to find instead a whole mammoth sticking out visibly from a bank of half-thawed mud. Siberians stand rather in awe of mammoths; they are regarded as in some sort antediluvian, and therefore uncanny monsters, and the fisherman accordingly said nothing of his find to any man anywhere, but locked up the secret profoundly in his own bosom. Next year, however, he went again stealthily to visit the suspicious creature, and the year after that he visited it a third time; and so on, till the mammoth was at last fairly thawed out, and fell on to a sandbank by the shore of the Arctic Ocean. Then the fisherman, seeing the monster was really dead, summoned up courage boldly to cut out the tusks, which he straightway sold, on business bent, for fifty roubles to a Russian merchant. As to the body itself, he thought no more in any way about that, for the skin and the flesh being somewhat high, not to say unpleasant, were not in a condition to form marketable commodities. However, he noticed that his monster was covered with long hair and thick wool, and that in general shape it roughly resembled his own unsophisticated idea of an elephant.

Two years later a wandering man of science passed that way on his road to China with Count Golovkin. Hearing that a mammoth had been unearthed, or rather uniced, near the mouth of the Lena, he turned aside from his main path to pay his respects in due form to the prehistoric monster. He found it, indeed, still recognisable, but, *quantum mutatus ab illo*, a bare and mutilated elephantine corpse, with scarce a fragment of flesh clinging to the bones of the huge skeleton. The fishermen around had cut off the muscles from the body in great slices to feed their dogs, and the wolves and bears had feasted their fill on the frozen and unsavoury meat of a forgotten antiquity. There is something positively appalling in the idea of that strange beast, preserved so fresh for 80,000 years (on the most modest computation), that when once more disintombed it was still fit for lupine food, and for the matter of that was very probably cooked and eaten in part by the unsophisticated Tungusians themselves in person. But though most of the flesh had disappeared, the skeleton still remained almost intact, held together in places by the undecayed ligaments; the huge eyes yet stared wildly from their capacious sockets, the brain was uninjured within the heavy skull, one ear hung unhurt from the side of the head, retaining its long tuft of bristly hair, and as much of the skin had escaped destruction as ten men could carry away together. The skeleton was taken to St. Petersburg and there set up in the museum of the Imperial Academy. It has frequently sat or stood for its portrait since to various artists, and its counterfeit presentment in black and white forms, in fact, the common mammoth of the ordinary woodcuts, almost all of which are taken from this earliest, best, and most perfect specimen. The only doubtful point about the beast is the tusks. They were repurchased, as was supposed, from the Russian merchant who had bought them from their original discoverer; but whether he sold back the right pair, or another set like them that fitted equally well, has never been quite satisfactorily determined.

From that time forward it became quite clear that the mammoth was really a hairy northern form of elephant, adapted for living in a cold climate, and quite distinct in several ways from the degenerate modern hairless elephants of India and Africa. In the first place he was considerably bigger, the tallest elephants being not more than eleven feet high, while the mammoth often reached thirteen feet or over, with thickness in proportion. Then,

again, as regards his 'points,' he was very much clumsier, heavier, and uglier. Our own elephant is not precisely a model of grace; elephantine is an adjective the reverse of sylph-like; but the mammoth was in this respect even more than elephantine; he was an elephant raised to the n^{th} power of heaviness and ugliness. As the Arab is to the coarse dray-horse, so was Jumbo to the Siberian mammoth. The tusks of the earlier beast were very much longer, and spirally curved at the end in a way which suggests that his mode of fighting must have been to charge with his head between his legs, forehead foremost; for Mr. Darwin has amply shown that the *raison d'être* of all tusks, spurs, horns, and antlers is to assist the lords and masters of the herd in their battles for the secure possession of their harems.

It must not, however, be supposed that our own elephant is in any way a degenerate descendant of the true mammoth. On the contrary, the great Siberian beast was in many respects a more advanced and specialised representative of the original family than his southern cousins. He was, in short, a progressive elephant, who, seized with a desire to emigrate, had gone north and overspread the whole temperate regions of Europe, Asia, and North America before the coming on of the great ice age. In his northern home he retained or redeveloped the hairy covering which the elephants lost in India or Africa, and he took kindly enough to the cold weather which preceded the advent of the glacial epoch. In short, he was rather an elder brother of the elephant than in any sense a direct ancestor.

Other mammoths have since been found in the Siberian tundra, buried where they sank in up to their necks among the soft slush, and preserved ever since, partly like tinned meats by the exclusion of the air, and partly like Australian mutton by the effects of frost. The most interesting find was that made by a young Russian engineer of the name of Benkendorf, who, steaming in a small cutter up the Indigirka river (not to know the Indigirka naturally argues yourself unknown), saw, during a flood, to his immense delight, a real dead mammoth, with its eyes open, and its hairy trunk moving restlessly through the turbid water, bobbing up and down merrily in the stream before him. There is a well-known Swiss story of the wrinkled old woman in a mountain village who recognises in the fresh corpse of a young man just brought down among the ice of a glacier to the point where it melts into an Alpine torrent, the features of her lover, lost half

a century before in the yawning mouth of a deep crevasse. But what is half a century of iced humanity to a hundred thousand years of preserved mammoth? Benkendorf lassoed the extinct monster, whose hind limbs still stuck firm in the frozen earth, and observed with interest that it stood upright, showing conclusively the manner in which it met its death: it had sunk in through the soft mud, and there been frozen hard by the yet unmelted Siberian ice of the glacial epoch. Even the contents of the stomach were still preserved, and as they consisted of pine-needles and fir-cones, they indicated at once the nature of the mammoth's original food, and the climate of the country at the time when he lived there. Curiously enough, in the case of the mastodon, whose mortal remains, other than bones, have nowhere been preserved for our edification, an exactly similar accident disclosed the character of that other extinct elephant's fare. A skeleton dug up in the mud of a pond in New Jersey was found to have within its bare ribs the relics of a comfortable meal, consisting of seven bushels of dry green-stuff, chiefly minute twigs and leaves of cypress.

Probably the Siberian tundra is everywhere full of buried mammoths. Certainly the Irish bogs are full of the skeletons of the gigantic Irish elks, entombed in precisely the same manner. At the period when the mammoths ranged over the whole of the northern continents, the climate of Siberia must have been nearly as cold as it is at the present day. The big brutes must often have strayed down from the pine-woods where they fed to the neighbouring tundras, whose frozen surface readily supported them. But when a thaw came the luckless monster would find himself helplessly floundering in the soft mud till he sank in past all hope, and the muddy ooze closed remorselessly above his huge head. Then frost set in and bound him tight, a frost that never relaxed its hold from the days of the glacial epoch itself till the unusual thaw of the warm summer when he was once more unearthed for scientific eyes to observe his lineaments. We may well believe that if all the tundra could be systematically explored, innumerable skeletons of deceased mammoths might everywhere be discovered among its frozen recesses.

Every now and then, when the Siberian thermometer takes a wild upward movement above its normal freezing-point, a thaw by the riverside exposes the embedded body of a mammoth, thus hermetically fastened in the hard mass of ice-bound peat-moss.

The bank then gives way in flood, partly, no doubt, under the influence of the monster's weight, and the decomposing body is accordingly swept seaward, where it soon breaks up or is eaten by marine animals, leaving only the bones to bear witness to the huge creature's former existence. These bones are afterwards cast up in immense numbers on the Arctic coasts, especially in the Liakhov Islands, off the mouth of the Lena, where Nordenskiöld found them in such vast quantities that the shore for miles resembled a regular mammoth cemetery or elephantine charnel-house. Nordenskiöld carried away a few selected specimens for his own use, but myriads more strew the coast everywhere, dissolved from their icy, muddy, watery grave by the occasional warm Siberian summers. Dr. Middendorf even unearthed an entire young mammoth in river sand and gravel at the mouth of the Taringe, a stream as to whose precise geographical position I will not pretend to any private or exceptional knowledge.

But though Siberia is the classical country for mammoth hunting—standing to that noble sport in the same relation as Leicestershire does to the pursuit of the familiar fox, or Norfolk to that of the domestic partridge—it is not by any means in Siberia alone that the exciting chase of the extinct mammal can be fully enjoyed by the enthusiastic sportsman. In all the river-deposits of England, France, Germany, and Russia, mammoth remains occur in abundance. A single collector found in the beds at Cromer alone the bones of more than one hundred deceased specimens. In North America, too, the mammoth may be regarded as a common object of the country from Newfoundland to Alaska, and from the Arctic Ocean to the Gulf of Mexico. Probably there is no other extinct mammal whose personal remains have everywhere been found in such immense numbers, or with whose exact form we are so perfectly familiar. For this, no doubt, the mammoth has to thank his enormous size, which renders his bones and tusks comparatively indestructible; but he also owes much to his late date in geological time—he has been dead only some eighty thousand years or so—as well as the peculiar conditions of his life which have caused his remains to be sometimes preserved entire for our edification, like those things of yesterday, the Egyptian mummies and the pickled and desiccated Incas of Peru.

Science, however, is nothing if not exact: let us be exact, then, since this is a strictly scientific paper (though the Royal

Society might fail to perceive it), and let us ask ourselves soberly in due form, who was the mammoth, when did he live, how did he come there, and where did he come from?

The origin of the great proboscidian race in general, and of the mammoth and elephant group in particular, like the early history of Jeames de la Pluche, is 'wrop in obscurity.' All we can say about them with any confidence is that they form a comparatively late order of mammals, whose earliest recognisable representative in geological time is the monstrous deinotherium, an aquatic animal with a long trunk, and with two immense curved tusks, projecting downward paradoxically from his lower instead of his upper jaw. The deinotherium makes his first appearance upon this or any other stage in the Miocene period: but as he couldn't, of course, have appeared there (like Aphrodite and Topsy) without any parents, and as he was then already a fairly specialised and highly developed animal, we must take it for granted that his earlier ancestry, though ancient and respectable in its own time, had long passed away, leaving not a wrack behind, so far as yet known, in the matter of tangible geological vouchers. These unknown ancestors, in all probability, gave birth during their earlier and more plastic stage—for species, like individuals, are most readily moulded in their green youth—to three main family branches. The senior branch produced the deinotherium, a vast brute, who, finding the world too full to hold him about the close of the tertiary period, demised suddenly without issue, leaving the honours of the family in subsequent ages to the junior members. The second branch produced the mastodons, huge creatures of elephantine outline and majestic tread, most of them with tusks both in the upper and lower jaws, though the under pair were always the smallest. The third branch produced the true elephants, including both our modern Indian and African species, as well as the mammoth himself, and many other extinct congeners. All the elephants proper have but one solitary pair of tusks, and that pair is quite correctly located in the upper jaw instead of the under one. Thus is evolution justified of all her children.

The true elephants made their first appearance, so far as known, in the Pliocene period, that is to say, the epoch immediately preceding the Great Ice Age in Europe and America. They blossomed out at once, with all the usual impetuosity of youth, into an alarming number of distinct species. The large 'straight-

tusked elephant' of Southern Europe, whose scientific name I will mercifully spare the unoffending reader, was one of the first to appear upon the scene: he ranged over the whole of Italy, France, Britain, and Germany in great numbers, and left his bones behind him in the Florentine deposits as a polite attention, for the Tuscan biologists to write learned memoirs upon. The 'narrow-toothed elephant' was another very early competitor in the same field; and this more enterprising and more northern form, anticipating Sir Edward Watkin and the Channel Tunnel people, marched in still greater numbers across the belt of land where the Straits of Dover now stretch, and freely roamed the verdant plains of Pliocene Britain. His teeth are still frequent in the Norwich crag, and lots of them may be seen in Norwich Museum 'to witness if I lie,' by anyone who chooses to go and look for them. Both of these antique types were extremely sizeable elephants indeed; but all mistaken persons who go on telling us that 'everything was so very big in those days'—those days being presumably the geological equivalent of that precise historical date, the olden time—should remember *per contra* that some early elephants were anything but colossal, one little Maltese species, a sort of diminutive elephantine Shetland, measuring no more than two and a half or three feet high, an unworthy creature to be so much as mentioned in the same day with the late lamented Jumbo.

The Pliocene period was (in a different sense from the slang one) a warm time: tropical plants then flowered, and tropical animals gambolled merrily close up to the Pole, and within the limits of the Arctic Circle. But towards its close, the world's weather began to undergo an unpleasant variation. The glacial epoch was coming on. Things generally were getting colder. And with the approach of the cold weather, plants and animals slowly adapted themselves to the new state of things in the polar and circumpolar regions. The mammoth thus grew out of the earlier elephants, an elephant specially adapted for cold conditions, and guarded by his thick skin and hairy coat from the extreme chilliness of a glacial climate. Now, at the time when the mammoth began to be, it is pretty clear that Europe, Asia, and America were joined in one; for mammoth bones are found over all three continents alike; and this shows that the Atlantic voyage could then be performed overland, probably by means of a great land-bridge extending from Scotland and Scandinavia, via the Orkneys, the Shetlands, the Faroe Islands, and Iceland, to the coast of Greenland and the

American main. Relics of this supposed land-belt still, perhaps, exist in the great bank that stretches right across the face of the North Atlantic, with these various islands rising from its top, the summits of its tallest groups of hills. However that may be, though—for it is, of course, possible that the mammoth rather invaded America by way of a conjectural land-belt across Behring's Straits, still marked, perhaps, by the Aleutian Islands—this much, at least, is fairly certain, that some means of communication then existed between the continents of the Eastern and Western Hemispheres. Over this vast area the mammoth ranged in enormous numbers, from the Mediterranean to the Arctic Sea, and from the Caribbean to the shores of Alaska.

Perhaps, however, the most interesting point of all about the mammoth is the fact of his contemporaneity with our own beloved though somewhat dusky ancestors, whose dinner he provided in their native caves some two hundred thousand years ago or thereabouts. It is now, I suppose, fairly certain that both man and the mammoth were interglacial animals: they lived together, not very amicably, it is true, in the comparatively mild and genial spells which intervened between the worst ice-orgies of the glacial period. Now the glacial period, if we may believe Dr. Croll, the greatest living authority upon that wonderful epoch, set in about two hundred thousand years since, and after suffering several long vicissitudes of alternate warm and cold spells, finally disappeared, at least so far as its worst intensity was concerned, say some eighty thousand years ago. In the caves which our distinguished progenitors inhabited during this chilly episode of the world's history, we find with considerable frequency the bones of the mammoth, which the primitive hunter had no doubt hunted down among the glacial pine-forests as the modern Zulus hunt down the elephant upon the broad plains of subtropical South Africa. And when primitive man had eaten his mammoth, he often proceeded to carve from his big tusks rude needles, harpoons, and knife-handles, or even to add insult to injury by sketching a rough outline of the animal himself on his own ivory. Specimens of all these early works of art have been found in abundance beneath the concreted floors of the French bone caves.

The best-known and most famous of these very antique drawings is the sketch of a mammoth scratched on a bit of his own tusk which was grubbed up in the cave of La Madelaine in the Dordogne by those indefatigable explorers, MM. Christy and

Lartet. This very spirited and life-like drawing, exhibiting distinct marks of the early French impressionist tendency, represents a creature with wide protruding forehead, small shaggy flapping ears, and long tusks with an upward curve, all which peculiarities immediately serve to distinguish the prehistoric beast from its modern congeners, the Indian and African elephants. Long hair covers the head and body; a heavy mane, like that of the American buffalo, droops from the great monster's neck and back. I do not doubt that the nameless artist who sketched this mammoth on a fragment of ivory two thousand centuries or so since had an actual mammoth in sight before him as he drew, so truthful and lifelike are all the details of his curious picture. I can imagine our naked black Landseer, himself as shaggy and hirsute as the Ainos of Japan, seated at his ease beneath the shelter of his domestic cave, and watching the huge brute in the valley below stalk with leisurely tread through some glade of the forest. Flint knife in hand, our artist fixed him on imperishable ivory, and handed down his features for unknown descendants, whose white skins and strange habiliments would vastly have astonished their unsophisticated progenitor.

Comparison of this very ancient impressionist sketch with the drawing 'dessiné d'après la nature,' by a modern trader, of the mammoth found at the mouth of the Lena, shows the naked prehistoric artist to a very distinct and decided advantage. By putting together these two sources of information, side by side with the skeletons and bodies unearthed by Middendorf in 1843 and Benkendorf in 1846, as well as the specimen found in 1864 in the Bay of Yenisei, we are enabled to reconstruct for ourselves with much probability a very correct image indeed of the living mammoth in all his glory. 'Picture to yourself,' says Benkendorf of his own specimen, 'an elephant whose body is covered with thick fur; a beast thirteen feet in height and fifteen in length, with tusks eight feet long, thick and curving outward at their ends, a stout trunk running to six feet, colossal limbs of immense thickness, and a tail naked up to the end, where it terminates in a thick tuft of coarse hair. My animal was fat and well nourished; death had overtaken him in the flower of his age. His parchment ears lay turned up over his head; about his back and shoulders he had stiff hair, a foot in length, hanging down like the mane of a bison. On his body the long outer hair was deep brown, and coarsely rooted; beneath it appeared everywhere a coat of wool, warm and

soft and thick, and of a yellowish brown or auburn colour. Our giant was well protected against the cold. As compared with the Indian elephant, his head was coarse, his brain-case low, small, and narrow, his trunk and mouth much larger. The teeth were powerful. The open eyes made the creature look as if it were alive, and we fancied it might move in a moment and crush us in its anger.' A graphic description this, well set forth, but not more speaking than many of the rude prehistoric etchings.

Two less well-known drawings of the old stone age show even better than the Madelaine sketch how much the ancient cave-haunting artists were given to studying direct from nature in a way that ought to have secured for them the high commendation of the palæolithic Ruskins and Colvins. One of them comes from a cave in Périgord, and represents a mammoth on his walks abroad, just as the prehistoric etcher himself beheld him. The worst of it was, however, the creature would never stand still a minute together, and our artist seems to have regarded mammoths accordingly as 'very bad sitters' for the student of nature. The moment he had got one leg right, another leg was sure to get in the way and spoil it. Twice he tried with his flint scraper to sketch the outline of the creature aright; twice a series of abortive and undecided lines displayed a chaos of fore and hind legs absolutely inextricable in their tangled movements. At last the mammoth halted for a second, and our troglodyte, abandoning his first unsuccessful efforts, traced out in the end on the same bit of bone a fairly accurate profile outline of the colossal beast as he appeared in the act of putting down his trunk to the ground to pick up a bun, or whatever else some preglacial visitor had just thrown him. (I will admit the bun to be a slight anachronism, but I can't for the life of me imagine what else the mammoth can be doing.) The other sketch, a still more impressionist and hasty outline, represents the woolly elephant with his great mouth open, his trunk raised, and his tusks bent in the attitude of charging. The palæolithic hunter who sketched that head must himself have recently executed a strategic movement from in front of just such an infuriated beast; he came to the task fresh from that one-sided contest; and into this early caricature he has thrown with wonderful vividness the impression produced upon his susceptible soul by the huge yawning jaws and fierce assault of his colossal enemy. After all, there was a deal of human nature even in the cave-men.

ONE DAY.

LIKE some old friend from far who visits us
 Still garrulous
 Of long forgotten ways and things of yore
 We knew before,
 Some babbler of old times, old jests, and song
 Dazed 'mid a throng
 Of younger careless strangers who disdain
 His boyhood's reign,
 So from the shadows of the bygone years
 It reappears,
 From an unsealèd corner of the brain
 It starts again—
 The memory of a day as clear and gay
 As yesterday.
 And at its bidding adumbrations rise,
 To dreamy eyes,
 Dim splendours of a wide untraversed world
 Once more unfurled,
 Thin, far off mirth, vague sorrow, vanished sights,
 Long dead delights,
 Wonder and hope and joy, the exultant thrill
 Ineffable ;
 The fainting echo and the afterglow
 Of long ago.
 Then as a lonely outcast who hath come
 To find his home
 Changed with changed fortunes, chambers sacred still
 That others fill,
 Whose wild white face to panes uncurtained pressed
 A space might rest

Upon a fireside group, all warmth and glee,
Rest—and then flee !
So swift it came and then as swiftly went,
Its brief life spent,
Into the dense oblivion of the night
It took its flight ;
Fled the pale ghost into the wilderness
Companionless ;
Fell the frail bridge the yawning gulfs that spanned
At touch of hand !

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CUTTING OF THE KNOT.

FOR the final failure of his plot Dagworthy was in no wise prepared. He had anticipated prolonged scenes, passionate pleadings, appeals to his better nature, and to his shame; but that his threat should prove ineffectual was not among his fears. Illustrating a well-known tendency of human nature, his reckless egoism based its confidence on the presumed existence of heroic self-devotion in his victim. Starting from a knowledge of the close affection between Emily and her father, the logic of desire had abundant arguments to prove that the girl must and could act in but one way. Dagworthy's was not an original mind; the self-immolation of daughters (not of sons) on their parents' behalf is among vulgar conceptions of the befitting, and it is more than probable that the mill-owner was half-consciously supported by precedents drawn from his readings in popular fiction. His imagination, as is commonly the case, was only strong in the direction of his wishes; neglecting Emily's avowed attachment to an accepted lover—whose shadowiness made him difficult to realise even as an obstacle—he dwelt persistently on the thought of Hood's position, and found it impossible to imagine a refusal on Emily's part to avert from her father the direst of calamities. That other motive, the strength of which in Emily was independent of her plighted troth, was not within the range of his conceptions; that a woman should face martyrdom rather than marry without love was a contingency alien to his experience and to the philosophy wherewith nature had endowed him. In spite of the attributes of nobleness which so impressed him in the object of his love, Dagworthy could give no credit to the utterance of such a feeling. Whilst Emily spoke, he was for the moment overcome by a vision of vague glories; reflecting on her words, he interpreted them as merely emphasising her determination to wed one only. Their effect was to give new food to his jealousy.

That solace of men's unconscious pessimism, the faith, pathetically clung to, that in frustration of desire is the soul's health, is but too apt to prove itself fallacious just where its efficiency would show most glorious. Is there not lurking somewhere in your mind, notwithstanding the protests of your realistic intelligence, more than half a hope that Richard Dagworthy will emerge radiant from the gulf into which his passions have plunged him? For the credit of human nature! But what if human nature oft establishes its credit by the failures over which we shake our heads? Of many ways to the resting-place of souls, the way of affliction is but one; cling, if it please you, to the assurance that this is the treading of the elect, instinct will justify itself in many to whom the denial of a supreme need has been the closing of the upward path. Midway in his life when slow development waited but occasion to establish the possibilities of a passionate character, Dagworthy underwent the trial destined to determine the future course of his life. One hesitates to impute it to him as a fault that he was not of the elect. A mere uneducated Englishman, hitherto balancing always between the calls from above and from below, with one miserable delusion and its consequent bitterness ever active in his memory, he could make no distinction between the objects which with vehemence he desired and the spiritual advantage which he felt the attainment would bring to him; and for the simple reason that in his case no such distinction existed. Even as the childhood of civilisation knows virtue only in the form of a concrete deity, so to Dagworthy the higher life of which he was capable took shape as a mortal woman, and to possess her was to fulfil his being. With the certainty that she was beyond his reach came failure of the vital forces which promised so much. A pity; for it flatters us poor mortals to discern instances of the soul's independence of the body. I would it had been otherwise with Dagworthy; I have but to relate the facts. It was no dark angel that had whispered to him through the hours of his waiting for Emily's surrender. High aims, pure ambitions, were stronger in him than they ever had been; stronger than they ever would be again. It was when Emily left him with those proud words of defiance that the veritable demon took stand at his ear. The leaping, fruitful sap of his being turned itself to gall. He sat with a brow of blackness; cruel projects worked in his brain.

Not only had he lost her, but his loss was another's gain.

The pricking of jealousy, for a while suspended, again became maddening. He had heard her say that she would die rather than be his wife; judge, then, what must be her love of the man she had chosen. His desire now was to do her injury, and his fiercest torment was the thought that he dared not fulfil the menace with which he had hoped to overwhelm her. If he prosecuted Hood, all the circumstances of the case would inevitably come out; Emily had friends in Dunfield, and if her father's guilt were once disclosed, there would be no reason for her concealment of what had happened; facts like these put forward in mitigation of punishment would supply the town with a fearful subject of comment—nay, was he safe from the clutch of the law? Of these things he had not troubled to think, so assured was he that the mere threat would suffice. From his present point of view it was easy enough to see that the plot had been a wretched piece of bungling; in failing of its end it became the project of a simpleton. Had the girl herself been cool enough to see this? Did she defy him in knowledge of the weakness of his position? Probably not; in that case she would have spoken differently; she had granted, and clearly with sincerity, his power to do what he threatened. And then the fact remained that he could injure Hood irremediably by means short of criminal proceedings. Emily—his reasoning was accurate enough—had not been careful to distinguish between modes of injury, where each meant ruin.

What he dared to do, he would. He was acquainted with the wretched story of struggle which had ended in Hood's taking refuge, as a clerk with a mean salary, from the extremities of destitution. To dismiss the man after private accusation would be to render his prospects worse than ever, for it was easy to whisper here and there the grounds of dismissal. Emily's mouth would be closed by the necessity of keeping secret her father's dishonesty. But this revenge fell short of his appetite for cruelty; it would strike the girl herself only indirectly. And it was possible that her future husband might have it in his power to give her parents aid. Yet he persuaded himself that the case was otherwise; Emily's secrecy had impressed him with the belief that the match she contemplated was anything but a brilliant one. Could he devise no graver hurt? Through the Sunday afternoon and the night which followed, he pondered ceaselessly on means of evil, delighted to flesh his fangs even in imagination. Many a vile plan dwelt with him which he knew he durst not put

into practice. Monday morning came and found him no further than the crime which had first suggested itself. Fevered with eagerness to accomplish that at least, he left home earlier than usual. It might be that the day would bring fresh counsel.

To Emily the hours following upon her visit to the house on the Heath had brought unnatural quietness. Physical suffering troubled her, but the energies of her mind were for the time expended; the aching of her brow involved thought in sluggishness. She did not shun her parents, and even talked with them in a listless way; solitude would have been irksome to her just now. For once she felt glad of her mother's way of spending Sunday; to sit inactive was all that she desired. It was understood that her head distressed her.

In the afternoon, and again in the evening, the single bell of the chapel clanged for worshippers. Mrs. Hood was not in the habit of attending service more than once in the day; she sat on her uneasy chair, at times appearing to read, more often gazing out of the windows. The road had more traffic than on weekdays, for it was the recreation of a certain class of Dunfieldians to drive out in parties to the Heath, either hiring a vehicle or using their own trade-carts. It would have been a consolation to observe that in the latter case the quadruped employed benefited by its owner's regard for his own interests; possibly an acute spectator might have discerned gradations of inhumanity. To the casual eye there showed but a succession of over-laden animals urged to the utmost speed; the national predilection exhibiting itself crudely in this locality. Towards nightfall the pleasure-seekers returned, driving with the heightened energy attributable to Bacchic inspiration, singing, shouting, exchanging racy banter with pedestrians. So the hours dragged wearily on, wheezed out, one after one, by the clock on the stairs. Hood was at no time fertile in topics of conversation; to-day he maintained almost unbroken silence. Tea was prepared, partaken of, removed; supper, three hours later. The day closed with rain and a rising wind.

Emily heard it about the house as she lay through hours of sleeplessness. At first a light slumber had come to her; it was broken by the clock striking eleven. Probably she was roused at the first stroke, for, failing to count, the number seemed to her so interminable that she started up and made to herself fretful complaint. Pain was weakening her self-control; she found

herself crying in a weary, desolate way, and could not stop her tears for a long time. The gusts of wind went by her windows and bore their voices away on to the common, wailing and sobbing in the far distance; rain spattered the windows at times. When her tears ceased, Emily hid her face in the pillow and moaned; often she uttered Wilfrid's name. To-day she should by agreement have written to him, but to do so had been impossible. He would be uneasy at her silence. O, how could she ever write to him again? What might happen to-morrow? At the thought, she held her breath and lay in silence.

She rose in time for breakfast, but at the last moment could not bring herself to go down to the meal. To face her father was impossible. Her mother came to the door, and Emily answered her that she would lie for an hour or two longer, being still unwell. During the half-hour that followed she sat listening intently to every sound in the house. Hood, having breakfasted, came upstairs and entered his room; when, a few minutes later, he came out, his steps made a pause at her threshold. Her heart beat in sickening fear; she could not have found voice to reply to him had he spoken. But he did not do so, and went downstairs. She heard him open the front-door, and sprang to the window to catch a glimpse of him. At the gate he turned and looked up to her window; his face was sorrowful. Emily held back that he might not see her; when it was too late she could not understand this movement, and longed to wave him a goodbye. She threw up the sash; her father did not turn again.

We follow him. Not very long after his arrival at the mill, Dagworthy himself appeared. Hood's evil conscience led him to regard with apprehension every unusual event. Dagworthy's unwonted earliness was still troubling his mind, when a messenger summoned him to the private room. There was nothing extraordinary in this, but Hood, as he crossed the passage, shook with fear; before knocking and pushing open the door, he dashed drops from his forehead with his hand. Dagworthy was alone, sitting at the desk.

'Shut the door,' he said, without turning his eyes from a letter he was reading.

The clerk obeyed, and stood for a full minute before anything more was addressed to him. He knew that the worst had come.

Dagworthy faced half round.

'One day early last week,' he began, averting his eyes after a

single glance, 'I was looking over one of these ledgers'—he pointed to the shelf—'and left an envelope to mark a place. I forgot about it, and now that I look, the envelope has gone. It contained a bank-note. Of course you came across it in the course of your work.'

It was rather an assertion than a question. Whilst he was speaking, the courage of despair had taken hold upon his hearer. Like the terrible flash of memory which is said to strike the brain of a drowning man, there smote on Hood's mind a vision of the home he had just quitted, of all it had been and all it might still be to him. This was his life, and he must save it, by whatever means. He knew nothing but that necessity; all else of consciousness was vague swimming horror.

'No, sir,' was his reply, given with perfect firmness, 'I found no envelope.'

Dagworthy's coarse lips formed a smile, hard and cruel. He faced his clerk.

'Oh, you didn't?'

'In which ledger did you leave it, sir?' Hood asked, the dryness of his throat rendering speech more difficult as he proceeded. Still, his eye was fixed steadily on Dagworthy's face; it was life at stake. 'I have not had them all.'

'I don't remember which it was,' replied the other, 'and it doesn't much matter, since I happen to know the note. I dare say you remember buying a new hat in Hebsworth last Friday?'

The love of inflicting pain for its own sake, an element of human nature only overgrown by civilisation, was showing itself strongly in Dagworthy. He was prolonging this scene. On his way to the mill he had felt that the task would be rather disagreeable; but we cannot nurture baseness with impunity, and, face to face with a man under torture, he enjoyed the spectacle as he scarcely would have done a little while ago. Perhaps the feeling that his first blow at Emily was actually struck gave him satisfaction, which he dwelt upon.

Hood made no reply to the question. He would not admit to himself that this was the end, but he had no voice.

'You hear me?' Dagworthy reminded him.

'Yes. I bought a hat.'

'And you paid for it with the note I have lost. I happen to know it.'

There was silence,

‘Well, you understand that under ordinary circumstances you would be at once given in charge.’ Dagworthy spoke almost cheerfully. ‘If I don’t do that it’s out of consideration for your age and your family. But as you are not to be trusted, of course I can’t continue to employ you.’

A wild hope sprang in Hood’s eyes, and the rush of gratitude at his heart compelled him to speak.

‘Oh, Mr. Dagworthy, you are generous! You have always treated me with kindness; and this is how I repay you. It was base; I deserve no mercy. The temptation—’ he grew incoherent; ‘I have been driven hard by want of money. I know that is no excuse. I had no intention at first of taking the money; I came here to give it you; I should have done so without a thought of dishonesty, but you happened to be away. In going to Hebsworth I lost my hat, and I had not enough money of my own to buy another; I had to change the note—that was the temptation—I will return it.—But for this work here, I might by now have been in the workhouse. Try, sir, to forgive my baseness; I cannot forgive myself.’

Dagworthy turned his face away.

‘Well,’ he said, with a wave of the hand, ‘all that’s too late.’

‘Sir,’ Hood pursued, spurred by foresight of penury perhaps as much as by dread of having to explain his dismissal at home, for penury had been his relentless foe through life; ‘Sir, is it in vain to ask you to give me another chance? I am not a dishonest man; never before has such a temptation come to me, and surely never would again. Will you—I entreat you to think what it means—at my age—my wife—— I ought to be content with thanking you for having spared me—how few would have done that! Let me continue to serve you—a lower salary—if it be ever so little—till I have regained your confidence——’

Dagworthy was drumming with his fingers on the desk. Not for an instant did he falter in his purpose, but it gave him pleasure to be thus prayed to. The employer of labour is not as a rule troubled with a lively imagination; a pity, for it would surely gratify him to feel in its fulness at times his power of life and death. Native defect and force of habit render it a matter of course that a small population should eat or starve at his pleasure; possibly his resolution in seasons of strike is now and then attributable to awakening of insight and pleasure in prolonging his rôle of hunger-god. Dagworthy appreciated his victim’s despair

all the more that it made present to him the wretchedness that would fall on Emily. Think not that the man was unashamed. With difficulty he could bring himself to meet Hood's look. But self-contempt may well consist with perseverance in gratification of ignoble instincts.

When Hood ceased, there came this reply.

'I shall not grant what you ask, simply because it is against my principles. I let you off, for it would do me no good to punish you, and certainly, as regards yourself, the lesson will be enough. But I can't keep you in my employ, so we'll talk no more about it. You were going to take your holiday from the end of this week, I think? Very well, let it be supposed that you begin to-day instead, and in a day or two write me a note giving up your place.'

This was not yielding on Dagworthy's part; it merely occurred to him as a way of protecting himself if there should be future need.

Hood was standing with bent head; he seemed unable either to speak or to depart.

'You may go,' Dagworthy said.

'Sir,—I may refer to you?' asked the wretched man, roused by the bidding.

'No, I think not,' was the calm reply. 'Unless, of course, you are willing that I should state the plain facts of the case?'

Hood staggered from the room. . . .

When Emily came down in the course of the morning, her appearance was such that her mother uttered an exclamation of alarm.

'Why, child, you are like a ghost! Why didn't you stay in bed? I was just coming up to you, hoping you'd been asleep. I must go for Dr. Evans at once.'

Emily resisted.

'But I certainly shall, say what you like. No headache would make you look like that. And you're as feverish as you can be. Go up to bed again; you hardly look, though, as if you could climb the stairs. I'll put on my things and go round.'

It was only by affecting anger that Emily could overcome her mother's purpose. She did indeed feel ill, but to submit to treatment was impossible whilst this day lasted. Far worse than her bodily fever was the mental anguish which would not allow her to remain in one place for more than a few minutes at a time.

and did not suffer the pretence of occupation. How would it come about? Was her father at this moment in the hands of the police? How would the first news come to Banbrigg, and when? The sound of every vehicle on the road was an approaching terror; she was constantly at the window to watch the people who came near. It had seemed to her that she realised what this trial would be, yet her anticipation had fallen far below the experience of these fearful hours. At instants, she all but repented what she had done, and asked herself if there was not even now a chance of somehow saving her father. The face which he had raised to the window as he left home smote her heart. Not a word of kindness had she spoken to him since Friday night. Oh, what inconceivable cruelty had possessed her, that she let him go this morning without even having touched his hand! Could her mind endure this? Was she not now and then near to delirium? Once she went to the window, and to her horror, could see nothing; a blue and red mist hovered before her eyes. It left her, but other symptoms of physical distress grew from hour to hour, and she dreaded lest strength to endure might wholly forsake her before night came. She tried to picture her father returning as usual; human pity might have spoken even in Dagworthy's heart; or if not so, then he might have been induced to forbear by a hope of winning her gratitude. Very agony made her feel almost capable of rewarding such mercy. For Wilfrid seemed now very far away, and her love had fallen to the background; it was not the supreme motive of her being as hitherto. Would she suffer thus for Wilfrid? The question forced itself upon her, and for reply she shuddered; such bonds seemed artificial compared with those which linked her to her father, the love which was coeval with her life. All feeling is so relative to circumstances, and what makes so stable as the cement of habit?

In the early hours of the afternoon a lull of utter weariness relieved her; she lay upon the couch and all but slept; it was something between sleep and loss of consciousness following on excessive pain. She awoke to find the doctor bending over her; Mrs. Hood had become so alarmed that she had despatched a neighbour secretly on the errand. Emily was passive, and by her way of speaking half disguised the worst features of her state. Nevertheless, the order was given that she should go to bed. She promised to obey.

‘As soon as father comes,’ she said, when alone again with her mother. ‘It cannot be long till his time.’

She would not yield beyond this. But the hour of return came, and her father delayed. Then was every minute an eternity. No longer able to keep her reclining position, she stood again by the window, and her eyes lost their vision from straining upon one spot, that at which Hood would first appear. She leaned her head upon the window-sill, and let her ears take their turn of watching; the first touch of a hand at the gate would reach her. But there came none.

Can hours thus be lived through? Ah, which of us to whom time has not been a torment of hell? Is there no nether Circle, where dread anticipation eternally prolongs itself, eternally varied with hope in vain for ever?

Mrs. Hood had abandoned her useless protests; she came and sat by the girl.

‘I’ve no doubt he’s gone to the Walkers,’ she kept saying, naming acquaintances with whom Hood occasionally spent an evening. Then, ‘And why need you wait for him, my dear? Can’t he go up and see you as soon as he gets in?’

‘Mother,’ Emily said at last, ‘will you go to the Walkers’ and ask? It is not really very far. Will you go?’

‘But, my child, it will take me at least an hour to walk there and back! I should only miss him on the way. Are you afraid of something?’

‘Yes, I am. I believe something has happened to him.’

‘Those are your fancies. You are very poorly; it is cruel to me to refuse to go to bed.’

‘Will you go, mother?—If you do not, I must; ill or not I must go.’

She started to her feet. Her mother gazed at her in fear,—believing it the beginning of delirium.

‘Emily, my dear child,’ she pleaded, laying her hand on the girl’s arm, ‘won’t you come upstairs,—to please me, dear?’

‘Mother, if you will go, I promise to lie here quietly till your return.’

‘But it is impossible to leave you alone in the house. Look now, it is nine o’clock; in half an hour, an hour at most, your father will be back. Why, you know how often he stays late when he gets talking.’

Emily was silent for a few minutes. Then she said—

‘Will you ask Mrs. Hopkins to send her servant?’

‘But think—the trouble it will be giving.’

‘Will you do it? I wish it. Will you go and ask her! I will give the girl money.’

‘If you are so determined, of course I will ask her. But I’m sure——’

At length she left the room, to go out of the house by the back-door and call at the neighbours’. Scarcely was she away, when Emily darted upstairs, and in an instant was down again, with her hat and a cloak; another moment, and she was out in the road. She did not forget the terror her mother would suffer, on finding her gone; but endurance had reached its limit. It was growing dark. After one look in the direction of Dunfield, she took the opposite way, and ran towards the Heath, ran till her breath failed and she had to drop into a quick walk. Once more she was going to the Upper Heath, and to the house which was the source of all her misery. When she reached the quarry it was quite dark; at her approach she saw the shape of a man move away into the shadow of the quarried rock, and an unreasoning fear spurred her past the spot. Five minutes more and she was at Dagworthy’s gate. She rang the door-bell.

The servant told her that Mr. Dagworthy was at home; she declined to give her name, but said she must see him at once. Speedily she was led into a room, where her enemy sat alone.

He looked at her wonderingly, then with a deep flush—for now he surely had gained his end,—he advanced towards her without speaking.

‘Where is my father?’ she asked; the voice which disabused him did not seem Emily’s.

‘Isn’t he at home?’

‘He has not come home. What have you done?’

‘Not come home?’

‘Then he is free? He is safe—my father? You have spared him?’

Dagworthy inwardly cursed himself for shortsightedness. Were he but able to answer ‘Yes,’ would she not yield him anything? Why had he not made trial of this policy? Or was it now too late? But Hood had not returned home. The man had gone forth from him in despair. As he gazed at the girl, a suspicion, all but a fear, touched him. Why should Hood remain away from his house?

She was repeating her questions imploringly.

‘He is free, as far as I am concerned, Emily.’

‘You have forgiven him? Oh, you have had that mercy upon us?’

‘Sit down, and let us talk about it,’ said Dagworthy.

She did not seem to notice that he had taken her hand; but the next moment he was holding her in his arm, and with a cry she broke away.

‘There are others in the house,’ she exclaimed, her wild, fearful eyes seeking other exit than that which he stopped. ‘I must call for their help. Can you not see that I am suffering—ill? Are you pitiless? But no—no—for you have spared him!’

Dagworthy mastered himself, though it cost him something, and spoke with an effort at gentleness.

‘What thanks have you to give me, Emily?’

‘My life’s gratitude—but that will be your least reward.’

‘Ay, but how is the gratitude going to be shown?’

Her keen sense found a fear in his manner of speaking.

‘You have not said a word to him,’ she asked, seeming to forget his question.

Of what ultimate use was it to lie? And she would not suffer him within reach of her.

‘I couldn’t very well help doing that,’ he replied, unable to resolve how it were best to speak, and uttering the first words that came, carelessly.

‘Then he knows you have discovered——’

Her voice failed. Such explanation of her father’s absence was a new terror.

‘Yes, he knows,’ Dagworthy answered, cruelty resuming its fascination. ‘I couldn’t keep him at the mill, you know, though I let him off his punishment.’

‘You dismissed him?’

‘I did. It’s not too late to have him back, and something better.’

‘Let me go!’ she said hoarsely.

He moved from the door; sight of such misery vanquished even him.

When she reached home, her mother was standing with two or three neighbours in front of the house; at the sight of Emily there were exclamations of relief and welcome.

‘My child, where can you have been?’ Mrs. Hood cried, following the girl who passed the garden gate without pausing.

‘Is father come?’ was the reply.

‘No, not yet. But where have you been? Why, you were coming from the Heath, Emily, in the night air, and you so ill!’

‘I have been to ask Mr. Dagworthy,’ Emily said in a tired voice. ‘He knows nothing of him.’

Her strength bore her into the parlour, then she sank upon the couch and closed her eyes. Mrs. Hood summoned the help of her friends. Unresisting, with eyes still closed, silent, she was carried upstairs and laid in her bed. Her mother sat by her. Midnight came, and Hood did not return. Already Mrs. Hood had begun to suspect something mysterious in Emily’s anxiety; her own fears now became active. She went to the front door and stood there with impatience, by turns angry and alarmed. Her husband had never been so late. She returned to the bedroom.

‘Emily, are you awake, dear?’

The girl’s eyes opened, but she did not speak.

‘Do you know any reason why your father should stay away?’

A slight shake of the head was the reply.

The deepest stillness of night was upon the house. As Mrs. Hood seated herself with murmured bemoaning of such wretchedness, there sounded a heavy crash out on the staircase; it was followed by a peculiar ringing reverberation. Emily rose with a shriek.

‘My love—hush! hush!’ said her mother. ‘It’s only the clock-weight fallen. How that does shake my nerves! It did it only last week, and gave me such a start.’

Grasping her mother’s hand, the girl lay back, death-pale. The silence was deeper than before, for not even the clock ticked. . . .

Dagworthy could not sleep. At sunrise he had wearied himself so with vain efforts to lie still, that he resolved to take a turn across the Heath, and then rest if he felt able to. He rose and went into the still morning air.

The Heath was beautiful, seen thus in the purple flush of the dawn. He had called forth a dog to accompany him, and the animal careered in great circles over the dewy sward, barking at the birds it started up, leaping high from the ground, mad with

the joy of life. He ran a race with it to the wall which bounded the top of the quarry. The exercise did him good, driving from his mind shadows which had clung about it in the night. Reaching the wall he rested his arms upon it, and looked over Dunfield to the glory of the rising sun. The smoke of the mill-chimneys, thickening as fires were coaled for the day's work, caught delicate reflection from the sky; the lofty spire of the church seemed built of some beautiful rose-hued stone. The grassy country round about wore a fresher green than it was wont to show; the very river, so foul in reality with the refuse of manufactures, gleamed like a pure current.

Dagworthy's eyes fixed themselves on the horizon, and grew wide with the sense of things half understood.

The dog had left him and was gone round into the quarry. A bark came from below. At a second bark Dagworthy looked down. The dog was snuffing at a man who lay between a big piece of quarried stone and a little grass-bordered pool. Asleep—was he? Yet it was not the attitude in which men sleep. The dog barked a third time.

He left his position, and followed the circuit which would bring him down to where the man lay. Whilst still a few yards off, he checked himself. If the man slept, his body was strangely distorted; one arm seemed to be beneath him, the other was extended stiffly; the face looked at the sky. A few steps, and Dagworthy, gazing upon the face, knew it.

A cold shudder thrilled him, and he drew back. His foot struck against something; it was a bottle. He picked it up, and read a word in large print on the white label.

The temptation to look full into the face again was irresistible, though horror shook him as he approached. The features were hideous, the eyes starting from their sockets, the lips drawn back over the teeth. He turned and walked away rapidly, followed by the dog, which roused the quarry echoes with its barking.

'My God! I never thought of that.'

The words uttered themselves as he speeded on. Only at the garden-gate he stayed, and then seemed to reflect upon what he should do. The temptation was to return into the house and leave others to spread the news; there would be workmen in the quarry in less than an hour. Yet he did not do this, but hurried past his own door to the house of a doctor not a hundred yards away. Him he called forth. . . .

About midday a covered burden was brought in a cart to Banbrigg; the cart stopped before the Hoods' house, and two men, lifting the burden, carried it through the gate and to the door. Mrs. Hood had already opened to them, and stood with her face half-hidden. The burden was taken into the parlour, and placed upon the couch. The outline was that of a man's form.

In the kitchen were two women, neighbours; as soon as the men had departed, and the front door was closed, they stole forward, one sobbing, the other pale with fear. They entered the sitting-room, and Mrs. Hood went in with them. She was strangely self-controlled. All three stood looking at the wrapped form, which was that of a man.

'I shan't dare to look at him!' Mrs. Hood whispered. 'The doctor told me I wasn't to. O, my husband!'

With the sublime love of woman, conquering all dread, she dropped to her knees and laid her head on the pillow of the couch by the side of that head so closely shrouded.

'Thank God, Emily can't see this!' she groaned.

'Hadn't I better go up to her?' one of the women asked. Both of them stood at a distance.

'Yes, perhaps you had. But you'll be wanted at home. Stay with me a minute, then I'll lock this door and go up myself.'

At the sound of a hand on the door all turned with a movement of surprise and affright. There entered Emily, hurriedly dressed, her hair loose upon her shoulders. She looked round the room, with half-conscious, pitiful gaze, then upon her mother, then at the form on the couch. She pointed to it.

'He has come?'

Her voice was unearthly. The sound gave her mother strength to run to her, and throw her arms about her, sobbing, terror-stricken.

She suffered herself to be led upstairs, and did not speak.

CHAPTER XIV.

NEWS AND COMMENTS.

As a man who took the world as he found it, and on the whole found it well worth accepting on such terms, Mr. Athel was not likely to allow his annoyance with Wilfrid to threaten the

habitual excellence of his digestion. His disappointment was real enough. When of a sudden Wilfrid had announced that he could not accompany the family party to Switzerland, Mr. Athel was saved from undignified irresolution by a hearty outburst of temper, which saw him well over the Straits before it gave way to the natural reaction, under the influence of which he called himself a blockhead. He had, beyond a doubt, precipitated the marriage, when postponement was the only thing he really cared about. To abuse himself was one thing, the privilege which an Englishman is ready enough to exercise; to have his thoughts uttered to him by his sister with feminine neatness and candour was quite another matter. Mrs. Rossall had in vain attempted to stem the flood of wrath rushing Channelwards. Overcome, she clad herself in meaning silence, until her brother, too ingenuous man, was compelled to return to the subject himself, and, towards the end of the journey, rashly gave utterance to half a wish that he had not left 'that young fool' behind. Mrs. Rossall, herself a little too impetuous when triumph was no longer doubtful, made such pointed remarks on the neglect of good advice that the ire which was cooling shot forth flame in another direction. Brother and sister arrived at Geneva in something less than perfect amity. Their real affection for each other was quite capable of bearing not infrequently the strain of irritability on both sides. A day of mutual causticities had well prepared the ground for the return of good temper, when the arrival of Wilfrid, by astonishing both, hastened their complete reconciliation. Wilfrid was mysterious; for a week he kept his counsel, and behaved as if nothing unusual had happened. By that time Mr. Athel's patience had reached its limit; he requested to be told how matters stood. Wilfrid, determined not to compromise his dignity by speaking first, but glad enough when his father broached the topic, related the story of his visit to Dunfield. Possibly he laid needless emphasis on Emily's unselfish prudence.

'I fail to see the striking meritoriousness of all that,' Mr. Athel observed, put into a good humour by the result and consequently allowing himself a little captiousness. 'It merely means that she behaved as any woman who respected herself would under the circumstances. Your own behaviour, on the other hand—well, let it pass.'

'I don't see that I could have acted otherwise,' said Wilfrid, too contented to care about arguing the point.

‘You of course saw her parents?’

Wilfrid had given no detailed account of the way in which his interview with Emily had been obtained. He mentioned it now, his father listening with the frowning smile of a man who judges such puerilities from the standpoint of comfortable middle age.

The tone between them returned before long to the friendliness never previously interrupted. Mr. Athel shortly wrote a letter to Mr. Baxendale of Dunfield, whom he only knew by name as Beatrice Redwing’s uncle, and begged for private information regarding Emily’s family. He received a courteous reply, the details not of course wholly palatable, but confirmatory of the modest hopes he had entertained. This reply he showed to his sister. Mrs. Rossall raised her eyebrows resignedly, and returned the letter in silence.

‘What one expected, I suppose?’ said Mr. Athel.

‘I suppose so. Mr. Baxendale probably thinks the man has been applying for a position in your pantry.’

‘Well, I was obliged, you know, to hint at my reasons for seeking information.’

‘You did? Then Beatrice knows all about it by this time. As well that way as any other, I suppose.’

‘We shall have to take the matter like reasonable beings, Edith,’ said her brother, a trifle annoyed by her failure to countenance him.

‘Yes; but you seem anxious that I should rejoice. That would not be very reasonable.’

Something warned Mr. Athel that he had better abstain from rejoinder; he pursed his lips and walked away.

Wilfrid had not spoken of the subject to his aunt since the disclosure at the Firs, and Mrs. Rossall was offended by his silence at least as much as by the prospect of his marrying Miss Hood. Clearly he regarded the matter as no concern of hers, whereas a woman claims by natural right a share in the matrimonial projects of all her male relatives with whom she is on a footing of intimacy. Perhaps the main cause of her displeasure in the first instance had been the fact that things should have got to such a pass without her having as much as suspected the imminence of danger; she regarded Emily as one that had outwitted her. Dearly would she have liked to be able to meet her brother with the assertion that she had suspected it all along; the impossibility of doing so—not from conscientious scruples, but

because in that case it would clearly have been her duty to speak—exasperated her disappointment at the frustration of the match she desired. Now that she was getting used to the state of things, Wilfrid's behaviour to her became the chief ground of her offence. It seemed to her that at least he owed some kind of apology for the distress he had naturally caused her; in truth she would have liked him to undertake the task of winning her over to his side. Between her and her nephew there had never existed a warm confidence, and Wilfrid's present attitude was too much a confirmation of the feeling she had experienced now and then, that his affection was qualified with just a little contempt. She was not, she knew, a strong-minded woman, and on that very account cared more for the special dominion of her sex. Since Wilfrid had ceased to be a hobbledohoy, it would have become him to put a little more of the courtier into his manner towards her. For are there not countries in which their degree of kin is no bar to matrimony? Mrs. Rossall was of the women who like the flavour of respectful worship in all men who are neither father, brother, nor son. Wilfrid had fallen short of this, and hence the affectation with which she had persisted in regarding him as a schoolboy. His latest exploits were vastly more interesting to her than anything he had done in academic spheres, and she suffered a sense of exclusion in seeing him so determined to disregard her opinion.

She persuaded him to row her out one evening on a lake by which they were spending a few days. Wilfrid, suspecting that she aimed at a *tête-à-tête*, proposed that his father should accompany them. Mrs. Rossall overruled the suggestion.

'How wonderfully you are picking up,' she said, after watching him pull for a few minutes. 'Do you know, Wilf, your tendency is to stoutness; in a few years you will be portly, if you live too sedentary a life.'

He looked annoyed, and by so doing gratified her. She proceeded.

'What do you think I overheard one of our spectacled friends say this morning—"Sehen Sie mal,"—you were walking at a little distance—"da haben Sie das Muster des englischen Aristokraten. O, der gute, schlichte Junge!"'

Wilfrid had been working up his German. He stopped rowing, red with vexation.

'That is a malicious invention,' he declared.

‘Nothing of the kind! The truth of the remark struck me.’

‘I am obliged to you.’

‘But, my dear boy, what is there to be offended at? The man envied you with all his heart; and it is delightful to see you begin to look so smooth about the cheeks.’

‘I am neither an aristocrat, nor *schlicht!*’

‘An aristocrat to the core. I never knew anyone so sensitive on points of personal dignity, so intolerant of difference of opinion in others, so narrowly self-willed! Did you imagine yourself to have the air of a hero of romance, of the intense school?’

Wilfrid looked into her eyes and laughed.

‘That is your way of saying that you think my recent behaviour incongruous. You wish to impress upon me how absurd I look from the outside?’

‘It is my way of saying that I am sorry for you.’

He laughed again.

‘Then the English aristocrat is an object of your pity?’

‘Certainly; when he gets into a false position.’

‘Ah!—well, suppose we talk of something else. Look at the moon rising over that shoulder of the hill.’

‘That, by way of proving that you are romantic. No, we won’t talk of something else. What news have you from England?’

‘None,’ he replied, regarding the gleaming drops that fell from his suspended oar.

‘And you are troubled that the post brings you nothing?’

‘How do you know?’

‘Your emotions are on the surface.’

He made no reply.

‘Ah!’ Mrs. Rossall sighed, ‘what a pity you are so independent. I often think a man’s majority ought to come ten years later than it does. Most of you are mere boys till thirty at least, and you go and do things that you repent all the rest of your lives. Dare you promise to come to me in ten years and tell me with complete frankness what you think of—a certain step?’

He smiled scornfully.

‘Certainly; let us register the undertaking.’

After pausing a moment, he continued with an outburst of vehemence—a characteristic of Wilfrid’s speech.

‘You illustrate a thought I have often had about women. The majority of you, at all events as you get into the world, have

no kind of faith in anything but sordid motives. You are cynical beyond anything men can pretend to; you scoff at every suggestion of idealism. I suppose it is that which makes us feel the conversation of most women of refinement so intolerably full of hypocrisies. Having cast away all faith, you cannot dispense with the show of it; the traditions of your sex must be supported. You laugh in your sleeves at the very things which are supposed to constitute your claims to worship; you are worldly to the core. Men are very Quixotes compared with you; even if they put on cynicism for show, they are ashamed of it within themselves. With you, fine feeling is the affectation. I have felt it again and again. Explain it, now; defend yourself, if you can. Show me that I am wrong, and I will thank you heartily.'

'My word, what an arraignment!' cried Mrs. Rossall, between amusement at his boldness and another feeling which warmed her cheeks a little. 'But let us pass from broad accusation to particulars. I illustrate all these shocking things—poor me! How do I illustrate them?'

'In the whole of your attitude towards myself of late. You pooh-pooh my feelings, you refuse to regard me as anything but a donkey, you prophesy that in a year or two I shall repent having made a disinterested marriage. I observe the difference between your point of view and my father's. The worst of it is you are sincere: the circumstances of the case do not call upon you for an expression of graceful sentiments, and you are not ashamed to show me how meanly you regard all that is highest and purest in life.'

'Shall I explain it? Women are very quick to get at realities, to see below the surface in conduct and profession. We become, you say, worldly as soon as we get into the world. Precisely because we have to be so wide awake to protect ourselves. We instinctively know the difference between the ring of false and true, and as we hear the false so much the oftener! Your charge against us of want of real feeling is the result of your ignorance of women; you don't see below the surface.'

'Well now, apply all this to the present instance. What has your insight discerned in my proposed marriage to cause you to regard it as a piece of folly?'

'Simply this. You ally yourself with some one from a class beneath your own. Such marriages very, very seldom prove anything but miserable, and *always* bring a great many troubles.

You will say that Miss Hood is raised by education above the class in which she was born; but no doubt she has relatives, and they can't be entirely got rid of. However, that isn't the point I lay most stress on.'

'Well?'

'I am quite sure you will make her miserable. You are marrying too young. Your character is not fixed. In a few years, before that, you will want to get rid of her.'

'Well, that is at all events intelligible. And your grounds for the belief?'

'You are inconstant, and you are ambitious. You might marry a woman from a class higher than your own, and when it is too late you will understand what you have lost.'

'Worldly advantages, precisely.'

'And how if your keen appreciation of worldly advantages results in your wife's unhappiness?'

'I deny the keen appreciation, in your sense.'

'Of course you do. Come to me in ten years and tell me your opinion of women's ways of thinking.'

This was the significant part of their conversation. Wilfrid came to land confirmed in his views; Mrs. Rossall, with the satisfaction of having prophesied uncomfortable things.

She had a letter on the following morning on which she recognised Beatrice Redwing's hand. To her surprise, the stamp was of Dunfield. It proved that Beatrice was on a visit to the Baxendales. Her mother, prior to going to the Isle of Wight, had decided to accept an invitation to a house in the midland counties, which Beatrice did not greatly care to visit; so the latter had used the opportunity to respond to a summons from her friends in the north, whom she had not seen for four years. Beatrice replied to a letter from Mrs. Rossall which had been forwarded to her.

After breakfast, Mrs. Rossall took her brother aside, and pointed out to him a paragraph in Beatrice's letter. It ran thus:—

'A very shocking thing has happened, which I suppose I may mention, as you will necessarily hear of it soon. Miss Hood's father has committed suicide, poisoned himself; he was found dead on a common just outside the town. Nobody seems to know any reason, unless it was trouble of a pecuniary kind. Miss Hood is seriously ill. The Baxendales send daily to make inquiries, and

I am afraid the latest news is anything but hopeful. She was to have dined with us here the day after her father's death.'

There was no further comment; the writer went on to speak of certain peculiarities in the mode of conducting service at St. Luke's church.

Mr. Athel read, and in his manner, whistled low. His sister looked interrogation.

'I suppose we shall have to tell him,' said the former. 'Probably he has no means of hearing.'

'I suppose we must. He has been anxious at not receiving letters he expected.'

'How do you know?'

'I had a talk with him last night.'

'Ah, so I thought. The deuce take it! Of course he'll pack off on the moment. What on earth can have induced the man to poison himself?'

Such a proceeding was so at variance with Mr. Athel's views of life that it made him seriously uncomfortable. It suggested criminality, or at least lunacy, both such very unpleasant things to be even remotely connected with. Poverty he could pardon, but suicide was really disreputable. From the philosophic resignation to which he had attained, he fell back into petulance, always easier to him than grave protest.

'The deuce take it!' he repeated.

Mrs. Rossall pointed to the words reporting Emily's condition at the time of writing.

'That was more than two days ago,' she said, meaningly.

'H'm!' went her brother.

'Will you tell him?'

'I suppose I must. Yes, it is hardly allowable even to postpone it. Where is he?'

Wilfrid was found in the hotel garden.

'Your aunt has had a letter from Beatrice,' Mr. Athel began, with the awkwardness of a comfortable Englishman called upon to break bad news. 'She is staying in Dunfield.'

'Indeed?'

'There's something in the letter you ought to know.'

Wilfrid looked anxiously.

'It appears that Miss Hood's father has—don't let it be a shock to you—has just died, and died, in fact, by his own hands.'

'Has killed himself?' Wilfrid exclaimed, turning pale.

‘Yes, I am sorry to say that is the report. Miss Hood is naturally suffering from—from the shocking occurrence.’

‘She is ill?’ Wilfrid asked, when he had examined his father’s face for a moment.

‘Yes, I am afraid she is. Beatrice gives no details.’

‘You are not keeping anything from me?’

‘Indeed, nothing. The words are that she is ill, and, it is feared, seriously.’

‘I must go at once.’

It was said with quiet decision. Wilfrid consulted his watch, and walked rapidly to the hotel. He had to wait a couple of hours, however, before he could start on his journey, and he spent the time by himself. His father felt he could be of no use, and Mrs. Rossall found a difficulty in approaching her nephew under such circumstances.

‘You will telegraph?’ Mr. Athel said, at the station, by way of expressing himself sympathetically.

The train moved away; and the long, miserable hours of travelling had to be lived through. Wilfrid’s thoughts were all the more anxious from his ignorance of the dead man’s position and history. Even yet Emily had said very little of her parents in writing to him; he imagined all manner of wretched things to connect her silence with this catastrophe. His fears on her own account were not excessive; the state of vigorous health into which he had grown during late weeks perhaps helped him to avoid thoughts of a desperate kind. It was bad enough that she lay ill, and from such a cause; he feared nothing worse than illness. But his uneasiness increased as time went on; the travelling seemed intolerably tardy. He had to decide what his course would be on reaching Dunfield, and decision was not easy. To go straight to the house might result in painful embarrassments; it would at all events be better first to make inquiries elsewhere. Could he have recourse to Beatrice? At first the suggestion did not recommend itself, but nothing better came into his mind, and, as his impatience grew, the obstacles seemed so trifling that he overlooked them. He remembered that the address of the Baxendales was unknown to him; but it could easily be discovered. Yes, he would go straight to Beatrice.

Reaching London at ten o’clock in the morning, he drove directly to King’s Cross, and pursued his journey northwards. Though worn with fatigue, excitement would not allow him more

than a snatch of sleep now and then. When at length he stepped out at Dunfield, he was in sorry plight. He went to an hotel, refreshed himself as well as he could, and made inquiry about the Baxendales' address. At four o'clock he presented himself at the house, and sent in a card to Beatrice.

The Baxendales lived in St. Luke's, which we already know as the fashionable quarter of Dunfield. Their house stood by itself, with high walls about it, enclosing a garden; at the door were stone pillars, the lower half painted a dull red. It seemed the abode of solid people, not troubled with scruples of taste. It was with surprise that Wilfrid found himself in a room abundantly supplied with books and furnished in library fashion. His state of mind notwithstanding, he glanced along a few shelves, discovering yet more unexpected things, to wit, philosophical works. Unfortunately the corners of the room showed busts of certain modern English statesmen; but one looks for weaknesses everywhere.

Beatrice entered, rustling in a light, shimmery dress. Her face expressed embarrassment rather than surprise; after the first exchange of glances, she avoided his eager look. Her hand had lain but coldly in his. Wilfrid, face to face with her, found more difficulty in speaking than he had anticipated.

'I have come directly from Switzerland,' he began. 'You mentioned in a letter to my aunt that——'

His hesitation of a moment was relieved by Beatrice.

'You mean Miss Hood's illness,' she said, looking down at her hands, which were lightly clasped on her lap.

'Yes. I wish for news. I thought it likely you might know——'

Probably it was the effect of his weariness; he could not speak in his usual straightforward way; hesitancy, to his own annoyance, made gaps and pauses in his sentences.

'We heard this morning,' Beatrice said, looking past his face to the window, 'that she is better. The danger seems to be over.'

'There has been danger?'

'The day before yesterday she was given up.'

'So ill as that.' Wilfrid spoke half to himself, and indeed it cost him an effort to make his voice louder. He began 'Can you tell me——' and again paused.

'Have you heard nothing from any other quarter?' Beatrice asked, after a silence of almost a minute.

He looked at her, wondering what she knew of his relations to Emily. It was clear that his interest occasioned her no surprise.

‘I came away immediately on hearing what your letter contained. There is no one else with whom I could communicate. I hesitated to go to the house, not knowing—— Will you tell me what you know of this horrible event?’

Beatrice stroked one hand with the other, and seemed to constrain herself to look up and to speak.

‘I myself know nothing but the fact of Mr. Hood’s death. It took place some ten days ago, on Monday of last week. I arrived here on the Wednesday.’

‘Of course there was an inquest—with what results?’

‘None, beyond the verdict of suicide. No definite cause could be discovered. It is said that he suffered from very narrow means. His body was found by Mr. Dagworthy.’

‘Who is Mr. Dagworthy?’

‘I thought you probably knew,’ returned Beatrice, glancing quickly at him. ‘He was employed by Mr. Dagworthy as clerk in a manufactory. He had just left for his summer holiday.’

‘What evidence did his employer give?’

‘He only stated that Mr. Hood had been perfectly regular and satisfactory at his work.’

‘Then in truth it is a mystery?’

‘Mr. Baxendale thinks that there had been a long struggle with poverty, quite enough to account for the end.’

Wilfrid sat in gloomy silence. He was picturing what Emily must have endured, and reproaching himself for not having claimed a right to her entire confidence, when it was in his power to make that hard path smooth, and to avert this fearful misery. Looking up at length, he met the girl’s eyes.

‘I need not explain myself to you, Beatrice,’ he said, finding at last a natural tone, and calling her by her Christian name because he had much need of friendly sympathy. ‘You appear to know why I have come.’

She answered rather hurriedly.

‘I should not have known but for something that Mrs. Baxendale told me. Mr. Athel wrote a short time ago to ask for information about them—about the Hoods.’

‘He wrote?’

Wilfrid heard it with a little surprise, but without concern.

‘Do you know whether Mrs. Hood is alone—with her?’ he went on to ask.

‘I believe so.’

‘And she is better?’ He added quickly, ‘Has she proper attendance? Have any friends been of aid?’

‘The Baxendales have shown much kindness. My aunt saw her yesterday.’

‘Will it be long before she is able to leave her room, do you know?’

‘I am not able to say. Mrs. Baxendale hopes you will go upstairs and see her; she can tell you more. Will you go?’

‘But is she alone? I can’t talk with people.’

‘Yes, she is alone, quite.’

He rose. The girl’s eyes fixed themselves on him again, and she said:

‘You look dreadfully tired.’

‘I have not slept, I think, since I left Thun.’

‘You left them all well?’ Beatrice asked, with a change in her voice, from anxious interest which would have veiled itself, to the tone of one discharging a formal politeness.

Wilfrid replied with a brief affirmative, and they ascended the stairs together to a large and rather dim drawing-room, with a scent of earth and vegetation arising from the great number of growing plants arranged about it. Beatrice presented her friend to Mrs. Baxendale, and at once withdrew.

The lady with whom Wilfrid found himself talking was tall and finely made, not very graceful in her bearing, and with a large face, the singular kindness of which speedily overcame the first sense of dissatisfaction at its plainness. She wore a little cap of lace, and from her matronly costume breathed a pleasant freshness, akin to the activity of her frame. Having taken the young man’s hand at greeting, she held it in both her own, and with large, grey eyes examined his face shrewdly. Yet neither the action nor the gaze was embarrassing to Wilfrid; he felt, on the contrary, something wonderfully soothing in the pressure of the warm, firm hands, and in her look an invitation to the repose of confidence which was new in his experience of women—an experience not extensive, by the bye, though his characteristic generalisations seemed to claim the opposite. He submitted from the first moment to an influence maternal in its spirit, an influence which his life had lacked, and which can perhaps only

be fully appreciated either in mature reflection upon a past made sacred by death, or on a meeting such as this, when the heart is open to the helpfulness of disinterested sympathy. Mrs. Baxendale's countenance was grave enough to suit the sad thoughts with which she sought to commune, yet showed an under-smile, suggesting the consolation held in store by one much at home in the world's sorrows. As she smiled, each of her cheeks dimpled softly, and Wilfrid could not help noticing the marvellous purity of her complexion, as well as the excellent white teeth just visible between her lips.

'So you have come all the way from Switzerland,' she said, leading him to a chair, and seating herself by him. Her voice had a touch of masculine quality, even as her shape and features, but it chained attention, and impressed as the utterance of a large and strong nature. 'You are tired, too, with travel; I can see that. When did you reach Dunfield?'

'Half an hour ago.'

'And you came here at once. Beatrice and I were on the point of going to Hebsworth this afternoon; I rejoice that we did not. I'm continually afraid lest she should find the house dull. My husband and myself are alone. My eldest girl was married three months ago, my younger one is just gone to Germany, and my son is spending half a year in the United States; the mother finds herself a little forsaken. It was really more than kind of Beatrice to come and bury herself with me for a week or two.'

She passed by tactful transition to the matter in hand.

'Wasn't it a strange link that she should meet Miss Hood at your house! She has been so saddened. I never yet knew any one who could talk with Emily without feeling deep interest in her. My daughter Louisa, I am convinced, will never forget what she owes to her teacher. She and my youngest child used to be Miss Hood's pupils—perhaps you have heard? My own Emily—she is dead—was passionately fond of her namesake; she talked of her among the last words she ever spoke, poor little mite.'

'Miss Redwing tells me you saw her yesterday,' Wilfrid said.

'Yes, for the first time.'

'Was she conscious?'

'Quite. But I was afraid to talk to her more than a minute or two; even that excited her too much. I fear you must not let her know yet of your presence.'

'I am glad I knew nothing of this till the worst was over.'

From the way in which she spoke of her father, I should have feared horrible things. Did you know him with any intimacy?’

‘Only slightly, I am sorry to say. The poor man seems to have had a very hard life; it is clear to me that sheer difficulty in making ends meet drove him out of his senses. Are you a student of political economy?’ she asked suddenly, looking into Wilfrid’s face with a peculiar smile.

‘I am not. Why do you ask?’

‘It is the one subject on which my husband and I hold no truce. Mr. Baxendale makes it one of his pet studies, whilst I should like to make a bonfire of every volume containing such cruel nonsense. You must know, Mr. Athel, that I have an evil reputation in Dunfield; my views are held dangerous; they call me a socialist. Mr. Baxendale, when particularly angry, offers to hire the hall in the Corn Exchange, that I may say my say and henceforth spare him at home. Now think of this poor man. He had a clerkship in a mill, and received a salary of disgraceful smallness; he never knew what it was to be free of anxiety. The laws of political economy will have it so, says my husband; if Mr. Hood refused, there were fifty other men ready to take the place. He couldn’t have lived at all, it seems, but that he owned a house in another town, which brought him a few pounds a year. I can’t talk of such things with patience. Here’s my husband offering himself as a Liberal candidate for Dunfield at the election coming on. I say to him: What are you going to do if you get into Parliament? Are you going to talk political economy, and make believe that everything is right, when it’s as wrong as can be. If so, I say, you’d better save your money for other purposes, and stay where you are. He tells me my views are impracticable; then, I say, so much the worse for the world, and so much the more shame for every rich man who finds excuses for such a state of things. It is dreadful to think of what those poor people must have gone through. They were so perfectly quiet under it that no one gave a thought to their position. When Emily used to come here day after day, I’ve often suspected she didn’t have enough to eat, yet it was impossible for me to ask questions, it would have been called prying into things that didn’t concern me.’

‘She has told me for how much kindness she is indebted to you,’ Wilfrid said, with gratitude.

‘Pooh! What could I do? Oh, don’t we live absurdly artificial

lives? Now why should a family who, through no fault of their own, are in the most wretched straits, shut themselves up and hide it like a disgrace? Don't you think we hold a great many very nonsensical ideas about self-respect and independence and so on? If I were in want, I know two or three people to whom I should forthwith go and ask for succour; if they thought the worse of me for it, I should tell them they ought to be ashamed of themselves. We act, indeed, as if we ourselves had made the world and were bound to pretend it an admirable piece of work, without a screw loose anywhere. I always say the world's about as bad a place as one could well imagine, at all events for most people who live in it, and that it's our plain duty to help each other without grimacings. The death of this poor man has distressed me more than I can tell you; it does seem such a monstrously cruel thing. There's his employer, a man called Dagworthy, who never knew what it was to be without luxuries,—I'm not in the habit of listening to scandal, but I believe there's a great deal of truth in certain stories told about his selfishness and want of feeling. I consider Mr. Dagworthy this poor man's murderer; it was his bounden duty to see that a man in his employment was paid enough to live upon,—and Mr. Hood was not. Imagine what suffering must have brought about such an end as this. A sad case,—say people. I call it a case of crime that enjoys impunity.'

Wilfrid listened gloomily. The broad question stirred him to no strong feeling, but the more he heard the more passionate was his longing to bear Emily away from the scenes of such a past. With what devotion would he mould his life to the one task of healing her memory! Yet he knew it must be very long before her heart could recover from the all but deadly wound it had received. A feeling which one may not call jealousy,—that were too inhuman,—but still one of the million forms which jealousy assumes to torture us, drove him to ask himself what the effect of such a crisis in her life might be on Emily's love for him. There would always remain in her inmost soul one profound sadness in which he had no part, and which by its existence would impugn the supremacy of that bond which united him and her.

'How does Mrs. Hood bear it?' he asked, when he found Mrs. Baxendale again examining his face.

'I think Emily's illness has been her great help,—poor creatures that we are, needing one great grief to balance another.

But she seems in a very weak state; I didn't like her look yesterday.'

'Will you describe her to me?' asked Wilfrid.

'She is not the kind of mother you would give to Emily. I'm afraid her miserable life has told upon her greatly, both in mind and body.'

'Emily never spoke of her, though so often of her father.'

'That is what I should have expected. Still, you must not think her quite unworthy. She speaks as an educated woman, and is certainly very devoted.'

'What of her present position? She must be in extreme difficulties.'

'No, she wants nothing for the present. Friends have been very anxious to help her. That's what I say,—only let your misery drive you out of the world, and people will find out all at once how very easily they might have saved you. A hundredth part of the interest that has been shown in the family since poor Mr. Hood's death would have found endless ways of making his life very different. All sorts of people have suddenly discovered that he really was a very deserving man, and that something ought long since to have been done for him. I don't know what has been told you of his history. He was once in independent business; I don't know exactly what. It was only utter failure that drove him to the miserable clerkship. How admirable it was of a man in such circumstances to have his daughter so well educated!'

Wilfrid smiled.

'Emily,' he said, with gentle fervour, 'would have found her own way.'

'Ah, don't depreciate his care!' Mrs. Baxendale urged. 'You'll find out by degrees what a great deal of heathen doubt there is in me; among other things, I am impressed by the power of circumstances. Emily would always have been a remarkable girl, no doubt; but, without her education, you and I should not have been talking about her like this, even if we had known her. We can't dispense with these aids; that's where I feel the cruelty of depriving people of chances. Men and women go to their graves in wretchedness who might have done noble things with an extra pound a week to live upon. It does not sound lofty doctrine, does it? But I have vast faith in the extra pound a week. Emily had the advantage of it, however it was managed.'

I don't like to think of her as she might have been without it. What was it Beatrice called me yesterday? A materialist; yes, a materialist. It was a reproach, though she said it in the kindest way; I took it as a compliment. We can't get out of the world of material; how long will the mind support itself on an insufficient supply of dry bread?'

Wilfrid's intellectual sympathies were being aroused by his new friend's original way of talking. He began to feel a keen satisfaction at having her near him in these troubles.

'Do you think,' he asked, returning to his immediate needs, 'that I might write to her?'

'Not yet; you mustn't think of it yet.'

'Does Mrs. Hood——' he hesitated. 'Do you think Emily has told her mother—has spoken to her of me?'

Mrs. Baxendale looked surprised. 'I can't say; I took it for granted.'

'I wonder why she was reluctant to do so?' Wilfrid said, already speaking with complete freedom. 'Her father cannot have known; it would have relieved his worst anxieties; he would surely never have been driven to such things.'

'No; I think not. The poor girl will feel that, I fear. I suppose one can get a glimpse of her reasons for keeping silence?' She gave Wilfrid a friendly glance as she spoke.

'How glad I am,' he exclaimed, 'to be able to talk to you! I should have been in the utmost difficulties. Think of my position if I had been without a friend in the town. Then, indeed, but for Miss Redwing I should have heard nothing even yet.'

'She wrote to you?'

'Not to me; she mentioned the matter in a letter to my aunt, Mrs. Rossall.'

'Did Beatrice—you let me question?—did she know?'

'Only, she says, in consequence of a letter my father addressed to Mr. Baxendale.'

The lady smiled again.

'I ask because Beatrice is now and then a little mysterious to me. I spoke to her of that letter in the full belief that she must have knowledge of the circumstances. She denied it, yet, I thought, as if it were a matter of conscience to do so.'

'I think it more than likely that my aunt had written to her on the subject. And yet—no; she would not have denied it to you. That would be unlike her.'

‘Yes, I think it would.’

Mrs. Baxendale mused. Before she spoke again a servant entered the room with tea.

‘You will be glad of a cup, I am sure,’ said the lady. ‘And now, what do you propose to do? Shall you return to London?’

‘Oh, no! I shall stay in Dunfield till I am able to see her.’

‘Very well. In that case you will not refuse our hospitality. The longer you stay the better pleased I shall be.’

She would hear of no difficulties.

‘I wouldn’t ask you,’ she said, ‘if I were not able to promise you any degree of privacy you like. A sitting-room is at your disposal—begging to be occupied since my boy Charlie went away. My husband is over head and ears in electioneering business, foolish man, and I can’t tell you how I feel the need of someone to talk to on other subjects than the manufacture of votes. Where is your luggage?’

Wilfrid named the hotel.

‘It shall be fetched. And now I’ll ask my niece to come and pour out tea for us.’

With the entrance of Beatrice the conversation naturally took a different turn. She heard with becoming interest of Wilfrid’s establishment as a guest, and, after a little talk of Mrs. Rossall and the twins, led to the subject of certain ‘revivalist’ meetings then being held in Dunfield, an occasion of welcome excitement to such of the inhabitants as could not absorb themselves in politics. Mrs. Baxendale seemed to regard the religious movement dispassionately, and related a story she had from her husband of a certain prominent townsman driven to such a pass by his wife’s perpetual absence from home on revivalist expeditions, that he at length fairly turned the key on her in her bedroom, and through the keyhole bade her stay there till she had remembered her domestic duties. He was that night publicly prayed for at a great meeting in the Corn Exchange as one who, not content with losing his own soul, did his best to hold back others from the way of grace.

Beatrice affected to pay no heed to this anecdote.

‘What is your side in politics?’ she asked Wilfrid. ‘Here we are all either Blues or Yellows?’

‘What do they represent?’ Wilfrid inquired.

‘Oh, you shouldn’t ask that,’ said Mrs. Baxendale. ‘Yellow

is yellow, and Blue, blue; nothing else in the world. I think it an excellent idea to use colours. Liberal and Conservative suggest ideas; names, therefore, quite out of place in Dunfield politics—or any other politics, I dare say, if the truth were known. My husband is a Yellow. It pleases him to call himself a Liberal, or else a Radical. He may have been a few months ago; now he's a mere Yellow. I tell him he's in serious danger of depriving himself of two joys; in another month a cloudless sky and the open sea will be detestable to him.'

'But what are you, Mr. Athel?' Beatrice asked. 'A Liberal or a Conservative? I should really find it hard to guess.'

'In a Yellow house,' he replied, 'I am certainly Yellow.'

'Beatrice is far from being so complaisant,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'She detests our advanced views.'

'Rather, I know nothing of them,' the girl replied. The quiet air with which she expressed her indifference evinced a measure of spiritual pride rather in excess of that she was wont to show. Indeed, her manner throughout the conversation was a little distant to both her companions. If she jested with Wilfrid it was with the idleness of one condescending to subjects below the plane of her interests. To her aunt she was rather courteous than affectionate.

Whilst they still sat over tea, Mr. Baxendale came in. Like his wife, he was a man of liberal proportions, and he had a face full of practical sagacity; if anything, he looked too wide awake, a fault of shrewd men, constitutionally active, whose imagination plays little part in their lives. He wore an open frock-coat, with much expanse of shirt-front. The fore part of his head was bald, and the hair on each side was brushed forward over his ears in a manner which gave him a singular appearance. His bearing was lacking in self-possession; each of his remarks was followed by a short laugh, deprecatory, apologetic. It seemed impossible to him to remain in a state of bodily repose; even with a cup of tea in his hand he paced the room. Constantly he consulted his watch—not that he had any special concern with the hour, but from a mere habit of nervousness.

He welcomed the visitor with warmth, at the same time obviously suppressing a smile of other than merely polite significance: then he began at once to speak of electioneering matters, and did so, pacing the carpet, for the next half hour. Wilfrid listened with such show of interest as he could command; his

thoughts were elsewhere, and weariness was beginning to oppress him.

Shortly after dinner fatigue passed the point at which it could be struggled against. Long waking, the harassment of fears at length consoled, and the exhaustion consequent upon his journey, besieged him with invincible drowsiness. Mrs. Baxendale, observing it, begged him to discard ceremony and go to rest. Gladly he suffered himself to be led to his room; once there, he could not note the objects about him; the very effort of taking off his clothes was almost beyond his strength. Sleep was binding his brows with oblivion, and relaxing every joint. His dearest concerns were nothing to him; with a wave of the hand he would have resigned an eternity of love; cry to him blood-chilling horrors, and his eyelids would make no sign. The feather-softness moulded itself to his limbs; the pillows pressed a yielding coolness to his cheek; his senses failed amid faint fresh odours. Blessed state! How enviable above all waking joys the impotence which makes us lords of darkness, the silence which suffers not to reach our ears so much as an echo of the farce of life.

(To be continued.)

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WHO WROTE DICKENS'S NOVELS?

IT is well known to Americans, and especially to Americans of the far west, that the English understand little of their chief writers. It has only been given to American students of what are called Shakespeare's plays to understand their true inner significance and to recognise their real author. It is probable that, but for the spry intellect of the far west, Lord Bacon's authorship of the plays attributed by the dull Britisher to Shakespeare and Marlowe would never have been demonstrated, as it has triumphantly been, by my brilliant compatriot Professor Ignatius Donnelly. The leading writers about Shakespeare in England have persistently ignored the grand discovery made by Miss Delia Bacon. But the contemptuous silence of the Inglebys and Furnivalls, of Halliwell Phillipps and 'British Encyclopædia' Baynes, has not prevented the soaring of the Eagle Donnelly above the far horizon of the setting sun, to perceive with the clearness of eagle vision, and to proclaim in strident tones appropriate to a denizen of the occident, the true theory about works which no Britisher has ever rightly understood.

I make no doubt that had there been Americans and a far west in the days of Queen Elizabeth, Lord Bacon's authorship of the Shakespeare and Marlowe plays would have been demonstrated in his lifetime, even if not in the lifetime of Shakespeare. It might not have been agreeable to Lord Bacon, and it would certainly not have been agreeable to William Shakespeare, to have the whole matter revealed. But had there been a Professor Ignatius Donnelly in those days, we may be sure that, in discharge of his duty as a commentator on the conduct of other

persons (a duty which every American regards as his birthright, especially if he chances to be connected with a newspaper), he would have disclosed the secret of the great cryptogram, and made known to the world the crafty ways of the Lord High Chancellor, and the evil life, the mean and shifty character, of the man whom Jonson, Hemynge, and Condell pretended to regard with esteem and affection.

It has been my privilege (let me introduce myself, British reader, as the Honourable Ignorantius O'Reilly, of Nebraska, U.S.A.) to detect a secret akin to that which Lord Bacon strove in vain to conceal from the keen vision of my fellow-countryman of Minnesota. (The sneering Britisher may ask here, perhaps, whether Professor Donnelly understands Lord Bacon to have intended to conceal or to reveal the secret of his authorship. But the great Chancellor has already answered that sneer in the pertinent lines—

I may not conceal them, sir.
Conceal them, or thou diest,

immediately preceding, be it noticed, the words, 'Why, sir, they were nothing but about Mistress Anne PAGE'—a reference to the page-cyphering which cannot be misunderstood.) A man who holds under Queen Victoria a position similar to that which Francis Bacon, Lord Verulam, held under Queen Elizabeth, a man who may be said to have taken all learning under his dominion, even as Lord Bacon 'made all science his province,' is the real author of the works which have hitherto gone under another's name. The Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone is the veritable and 'only begetter' (as Bacon puts it in the prefix to his 'Sonnets') of 'Pickwick' and 'Oliver Twist,' of 'Nicholas Nickleby' and 'Martin Chuzzlewit,' of all the writings, in fine, which the deluded Britisher has hitherto attributed to Charles Dickens.

It has long been clear to every thinking mind that Charles Dickens could not possibly have written the works which bear his name. Without admitting that all which Forster and others have related about Dickens can be trusted (indeed, I fully believe that Forster and Carlyle were in the plot which I have been privileged to detect), we can yet learn enough from Forster's 'Life of Dickens' to see that neither by position nor by training was he likely to become the author of works in which politics, science, art, and literature are dealt with confidently and boldly, as by one who knew and could speak with authority.

When Charles Dickens wrote 'Nicholas Nickleby' he had not as yet mingled in society with the lords and baronets, the Verisophts and Mulberry Hawks, with whose manners (much better known to Americans than to most Englishmen) the writer of that work exhibits so perfect a familiarity. Again, Dickens was at no time a profound student of science; but the author of the works attributed to Dickens refers often and pointedly to scientific matters! It may even be supposed that in some cases the author of the Dickens volumes made actual calculations to render his astronomical statements exact; for otherwise he would not have described Stephen Blackpool as watching a star which shone down the shaft into which he had fallen. Again, Dickens would have been content to say, in 'Our Mutual Friend,' that 'so many months passed' and Bella Harmon presented John Harmon with his first-born. The real author of that work, with the confidence of one to whom the science of his day, like the learning of his day, is familiar, says instead, 'The winds and tides rose and fell a certain number of times, the earth moved round the sun a certain number of times, the ship upon the ocean made her voyage safely, and brought a baby-Bella home.' A British astronomer, a visitor here, has just told me that there must be some mistake in Mr. Gladstone's astronomy here, since the earth takes a year in travelling around the sun. This is all that was wanted to prove my case. It shows how dexterously the great statesman masked his learning. There is an analogous instance, in fact, in Lord Bacon's masterly manipulation of the folio edition of the Shakespeare plays, in which, as Professor Donnelly has shown, the great cryptogram is concealed. Lord Bacon, we know, was a ripe Latinist, whereas Shakespeare 'had little Latin and less Greek.' Lord Bacon then, whose careful precision in such matters is well known, would never, except to conceal his identity, have allowed such a line as this to stand in the folio:

Bome boon for boon prescian, a little scratcht,

which is what the famous folio actually has instead of—

Bone? Bone for bene! Priscian a little scratched.

The great Chancellor successfully hid his identity as the overseer of the letterpress of the folio edition by making the printers set up the nonsense line in that edition. And in like manner the great statesman, whose learning and profound accuracy are well

known, conceals his scientific knowledge and as far as possible his identity, by confounding (or seeming to confound) the motion of the moon around the earth with the motion of the earth around the sun. Proof positive, if further proof were needed than that which I shall presently supply, that the real author of the Dickens works was not Dickens, but a profound and learned scholar.

But let me at once turn to the cypher evidence which I have recognised in the 'Charles Dickens edition' of the Dickens volumes—so for convenience to call the works of fiction produced under an assumed name by the Right Honourable William Ewart Gladstone, erst Prime Minister of England.

It can hardly have escaped attention, in the first place, that the name Dickens does not occur once in all the Dickens volumes—precisely as we find that the word Shakespeare does not appear once in the so-called Shakespeare plays. Yet Mr. Gladstone has as deftly brought in the characteristic portion, 'Dick,' of Dickens's name as Lord Bacon (in 'Hotspur' and 'peere out,' &c.) has brought in the characteristic 'spur,' 'peere,' &c., of Shakespeare's. Indeed, in 'David Copperfield' we have a veritable Mr. Dick; while we are significantly told that, though he is called Mr. Dick, *he has another name*—no other than 'Babley,' a name obviously intended to remind Dickens that he is *not* to babble. It is Miss Trotwood (a name the parallelism of which to Gladstone at once attracts attention) who is careful to explain that Mr. Dick has this other name. As if to make assurance doubly sure, Dickens's Christian name is directly associated with Mr. Dick's throughout 'David Copperfield.' For Mr. Dick is represented as constantly striving to keep out the name of Charles from his memorial, yet constantly bringing it in—another hint to Dickens to be careful.

It is hardly necessary to remind those who have read Mr. Gladstone's 'Oliver Twist' of the mysterious 'Dick' in that work—one of those which compelled the great statesman to write under the shelter of a pseudonym and a cryptogram. For, as is well known (in America), no man in so prominent a position as Mr. Gladstone's, when 'Oliver Twist' was written, could safely venture to speak disrespectfully of Beadledom. Observe that Dick vanishes from the story so completely, that but for the special system which the author had in view we may be sure Dick would never have reappeared. Yet, at the very crisis of the *dénouement*, we find, as the closing words of the chapter preceding the condemnation of Fagin, 'Poor Dick was dead.' In this work, also,

the great author introduces the name Charles, which very seldom appears in later volumes of the Dickens series.

But even more decisive of Mr. Gladstone's purpose, if anything more decisive could be imagined, is the appearance of the strange name, Richard Doubledick, all made up, as it were, of Dicks (since it may be read Dick Double Dick), in the 'Seven Poor Travellers'—this trebly Dicked character (so to describe his name) being also one of those who bears an assumed name. Moreover, he is introduced as coming 'to this town of Chatham—if anybody knows where Chatham begins and Rochester ends,' where Dickens passed so large a portion of his life.

I may as well explain that it was by these striking indications that I was led to seek for the cypher-system which I eventually succeeded in detecting in the Dickens volumes. That system is strikingly like the Baconian cryptogram. Professor Donnelly was led to his discovery; it will be remembered, by the appearance of the name 'bacon' ('bacon-fed knaves,' 'hang-hog is Latin for *bacon*,' 'On, *bacons*, on,' 'gammon,' &c.) I am half inclined to suspect that Mr. Gladstone had become in some way acquainted with the Bacon cryptogram. At any rate, I shall follow my distinguished compatriot, if he will allow me so to call him, in keeping the cypher key concealed for the present—though I shall be prepared to reveal it when I have worked out by its means the complete narrative of events relating to ministerial and parliamentary matters, and to the private history of the royal family, which the great statesman has concealed within the Dickens novels. The general plan of the cypher-system, and the method of reading the concealed narrative, may be indicated as follows:

There are thirteen cypher-numbers, all determined by one key number (which I keep a profound secret). Starting with any one of these numbers, we count to the corresponding word on each page of the 'Charles Dickens edition' of any volume. The word thus reached is a word in the concealed narrative. In counting we may include or exclude proper names, or words within parentheses; we may count hyphenated words as one or two; we may count upwards or downwards or on alternate lines; or we may take two pages together and count across the pair; or we may count alternate lines from the top of one page and the bottom of the next (or of the next but one, or two, and so forth); and we may employ other modifying methods—*not as we please, however, but according to a definite system*, which I am not at present

prepared to disclose. Other devices are open to the cypher-reader, which I will indicate when I publish the complete narrative. The narrative already written contains 928 words. Now the chances are 2,739,142,870,605,129,999 to 1 against nine words, thus taken in succession according to definite (however complicated) law, forming a connected sentence. The student of the law of probabilities will perceive that the appearance of 928 words in such sequence as to form a connected narrative, *by accident*, is simply impossible.

Here, for instance, is the result of a process of alternate backward and forward counting applied to the 'Charles Dickens edition' of 'David Copperfield':

237-71 =	intermediate combinations	= Dick[ens]
237-73 =	with which	= has
237-71 =	I need	= been
237-73 =	not here	= ill
237-71 =	trouble the	= from
237-73 =	reader	= drinking
237-71 =	anxious only	= iced
237-73 =	for the	= soda
237-71 =	narrative	= water

Now let the mathematician calculate for himself—as I have done—the odds that these coherent words come out by mere accident. I venture to say it is impossible. I could as well believe that by shaking together a hundred thousand alphabets and drawing letters at random one could produce Virgil's 'Æneid.'

At the risk of starting some American reader (I am not afraid of British readers) on the track of the cypher, I call attention to two manifestly cryptogamic passages which contain in reality the key of the whole system.

One is the famous passage in 'Pickwick'—

BILST
UMPSHI
SM
ARK

where it will be noticed the Christian name of the People's William is manifestly included: in fact, we are carefully told how Mr. *William* [Stumps] prepared this cryptogram. Note also that we are told how *Glad* Mr. Pickwick was when he found this *stone*. This is evidence there is no mistaking.

The other is a passage not quite so celebrated but quite as obviously intended to conceal a secret. I refer to the letter in

'Great Expectations'—the very name of which work shows us how much we may expect from its examination—

MI DEER JO i OPE U R KRWITE WELl i OPE i SHAL SOñ B HABELL
4 2 TEE DGE U JO AN TIEN WE SHORL B SO GLODD AN WEN i M
PREñGT D 2 U JO WO T LARX AN BLEVE ME INF XN PIP.

Observe that, precisely as in the former hieroglyphic, we have the great commoner's Christian name in the modified form BILL, so in this we have the characteristic part of his surname in the modified form GLODD. But this is only to guide the keener reader to look farther into the mysterious communication. I have done this; and I have discovered that Mr. Gladstone has made use of a trilateral cypher, akin to Lord Bacon's celebrated biliteral one—but simpler, because only four signs are required instead of five as when there are only two (instead of three) kinds of sign. Mr. Gladstone has always been celebrated for his 'three courses'; and in this hieroglyph, accordingly, we find large capitals, small capitals, and lower case or small letters—besides numbers which have the same force as lower case letters. The concealed sentence, which contains twenty-nine letters, does not begin at the beginning of the hieroglyph. I am not as yet ready to state where it begins or to disclose its real significance—for it tells the secret of the cypher-number, a knowledge of which would enable everyone to read the whole narrative concealed by Mr. Gladstone in the Dickens volumes.

I reserve for the American public, as worthiest, those portions of the concealed narrative which I have already interpreted. I am told, indeed, that the British public will probably be so wrathful when the details I have to disclose are made known, that no British editor would publish even extracts of any considerable length. The account of Shakespeare published by Professor Donnelly has been denounced in no measured terms by insolent and arrogant British writers—simply because he lets you know that your vaunted Shakespeare was a coarse and illiterate plebeian, so evil a liver that at thirty he was already whitehaired and decrepit, besides being afflicted with all the diseases which a Thersites or a Caliban could bring within the compass of his curses. One indignant Shakespeare worshipper has even used as an appropriate quotation against Professor Donnelly the words of Imogen in Lord Bacon's 'Cymbeline,' where (in effect) she asks Iachimo how he dares come to Britain 'to expound his beastly

mind' there. Wherefore, I keep the details of the Dickens narrative for American readers, ready to hail with joy the discovery that a long-worshipped idol has feet of clay.

One point only remains to be mentioned. I have found that the edition in which the Right Honourable Mr. Gladstone has concealed (or revealed, it is not quite easy to say which) his narrative of the Victorian age, is that known as the 'Charles Dickens edition'—so specially named, no doubt, with the object of deceiving the public more effectually. It may perhaps be asked how, if this be the cryptogram edition, the concealed narrative can possibly have been brought into the earlier works, which remain verbally almost exactly the same in the 'Charles Dickens edition' as when they were first published. Doubtless this captious objection will be much dwelt upon by British critics when my 'Great Dickens Cryptogram' is published. But, rightly considered, this, which seems at a first view a serious difficulty, really helps us to understand how Mr. Gladstone has been able to combine so many great parts together—how, while holding a leading position for half a century in the politics of Great Britain, he has been also able to interpret Homer, to maintain an almost infinitely voluminous correspondence, to be an officiating minister among his parishioners, to assault such enemies of his religious views as Professor Huxley and Colonel Ingersoll, to fell gigantic trees at Hawarden, and (last but not least) to write the whole series of works so long attributed to Charles Dickens. Nothing but the amazing capacity and versatility which enabled Mr. Gladstone to foresee the paging of the intended cryptogram edition of the Dickens volumes, and to prepare beforehand the arrangement of the earlier editions, so that every word of the narrative he was planning should come into the place determined by the cypher system, could have enabled him to do all that he is known to have done—to be at once statesman, *littérateur*, theological champion, local deacon, and champion woodsman, while 'beating the record' in multitudinous correspondence. Lord Bacon alone of all the men the world has known has matched the Right Honourable Mr. Gladstone in versatility—comparing the two men as pictured, respectively, by Professor Ignatius Donnelly and by myself, Ignorantius O'Reilly. For we have the same difficulty to overcome, we learn the same lesson in overcoming it, in Lord Bacon's case as in Mr. Gladstone's. Lord Bacon wrote, for example, the First Part of 'Henry IV.,' in which Professor Donnelly has found so voluminous a narrative,

before February 25, 1598 (new style), when it was entered in the Stationer's register; it passed through six quarto editions; and the folio which Professor Donnelly has made so famous was printed in 1625 from the fifth quarto, which had been published in 1613. Yet with amazing, one might almost say miraculous, powers of prevision, the Lord High Chancellor so wrote this fine play that when it took its place in the cryptogamic folio, every word wanted for his concealed (or revealed) narrative fell into its right place in the paging, according to the complicated cypher-system detected by the genius of a Donnelly. Only so marvellous a feat as this enables us to understand the marvellous way in which Bacon combined profound scientific investigations with his work as statesman and Lord High Chancellor, his work in gardening and house-adorning with extensive literary labours and strict attention to his own advancement. There is, indeed, one circumstance in regard to which Lord Bacon's achievement in writing the Shakespeare plays surpassed even Mr. Gladstone's in writing the Dickens novels. Lord Bacon was able to foresee the development of the English language during the two centuries and a half which (as he also foresaw) would elapse before his cryptogram was interpreted. Thus he was actually able to write Victorian English (with an American flavour!) in the days of Queen Elizabeth! Mr. Gladstone's concealed narrative is in the English of the present day: but it is written with the purity of style which we find in our best American authors, and which no Englishman, save Mr. Gladstone alone (and he only in this narrative), has ever been able to acquire.

*TWO BRITISH PILGRIMAGES IN THE
NINETEENTH CENTURY.*

OF all the changes wrought by modern facilities of travel, none perhaps would prove more startling to our ancestors, could they return to earth for a little season, than the so-called 'pilgrimages' of their luxurious descendants. To those earnest penitents a pilgrimage to a holy shrine involved most real bodily hardship, even without the addition of rough hair shirts and peas in their shoes. It meant long weeks or even months of weary travel by land, and perhaps also by sea, under every conceivable condition of discomfort—in short, to have accomplished one of the great pilgrimages implied an amount of resolute purpose, and a depth of faith which certainly entitled the pilgrims to the honest respect of their fellow-sinners. But what of their comfortable representatives of the nineteenth century, for whom (at least for those in Europe) every detail has been thought out, and the whole scheme admirably organised so as to minimise fatigue and avoid all personal friction with trouble of any sort! Even in Hindostan, the worshippers of many gods have realised that it is wise to diminish the toil of their weary journeyings to holy shrines, by accepting railway transport for a few hundred miles. So, too, Egyptian railways now vastly simplify the devotion of the stately Moorish pilgrims, whose toilsome march across the desert formed the theme of the few European travellers of the last century. Probably the next step in development will be a Mahommedan branch of Messrs. Cook's travelling made easy, advertising personally conducted pilgrimages to Mecca!

The recent revival of the taste for these singular excrescences of religion, and apparent faith in their efficacy, amid all the enlightenment and progress of this latter half of the nineteenth century, must surely be accounted phenomenal, and it is no wonder that it should be regarded by our Roman Catholic brethren with very marked satisfaction.

The common-sense of our average unimpressionable Britons was considerably startled on learning how many of their countrymen and countrywomen were numbered among the pilgrims who in 1873 and 1874 flocked to visit the sanctuary of Paray-le-

Monial in consequence of the supposed vision of Marie Alacoque; and that in the latter year no less than five hundred English pilgrims visited the sacred shrine at Pontigny. Since then, however, pilgrimages to Lourdes, La Salette, Notre Dame de la Garde, and many other places deemed specially sacred, have become so fashionable as to cease to excite comment, occurring, as they do, in countries where Roman Catholic open-air ceremonials and processions are things of course. But it must be admitted to be a singular retrogression towards mediæval thought which has reintroduced their counterpart into Britain, where, until 1887 and 1888, nothing of the sort had been seen since the Reformation.

The scenes of these inaugurative pilgrimages (doubtless the precursors of many to follow) have been judiciously chosen. Each was to a Holy Isle—and such, in all parts of the world, have a charm essentially their own. Moreover, each was to the spot specially hallowed—not by the vision of some brain-sick girl, but by the life and labours of one of Britain's earliest Christian missionaries, namely, St. Cuthbert, the Apostle of Northumbria, and St. Columba, who with his twelve companions crossed the stormy seas from Ireland, to bring the light of the Gospel to the Pagan Picts of the North.

Mitigated as are the hardships of all modern pilgrimages, there was at least a good deal of the picturesque element in the solemn commemoration of the twelfth centenary of the death of St. Cuthbert, in honour of which, on August 11, 1887, about four thousand Roman Catholics from the North of England and Ireland assembled on the bleak Northumbrian shore below Beal Station (about five miles south of Berwick), and thence tramped (many of them barefoot), across the sands to Lindisfarne, the Holy Isle. Why Beal Station should have been selected as the *rendezvous*, when Belford is so much nearer, does not appear, neither are we informed why August 11 was selected, instead of March 20, which is generally understood to have been the day of St. Cuthbert's death, A.D. 687, not at the monastery of Lindisfarne, but in that lonely hut, built by his own hands, on Farne Island.

Doubtless, however, the date of this nineteenth-century pilgrimage was determined by the state of the tide, which on the day selected was unusually low. In fact, this particular tide is commonly called 'St. Cuthbert's tide,' as being especially favourable to pilgrims. Twice daily the broad expanse of sand between Lindisfarne and the mainland is covered by the sea, and often

the Holy Island is encompassed by angry waters; but when the tide recedes, the sands are firm and fairly dry, and foot passengers pass to and fro in safety, along the track indicated by tall stout posts, erected at regular distances. Only one small stream, 'the Low,' must be crossed just below Beal, but in fine weather and at low tide it is neither so broad nor so deep as to involve serious wading, only just enough to give a touch of reality to the pilgrimage.

On the present occasion carts and other conveyances were provided for those who were unable to walk, but these were exceptional. As the excursion trains arrived at Beal Station from Berwick, Wooler, North Sunderland, Carlisle, York, Darlington, and Newcastle, the pilgrims placed themselves under the direction of the Catholic clergy, who marshalled them in procession—the men first, the women following, and thus they marched the four miles or thereabouts, whilst reciting the fifteen mysteries of the rosary. But surely this recital could not claim undivided attention, for many eyes, at least, must have wandered in the hopes that St. Cuthbert's own tide might have strewn the sands with some of his own beads, namely those single joints of the fossil encrinite, washed from the fossiliferous rocks by the action of the waves, and which being somewhat cruciform, and naturally perforated in the centre, were in olden days eagerly sought by pilgrims and strung as rosaries.

On reaching the Holy Isle, processional banners were distributed, and the choir intoned the Litany of the Saints, while the procession slowly advanced towards the noble ruins of the Abbey, the oldest monastic church in Northumberland, with massive columns and circular arches of red sandstone, and Saxon architecture. When and by whom this grand church was built is uncertain, but we know that the original church of the Bishops of Lindisfarne was built of oak and thatched with reeds, and so continued till towards the end of the seventh century, when Bishop Eadbert removed the thatch, substituting sheet lead. This was destroyed by pagans from the north, who landed on the 7th of the Ides of June, and ravaged the isle, cruelly maltreating the monks. These, however, took courage to return, and, rebuilding their simple church, remained on their storm-swept isle till 867 or 875, when, terrified at the prospect of another Danish invasion, the monks fled, bearing on their shoulders the body of St. Cuthbert, which thus commenced its long course of restless

wandering, ere it was laid within the sacred precincts of Durham Cathedral.

Having concluded the Litany, the pilgrims sang the hymn 'Faith of our Fathers.' Holy Mass was then celebrated in the ruined Abbey, and the *Te Deum* was sung, the service concluding with a hymn to St. Cuthbert.

Though saintly legend has traced this saint's lineage from one of the petty kings of Ireland, he is first known to history as a shepherd lad on the hills of Lauderdale, which was then included in the kingdom of Northumbria. While watching his flocks by night—whether sleeping or waking we must not too curiously question—he beheld a vision of angels descending to the earth, and thence reascending, bearing with them the soul of St. Aidan, the venerated Bishop of Lindisfarne. Thereupon the young shepherd resolved that he too would become a shepherd of men, and so he sought admission to the monastery of Melrose, whence he accompanied St. Eata to a new monastery at Ripon.

On the death of the Prior of Melrose he was recalled thither, and for some years he laboured zealously among the people of the mountain villages, who had relapsed into the practice of many pagan rites. After awhile, however, he longed to rejoin his old master St. Eata, who was then Abbot of Lindisfarne, but, deeming the social life of the island monastery too cheerful, he sought a more austere existence on Farne Island, where as a solitary recluse he lived for eight years, till Egfrid, King of Northumbria, came in person to try and persuade him to accept the bishopric of Hexham. He yielded, but, still longing for his island life, he very soon exchanged the inland diocese for that of Lindisfarne, and in two years resigned his bishopric and retired to his own lowly hut on Farne Island, where a few months afterwards (on the 20th of March, A.D. 687) he died.

His body was carried for burial to the Holy Isle (to which so many of the border families brought their dead, to claim a final resting-place in that sacred soil). But St. Cuthbert, as we have seen, was not long allowed to lie on his dear isle. His body was carried from one place to another, both in Scotland and England, till at last it reached Durham, where, inclosed in a precious shrine, it was supposed to remain miraculously incorrupt, and to work many miracles.

But these mediæval saints seem to have been slow indeed to learn the Christian law of courtesy to woman, and so rigidly were

women forbidden to approach this shrine that a cross of blue marble was inlaid in the pavement (where it remains to this day) to mark the limit within which no female footstep might venture to approach.

Miraculous powers were also attributed to a certain cloth used by St. Cuthbert in celebrating Mass. This being mounted as a banner was supposed to ensure victory for whoever carried it, and the English victory on Flodden field was ascribed to its presence. Afterwards it was hung beside the saint's shrine, where it remained till the Reformation, when the shrine was demolished, the banner burnt by Calvin's sister (who was the wife of the first Protestant Dean of Durham), and the coffin decently buried beneath the pavement—not, however, to find a final rest even there, for in 1827 curiosity prompted an examination of the saintly remains. Three historic coffins were found, one within the other, and in the innermost, wrapped in five robes of embroidered silk, lay the perfect skeleton of the saint, together with sundry relics, including one of those ritual combs which held so singular a place among the essentials of ecclesiastical furniture in olden days.

It would be curious to know what mystic meaning our forefathers attached to so simple an act as that of combing the hair. Yet we learn from old Church history that the hair of the priest or bishop was thus combed several times during Divine service by one of the inferior clergy. The comb is mentioned as one of the essentials for use during a High Mass when sung by a bishop, and both in English and foreign cathedrals they were reckoned among the costly possessions of the church. Some were made of ivory, some were carved, others gemmed with precious stones. Amongst the combs specially known to history are those of St. Neot, St. Dunstan, and Malachias. That of St. Thomas the Martyr, of Canterbury, is still to be seen in the church of St. Sepulchre, at Thetford, and that of St. Cuthbert at Durham Cathedral.

From sundry references in old legends to the use of the comb in divination, and from its appearance in combination with pagan emblems on rudely sculptured stones in various parts of Scotland, it seems probable that this was one of the objects of Pagan veneration which early Christian teachers deemed it prudent to adopt, investing it with some new significance.

As regards the victory-conferring banner, it is curious to note what odd fetishes have in all lands been credited with the same virtue. In Samoa, the venerable and venerated god of war, 'Papo,'

was a strip of rotten old matting about three yards long and four inches wide,¹ which was held in deepest reverence and was always attached to the war-canoe of the highest chief when he went forth to battle. This, however, was in heathen days before the Samoans had accepted Christianity. They would deem it strange indeed to learn that the cloth used by a Christian minister could have been so long revered in England, and that the Book of Psalms, copied by St. Columba's own hand, was supposed to be endowed with the same marvellous power.

That was indeed a remarkable Psalter in every stage of its existence, for it was written in church in the still hours of night, but, according to the old legend, the young priest had no occasion to burn midnight oil, for a miraculous light shone from his own hand, illuminating the page while he wrote, which was the more remarkable as he was taking the liberty to copy a book belonging to St. Finian without permission of the owner, who was doubtless a recognised churl. Anyhow he was a crafty saint, for, though quite aware of what the young man was doing, he waited till the toilsome task was done, and then claimed the copy. The matter was referred to King Diarmid, who decided that 'To every cow belongs her own calf—to every book its own copy'—a judgment against which the fiery young Columba rebelled, and took such active part in the civil wars of his country that his Psalter came to be known as the Book of Battles, because it had led to so much bloodshed. When subsequently venerated as a charm, it was, on the morning of a battle, carried thrice round the army fortunate enough to possess it, and the soldiers were thereby so convinced of their invincibility that the victory was generally assured.

Another peculiarity which St. Columba shared with St. Cuthbert (as with sundry other saints) was the uncompromising aversion to women, which caused him to prohibit even a cow from setting foot on Iona, because he said that 'where there is a cow there must be a female—and where there is a female there must be mischief.' So if any of the tradesmen connected with Iona insisted on having wives they were compelled to keep them on a neighbour islet called 'The Women's Isle.' Even in death their dust might not mingle with that of Iona, so while the Lords of the Isles and other great men from the Isles and Highlands were brought there for burial, their wives were interred on the Isle of Finlagan!

¹ Still preserved in the Museum of the London Missionary Society.

Nevertheless, woman refused to be debarred from her share in what was accounted good, so a company of devout women first obtained a footing on a neighbouring islet called the Isle of Nuns, whence in due time, but not till St. Columba's body had been removed, they passed on to Iona itself, where the Canoness of St. Augustine established a priory of Austin nuns, the ruins of which remain to this day. Thus on Iona, as at Durham, the women eventually triumphed.¹

Thus the sex could well afford to be magnanimous, which doubtless accounts for their mustering in full force to take part in 'The National Pilgrimage to Iona.' This took place on June 13, 1888. It was a very carefully organised Roman Catholic demonstration in honour of St. Columba, and one to which, as we have already observed, a very special interest attaches, as being the first pilgrimage which has taken place in Scotland since the Reformation, and has consequently been hailed by all the Roman Catholic newspapers as one of many symptoms of 'the progress and vitality of the true religion in the land of Knox—another link in the chain of recent events which so clearly indicates that the past is being rolled back, and Scotland is again assuming the garb of Catholicity.'

The pilgrimage was designed specially to commemorate the fact of St. Columba having just been canonically appointed patron saint of the Roman Catholic diocese of Argyle and the Isles, on the assumption that he was a true son of the Roman Church. This view was forcibly advanced by Archbishop Smith of Edinburgh in his sermon addressed to the pilgrims who crowded around, in the ruins of the mediæval cathedral. He told them that the form of Christianity taught by St. Columba was precisely the same as that which the Catholic Church still believed. He concluded with an earnest prayer that St. Columba would still remember them in heaven, and obtain for them an increase of religion and piety in Scotland.

¹ If these mediæval saints had had the ordering of the world, the human race would have come to an end as rapidly as under the direction of the sweet girl graduates in the modern edition of the old song :

'Where are you going, my pretty maid ?'

'To lecture at Cambridge, Sir,' she said.

'What is your subject, my pretty maid ?'

'The total extinction of man,' she said.

'Then you can't marry, my pretty maid !'

'Advanced girls don't marry now, Sir,' she said.

Probably, however, if that saintly father of the early Celtic Church could speak for himself, he would seriously object to being thus appropriated, as he and his followers do not seem to have owned any sort of allegiance to the Church of Rome. The Venerable Bede wrote concerning them that they were men eminent for their Divine love and exact discipline—following indeed doubtful cycles in their computation of the Great Festival (Easter), but withal men diligently observing those works of piety and chastity, *and those only*, which they were able to learn from the writings of the Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles.

It was not till A.D. 716 that they consented to observe Easter on the day decreed by the Latin Church. They also resolutely refused to conform to 'the tonsure of St. Peter' by simply shaving a ring on the crown and back of the head, the Celtic priests of Ireland and Scotland deeming it essential to shave the entire front of the head—a custom which they believed to be derived from Apostolic times.

As regards questions of doctrine, our knowledge of their distinctive tenets is somewhat hazy, but it is certain that many religious houses both in Scotland and Ireland, founded by these early Culdees, 'Worshippers of God,' continued for some centuries to be independent of the Church of Rome, which, however, gradually suppressed them all. Though their monastery on Iona was finally destroyed in A.D. 1059, the fathers of the Culdee Church clung to the possession of the isle till the end of the twelfth century, when the stately cruciform cathedral of massive red granite was built by the Roman Church, and the Clugniac monks obtained so firm a footing that the Culdees abandoned the isle, leaving their rivals in undisputed possession.

To these awkward historical details, however, the attention of the pilgrims was not directed, when on June 12 about five hundred devout Catholics from all parts of Scotland assembled in Oban in such a deluge of rain as fully kept up the character of the west coast of Scotland. This continued till the following morning, when (after attending early Mass in the Pro-Cathedral) they embarked at 6 A.M. on a swift, well-appointed steamer, specially chartered for the conveyance of these luxurious modern pilgrims, and warranted to bring them back to Oban in ample time either for dinner, or to catch the last train south.

This did not allow much time for such quiet dreamy sentiment as alone seems in keeping with Iona, but in this nineteenth cen-

tury strict economy of time is essential! Certainly the whole scene afforded a curious contrast to the approach to the Holy Isle by penitents in all bygone ages!

Even the weather favoured these comfortable pilgrims, for shortly after they started the sky cleared, and the sea and the heavens alike assumed that wonderful blue and the mountains that marvellous clearness in the bright sunlight which so glorifies our oft-times grey scenery. During the three hours' voyage the pilgrims twice assembled in groups to recite the rosary, and to sing the hymns 'Look down, O mother Mary,' and 'Hail, Queen of Heaven.' Those who were entitled to the honour of a special interview visited Monsignor Persico, who was present as the Papal representative, and did homage on bended knee.

As the steamer neared Iona the pilgrims joined in singing 'Faith of our Fathers,' and on landing they formed in processional order, and (reciting decades of the rosary as they slowly moved onward) they marched to the grand ruins of the cathedral, where they were received by the R.C. Bishop of Argyle and the Isles. A temporary wooden roof had been erected to protect the chancel; the walls were draped with carpets, and carpets were laid on the ground sodden with the recent rain. The Archbishop, Bishops, and a large body of clergy, and of Benedictine, Franciscan, Carmelite, and Vincentian monks, all wearing their distinctive costumes, assembled round the temporary altar at which High Mass was celebrated. Gregorian chants were sung by a choir of thirteen Benedictine brethren from the recently established monastery of St. Augustus on Loch Ness.

After a sermon in English from the Archbishop of Edinburgh, the Creed and the 'Agnus Dei' were sung. Then a second sermon was preached in Gaelic by the Bishop of the Isles, who then gave the benediction, and the pilgrims, after once more singing 'Faith of our Fathers,' dispersed to see what they could, in the short time at their disposal, of the many points of interest in the immediate neighbourhood. Of course the further points could not possibly be included in so brief a visit, for at two o'clock the re-embarkation commenced, and at 3 P.M. the vessel weighed anchor, reaching Oban at 6 P.M. At the bidding of the clergy, 'Three cheers for the Pope' were given ere the five hundred pilgrims landed and dispersed. Half an hour later, the majority were speeding on their way north, south, and east, by steamer and rail, to their widely scattered homes.

Such is the very expeditious form of pleasure-trip which in these luxurious times is dignified with the name of 'a pilgrimage.'

Though doubtless there were more hardships, at least there was less hurry in those prehistoric days—dimly revealed through the mists of so many centuries—when our pagan ancestors assembled on that lonely wave-washed shore, to worship amid the 360 grey upright stones, whereon the next comers sculptured rude crosses, in order that the semi-Christianised people, who could not be quite weaned from their old worship, might continue to hold them in reverence. This they did till the year A.D. 1560, when the bigoted Protestant Synod of Argyle pronounced them to be 'monuments of idolatrie,' and decreed that all should be cast into the sea.

What a succession of pictures does imagination thus conjure up at the very name of Iona!—that little lonely isle so unaccountably venerated from the earliest ages, and still known to the Highlanders as the *Eilean nah Druineach*, the 'Sacred Isle of the Druids,' although for thirteen centuries it has also borne the name of *I-Colm-kill*, the 'Isle of Columba's Cell,' in memory of that most energetic and saintly of Celtic apostles, to whom it was granted by Conal, the Christian king of the Northern Scots—a gift confirmed by Brude, king of the Picts, when he also was converted to the new faith.

From this centre Columba's resistless energies spread themselves forth as he sailed from isle to isle and from shore to shore, seeking to convert the still pagan Pictish tribes north of the Grampians; moreover, he sent forth his brethren to teach and to preach, so that ere long there was scarcely an isle on which one of these Celtic Fathers had not built his little lonely chapel, to shed its ray of light on the pagan people.

Simple indeed were these primitive centres of Christian worship. When St. Columba took up his quarters on the isle, his first care was to build a chapel and 'an hospice' beside the venerated grey monoliths; so he sent forth his monks to gather 'bundles of twigs' for this purpose, the architecture of those days being simple—walls of wickerwork and mud thatched with heather and rushes. Of course such frail buildings very quickly disappeared, especially when savage Danes and Norsemen so often ravaged the Isles; but on the site of St. Columba's first chapel—always called after his companion, St. Oran—Queen Margaret of Scotland built one of stone, the ruins of which still stand, beside

the Reilig Orain—that far-famed burial-ground to which, from time immemorial, kings, saints, and warriors were brought from Ireland, Norway, and Denmark, as well as from the mainland both of Scotland and England, that they might be laid on this Holy Isle.

Forty-eight crowned kings of Scotland, eight Danish and Norwegian sea-kings, four kings of Ireland, and at least one Bishop of Canterbury, were thus brought in solemn funereal state to sleep their last sleep on Iona. The saintly remains of Columba, however, were not allowed to rest here for long; for when his disciples could no longer endure the barbarities of successive invaders, they forsook the isle for awhile, carrying his bones with them to save them from desecration. Thus Kells, in Ireland, and the Cathedral of Dunkeld thenceforth divided the honour of possessing these precious relics.

This veneration for the island as a place of worship and of burial was, however, of older date than that of the Christian apostle, as we gather from the fact that King Fergus of Scotland sailed thither for his coronation, and his body was brought thither for burial, long before Columba, the fiery priest, had been exiled from the Emerald Isle. It is recorded that King Fergus brought with him, A.D. 536, that identical Coronation Stone, seated on which, from that day to this, every Scottish sovereign, including her most gracious Majesty Queen Victoria, has been crowned. According to the legends of the isle, that identical stone, now enshrined in the Coronation Chair in Westminster Abbey, was that whereon rested the head of St. Columba when, feeling the hour of his death approaching, he hastened to the little church, and there beheld a glorious vision of angels, sent to bear his ransomed spirit home (on June 9, A.D. 597).

This was not his first acquaintance with angel visitors. The name of Croc-an-Aingel, 'The Angel's Hill,' still recalls the legend of how he thereon communed with messengers from heaven. Another green hillock, close to the hospice, is known as the Tor Ab, 'The Abbot's Hill,' because thereon he was wont to sit and meditate while scanning the far horizon to catch the first glimpse of galleys that might be approaching his isle, bearing saints or sinners, coming to seek his counsel in their difficulties, or absolution from their crimes; reverent pilgrims, or, perchance, ruthless pirates only bent on plunder.

Looking across the narrow straits which divide Iona from the

rugged mountains of Mull, his keen eye oftentimes discerned the approach of pilgrims who preferred to shorten their long sea voyage in some frail bark by traversing the wild glens, and who, on reaching the further shore, had but to cry aloud to attract the attention of the brethren, who were ever ready to ferry all comers across the straits, and welcome them to a share of their own poor fare, and the shelter of those rude monastic cells glorified by the very presence of St. Columba.

How many of the pilgrims who visited Iona on Wednesday, June 13, 1888, would care to face such hardships as fell to the lot of those of the sixth century?

Among the many points of interest on the Island of Iona, which can hardly be visited by the tourist or 'pilgrim' who comes from Oban in the morning, to return thither at night, is the Port-na-Churraich, or Harbour of the Boat, on the further side of the isle. It is so named because here St. Columba and his brethren are said to have buried the frail coracle of wicker-work covered with hides, in which they sailed over from Ireland, to which they purposed never to return, and thus they put temptation out of sight. A hill close by is still called the Cairn-cul-n'-Erin, because, ere burying the boat, they had climbed thither to make sure that the Emerald Isle was no longer visible, and that henceforth for ever they had turned their backs on Erin's shore.

The beach of this little bay is one expanse of shingle, in the midst of which lies a small grassy hillock, just the shape of a boat lying keel uppermost, and just the size of the 'curragh' in which the Irish missionaries sailed, and of which the measurements have been recorded. Curiously enough, this is the only spot on all that stony shore where the grass contrives to grow.

Beyond the reach of the highest tide, the shingle is heaped up into a multitude of great cairns, which are said to have been piled, stone by stone, by penitents working on their knees in expiation of their crimes. Certainly a more painful and wearisome form of 'stone drill' could not well have been devised.

To geologists and mineralogists, as well as to pilgrims, a special interest attaches to that beach, inclosed by the great gneiss rocks. The shingle is composed of green serpentine, and quartz and red felspar, all of which glitter like jewels when wet with salt spray from the great waves which sweep in with such force. Children collect the brightest of these pebbles and

bring them for sale to the steamboat passengers, but from time immemorial true pilgrims have attached special value to certain clear green pebbles, which are occasionally found, and which have generally been assumed to be quartz. Quite recently, however, these have been proved to be true jade of excellent quality.

The discovery was due to Mr. Leland having, on his return to London after visiting Iona, given some to several Chinese gentlemen, simply as mementos. They examined the stones minutely, and with evident surprise, and after a discussion in Chinese thanked the donor with such warmth as seemed out of all proportion to the gifts, and induced him to procure others, which he showed to Professor J. Leidy, an expert in mineralogy, who at once selected one transparent specimen of clear dark green, which he pronounced to be the finest jade. That such should be found in the British Isles is a matter of extreme interest, as until the recent discovery of fragments in the glacial drift in North Germany near Potsdam, and at Schwensal, near Leipzig, this precious mineral was supposed to exist only in Northern Asia. It is believed that the only jade mines in the world are those in the Kuen-luen mountains in Turkestan whence, from the earliest times of which even the Chinese have any record, jade has been brought to Peking as tribute, and so highly prized that the Chinese have jealously striven to keep the market entirely to themselves.

Till very recently it has always been assumed that the celts and charms discovered in European lake-dwellings and other pre-historic remains, were brought from the highlands of Central Asia by the stream of the great Aryan westward migration, either as barter, or as charms against lightning.

The Mexican Indians deem a bracelet of jade pebbles to be the surest safeguard against all diseases of the loins; hence the name *pedra de hijada* (stone of the loins) bestowed upon it by the Spaniards, and by which it became known in Europe in the present contracted form. It is not known where the Mexicans obtained their specimens, as the mineral is not known to exist in America. In New Zealand, though the mineral has never been discovered *in situ*, great jade pebbles have been found, from which have been fashioned the grotesque amulets and celts so highly prized by the chiefs. It is possible that similar great pebbles may anciently have been found on Iona, and may have furnished the raw material for the pre-historic implements and fetishes which have proved so perplexing to learned men. If this were the case it

might very likely account for the sanctity in which, from the earliest ages, Iona has ever been held.

At the present time the really valuable green pebbles to be found on the shingly shore are few and far between, the majority being dull, and lacking transparency, as is the case in the jade mines of Central Asia, where the specimens found are of the most varied colours—semi-opaque cream colour, milky white, and dark green, with no transparency whatever, the clear sea-green, and the richer dark-green, which in the Celestial Empire are more precious than diamonds, being comparatively rare.

One thing certain is that wherever may be the mountain-cradle whence true jade has found its way to Iona, there it now does undoubtedly exist, and the patient seeker may be rewarded by finding a really good specimen, a portable and most interesting memento of the Holy Isle. Of course the most casual tourist may chance to secure a perfect pebble from some ragged child, but half the charm lies in having found it for oneself.

The very birds, sea-birds and land-birds alike, seem to have special peculiarities which endear them to the people—but none have such distinctive characteristics as the jackdaws.

There is always a certain sort of fascination about these odd birds which haunt ancient buildings and assume such vested rights therein. Men may come and men may go—aye, and bird's-nesting schoolboys too, but the jackies maintain their ground, and utterly refuse to be irritated to the point of flitting to new quarters. But nowhere in Britain does greater interest attach to the jackdaw colony than on Iona, where they find shelter in the crannies of the great cathedral tower. The islanders greatly respect these birds, and suffer no one to molest them. They declare that their numbers never either increase or decrease. They believe that long ere the building of the stately cruciform cathedral (the ruins of which are now the conspicuous feature of the isle) these self-same birds claimed a home in the monastery of St. Columba; indeed, who knows that these very birds were not the companions and diviners of the Druids who dwelt on this Holy Isle long before St. Columba and his comrades were dreamt of?

Certainly they are uncanny birds and may well be credited with unearthly wisdom. There is something very eerie in the way in which they guard the old ruins, especially at night, when one watchful sentinel is ever on guard; and no matter how stealthily a human visitor may approach, the very moment he sets foot

within the sacred enclosure he sounds the alarm. Anywhere outside of that magic circle strangers may walk at will, up to within a few yards of the ruins, but once cross the line of demarcation, and instantly the vigilant sentry goes his rounds to waken the colony, who start up with angry, querulous cawing, and, after a few seconds of noisy confusion, form themselves into a close phalanx, intent on watching every movement of the invader. Not another caw is uttered, but in total silence the black wings sweep athwart the dark sky, with a rushing sound like a blast of wind, now passing close over the head of the trespasser, then vanishing into space, to return again after a couple of minutes—a ghost-like proceeding which produces a curiously creepy sensation in the human being unaccustomed to finding himself alone at the mirk midnight, amid the sculptured tombs of saints and kings and brave old knights, with the murmur of the waves all around.

There is no deceiving these strange birds. Sometimes the moment they have passed overhead, the visitor may rapidly glide along in the shadow of the great tower or tall columns, thinking that on their return they will surely sweep over the spot where they left him; but they never hesitate for one second, but from out of the dark night back they come straight as an arrow almost touching the head of the unwelcome visitor. The very moment he steps beyond the actual inclosure of the cathedral they are content, and with low cawing and chattering discuss the events of the night, ere once more settling down to sleep in the niches of the old walls. No matter how often the experiment may be repeated in a night, the result is invariably the same. But the tourist who only sees the red ruins beneath the prosaic light of noon, and in the hurried rush round, while the steamer waits to carry him away again—knows none of these things, any more than he can know of that wild rocky valley where a circle of small stones still known as the Cappan Cuildich, or Tabernacle of the Culdees, still marks where our Pagan ancestors worshipped, and where, it is said, the standard of the Cross was first planted. In fact, the memories of Iona, cherished by the happy pilgrim who can allow himself a week of reverent leisure on the isle, are as different from those of the tourist who here halts for a couple of hours, as are the stately ruins of the red granite cathedral from that primitive church of wicker-work daubed over with mud, wherein the grand Apostle of the Isle first taught those same pagans to worship the Saviour of the world.

BALDWIN'S MISTAKE.

SOME years ago I was appointed to a mastership at Silcombe College. Silcombe is a very large school, quite one of our national institutions; 'that illustrious seat of learning' whose cricket annually awakens so much interest in the minds of the British public. There were a great many masters there, and I speedily became tolerably intimate with one or two of them. Most of all with Baldwin, a mathematical man, two or three years my senior. He was one of the most amiable, unassuming men that the world ever did injustice to. He had taken a very good degree, and, unlike many of his colleagues, had not exhausted all his brain power in getting it. He was still a tolerably diligent student of 'the hard-grained muses of the cube and square,' and was, moreover, a very careful and conscientious teacher. This latter quality he displayed to a degree that his pupils found very disagreeable and many of his fellow-teachers thought very ridiculous. For Silcombe had a very ancient foundation and very rich endowments, so that zeal in teaching was plainly superfluous. Boys who came there got the 'advantages of a public school education,' among which the learning of anything in particular is not generally included. But Baldwin expected all his pupils to do some work, and couldn't be induced to wink at the ignorance of even a leading member of the eleven. It was felt that this unnecessary eagerness to impart instruction was quite unsuited to the character of the place, tended in fact to degrade it in public estimation, and to lower it to the level of a private school or an army crammer's.

But Baldwin was so modest and unassuming, and in fact in all other respects was such a good fellow, that this little peculiarity was forgiven, and he was fairly popular with his colleagues. With the ladies in the neighbourhood—and there were a great many—he had, from time to time, awakened a more lively interest. For no unencumbered bachelor with a fairly good income, and with the prospect of a 'house' in the immediate foreground, could be an object of indifference to the match-making mammas in our neighbourhood. There were many such anxious mothers; and Baldwin, if not the ideal husband, seemed admirably fitted to be a son-in-law. But he escaped all the snares laid for him, more from in-

difference than from circumspection. Miss Phipps, the greatest flirt for twenty miles round, made a dead set at him, and felt confident that she could bring him to her feet. But he couldn't anyhow be got to understand the part allotted to him in this comedietta of coquetry, and Miss Phipps was obliged to retire, *re infecta*, as Cæsar says. She avenged herself by many sarcasms on his red whiskers. Then Mrs. McFanshaw cultivated his acquaintance with great assiduity. Her daughter Bella, who was red-haired and much freckled, would like to study mathematics, and would Mr. Baldwin be so obliging? &c. &c. Baldwin complied with the greatest alacrity, and Miss McFanshaw's hopes were high, but alas, she could not manage to pass the *Pons Asinorum*, and after some time her zeal slackened and the lessons ceased. Miss McFanshaw will remember the definition of a right angle and of a circle to the end of her days, and that she sighs to think is all the good that came of those horrid lessons. So indifferent was Baldwin to all varieties of feminine fascination, that we considered it quite a grand pleasantry and fine piece of wit to accuse him of various attachments. 'Baldwin's last flame,' 'Baldwin's final choice,' &c. &c. &c., were the standing dish of amusement in our Common Room. By-and-by the time came when Baldwin found these jokes in bad taste and said so quite seriously. We were astonished and puzzled. Had Miss McFanshaw then made an impression? Was Miss Phipps destined to triumph? His behaviour had become somewhat strange, the placidity of his demeanour was gone, he was absent-minded and abstracted. Twice he came late for his classes, once he put in an unnecessary appearance on a half-holiday. Various hypotheses were afloat to account for this change in his conduct. 'Rash speculation in the Stock Exchange, sudden fall in Egyptians.' (Some of us had dealings with Mr. Gammon, the great outside broker.)

'He is in love.'

'Aut insanit aut facit versus.'

'Much learning doth make thee mad, Baldwin,' I said to him; 'the geometry of n dimensions is getting too much for you.'

He looked at me fixedly for some time and then said, 'A letter would go by Brindisi in six weeks!'

It was after the long vacation that this change in him was remarked. He had been to Switzerland. I had arranged to go with him, and we had made out an elaborate skeleton tour. But an invitation specially attractive had come for me, and I had left

Baldwin to go alone. He had, however, the plan which I had drawn up, London to Bâle, Bâle to Zürich, Zürich to the Rigi, then to Lucerne over the Brunig to Interlaken, &c. &c. He had promised to buy me one or two little things at different points of the route, some wood-carving at Brienz, some Alpine plants at Zermatt, and so on, but none of these articles were forthcoming, and Baldwin, after some hesitation, admitted that he had never been to Brienz or Zermatt at all. The tour had not been carried out. He had got to Bâle and gone from there to Zürich, and had crossed the Lake of Zug and gone up the Rigi; from that point, however, his account became quite vague and indefinite. But about a month after the term had commenced, he told me all about his holiday and what had happened in it. He had fallen in love with a young lady he had met in Switzerland. He had abandoned his tour to be in her society, and he was sure he could never forget her. I suppose he was induced to confide in me from the fact that I, too, was then thinking a good deal about an absent lady. It was one evening after dinner that he took me into his confidence. We had dined together, as we often did. 'You ought to sympathise with me,' he said; 'you know why you threw me over and went to Scotland. I will tell you all about it. I must tell some one. It was on the Rigi. I saw her first at a *table-d'hôte*. Then in the morning, when we all got up to see the sun rise, she was standing and walking about for a long time in that little space at the very top of the mountain. Very pale and lovely she looked in the morning light. They said there was a beautiful sunrise. I hardly saw it.' There Baldwin paused for a little, took a few puffs at his cigar and then went on again. 'The next morning I was going away. As I went to take my place in the train to go down the mountain, I saw that she was in the train too. This meeting was quite accidental, I assure you, but it was not an accident that I took my seat in the same carriage, nor that I wandered about the station at Vitznau till I found out where they were going.'

'How many were there, then, in the party?' I inquired.

'Herself, her brother, and an aunt, an unmarried aunt,' he replied. 'I found that out afterwards,' he continued. 'After I saw their luggage taken away and had made a note of the name of the place, I went on to Lucerne. But I couldn't go on with my trip. I spent two very restless days at the Schweizerhof, and then I found out that the place where they had gone to was a little

village on the lake. The next day I took the boat there and soon found the quiet "pension" where they were stopping. There were only the two ladies there; the brother had gone away.' Baldwin paused a little and lighted a fresh cigar.

'Of course you made their acquaintance,' I said, 'and you naturally began with the aunt. And you pretended to think that she was the sister of your divinity.'

'I didn't carry it quite so far as that,' he replied, 'but of course I had to make the aunt's acquaintance first, and I admit I devoted myself a good deal to her in the beginning. Oh, I was artful, very artful,' and he leaned back in his chair and puffed away in enjoyment of the recollection of his skill in finesse.

'I can't tell you everything we said and did,' he went on, 'during those five weeks; the aunt was always there except once, except once,' and he smiled softly. 'I never spoke out to her, I hadn't the chance. But I meant to say something on leaving, to ask if I might write to her father, or at any rate I would have asked the aunt's advice and told her the state of the case.'

'And you didn't?'

'Fate was against me. I went away for a day, I felt bound to go away sometimes for the sake of appearances, and while I was absent, the brother suddenly returned and whisked them off to Lucerne. I saw them on the lake in the steamer and they waved me a farewell, but I didn't understand it was a final one till I got to the "pension" and found them gone. They had left their kind regards.'

Here Baldwin's story was interrupted by a visitor coming to smoke the evening pipe, and I went away promising to dine there again the next day.

CHAPTER II.

WHEN dinner was over the next day and he was left alone, there ensued a rather awkward silence. Then Baldwin broke out abruptly, 'Her name is Edith—Edith Metcalf. Her home is in New Zealand, at Dunedin. She was educated in England, and her aunt and her brother came over to take her back. They are utilising the occasion to see a little of Europe. They have been already travelling a year, stopping a long time at each place, and she told me that they would probably be six or nine months

longer. Then they would go back to her home. You see,' he went on after a short pause, 'I don't in the least know where they are now. They expected to remain fully a fortnight longer at Weggis, on the Lake of Lucerne, and I intended to speak to the brother when he returned to them. That abrupt departure spoiled everything.' We talked a long time that evening. Baldwin told me a good deal about his doings at Weggis, the excursions on the Lake, the walks on its shore, the visits to different points of interest in the neighbourhood. He mentioned the many little incidents which had diversified their acquaintance. These 'trifles light as air' need not be set down here. I was a sympathetic listener, for I too was in love. Finally we decided that the best thing to be done was to get as many visitors' lists as possible and try to find their halting place. This was done, and during a whole month we pondered over many a 'Fremdenblatt' or 'Liste des Etrangers,' but all in vain. There was a Metcalf and family 'aus England' at Wiesbaden, a Miss L. Metcalf at Vevey, several Metcalfes with an 'e,' but no Miss E. Metcalf twice repeated, once for the aunt, once for the niece. The aunt's name he told me was Eleanor.

'You had better write to New Zealand,' I said after one of these fruitless searches. 'She will get the letter when she gets back.'

'Do you think so?' he said, 'I am glad of it. For I wrote a fortnight ago. I didn't like to tell you so. I told her how I felt towards her, I set forth at length my prospects, and asked her, in short, to share my fortunes.'

And now ensued a very anxious time for Baldwin, during which his fits of absence of mind became worse and worse and provoked lively sarcasms from the unforgiving Miss Phipps. I was his confidant through it all, and I found it a rather burdensome position. Sometimes he was hopeful, and even talked of buying furniture. Sometimes he was despondent. Edith was sure to be admired wherever she went, and he feared, &c. &c. Sometimes he thought she must have got his letter long ago and have disdained an answer. They would be very likely to get back for Christmas. Sometimes he felt certain that they would not go back till the end of the spring, and perhaps not till the end of the summer. He would not abandon all hope of a reply till the next autumn. But when Christmas passed and no letter came Baldwin became very gloomy. He worked his classes harder than ever, and became

a contributor to the mathematical columns in the 'Educational Times.' But one fine morning in April, as I entered my classroom I received a scrap of paper on which was written 'N. Z. letter arrived. Yes.' As soon as school was over I went round to his room and met his class coming out. Joy was written on their faces, they had expected—or most of them had—wrath, punishment, detention, even stripes; lo, they found their teacher in the most amiable of moods, ready to help the greatest dunce out with his work. Baldwin's face was beaming with delight. 'Do you know,' he said, 'I feel that I must do something absurd, I am so delighted? Shall I go down and play leap-frog with the small boys of the lowest form? What silly thing shall I do? The letter came this morning. At first I was afraid to open it. I laid it down and looked at it for fully five minutes. When I opened it I glanced at it hurriedly, till I caught a phrase which reassured me, then I read it all, and I am now the happiest of men.'

He showed me the letter. Miss Metcalf wrote a beautiful hand, and there was not an 'i' undotted or a 't' uncrossed in the whole letter. It ran thus:—

' Twickenham Cottage, Dunedin, New Zealand.

'DEAR MR. BALDWIN,—I found your letter on my arrival here. We stopped a good while in Italy and made a halt of some weeks at Melbourne, so that your letter has been waiting here for some months. I need hardly say that I feel very much honoured by your offer. I have considered very seriously whether I know you well enough to trust my future happiness to your keeping. My heart tells me "yes." Yes. Are you satisfied with this answer? Ah, I thought sometimes, while you were walking by my side, I thought sometimes that you really cared for me. And I cried a little over our abrupt departure, though no one saw my tears. For I thought we should never meet again. Is my insignificant person really the object of such a grand passion? Is it for me that my lover will cross the world? How shall I think of you on your voyage out?'

But I will not quote the whole of the letter. It was long, and in spite of the commercial tone of its beginning it became very tender and even sentimental towards the end. It was signed 'Yours affectionately, E. Metcalf.' But there was an erasure, and Baldwin was much exercised in mind to know what had formerly

stood there. He was most angry when I suggested 'Yours truly.' He actually began to think of starting at once for New Zealand, but an interview with the head-master next day showed him the inexpediency of that course, and suggested the idea that the lady might come over to England to be married. This was so clearly the advisable course, but he said he didn't like to propose such a thing. It seemed indelicate. But I advised him to say nothing about coming to England at first, and after some letters had passed and things were ready for the marriage to come off, to suggest it then. But he did not at all fancy this advice, he was not in favour of long engagements, he said gravely; and the end of the business was that he wrote not only asking her to come out, but pressing her to do so at once, and giving a great many reasons why the marriage should take place as soon as possible. The letter was six sheets, though Baldwin, like many mathematical men, writes a very small neat hand; a second letter which went out by the same mail begged for a reply by cable.

Baldwin was excited enough in all reason when that much desired letter came, but when the cablegram arrived stating that the lady had sailed for England in the 'Tigris,' he was almost ridiculous in his joy. Of course the fact of his engagement was known before this to his colleagues, and to Silcombe society generally. Great was the stir among the ladies who were the ornaments of that society, and Baldwin only escaped a good deal of severe cross-examination by stopping at home. I was supposed to be a good deal in his confidence, and over and over again I was asked to supply the pedigree of the lady who was then crossing the ocean and recount her family history. This I couldn't do, but I saw no harm in telling them what Baldwin told me often enough, that she was very pretty, that she had dark eyes and hair, and was, according to Baldwin's ideas, about twenty years old. The ladies chattered a good deal over these details, some being anxious to know what the lady could have seen in Baldwin to induce her to accept him (great emphasis on the pronoun), while Miss Phipps pronounced herself entirely sceptical as to the lady's attractions, as Baldwin had plainly shown that he was no judge in such matters. There were others who were delighted with a romantic affair, and wished Baldwin well with all their hearts.

It is hardly necessary to say that the course of the 'Tigris' was most anxiously watched. Baldwin was dreadfully indignant

because there was a day's delay in passing through the Suez Canal, and wrote a letter to the 'Times' to show that the English Government should at once assume the management of this 'most important means of communication between the different parts of our extended empire.' M. de Lesseps was then being fêted in London, and the letter was not inserted. At last, however, the vessel arrived with its precious burden. It was then just the end of term, and Baldwin was in the midst of his examination and couldn't well get away to meet the vessel. It had been arranged that Miss Metcalf was to go to some distant relation in the north of England, and was to be married from there as speedily as might be. Two days after the arrival of the vessel Baldwin was free to go to claim his bride. He had saved a day by not going to meet the boat. He came to see me the night before he started north. His broad ruddy face was beaming with happiness; I almost think that his whiskers had taken a deeper tinge.

'I'm come to say good-bye,' he said. 'You won't see me again as a bachelor. I never thought things would have turned out so easily. I can hardly realise that in a few days I shall be married to my Edith. I shall be the happiest of men. Oh, she is so beautiful! I hardly dare think of her lovely face and slender, graceful, sweet little figure becoming mine.' And his voice sank and he blushed a little. Then after a little while he continued, 'There's one thing troubles me just a little; that's the aunt. I went rather far with her, you know, last summer, with my artfulness. She'll see why I did it now, and she'll be disgusted. But then I dare say she's got over that long ago.'

'Some one always is disgusted at every wedding. One person, perhaps occasionally two, is made happy for a time, and a dozen disappointed.'

I spoke bitterly, for the course of my own love was not running smooth just then. I had heard that Lucy was engaged, or nearly so—to that odious some one else that one always detests.

Baldwin wrung my hand in sympathy, and tried to look depressed. 'After all,' he said, 'I'm not sure that our bachelor freedom isn't best. One does give up a good deal.' But this pretence was too transparent, and he burst out laughing. 'I'll write to you on my honeymoon,' he said, 'that is, if I can find time. We are going to the Lake of Lucerne—the old spots, you know. I had a letter from her this morning, and she is delighted with this idea of mine.'

CHAPTER III.

I DIDN'T see the announcement of Baldwin's marriage in the *Times*, though I believe it appeared in due form, with the addition 'Colonial papers, please copy.' During the holidays I had two letters, but they were very brief. He and his wife were both quite well, though a little fatigued with much travelling. For they had altered their plans, they were not visiting the Lake of Lucerne, but were making a wider tour; in fact, carrying out the scheme he had abandoned the year before. He had bought my wood-carving at Brienz and would attend to the botanical specimens when they got to Zermatt. The weather had not been very good. I was a little surprised that he was not more effusive in his correspondence, but I attributed the dry and curt tone of these two letters to haste, and—to tell the truth—I didn't think very much about them. I had other employment. My own love affair had righted itself; the reported engagement was a fabrication, and a real one was substituted for it. Lucy's father yielded, and I was as happy as Baldwin had been when the important letter came. I got back to Silcombe on the day when the boys returned, and the next day I saw Baldwin for a moment in our Common Room. He was much sunburnt and looking very well. Still there was a manifest change in him. His honeymoon had sobered him. The gaiety of the last term had gone. He said but little, asked how I had spent my holidays, was interested in my news, and then said as he went away, 'You must come and dine with us one of these evenings.' The next day I met him walking with a lady. She was between thirty and thirty-five, I should think, of slightly florid complexion. Her eyes were a light blue, and she wore spectacles. She was inclined to be stout, and was very badly dressed. I couldn't conceive who it was that Baldwin had on his arm, and during the few seconds which elapsed between my first seeing him and getting into speaking distance, I had made and rejected half a dozen different conjectures. Then the lady was introduced to me as Mrs. Baldwin. I hope I managed to conceal my astonishment; I know I tried my hardest. For I was completely thunderstruck, startled out of all presence of mind. Was this the beautiful being that Baldwin had raved about? Those pale blue orbs, slightly protruding, blinking

through their spectacles, were they the eyes of lustrous, liquid depth that he had eulogised with such rapture?

I say I hope I disguised my astonishment; I hardly think I can have done. However, I murmured something about being delighted to make her acquaintance, and hoping that she would like Silcombe.

'I am sure I shall be charmed with it,' she replied, with a slight simper; 'Silcombe is a delightful place, so different from anything in New Zealand, and I am very pleased to know you. My husband has spoken of you several times. I am *so* anxious that he should not lose his bachelor friends, now that he is married. So many men do, they tell me. I am *so* obliged to you for making out that plan of travel. It was *so* well arranged. We saw everything, and never went on the same ground twice. And I will show you all the views we bought—we bought a great many views, didn't we, Frank?'

Baldwin assented gravely—very gravely I thought—and we walked on a little together. Then I left them, wondering as much as ever at the difference there was between the poetic description Baldwin had indulged in and the solid prose of the actual fact. No effort of imagination could transform Mrs. Baldwin into the graceful maiden he had depicted. No allowance for a lover's exaggeration could bridge the gulf. The most ardent fancy could not pretend that Mrs. Baldwin had a slight figure or was under thirty. And I thought that he was aware that I was thinking of this. There was an appearance of constraint in his manners. He seemed depressed and almost mournful.

I was by no means the only person in Silcombe who was puzzled in this way, though to no one else, perhaps, had Baldwin said so much in the days of rapture as to me. Mrs. Baldwin was the principal theme of gossip in Silcombe, especially, of course, in the scholastic circle. And the judgment was entirely unfavourable. Her features were plain and plebeian, her dresses dowdy and half-made. An elegantly-bound volume of Tupper was seen among her books, and the intellectual ones laughed her to scorn. She was destitute of the 'higher culture.' She filled her drawing-room with bad engravings and impossible vases. She was not musical, but fond of music, and especially admired Thalberg's 'Home, sweet Home.'

'Une vraie bourgeoise,' said Miss Rowlands, whose sister was studying art in Paris.

Miss Phipps was disappointed that she did not drop her h's; it was all that was wanted to complete her, she said. So that the poor lady was a complete failure in Silcombe society, which is remarkably intellectual, artistic, and cultivated, and the general wonder was how she had managed to fascinate Baldwin.

'If she had only been just a little pretty, one might have understood it,' said all the ladies; 'men are so easily captivated by a pretty face. Then she's forty at least.' (This I am bound to say was an exaggeration.)

The general view was that there was a mystery about it, and several solutions had a short-lived currency. The one that lasted longest was that money was the motive; this agreed so well with the known mercenariness of men. 'Mathematicians are always calculating,' said Miss Phipps, who had a reputation for wit.

So Mrs. Baldwin was pronounced to be enormously wealthy, and while this theory lasted she was treated with a great deal more consideration and invited to twice as many 'At Homes.' Then this explanation was discovered to be baseless, and then people were tired of conjectures, and Baldwin's marriage was suffered to rest in peace. But the ladies always called him 'poor Mr. Baldwin.'

About the beginning of November Baldwin asked me to dine with him. We were alone—we three—though one or two friends were expected to come in after dinner. The meal was not a remarkably lively one. I felt constrained and was very silent. The lady talked a good deal in an amiable, feeble sort of way, and Baldwin kept the conversation going pretty well. He was remarkably attentive to his wife. After dinner, however, when he and I were smoking together in his 'den,' he relapsed into utter silence, and sat puffing away at his cigar, cogitating deeply. I was about to propose an adjournment to the drawing-room, when Baldwin said suddenly,

'I have something to say to you.'

He rose from his seat and began pacing the room uneasily. After a few moments he resumed his seat and said,

'I must tell you. My marriage is an entire mistake. I married the wrong woman. Mrs. Baldwin is Edith's aunt. I addressed my letter to Miss E. Metcalf, Twickenham Cottage, Dunedin. Edith does not live at Twickenham Cottage, her aunt's name is Eleanor. So the letter was naturally enough

delivered to her. It was she who replied to it, it was she who came out in the "Tigris," and it was she whom I married.'

Then he paused. I said nothing. It was not my fault that the ludicrous side of the matter was about too much for me. But Baldwin's grave face was a reminder that the matter was very serious. After I had recovered from my first bewilderment I said:

'And you let yourself be trapped into the marriage. You were weak enough for that. She held you to your promise, knowing it was meant for her niece.'

'She knew nothing of the kind,' he rejoined, 'and I hope she never will. She supposes that the letter was really meant for her, and as long as I live, I will do what I can to keep her in that belief. She came down to the station to meet me, when I went to the north of England for my wedding. I saw her on the platform, and wondered for a moment why she had come, and where Edith was. But the warmth of her greeting, her "dear Frank," showed me at once what a mistake had been made. I don't know at all what I said to her. She has told me since that she thought me very strange, but she thought my agitation of spirit was only natural, and that she had been a little too effusive before the public gaze. I had presence of mind enough not to speak of Edith. I wanted first to think what must be done. I pleaded headache, and went back to my hotel early. I had to be alone. That night I spent pacing my room anxiously thinking it out. And in the morning I had made up my mind.' He paused a little and then went on more vehemently.

'Just think of it—think of it from her point of view. She had crossed the world to meet me. I am sure that she believed the letter was for her. Why should she not? I had given her reason enough with my artfulness as I called it—God help me. I had in my pocket a letter she wrote to me on landing—in reply to one I sent to Naples where those boats generally put in. It was a tender, passionate letter, where all reserve was cast aside, and woman's feeling spoke out unchecked. She is not young, you think, and not beautiful. But it is not the young and the beautiful alone who can feel. Many a plain woman contemptuously called old maid, is capable of a depth of affection which the young beauty who barter away her heart in the daily traffic of coquetry and flirtation has no conception of. Could I have the heart to give her such a cruel blow as to reject the affection she

thought I had invited so eagerly? Could I send her home again? Poor child! I've no doubt she was a little triumphant over her coming wedding. She had a trunk full of wedding presents with her. How could she go back to her friends who would remember her innocent boastings, and explain the story to them? I hadn't the heart. I don't want to make out myself better than I am. I felt at once that all was over between me and Edith in any case. For the girl was very fond of her aunt, and though she would not have blamed me, she would never, never, I was sure, take me for her husband after I had sent her aunt back. And if Edith was lost, I didn't care very much for anything. I have chosen my part, and I shall try to play it well. The worst is already over. Nothing again can be so bad as the ghastly mockery of our honeymoon. The only thing that I could not bear was to go where we were last summer. That I could not do.'

He stopped and unlocked a drawer and took out some withered flowers.

'See,' he said, 'she gave me this edelweiss; she has worn this little bouquet. And now'—he threw them into the fire—'there go my reminiscences. And I hope I shall soon forget her, forget the look of her face and the sound of her voice, the touch of her hand. Some day perhaps the thought of my lost love—for she loved me I feel sure, will——'

But here his wife came into the room and he was silent. She ran up to him, and with a glance at me, half shy, half proud, seated herself on his knee, and began patting his cheeks with her hand, beaming at him benevolently through her spectacles.

'Are you not coming into the drawing-room, Frank, dearest?' she said; 'it's getting quite late.'

'Let's go,' said Baldwin simply.

I went on in front, and heard her murmur playfully to her husband, 'Tum along, little Frankie.'

Later on in the evening she showed me a photograph. It was a half-length of a most beautiful girl, with dark hair and eyes, and lovely expressive face.

'There,' she said, 'isn't she pretty? That's my niece Edith. She is the great beauty of our family, and as good and clever as she is beautiful. We are all proud of her. I only hope,' she continued in a lower voice, glancing fondly across the room at her husband, 'that she will make as good a marriage as I have done. She couldn't have a better or a kinder husband.'

Some long time afterward I told my wife about Baldwin's mistake. Perhaps I was wrong, but I had only just been married, and didn't know better. In fact Lucy and I were on our honeymoon when I repeated to her what Baldwin had said on that evening.

When I mentioned the burning of the flowers her eyes filled with tears. 'I think that that is the noblest and most generous action I ever heard of,' she said; 'it's grand; it's quite heroic!'

'We pay, my dear little Lucy,' I replied, 'a heavy price for every imprudence. And a generous imprudence is perhaps the most costly of all.'

'I wonder if he really burnt all the flowers,' she replied irrelevantly.

*THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLEOPATRA.'*¹

HEAR how the stars and stripes, above stripes the stars,
 For by suffering men grow great,
 In the foam of Atlantic waves, the fiercest of wars—
 Rage of waters and hate
 Of wind—did a noble deed
 Whereof the eternal seed,
 When this our little world
 Into thousand atoms is hurled,
 And there is no more sea,
 Shall still bear fruit and be.

¹ The facts on which the ballad has been founded appeared in an English paper shortly after the occurrence. The writer was fortunately able to have them verified by an American friend, Mr. Yarnall, of Philadelphia, who wrote direct to the Shipping Agency for him and obtained the reply annexed:—

'Peter Wright and Sons, Philadelphia, Sept. 25, 1886.

'Ellis Yarnall, Esq.

'Dear Sir,—Annexed please find information required by you.

'Very truly,

'FRANK D. P. WEALL.

'Capt. Geo. W. Pendleton, American fishing schooner "Cleopatra," of Gloucester, Mass.

'Capt. Edmund Miller Hughes, American line steamer "Lord Gough." Date of rescue, December 27th, 1885.'

The 'Lord Gough,' though of the American line of steamers (Liverpool to Philadelphia), is a British vessel; her Captain is, I think, a Scotchman. On the 27th December the 'Lord Gough,' on her way to Philadelphia, saw the flag of distress on the mast of the 'Cleopatra.' The wind was blowing a gale, making it a matter of serious risk for the 'Lord Gough' to send a boat to the rescue. But Captain Hughes thought it his duty to do this, and he called for volunteers. The second officer (I think), and a crew volunteered, and a boat was lowered. Suddenly, however, the signal of distress was lowered from the mast of the 'Cleopatra.' Captain Hughes was much perplexed; it seemed almost certain that the vessel was in extremity. On the whole he thought it his duty to send the boat. The brave fellows made their way over the perilous waters, and the schooner was reached. There they found the master and eleven men, but for the 'Lord Gough,' utterly without hope. Three others of the crew had been washed away, and the body of a fourth lay on the deck. In two trips the survivors were conveyed to the 'Lord Gough.' The master of the schooner went in the second

We waved our caps, we crossed the bar,
 And out into the bay,
 And many a lass who lost her tar
 Was sad of heart that day;
 Each sailor loves some maid the best,
 Our ship went east, our thoughts went west.

The great sail whitened to the sun,
 And cheerly sang the foam,
 But backward still some hearts must run
 To that last eve at home,
 When in the mellow harvest corn
 They named the far-off marriage morn.

Our 'Cleopatra's' golden head
 Scarce heaved, so smooth of keel
 We flew, our topsail canvas spread,
 Our skipper at the wheel;
 Sixteen aboard, a crew as sound
 As ever sought a fishing ground.

You hail from Gloucester, friend, you know
 Jack Pendleton—a man you say,
 Our skipper—ay, not one to throw
 Much breath or many words away,
 But just and brave, a man who won
 All hearts of men, was Pendleton.

I sometimes think that God still comes
 In human shape and common kind,
 And calls from fisher-faring homes
 A simple crew of varied mind
 To teach men in a cross-sea trip
 The mystery of fellowship.

trip of the boat, but before doing so, he read with such solemnity as he could in the awful storm, the burial service over the remains of his comrade, and then the body was committed to the deep. Of course, the first inquiry made by Captain Hughes of the American Captain was why did he haul down his signal? The reply was:—*'Sir, we saw that you were preparing to make an effort to save us, but we saw, also, that it was a sea in which it was very doubtful whether a boat would live. I said, then, to my men, "Shall we let those brave fellows risk their lives to save ours?" and they said "No!" Then I hauled down the flag.'*

But be that false or be that true,
Our skipper's spell was over all,
His word was law in love, no crew
Came merrier to a 'bosun's' call ;
And in the love to him we bore
Each came to love his brother more.

Once in a dream it seemed to me,
Like Jesus as I read one day,
Our skipper walked a stormy sea ;
I saw his face burn through the spray,
And I remember that he said
'With me is life—be not afraid.'

He seldom spoke of God or Heaven,
But moved as in another world,
And ever one day out of seven
The kedge was cast, the sails were furled,
We raised a hymn, he made a prayer,
And told us of a Father's care.

Oh! hard is any seaman's lot
When nets are foul and winds are wild,
But when in calm the nets are shot
And decks with silver store are piled,
And lines come laden home with spoil,
The fisher's heart forgets the toil.

And many a day we sailed and knew
A golden east and rosy west,
But still our thoughts like swallows flew
To that dear port we loved the best.
'To-morrow,' cried the skipper, 'come
What will to-day, we'll steer for home.'

But as he spoke we felt the breath
Of some far iceberg fill the sail,
And with a hand as cold as death
The storm wrack burst in sleet and hail,
And all the sea writhed mad with pain
Beneath the thundering hurricane.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLEOPATRA.'

Our shrouds were snapt like packers' thread,
 The blocks flew out, the schooner heeled,
 We saw the white sea overhead,
 We cut the sheets and back she reeled,
 Then all a-board a billow leapt,
 And stem to staggering stern it swept.

Oh! bitterest wave, it tore from me
 My own son's son, it crashed the mast,
 It smote us all upon our knee,
 And when the whelming flood was past,
 Three were not: one upon the deck
 Lay dying, and our craft a wreck!

God knows how through that day and night
 The groaning vessel rose and sank,
 We envied him with face so white
 Beside the shattered water tank,
 He seemed so calm, his tempest past,
 We could not die, we fought the blast.

Then one cried out: 'A sail! a sail!'
 Dear God! the dead man was forgot.
 They see our flag's distress, they hail—
 Brave land to bear so brave a Scot—
 Our stars and stripes remember still
 Your bold sea captain's generous will!

Oh! life is dearer than we guess'd,
 And hope is harder to forego,
 Each saw the port he loved the best
 Once more upon the weather bow,
 But without word our skipper seemed
 As one who prayed or one who dreamed.

The mountain ridge of hurrying wave
 Rose up, but ever as it fell
 We caught between us and the grave
 That huge red hull, and we could tell
 How men as brave as lions there
 For brother-men would do and dare.

Our boats were stove, their boats were whole,
Lord help them ! out the davits swing !
What, shall they pull for such a goal
And launch on Death from death to bring
Life, but at Death's most certain price ?
God asks, not man, such sacrifice.

The waters hissed, the waters curled,
Thrashed into dust the waters screamed,
From height to hell we back were hurled,
But still our skipper prayed or dreamed,
And still above our battered crew
The stars and stripes in pity flew.

Then spake the skipper tried and true,
And there was that about his word
That pierced our very beings through
As if it were a spirit's sword,
And there was that about his face
Made each forget the storm a space.

' Mates, have we such dark fear of death,
Is that old Gloucester dock so dear,
That we would purchase life and breath,
Albeit the succour come so near,
At risk of such a hungry grave
For yonder friends who haste to save ?

' Have they no homes, no bairns, no wives,
Shall we like cowards stand to see
Men, brothers, dare to rescue lives,
— Our lives so poor— at such a fee ?'
And as he spoke his eyes were bright
With something of an angel light.

Oh ! God forgive my silence then,
My wife's dear call came through the wind ;
But with the skipper there were ten
Of self-forgetful hero mind.
Amen ! Amen ! and with that cry
They swore for them no man should die.

THE BALLAD OF THE 'CLEOPATRA.'

Down came the stripes, down came the stars !

Did e'er doomed hulk so well pretend

Her pumps were sound, no leak, no scars,

Nor any need of help or friend ?

And with the dead man at our side

We felt that we indeed had died.

Right merry gleams the Peter blue,

'Tis sad to haul the Peter down,

But when the flag for need flies true

And every other hope is flown,

To haul those colours down and feel

Hope dead, it tries a heart of steel.

Our vessel groaned as she would break,

O'erhead a billow seemed to boom ;

When next I heard the skipper speak

I lay in some strange cabin room—

He smiled and said, ' God crossed us, mate,

That day we dared to choose our fate.'

THE PEAK OF TENERIFE.

‘SINCE experience proves that a man cannot breathe on the top of the Peak of Tenerife . . .’ From this unsound predicate, Jacob la Pereyre, an ancient author writing about the Universal Deluge, makes the terrible deduction that if the Flood had risen a few yards higher no one would have been able to breathe in the Ark.

Before mountain climbing came into fashion, others besides this old writer had exaggerated ideas of the Peak. Gregorio Leti, a biographer of Philip II., says of it: ‘There is in Tenerife a mountain so immeasurably high, that it is impossible to climb it without great difficulty, and in less than three days. Hence it is believed to be the highest in the world. Nevertheless, it is said that from its base to its very summit, are to be found the dwelling places of a number of people, absolutely wild and cruel, and that they are more like ferocious beasts than reasonable beings.’ Even so late as the beginning of this century, certain geographers held to the opinion that the Peak was nowhere surpassed in height. But this *ipse dixit* of Leti’s about natives residing on the summit of the Peak is very odd, when we remember that for centuries this has been a crater of hot sulphur. A man might as well be said to reside in a half-quiescent limekiln.

Neither the Guanches (as the aborigines of Tenerife were called) nor the early Spaniards who succeeded them felt much affection for the Peak itself. Its very name was hurtful to polite ears—*Echeyde*, ‘Hell.’ Its present name is a clear transition from the Guanche word, the Peak of Teide. So long ago as 1402, in a navigation treaty between England and France, reference is made to the piracies of a certain Norman, Bethencourt, the original conqueror of some of the Canaries, and to Tenerife as the ‘Ile d’Enfer.’ And certainly if in the middle ages the cone rising from the sea more than 12,000 feet was (as it is said to have been) in a state of constant eruption, the sight of it, visible according to Humboldt for a circuit of 260 leagues, must have been uncommonly impressive to generations of men prone to see diabolical agency in all uncomfortable phenomena of nature. Hence, too,

the Spanish peasants called it 'the Devil's Cauldron, in which all the food of hell is cooked.'

Considering this ugly reputation of the Peak, it may well be worth the historian's while to record the first ascent of it by a Governor-General of the Islands. This feat, which none of his predecessors had ever dared to attempt, was successfully achieved by Don Andres Bonito, on August 21, 1743. One can hardly doubt that his adventurous Excellency was thankful to find himself safe back in his palace, and amazed, on reflection, that he had met with so few perils and horrors in the climb.

Perhaps the first detailed account of an ascent is that by Sprat, Bishop of Rochester, in the infantine days of the Royal Society. It narrates the trials of certain English merchants in 1650. These gentlemen were probably the local agents for the sale in England of the Canary wine, which still kept its fame. But their loyalty was soon to be shrewishly acknowledged by the marriage of Charles II. with a Portuguese princess, and the consequent patronage of Portuguese, and notably, Madeira wines, to the detriment of the Canaries. They got to the top, having felt many portentous tremblings of the earth on the way. But when they came to open the luncheon-basket they found the wine so congealed that they could not drink it before warming it, the brandy with hardly any strength left in it, and the wind so vigorous that they could scarcely drink the health of the king of England, or fire a volley in honour of his Majesty. These good royalists were, no doubt, made much of when they safely returned to the lowlands.

But let the truth be told. Of all the mountains on the globe, there can be few of the same height as the Peak to compare with it for the ease with which it may be ascended. Though its final 3,500 feet are steep, with an inclination of from 35° to 42° , the average slope is not more than $12\cdot30^{\circ}$. From first to last, life is never endangered. It is not even necessary to pass a night on it. By leaving Orotava in the evening, and travelling through the darkness by the aid of the moon or torches, it is possible to be on Teide by sunrise. Nor is the night that is conventionally spent between the big boulders known as the English halting-place (*Estancia de los Ingleses*) by any means so arduous an experience as one expects to find it. A camp in the open air at an elevation of 10,000 feet ought to be a little trying; and that is all that it is. But when the deed is done, and duly subjected to quiet analysis in retrospect, one is forced to admit that the toil is very trivial, and

amply requited by the scenic and other rewards attendant upon it.

We made our ascent on May 11 and 12. By the Spaniards it was thought to be rather soon in the year : to their warm imaginations, the least snow seems a very formidable obstacle to mountain climbing. What, then, were they likely to think of the two Englishmen who, so early as March 12, together with two or three ladies, had dared to make the trip ! Indeed, events seemed to prove that these brave compatriots of ours were somewhat hare-brained. For though they safely reached the top, over the sheets of ice which masked the Piton, as the cone is called, it was at no little risk, seeing that they were unprovided with ice axes. Moreover, they were so unfortunate as to fall out with their guides, who stayed below, leaving them to their own bold will. And as for the ladies, they gave it up after a while, reserving what little strength and breath remained to them for the congratulation of their lords when these descended with the glow of victory upon them. But for many weeks after this exploit the Spaniards of Tenerife used the word *loco* (‘ madman ’) and Englishman synonymously. Nor dare I repeat for English readers what a stalwart old *hidalgo* said to me in free comment upon the part played by our countrywomen in the excursion.

We started from the port of Orotava at seven o’clock in the morning, under the care of Diego Zamorra, a guide. Zamorra is not the best guide of the place, but his betters happened to be out of the way on this occasion. We were a party of three *caballeros*, and to look after our horses and attend the two mules that accompanied us laden with overcoats and dressing-gowns to keep us warm in the night, Diego took with him a brace of stout boys ; so that in all we mustered six human beings and five brute beasts. As provisions we carried good store of roast chickens, soup, eggs, bread, butter and cheese, and some bottles of wine, all provided by our hotel, and, lastly, a barrel of water. The water was a very important article of freight, for we were destined to traverse a parching desert of pumice sand, quite devoid of springs, and for more than twenty-four hours to be wholly dependent for our supply upon what we carried.

Our cavalcade made a stir as we rode through the streets of the red-roofed little town. Diego and the boys knew everyone we met—from the big, brown, bare-chested driver of the span of oxen going out into the fields, to the withered little old crone hurrying

her goat from door to door, with a tin cup in her hand to measure the milk she sold as she went. It is not every day that Teide is assailed, and therefore people of all ages and many different professions came to their doors when they heard our men's proud babble to their friends about the Englishmen and *El Pico*.

Nor was I less elated than the men. It was a charming day. The sea below us did but ripple under the blue sky, save where it beat itself into white foam on the rough black lava shore. The country was in summer beauty. By the roadside were dense clusters of scarlet geraniums. Oleanders sweetened the air. The vines had leafed and begun to blossom. The fig-trees and mulberries were darkening with ripe fruit. Myriads of poppies, red and yellow, brightened the grain fields, though here and there a bronze patch showed that some barley had already been cut and carried. Stately palms, broad bananas, glossy eucalypti, and eccentric aloes were at home on all sides of us, cheek by jowl with the humble daisies of our own less luxuriant land. The villas of this happy country were as gay as its vegetation. They were red, blue, buff, green, yellow, white, or brown, sometimes stencilled in pretty patterns, always bowered in foliage, and with a large tank of water close at hand for the irrigation of the gardens, and the accommodation of their respective colonies of noisy little green frogs. It were audacious to try to describe the Vale of Taoro. To form the shadow of an idea of it, imagine an amphitheatre of cultivated country about two leagues in length, and two leagues in breadth from the seashore to the top of the mountain ridge, some six or seven thousand feet high, which encircles it landwards; enliven the landscape with towns and villages, church spires and domes illumined by the sun; and add a fringe of woods where the land is 3,000 feet above the sea, and thin blue columns of smoke rising from the midst of the upper trees, betokening the charcoal-burner at his labour. In fact, this Vale of Taoro or Orotava is reputed to be one of the most beautiful valleys on the earth. And on this particular day, add a straight bank of still black cloud, which hangs down the mountain side to within about 3,000 feet from the sea. We cannot see through or above the cloud. But our climb through and above the cloud is to be the first great stage of our work towards the Pico. The Pico itself is invisible: for some occult reason the bank of cloud over the valley had not lifted for nearly a fortnight. Thus, though Teide might be viewed to perfection from the sea at a distance of forty or fifty miles from

Tenerife, we at its very feet were precluded from the briefest sight of it.

Conspicuous in the vale of Orotava are two remarkable humps, rising several hundred feet above the level of the country round them. They are volcanic, of course. Their shape and general colour show that clearly, even were there no lava stream running from the depression in the side of the one nearest to us. The lava is fast disintegrating, to be sure. Some of it is already reclaimed: pines and fig-trees are growing upon it. Only the other day I had visited the house of an English lady on the edge of this very lava where it nears the coast, and found a croquet-lawn set with its hoops and sticks under the shade of dragon-trees and palms, and hedged with yellow jessamine, Indian pinks, bougainvillea, and bushes of the beautiful mauve plumbago. These humps are little else than mammoth cinder-heaps, in part coated with grass and bushes; but the cinders have a purple sheen upon them that differentiates them notably from the common ashes of our cinder-heaps. It is uncertain when these small excrescences on the flank of the Peak appeared. The Guanche traditions ascribed them to the thirteenth century; and the lava just mentioned is said to have run out in 1430. Other blue veins score the valley from the mountain background towards the sea. But these are not lava flows. They are the river-beds, which carry off the mountain surplus of rain. Once or twice in a century the Canaries receive more rain than they can well accommodate; in 1826, for example, when Orotava was ravaged by the waters. But ordinarily the river-beds are dry; their blue stones serve the countrywomen as drying-grounds for their clothes; and here and there a peasant has insulted them by planting and reaping a good crop of potatoes in the very middle of the stream. The average annual rainfall is only thirteen or fourteen inches.

In the meantime we have climbed to the village of Palo Blanco, almost on the hem of the overhanging cloud. Tropical vegetation is below us now; we are among chestnut trees just breaking into leaf, potato fields two months later than those on the sea-level, barley of the most meagre kind, and pear and cherry trees instead of figs, bananas, and apricots. Close at hand, to the right, is the precipitous wall of Tigayga, about 7,000 feet above the sea. It is in the profoundest shadow, thanks to the clouds. Not even the fresh verdure of its ravines can do much to modify the gloom of its great precipices. Here, sheltering under its lee,

are the two famous villages of Realejo, Upper and Lower. They mark the site of prime incidents in the conquest of the island by the Spaniards in 1496. Bencomo, the king of Taoro, and chief prince of Tenerife, had retreated before Lugo and his Spaniards to this extremity of his realm. For three years he had kept the Spaniards at bay. Once he had beaten them in fair fight, killing 900 out of an army of 1,200. But a terrible pestilence broke out among the Guanches soon after this victory, and carried off thousands of them. Thanks to the pestilence rather than to their own might, the Spaniards henceforward held the country at their mercy. But for a crowning combat, the two armies—of Guanches, armed with clubs, axes, and javelins mounted with flakes of obsidian from the Peak, and of Spaniards in coats of mail, leathern jerkins, and with all the weapons of European usage—put themselves into position here on this slope, some 2,000 feet above the sea. ‘Realejo’ is the Spanish for ‘camp.’ The Spaniards held the upper ground, and the Guanches the lower. And it was here, where the spire of the church of Upper Realejo marks the land, that poor old Bencomo (as noble a savage as ever did honour to savagedom) determined to arrest further slaughter of his people by resigning his realm to the King of Spain on condition that the Guanche natives were not despoiled of their property, and by accepting the baptism that the Spaniards pressed upon him as one of the chief articles in his bond of surrender. The king of the Guanches was more of a *caballero* than the knights and titled adventurers of Spain. He was generous himself, and he trusted too much to the generosity of the conquerors. And so within a little while he died in Europe, whither he was taken to grace the fame of Lugo, the leader of the Spaniards, much as the old Roman proconsuls took with them captive kings to Rome to enhance their triumphal processions. Bencomo’s noble history, and the requited love of his daughter Dacil for a Spanish *hidalgo* in the suite of the conqueror, are both told in an old epic of the Canaries by Antonio de Viana. It had been better, perhaps, for the Guanche king if he had once more made ‘the green fields red with blood,’ instead of allowing himself to be baptized from policy, not conviction, on the site still commemorated by the white spire of the church of Upper Realejo.

As Palo Blanco offers us our last chance of fresh water, we make a halt by its fountain. One by one the animals are allowed to take a long and a strong pull. Poor beasts! they seem to know

that they have an unpleasant prospect in store for them. They drink and drink until Diego wrenches them violently from the trough; and then they stand aside and watch the next animal having its turn, with eager eyes and nervous ears, ready to make a rush the moment the man's attention is relaxed.

Hitherto, the track has been a not inconsiderable thoroughfare. We have had some rocks and stones to clamber over which we would have avoided if we could, but we have never been out of touch with human beings. We met many women with eggs on their heads, or a comely hen, wrapped in a silk handkerchief, tucked under the arm. They trod barefooted, admirably poised, and gave us cheerful greeting as they passed us. In the fields, too, men were weeding or hoeing their potatoes. And boys and girls, bright-eyed and alert, seemed ever on the look-out for such objects of interest as strangers. 'Mariquita!' screams a beldame from her hovel-porch to a well-grown child who is at work in the fields a hundred yards ahead of us, 'make haste and be ready to ask the gentlemen for a quartite when they pass you.' A quartite is rather less than a halfpenny, but it is enough to stir the desire of Mariquita; and so, when we reach the boundary of her field, there she stands, both her large brown eyes full of appeal, and her brown little palms outstretched as she beseeches for a 'quartite, Señor—quartite!' This unabashed begging is quite a curious feature in Tenerife since English people have acquired the habit of visiting the island. The children seem to beg spontaneously, whether they want anything or not. They plead laughingly, but with a perseverance that is generally adapted to provoke anything rather than laughter in their victims. However, this time we sent Mariquita back to her potatoes with a smile of real contentment on her face, and ere we were in the clouds we could hear her singing away like the larks around her, while she broke the red earth with her old-fashioned hoe.

For the next half-hour or more we ascend through a sparse wood of heaths, with the fog grey and persistent all around us. We naturally button our coats as we enter this zone of vapour. It is only for a minute or two, however, as we soon realise that the cloud is a dry cloud, and that we are rising through it to a region of heat instead of cold. We have gone but a little way, in fact, ere it is apparent that the sun is shining brilliantly above us. And so, at an altitude of 4,030 feet, we emerge from the shadows, and look around to discover that we are in the clear

upper air, with a sky of the purest blue over our heads, and a powerful sun in the heavens. The summits of the lower slopes of the Peak and the long back of Tigayga seem close to us in this refined atmosphere. They are invested in a very lovely coral-pink and blue light, through which the scant bushes of retama, which alone bespread them, gleam like spots of silver grey. Towards the head of the Guimar valley, on the south side of the island, the rocks are a dazzling crimson, due to the ferruginous nature of their volcanic earth. But the oddest impression of all is that caused by the very clouds just left beneath us. They stretch from the one great mountain flank of the valley to the other—the dark masses looming from them like islets in a sea. The vapour hangs motionless in mid-air, with a broad, undulating surface in the most curious of contrasts with the distant fringe of blue sea, which forms our horizon, I know not how many miles away. The cloud was light enough when we were enfolded in it, but, viewing it at our feet, and from the untroubled upper air, we feel disposed to pity our friends in Orotava, that they are cloaked from the sun by a nebulous stratum of such evident weight, opacity, and obstinate determination. It is a distinct migration from northern to southern climes. Swallows are soaring about our heads, happy in the sunlight, and quite careless of the fact that they are nearly a vertical mile above the sea.

But with this change in our surroundings begins the real heat and toil of the day. Of course, there is no more shade to be expected. The only vegetation hence to the other side of the Peak ten miles away is the retama, a shrub in close affinity with the

Odorata ginestra,
Contenta dei deserti . . . ;

and though on the pumice plains the retama broadens so that its branches attain a total girth of forty or fifty feet, it is never tall enough to cast a shadow of service to man. The track winds upwards by tiny defiles in the grey rock débris, until it brings us to a land of absolute desolation. From slopes of yellow pumice dust, hard to climb, and suffocating alike to man and beast, we pass to masses of reddish lava, sharp and irregular, and to the eye as fresh and capable of annoyance as if it had flown forth from the side of the Peak only the other year. The brilliant lichens which fasten upon the lower lava, and hasten its decomposition, are lacking here. Everything, in short, is lacking, save the burning sun

above us, which radiates from the fused iron under our feet to a degree that makes us gasp.

Under these circumstances, it is hard to condemn our guides for the want of self-control that is proverbial with them in an ascent of Teide. They are for ever in the wake of the mule that carries the water-barrel, and one after the other seizes a moment when he thinks he is unobserved to pull out the plug, and tilt some liquor down his parched throat. 'Muy bonito!'¹ remarks Diego, with a most inconsequent wave of the hand over these hideous mounds of red and russet lava, and under this pretence of devotion to the interests of his employers, whom he hopes he has thereby adequately diverted from himself, he goes in the rear to the barrel. After a time, however, we decide to keep our water-mule in front. A little of such larceny is permissible, whereas much might be disastrous.

We are more than 5,000 feet up before we round the mountain shoulders sufficiently to get our first view of the Peak from high ground. It peeps over a near heap of scoriæ, with an affectation of littleness that might have deceived us. But the guides were on terms of acquaintance with it, of course, and hailed the diminutive pink-purple cone with a shout of 'El Pico! El Pico de Teide!' that was very convincing. By and by we saw more of it. The ethereal beauty of its summit was modified by the stern black lava pyramid upon which it appeared to stand; even though the lava, in its turn, was made somewhat less depressingly gloomy by the white veins of snow which scored it. It continued to swell upwards as, little by little, we rose to the level of the great crater-bed of the Cañadas in the middle of which it is set with the completest symmetry, so that by one o'clock, when we were on the skirts of the crater, and 6,000 feet above the sea, we saw it before us from base to summit. It was then a superb spectacle, but its angle of elevation seemed so very steep that I fancy we viewed it with feelings of alarmed respect as much as admiration. But we were tired and scorched, and not in a fit state for judicious appraisal of the old volcano's difficulties. And long ere we had finished our lunch—sprawled on the hot sand in the middle of a Titanic coil of scoriæ, and under an improvised screen of dressing-gowns and retama bushes—we voted the Peak a hill of infinite assumption, and ourselves able to manage a mountain twice its height, with guides or without them.

¹ 'Very pretty!'

The ascent of Teide from Orotava may be conveniently divided into a certain number of stages. Of these the first must end with the Monte Verde, or Green Mountain, where we were in the cloud and among the heaths. The second is the Portillo, or entrance to the Cañadas. We were close to it when we lunched at midday. It is an imaginary gate to the third stage, the Plano de Retamo, or Plain of the Retama—a wearisome plateau of yellow pumice, diversified with blocks and small fragments of obsidian, and studded with the welcome shrub that gives it its name. This plain, be it understood, is the ancient crater of Tenerife, from which the Pico proper soars upwards. It is about eight miles in diameter, from 7,000 to 8,000 feet above the sea, and girded by the angular rocks of the Cañadas, striking contortions of brilliant reds and browns in colour, and in places 2,000 feet above the plateau itself. Where we enter the plain by the Portillo, the Cañadas' rocks seem to have been carried away by a ponderous stream of old lava. The gate is, in fact, forced: the toilsome climb across the scoriæ antecedent to our lunch-time was over the molten mass which ages ago had wrought their ruin on the circle of the Cañadas. The fourth stage of the ascent is the passage of the Montana Blanca, a rounded hump at the foot of the Pico, and of a pumice material rather whiter than that in the plain. The fifth stage includes the first thousand feet of the climb up the pyramid, a tedious course amid lava and obsidian in immense blocks, terminating at the Estancia de los Ingleses. Here is a level space upon which are poised two or three great boulders of rock about twenty feet high. It has acquired so recommendatory a name from the fact that our countrymen have been content to try and sleep between these stones on their way up to the final crater. I do not know when the place was so christened. Early in the eighteenth century it had the name. Possibly, therefore, it memorialises the halt of the party of scientists who paid the Peak a visit in the reign of Charles II. These gentlemen obtained special ambassadorial permission to make experiments on Teide. The Spanish Envoy at the Court of St. James' thought they were joking when they declared their purpose of crossing the sea to weigh the air on the summit of the Peak of Tenerife. He repeated the joke to Charles II. himself, with much added laughter of his own, and was then rather disturbed to find that the King of England chanced to be one of the promoters of the Royal Society under whose auspices the expedi-

tion was being arranged. Accordingly one may assume that these valorous servants of science have given us this creditable mark of fame in a distant island of Spain. From the Estancia one ascends another thousand feet over sliding pumice of a very vexatious kind to the site called Alta Vista. Here is a white wood house in a sheltered recess. It is a solid erection that would soon be provided with a refreshment contractor, and two or three beds for travellers interested in the sunrise, if the Peak of Tenerife were in England. As it is, the house belongs to a sulphur company still engaged in exploiting the sulphur of the peak. Its door is kept locked, and only by its window is it possible to enter, in acrobatic fashion, among its pickaxes and mattocks. It was close to this house, 10,700 feet above the sea, that Piazzi Smythe, in his laborious surveyal of the characteristics of the Peak, set up his tent some years ago, and lived for a while in extreme cold and extreme heat. Here, also, a few years later, Dr. Marcet followed Piazzi Smythe's example, and wondered with professional wonder how a constitution merely human could bear the test subjected to it, by a temperature of the sun's rays during the daytime of about 212° and a temperature at night of but 35° or 40° —a variation in twenty-four hours of 175° . The ledge of Alta Vista is the sixth stage of the ascent. The seventh is a slight semi-circuit of the final cone of the Peak known as the Rambleta, about another thousand feet higher than the sulphur house. This is a dreadful pile of obsidian blocks and lava, thrown together by a pre-historic eruption. Between the masses there are innumerable fissures into which it would be awkward to slip. And yet for all this thousand feet of vertical rise the ascent has to be made by a series of careful skippings from lava point to obsidian edge, and from obsidian edge to lava point. One is fortunate to reach the Rambleta with no worse wounds than barked shins and bleeding hands.

At the Rambleta the work seems done. The rosy Peak is just above, at the head of a fine straight slope, only some five hundred feet high. But this slope is at an angle of from 40° to 42° . Moreover, it is little else than a cone of fine ash and dust. Humboldt has averred that an angle of 42° is the steepest that can be climbed over ground covered with volcanic ash. We may therefore take it for granted that this final pull up the Peak to the crater rim, which is the eighth and last stage of the climb, is all but impossible. It is certainly an insufferable flounder.

But it may be avoided by bearing to the left, and scaling a lava flow which dives from the actual crater.

After luncheon amid the lava, we were ready for the third stage of our travel—the Retama Plain. In the records of those ancient explorers who published their narratives in quartos or among the pages of learned periodicals, the trials to be endured from this pumice are said to be severe. I expected to be blinded by the glare of the sun reflected from it, and choked by the dust eddied by the wind and stirred by the feet of our horses. No such thing, however. The sun was hot, but was so far from depriving the landscape of interest by the torture it inflicted that I recall this pale yellow plain, broken with purpled pinnacles of molten rocks, and bestrewn with the silvery green retama bushes, as one of the most completely picturesque countries in my experience. Here and there the retama had been burnt, and the long whitened trunks and roots where they had been pulled from the soil lay along it like the bleached bones of some extinct mammoth. But little imagination was necessary to make us fancy ourselves in a section of the Sahara untrodden by man, and invaded by beasts only at the peril of their lives. Again, according to the old voyagers, who ought to have been tough enough, the cold on this plain is as acute as the heat of the sun is prodigious. Their finger nails became discoloured, they lost the use of their hands, and the skin of their lips roughened to such a degree that they bled when they talked. Well, I would not discredit such records; but none of these incidents came to diversify the monotony of our tramp across the desert. After the Peak, with which by this time we were thoroughly at home, nothing took our attention like the water-barrel. Of course the dust irritated our eyes, but this was only a trivial novelty in the midst of a scene which, with its constituent parts, was wholly novel and absorbing. Two or three patches of snow in the sheltered side of the Montana Blanca informed us of our slow but certain progress upwards. Two or three hawks skimming in this clear blue air were the only objects to remind us that we had other living beings in our vicinity. The almost inaudible thud of our animals' hoofs in the hot sand, their quickened breathing, and that of the men, were the only sounds to be heard in this still, soundless plain. The clouds, now far below us, yet fenced the lower world from us like the broad brim of a hat. We seemed in another zone of life, with a bluer sky and an intenser sun dominant over us.

With occasional brief halts to rest the animals and allow the men to wipe their streaming faces and begin a fresh cigarette, we continued to the foot of the actual pyramid. The view upwards is here instructive and extraordinary. All of the steep slope that we can see at one glance is seamed with black lava rivers. These are of lengths as various as their courses. Some have run down to the plain and mixed with the pumice. For the most part they do not overstep the slope. Here they have cooled, and here, under ordinary atmospheric influences, they ought long ago to have decomposed and formed a soil more or less cultivable. But the atmosphere at this altitude is extraordinary, and so these rivers are preserved in all their freshness. The pumice beneath them is also littered with a number of vast red-brown spherical boulders, natural bomb-shells spewed from the Peak in the course of centuries, and sent rolling down the slopes until they have come to rest about four thousand feet from their starting-point. Orotava lies north-east of the Peak, but we have to make a détour ere beginning to climb the pyramid. So sharp is the twelve thousand feet rise from the sea to the north and north-west that, with a good impetus, a stone might perhaps bound from the crater mouth and never cease moving until it fell into the sea, several miles distant.

Our day's work is almost over at this point. It is already four o'clock—time we were making our beds, building a house, and laying the supper-table. With this cheerful prospect before us, therefore, we worm our way up the shoulder, breasting current after current of lava, and grinding the pumice into a powder that soon paints us all a bilious ochre colour from head to toe. The men do not dissemble their groans. Eight hours of pedestrianism is much for a Spaniard, and these Tenerifans are not stoics. Even the barrel cannot give them much satisfaction now; for the heat and the shaking have brewed its contents into the semblance of a liquor no more appetising than a puddle in a claypit. In fact, we all hail the rocks of the Estancia; and even the bits of beer-bottles, the rigid crusts, and the relics of tins that once held potted lobster, are welcomed as genial indications that we are in a measure at home, rather than as nauseating proofs that nothing is sacred from the invasion of civilised beings. The horses are soon tethered. They know the Estancia, and instinctively go to the spot where they lingered through a restless night the last time they were up the Peak, maybe a month ago. As for the men, their first impulse is to indulge in *dolce far niente!* We

have, therefore, to brisken them a little, point to the mellow glow creeping over the mountains and plains beneath us as signs of the coming night; mark out our bedrooms, and send our chamberlains in quest of retama for our couches, for the big fire we purpose keeping up through the night to warm us, and for the little fire that is the first step towards supper. We take upon ourselves the more artistic task of building a wall on the weaker side of the opening between the rocks, of laying the table-cloth, and drawing corks. And when all these agreeable preliminaries are ended, there is time to walk to and fro in the pumice alongside the Estancia, and watch the death of the day. Our thermometer is at 45°, while the sun is yet above the horizon. But the sun's heat is by this time quite withdrawn from us, as we are on the south-east side of the mountain. Nor do we expect a much greater accession of cold than we already feel at this bracing height of 9,770 feet above the sea.

The sunset pageant was very odd and entrancingly beautiful. The stratum of cloud which we had traversed some six or seven thousand feet lower than the Estancia, still hung thick and unmoved below us. In fact, it girdled what of the island was visible to us, and the sea also to the horizon line. But, seventy miles away, the mountains of the island of Grand Canary pierced this dull grey corrugated cloud-plain, and were dyed with rosy light. It was the same with the nearer island of Gomera, between Grand Canary and the west. As for the reddish rocks over Guimar, which we had already noticed earlier in the day, they were all of the colour of fresh blood. Again, the plateau beneath us and the Cañadas cliffs put on the tenderest of tints. The pumice grew to a pale primrose and saffron, and the mountain pinnacles were of crimson, and brown, and red, merging into purple. But how rapidly the scenes changed! The shadows pursued the lights at a measurable speed. The air seemed to chill as the intenser colours faded. We thought it was all over, and were turning towards our camp, when suddenly another great beam of crimson light broke upon the land, the clouds, and the sea, this time from the western side of our slope. In the midst of the sunset splendour there was now a triangular shadow, clearly defined, the apex over the mountain of Grand Canary. As the sun sank, this shadow rose. It rose fast, so that soon it seemed to hang in the heavens, isolated, with the paling hues of sunset on all sides of it. A few minutes later and the stars were out. This shadow was the

outline of the Peak, traced by the sun, and projected scores of miles seawards.

We were reminded of our altitude by a singular contrast during this sunset spectacle. About thirty miles from the Peak, in the north-east extremity of Tenerife, are the hills of Anaga, bold and pleasing from the sea, but infantine compared with Teide. These hills we could see, peeping grey and subdued from under the clouds, while our upper air was still transfigured with sunlight. For them there had long been no sun. It was only for such monarchs as Teide that the sun continued to shine.

Of the night bivouac that followed I cannot speak enthusiastically. We made a roaring fire of retama logs, and the thick smoke thereof periodically drove into our faces. The men lay down in a concentric circle, wrapped in their blanket cloaks, with their heads towards the fire. They snored contentedly, and were as indifferent to the renewal of the fire as to the excitement of my horse: the beast had some good blood in him, and neighed and threw up the earth whenever he saw anything he could not account for. However, the sparks now and then fell on a soft part of their skins, and made them jump up in despite of their wishes.

Although the thermometer went no lower than 42° , it was bitter cold. The rarity of the air had something to do with this, no doubt. I could not sleep at all, and found more pleasure in keeping patrol, tending the fire, and watching the ascent towards the zenith of the half-moon that was to guide us to the summit, than in trying to sleep. Moreover, one of my comrades had succumbed to the situation. The air and the exertion had made him sick. We mixed him some grog in a saucepan, using a lump of hard snow instead of water; but even the grog did not do everything. He admitted his disinclination to go on when the time came; and so there was nothing for it but to arrange a division of the party. They would not consent to my return, unsatisfied, with them; it was decided therefore that Diego should take me to the top, and one of the other men should accompany them back to Orotava. We were to start simultaneously at about two o'clock. The boy who was nominated to guide my friends homewards at first said he would do no such thing. He pleaded timidity, he wanted more sleep, he wanted to proceed to the top, &c. 'I will not go,' he said flatly. But a bribe made him revert from this lofty strain of obstinacy, and at the appointed time my friends and I separated with an interchange of good wishes.

It was full night when we started upwards in the teeth of a gentle wind that pinched me like an Arctic zephyr. The moon was bright above us, too small to illumine our path completely, but sufficiently lustrous to cast a bewitching glamour over all the scene that was visible to us. The clouds lay below, still as ever, silvered like mother-o'-pearl. Irregular patches of snow, frozen hard, now and again loomed to the right and left of us from the stern almost palpable blackness of the lava. Had I had any superfluous energy to put at the disposal of my imagination, these phantom forms might have played pretty pranks with my head. But of this there was not the least chance. The climb was so severe that it monopolised every faculty. We slipped and slid on the pumice, stumbled over scorixæ half in shadow, and sent blocks of obsidian speeding down to our friends at the Estancia in our attempts to move upwards. It is *possible* to make this stage of the ascent on horseback. Some people have the hardihood and cruelty to accomplish it. But to the animals it is a terrible effort, and their riders at times have to pay for it by a fall backwards that might end disagreeably.

Humboldt says it took him two hours to reach Alta Vista from the Estancia. Diego and I did the work in less than an hour and a half, including the time spent in a humiliating number of rests. These were unavoidable: so great was the call upon our muscles; so persistently did I pant in this high atmosphere. But it was sweet encouragement at last to see the wooden sides of the sulphur-house close to us, and to realise that we were now only about fifteen hundred feet from the summit. Though doubtful if our friends could hear us, we signalled to them with loud whoops, which seemed to echo with weird emphasis from the 'enormous masses of sublimity,' as James Montgomery might have called the dark shapes in our vicinity.

But a surprise was in preparation for us. If ever a man may assure himself that he is unlikely to meet his fellow-beings, and most unlikely to come across an acquaintance, might he not do so on a small island in the Atlantic, eleven thousand feet above the level of that island, and at three o'clock in the morning? One would suppose so. At the moment, however, when I had given the word to Diego to move forwards, the figure of a man appeared from below. At first this gentleman did not perceive us; and no sooner was he on the smooth ground than he thrust his fists into his sides, and began to dance a hornpipe under the vague light of

our moon. But I soon arrested this uncanny exhibition of vitality by asking him who and what he was; and then we found that we were acquaintances. He was a Frenchman, the Count de la Mous-saye, with only a few days' holiday at his disposal; and he had come direct from Orotava, resting not at all on the way. Here, at Alta Vista, he purposed supping at the fine Parisian hour of three A.M. His guide followed him with the supper, and after a short survey of the house, which was only to be entered by a heavy wooden window-flap high up, one after the other we climbed to this vent, and vanished like harlequins within. A couple of candles were produced, a bottle of Madeira was uncorked, and the temptation to devote an hour to my new friend was so irresistible that I bid Diego join the other guide outside the house, where they both rolled themselves up in their blankets and slept until our pleasure was ended. It was really colder within than without the house: we discovered afterwards that a slab of ice several inches thick lay between the boards and the ground, adapting the building for a refrigerator with complete success.

At four o'clock we renewed the climb. It was that most cold of hours—the hour before the dawn. We were gradually narrowing the area of mountain shoulder which shielded us from the gusts that now whistled about us. And we had for a task the clamber over as pitiless a wreck of rocks and molten substances as the world can show. The least pressure of a finger upon the sharp points and edges of these scorixæ resulted in a scratch or an abrasion. Between the masses there were crevices and fissures of uncertain depth. The snow lay hard as iron in some of them. Others were caked with ice, where the internal heat of the mountain had melted the snow. Over this unpleasant tract we stepped daintily from pinnacle to pinnacle, in clear profile against the sky. Of little use was my alpenstock here. Rather, it became a snare, for the smooth obsidian boulders gave it no secure purchase, and more than once it earned me a fall that made me groan. After a while I turned it to account as a balancing-pole; and as such it was not amiss. Thus, going in a very leisurely manner, we attained the Rambleta, or last stage but one of our work. This is really another ancient crater of the Peak, from out of which, on an awful day, centuries or even millenniums ago, the sugar cone or Piton of ash and lava was suddenly ejected, raising the height of the mountain by some five or six hundred new feet, and carrying the active crater upwards for the same distance. The Piton,

or actual summit, is therefore the representative, the survival of two old and expunged craters—the Rambleta and the Cañadas. Just as the Rambleta superseded the Cañadas, so the Piton has superseded the Rambleta. Before the last eruption from the centre of the mountain, the Peak of Tenerife was a truncated cone, like so many of the South American volcanoes. In fact, it is still so: but the area of the terminal crater now bears so very small a proportion to the great bulk of the mountain that one almost forgets that it is not absolutely pyramidal in shape—an isosceles triangle moulded by the hands of nature.

From the Rambleta we saw the sun rise. It was as memorable a show as the sunset of the previous evening. The clouds below were at first almost terrifying in their immobility, but they took glow after glow of brilliant hues that soon changed their character. Before the sun touched them they were like a limitless area of opaline terra-cotta, moulded by superhuman power. But the long crimson line in the east, many minutes before the appearance of the sun, coloured them divinely, and prepared them for the saturating flood of golden light which streamed upon them when the sun did appear. The shifting scene of splendour that ensued is quite indescribable. At the outset, only the cone of the Peak was touched by the sunlight. The lower slopes, the hills, valleys, and the sea were all in grey shadow when this early flush came over us. It seemed to pause for a few moments on the dimpled crest of Teide, and then it moved downwards with smooth continuous speed, as the sun rose high. We were soon absorbed in it. Then the mountains of Grand Canary came within its radius; and the island of Gomera, close to the left of us. The Cañadas next caught the glory, and in one rapturous instant the Plain of the Retama was spread with cloth of gold. Thus, for long minutes of time, we watched the gradual illumination of the lower world, until at length we knew that the sun had risen for the ships at sea as well as for us, 12,000 feet above them. The Peak sees the sun nearly twelve minutes before it is visible from its base. Of course, the day is similarly protracted in the evening. Hence the Peak's day is some twenty-four minutes longer than the common day in latitude 28° .

The curious phenomenon of the shadow of Teide was now repeated. The enormous pyramidal phantom was thrown from east to west. At its origin it fell over Gomera, only fifteen miles from Tenerife, and was distinctly of an isosceles shape. But the

advance of the sun broadened its base and changed its direction, so that when, half an hour later, we saw it from the summit of the mountain, it was a burly equilateral, with the apex resting on the rosy tops of the Caldera of Palma, an island sixty miles to the west of Tenerife.

In the meantime we had to scale the Piton of ash and pumice. The first hundred feet were trying in the extreme, so abrupt is the slope, and so insecure the foothold. But afterwards, the going is firmer, though very steep. We were here in an atmosphere markedly sulphureous. Jets of vapour oozed from holes in the rock to the right and left of us; and the temperature of the vapour was insupportable to the hand. Sulphur in various forms took the place of pumice. We sank deep in the soft adhesive crust, which soon burnt my boots so that they yawned conspicuously. It was really hard to breathe at all, what with the asphyxiating smell of the sulphur, the extreme rarity of the air, the nipping winds from all points, and the labour of the final climb. Dr. P—— in Orotava had suggested that I should feel my pulse on the top of Teide: it was 140! But what did it matter? We had climbed the Peak, and here we were at six o'clock in the morning, with the world at our feet, and a blue sky above us that put all other blues to shame.

Certainly nothing could be more expressive than the name given to the crater of volcanoes like Teide—Caldera, or cauldron. It is but one step from the outer rim of the cone to the inner sheathing of the crater. A rugged wall of fused rocks skirts the basin; there is an opening in the wall; one passes through this opening, and, immediately, the foot sinks in the blanched burning sulphur where it slopes to the bottom of the crater. The rocks of this outer wall are a few feet higher in one part than elsewhere: this is the highest point of the 'Pico de Teide,' and here for two or three mortally cold minutes I perched myself, half persuaded that the feeling of vertigo which has thrilled so many respectable travellers in the same position was a sensation not to be doubted. This rock point is scarcely a yard in diameter. A mountain 12,000 feet high could not culminate in a pinnacle much more satisfying to the imagination.

Had not the impermeable barrier of cloud, nearly two miles down, hung between us and the bulk of Tenerife, our view from the summit would no doubt have been prodigious. Even with the clouds it is not to be forgotten. Of the seven large islands

that compose the archipelago of the Canaries, the mountains of Palma and Grand Canary, and the greater part of Gomera, were alone visible. It were easier to-day to see the coast of Africa than the coastline of Tenerife; but we saw neither. The whole circuit of the Cañadas was distinct in every detail, and the scarlet swellings on the south-west flank of the Peak. These are the result of the more recent lateral eruptions of Teide. Probably none of them are two centuries old. Their brilliant colouring, and that of the forest of vivid yellow pines, diving to the cloud-zone, refreshed the eye. But in the same direction, between the Peak and these hills, is one conspicuous volcanic boil that must not escape notice. It is the mountain of Chahorra, only about 2,300 feet lower than Teide, and with a crater of beautiful formation at least a league in girth. From our standpoint we looked into this crater, and could mark the passage of the lava that streamed from it in 1798, when it was active for many weeks in succession. The rugged areas of desolation over which it broods tell their own story. But, however one might try to be judiciously sympathetic in one's survey, it was easier to admire the sombre bronzed and jetty colours of this lava under the unclouded sun than to think of the ruin it indicated.

The descent into Teide's crater is a matter of no difficulty. True, with pressure, my alpenstock went to the handle into the soft sulphur, but there was no danger of my sinking to the same extent. The heat was oppressive to a degree; the warm fumes stirred by our every displacement of the soil were very strong, and the white banks tried the eyes. Nevertheless, the crystals of sulphur, of many shades between pale yellow and dark orange, were quite irresistible, and I had soon given Diego as many specimens as he cared to carry. Humboldt dwells upon the iniquity of his guides in this particular. When his back was turned they threw away the blocks of obsidian and pumice with which he burdened them. In praise of Diego, therefore, I must say that he did no such thing. Perhaps, however, it was rather because he had no vigour for revolt left in him, for he was by this time a piteously-frozen object: the red and blue handkerchief which he had tied from his pate to his chin, to put warmth into his cheeks, harmonised only too well with their wintry hue, and all the while we were on the summit he was enthusiastic but once—in his hearty 'Si, Señor,' of assent to my proposition that we should leave it.

No doubt it will be supposed that when we departed these sublime solitudes were left to themselves, to be untroubled by humanity for weeks and months. It were natural to think so. But ere we left it the romance of the Peak was totally destroyed by the arrival of ten burly countrymen, with mattocks on their shoulders. We watched them climbing the ash-cone, not a little amazed at the sight of them. They were merely beginning their day's work, however. No sooner had they accosted us with ten affable 'Good mornings' than each man plunged into the crater, and began to dig up the sulphur. Conceive a person going nearly two miles and a half skywards ere he enters upon his daily labour! As for the risks attendant upon such labour, they are as nothing compared to the hideous desecration it implies.

In our descent we visited the famous ice cavern of Teide. It has the appearance of a chamber, or big bubble in the lava, going far into the bowels of the mountain; but investigation is difficult. Within was a pool of lustrous green ice, large enough to skate on, and the huge contorted icicles uniting the pool to the roof of the chamber were beautiful beyond the dreams of a manufacturer of chandeliers. Hither in summer come the confectioners of Santa Cruz, the capital of Tenerife, to fetch ice for the compound of sweet cooling drinks. Alas! how Teide's majesty seems lessened when one knows that it serves such various useful purposes!

Anon we are once more at the Estancia. The sun is broiling, and we cling to the shadow of the rocks of our bedchamber. Breakfast is spread, and we have fresh snow to cool our wine. M. le Comte protests that he is not tired, and indeed he talks like a man refreshed. But as for me, I am dead beat, so that when later we cross the terrible desert of pumice, with 120° of heat in the air around us, I sleep fast in my saddle. At four o'clock in the afternoon we are again in Orotava, after an absence of thirty-six hours.

HOT WINDS.

AT this season of the year, when so many thousands are looking forward to an early exchange of the dusty stifling atmosphere of town pavements for the cooling refreshing breezes of the country and the sea, it may not be altogether an uninteresting study to pass in review the hot air currents met with in various parts of the world.

The human body is peculiarly sensitive to the changes which are constantly taking place in the atmosphere, but the mind is not sufficiently trained to distinguish the combinations which enter into climatic variations. Personal sensations of the weather are generally restricted, in the popular mind, to high and low temperatures, whereas, as a matter of fact, temperature pure and simple is only of secondary importance. Two days, one damp, the other dry, may be exactly the same by the ordinary thermometer, but they would be altogether different to our feelings. In winter a damp day is extremely raw and disagreeable, and in summer muggy and enervating, while a clear dry atmosphere at all times of the year is bracing and invigorating. A dry wind seems to us to be much colder than a damp one of the same temperature, and it is evident therefore that our bodies are affected more by the amount of moisture in the air than by the number of degrees registered by the thermometer. The dry air promotes a more or less rapid evaporation from the skin and consequent cooling sensation; the moist air checks evaporation and produces feverishness. Instruments are in use which indicate, directly or indirectly, the amount of moisture in the atmosphere, excessively dry air being represented by zero, and complete saturation by 100; by this scale we express the relative humidity in percentages. It is necessary to have this preliminary understanding, because, as we shall presently see, the winds included in the list range from those in which there is no trace of moisture to those which are so saturated that the dampness in them forms a Scotch mist, and their effect varies accordingly. It will be seen how these opposite conditions affect people.

From a variety of causes, such as the small extent of land, an ample covering of vegetation, and the surrounding seas, the British

Isles are practically free from marked blasts of hot winds. But no part of the world is too remote for Englishmen to visit, and whether they are the wealthy classes travelling for pleasure or sport, or the less fortunate members of the community who find it necessary to seek a home in the colonies or in foreign countries, a knowledge of one of the peculiarities of climate may be useful. The severity of our winter cold and summer heat is tempered by the proximity of the vapour-producing waters of the Atlantic, and although we occasionally experience very high summer temperatures, sometimes exceeding 90° , they do not last long enough to favour the propagation of hot breezes, the perennial greenness of the country being able to withstand a long period of bright sunshine and drought before any extensive space is laid bare. Our hottest weather, generally speaking, is with a dry east wind, but there is nothing about it to give it the character of a hot wind like those we are about to describe. Indeed, the nearest approach we have to heated breaths of air is the experience of most townspeople on a scorching hot day, when the pavements have been exposed to the sun for hours, and the air is mixed with a quantity of impalpable dust, exhausting us with fatigue and thirst. Last year we had weeks of cloudless skies, bright sunshine, and hot weather. Most persons thought the conditions were peculiarly suited to the number of Indian visitors who were over here for the Jubilee festivities, but this was a mistake. The heat on the plains of Hindostan and the heat of an English summer are not the same, and our visitors soon felt the difference. Compared with the dry atmosphere of their own country ours was moist and uncomfortable, so that they were glad to get away from a temperature of between 80° and 90° , with a moderate amount of dampness, to get back to their own dry air, with a temperature twenty degrees warmer.

As another instance of this difference of feeling with very high temperatures, it may be noted that on the north-east coast of Australia, the neighbourhood of Rockingham Bay is sheltered from the direct influence of the great heat from the interior of the continent, and the climate of the district is stated to be 'delightfully cool,' in proof of which the record of the thermometer is given, showing the temperature to reach as high as 99° , frequently exceeding 90° , and once, under the influence of a fall of rain, descending to 76° . This lowest temperature was probably more distressing than the maximum, owing to the change in the humidity.

The mere mention of hot winds suggests that we must look for them in tropical countries, where the sun during two-thirds of the year is

Shining on, shining on, by no shadow made tender,

where the soil is sandy, and where vegetation is scanty or entirely absent. In the vast deserts of Africa, Asia, and Australia we find all the requisites for the full development of heated air-currents. The whole surroundings are favourable, and sand being a poor conductor, the powerful rays of an undimmed sun warm the superficial layers to an extraordinary degree, and this excessive temperature is communicated to the superincumbent atmosphere in the usual way.

Between Tripoli and Murzuk there is a sterile tract of more than fifty miles of sandy country, where a thermometer thrust six inches below the surface recorded a temperature of 130° . In South Africa Sir John Herschel found a ground temperature of 159° . In the severe drought of the summer of 1877, in the Fiji Islands, the black bulb thermometer on the grass registered 172° . So exceedingly hot was the ground that the poor natives, whose feet are 'as tough as cowhide, often enabling them to walk over fire, or on the top of live coral, an ordeal almost equally severe,' were compelled for once to bandage their feet for protection against the fiery soil. On some arid desert plains the temperature of the sand reaches 200° , and even higher. During Captain Sturt's wanderings in Australia he found that a match would fire by simply dropping it on the ground. Burton's feet were scorched while pitching his tent in the Arabian desert. The same authority, describing the Inenge district of Central Africa, states that 'under the burning yellow sky the grass is as white as the soil; the fields—stubbles stiff as harrows—are stained only by the shadows of passing clouds; the trees, except upon the nullah banks, are bare; the animals are walking skeletons; and nothing seems to flourish but flies, white ants, and caltrops. Intense heat and want of water have dried the land.' The Ragolay, an important river-system of Abyssinia, receiving many tributary streams, is unable to reach the sea, as the hot dry air and sand between them drink up the whole volume of water.

From these particulars we can easily understand the effect upon the wind as it passes over the superheated surfaces. The parched soil parches the air, and this as it moves on and comes in

contact with human beings causes a brisk perspiration, which, however, is rapidly taken up by the devouring wind. The same intense thirst is shown when it reaches water, and its capacity for drinking may be imagined when it is known that it can evaporate as much as an inch of water a day, or at the rate of about sixty-five thousand tons from every square mile of water surface.

The most remarkable of the hot winds is the *Simoom* (*sambuli*, *samun*, *shelook*, &c.), the violent whirlwind, with or without sand, which affects the deserts of Africa and South-Western Asia. The great heat of the soil passing into the atmosphere causes an appreciable expansion and lightening of the latter, resulting in the formation of small cyclonic disturbances. The surrounding atmosphere, in the never-ceasing natural struggle to maintain an equilibrium, rushes in to fill the space vacated by the expanded air, and in its turn undergoes the same process, until at last there is a powerful current drawn into the vortex, frequently bringing with it quantities of loose sand, and the cyclone then becomes visible—huge columns of sand whirling round and moving forward at the same time. The air, already very dry before the simoom originated, now becomes still more so from the presence of the dense cloud of dust. Away goes the storm across the desert: at first it is seen as a low haze on the horizon, but quickly spreading the cloud advances, sometimes slowly, sometimes rapidly, the tall pillars being visible a long way off darkening the atmosphere, and bringing with them great destruction. In the whirl the wind blows with the force of a hurricane, hills of sand are taken up, and are either scattered, or are again gathered into new hills wherever the storm chooses to deposit them, so that the desert is dotted with frequently shifting sand ranges. Under these are buried whole caravans of traders, travellers, and even armies. The simoom is supposed to have annihilated the armies of Sennacherib and of Cambyses.

So terribly dry is the air in these storms that it is fatal to vegetation, while the density of the dust cloud makes it almost impossible for human beings to breathe. This gave rise to the idea that the wind contained a deadly poison; hence the Arabic simoom, signifying a poisonous wind: but it is no more poisonous than any other wind, its fatal qualities being simply the excessive dryness and the quantity of fine sand with which it is loaded. The temperature of the air has been known to rise to 133°, and its dessicating effect is seen in dried-up mouths and nostrils, in

skin cracking, intense thirst, painful and difficult breathing, and inability to sleep. The time occupied in passing a given spot varies between a few minutes and twenty or twenty-four hours, the blast leaving behind it unmistakable evidence of the path it has travelled. The hot parching air of the simoom, almost as soon as the breath is out of the body and before decomposition has time to set in, causes the flesh to lose all its firmness and consistency, so that it drops or may be taken off the bones easily.

A party of officers sleeping on the roof of General Jacob's house at Jacobabad thus recount their experience of the simoom. 'They were awakened by a sensation of suffocation, and an exceedingly hot oppressive feeling in the air, while at the same time a powerful smell of sulphur pervaded the atmosphere. On the following morning a number of trees in the garden were found to be withered in a remarkable manner. It was as if a current of fire about twelve yards in breadth had passed through the garden in a straight line, singeing and destroying every green thing in its course. Entering on one side and passing out on the other, its path was as defined as the course of a river.'

Palgrave was overtaken by one of these scourges in Northern Arabia. After some preliminary remarks on the advance of the simoom, he proceeds: 'So dark was the atmosphere, and so burning the heat, that it seemed that hell had risen from the earth, or descended from above. But at the moment when the worst of the concentrated poison-blast was coming round we were already prostrate, one and all within the tent, with our heads well wrapped up, almost suffocated, indeed, but safe; while our camels lay without like dead, their long necks stretched out on the sand, awaiting the passing of the gale.

'We remained thus for ten minutes, during which a still heat, like that of a red-hot iron slowly passing over us, was alone to be felt. Then the tent walls began again to flap in the returning gusts, and announced that the worst of the simoom had gone by. My comrades appeared more like corpses than living men, and so, I suppose, did I. However, I could not forbear, in spite of warnings, to step out and look at the camels; they were still lying flat, as though they had been shot. The air was yet darkish, but before long it brightened up to its usual dazzling clearness. During the whole time that the simoom lasted, the atmosphere was entirely free from sand or dust; so that I hardly know how to account for its singular obscurity.'

The same traveller, while admitting that sandstorms resembling the duststorms of India are not uncommon in Arabia, throws a doubt on moving columns of sand in which whole caravans are buried, as the Bedouins whom he questioned on the subject laughed at the idea, and declared them to be only travellers' tales. He himself had had a long experience of the desert and had seen nothing of the kind. Burton, however, on his journey from Medina to Mecca, was 'persecuted by the simoom, and the air was filled with those majestic pillars of sand so graphically described by Abyssinian Bruce.' When passing through a simoom on the journey to Medina, he was assured by the Arabs that it never destroyed life in their Allah-favoured land. 'I doubt the fact,' adds Burton.

Professor Vambéry gives a graphic account of a simoom by which he was overtaken at Adamkrylgan (the place where men perish), between Khiva and Bokhara. The storm is there known as the *Tebbad*. 'The contact of its first grains seemed like a rain of fire. If we had been exposed to the shock of the tebbad twenty miles farther on in the depth of the desert, we should undoubtedly have perished.'

Most of the hot winds of the Old World are modified forms of the simoom. The *Scirocco* originates in the Sahara and travels northward to the Mediterranean and Southern Europe, but it is not so deadly as its prototype. It brings with it great quantities of the desert sand, and the air becomes so dense at times that the sun is obscured as if by a London fog. While it remains on the African mainland it is characterised by a very marked dryness, as there are no extensive water surfaces to supply it with moisture. As soon, however, as it is launched over the Mediterranean it begins to take up copious draughts, so that when it reaches Malta, Sicily, and the southern shores of Europe as a wind from between south-east and south-west, it has undergone a change from a hot dry wind to a hot damp wind. The result of this alteration is that it becomes most enervating to the human constitution. Indeed, while it prevails, from one to several days at a time, life is scarcely worth living, so depressing and burdensome is the wind. It is the *plumbeus Auster* of Horace. Human energy is quite dissipated under its fatiguing influence, and with a temperature ranging between 95° and 110° the streets of the towns affected by it are deserted. According to the Italians a stupid book is put down as 'era scritto in tempo del scirocco.'

To the Sicilians the oppressive wind is a perfect plague, for although naturally indolent, they cannot stand the further loss of energy induced by it. During its prevalence iron rusts, clothes spoil with mildew, meat turns putrid, grapes and green leaves wither, wine will not fine, and paint will not dry. Sicily experiences the scirocco about a dozen times a year, but it is not so frequently met with in other parts of Europe. There is no mistaking the origin of the wind, as the reddish sand is still present when it arrives on the northern shores of the Mediterranean, and causes a misty atmosphere.

In Turkey the scirocco is known as the *Samiel*, or *Sumyel*, a name identical in meaning with simoom. It is supposed to have some connection with cattle disease in the south of Russia.

On the Spanish Mediterranean coast the wind draws more to the east, and is known locally as the *Solano*, a damp wind, sometimes accompanied by rain, causing feverishness, dizziness, and restlessness, and people are so 'done up' under its debilitating influence that we must 'ask no favour during the solano.' According to the Spaniards only a pig and an Englishman are insensible to this wretched breeze.

The southern Spanish provinces of Murcia, Granada, &c., are visited by the *Leveche*, from between south-east and south-west, a drier wind than the solano, having comparatively little water to pass over in its journey from Africa. It is a sleepy, headachy wind, the feeling being as if the limbs were weighted with lead. The leaves of plants wither, and in a few days fall off. Its worst effects are felt only for some ten or twelve miles inland from the coast.

On the west coast of Africa the wind from the interior is called the *Harmattan* (the merciful, beneficent), chiefly felt in December and January. It affects the coast from the Equator as far north as Morocco, but is not so hot south of Cape Verd as to the north. It comes on at any hour, and may last for any time up to a fortnight. Temperature rises to 110°, and even at St. Louis on the coast of Senegal the relative humidity has fallen below 10 per cent. As with the other hot dry winds green plants fade and wither, and no dew forms; nevertheless, the harmattan is looked upon as a healthy wind for mankind, and is supposed to have many curative qualities; hence its name. The dust it brings from the desert is sufficiently dense to blot out the sun at noonday, and to render objects invisible at a distance of a few feet, while the

natives present a temporary change of colour from the deposition of the dust on their black skins. Ships several hundred miles out at sea have their sails and decks covered with the red sand, and on the Peak of Tenerife, at a height of nearly 12,000 feet above the sea, the air is at times densely hazy from the same cause.

The *Khamsin* is the hot dusty south-west wind of Nubia and Egypt, blowing between May and August. The name is derived from the Arabic for fifty, and two explanations of it are given, one being that it is supposed to blow for fifty days, the other that it is the south-west monsoon wind, bringing from the sea into Central Africa, and to the mountainous regions of Abyssinia, the supply of water necessary for the annual rise of the Nile, this rise being felt in the Delta about seven weeks after the rain sets in at the sources of the river. After depositing its moisture on the tropical ranges the wind descends to the sandy plains as a dry wind, and travelling across the deserts to the northern part of the Red Sea into Arabia, it is another simoom with its heated sand whirls. 'I have seen,' says Sir Samuel Baker, 'many such columns at the same time in the boundless desert, all travelling or waltzing in various directions at the fitful choice of each whirlwind; this vagrancy of character is an undoubted proof to the Arab mind of their independent and diabolical character.' In the southern districts, towards Khartoum, the thermometer rises above 120°; in the north, at Cairo, to 110°, with a relative humidity as low as 10 per cent. On the southern side of the Gulf of Aden the land wind is at times very hot and dry, the temperature, even at midnight, rising to about 105°, and making everybody glad to be sheltered from it. Ships passing through the Red Sea experience these winds in terrific squalls of sand. Even over the water the thermometer rises above 100°, and as the air is more moist from contact with the sea, this temperature is more unhealthy than the higher temperatures on the mainland, and as a result many persons succumb to heat apoplexy.

In Southern Africa extensive mountain ranges and lake and river systems make the country less favourable to hot winds, but the Káláhári desert is a desolate region in which long periods of drought and a scorching sun destroy all signs of vegetation, the soil is bare and sandy, and in the extreme heat dense clouds of dust are borne along by the wind, which has a feeling as if it had just come out of an oven. Its excessive dryness warps the best seasoned woodwork. When the heated breeze is blowing the

atmosphere is strongly electrical, the movements of the natives producing a stream of sparks. Before a thunderstorm in this locality the air becomes 'sultry and oppressive to an unusual degree. The whole creation is silent as death; not a breath of wind is perceptible.'

In Asia we find hot winds common in the countries sheltered from the cold of Siberia by the ranges of mountains running from Asiatic Turkey to Southern China. We have already dealt with the simoom, both as an African and as an Asiatic wind, and it will not be necessary now to do more than remind readers of the many Biblical references to the heating and withering effects of winds between south and east in Palestine, from Africa on one side and from Arabia on the other.

The *Shaitans*, or 'devil storms,' of India and neighbouring countries are the remarkable duststorms frequenting the great plains. In the dry hot season they are almost of daily occurrence, and the sand, whirled into great columns rising high up into the air, either rolls onward in an enormous cloud, or forms into pillars having both a progressive and a rotatory movement. There may be only one visible, but generally a number of them are to be seen dancing about the plain, all distinct, and having each its own rate of motion and circulation. Some of these, again, are composed of a number of pillars, like so many ringlets depending from the centre of a dome-shaped structure, and while the whole body is moving forward and circulating round the common centre, each ringlet is at the same time revolving round its own individual centre, so that we can well imagine the sight to be a highly picturesque one. The dust storms vary in width from a few yards to a couple of miles, and in length from ten to fifty miles or more. They are preceded by a perfect calm, then a small cloud appears on the horizon, gradually a breeze springs up which soon becomes gusty and squally, when it is time to seek shelter indoors, for the storm is advancing, darkening the air, and filling every crevice with fine sand, and forcing itself into the houses, it thickly covers the furniture and other objects. Temperature rises to between 100° and 115° on the Indian plains, and the dryness of the air decreases to less than 10 per cent., and even to zero. Its power of evaporation sometimes amounts to an inch of water per diem. Yet with all the heat and dryness the hot winds of India are not so deleterious to health as many imagine; their dryness is rather favourable than injurious, and Europeans who regulate

their dress and diet to suit the climate have little to fear from the prevailing conditions.

On the northern and eastern shores of the Persian Gulf similar winds to those of India are experienced, the temperature of the air at Bushire rising to 126° and running water to 90° . At Mohammerah, near the mouth of the Euphrates, the thermometer has registered 113° , the relative humidity decreasing to zero, and the average humidity for a whole month scarcely exceeding 30 per cent. The shade temperature at Bagdad rises to 125° , and the average afternoon temperature for a month (July) has been known to exceed 101° .

In addition to these hot dry winds the Persians have in the south and south-east winds from the Gulf another scirocco. The atmosphere being saturated with moisture, this wind is considered to be the greatest plague next to that of locusts. In the day-time the heat is suffocating and of a nature never experienced in the dry heat of the desert. At night the dampness is extraordinary, the condensation being so great that the water runs from the roofs as if there had been heavy rain, and even the most carefully protected articles are not safe from its injurious effects. A heavy damp mist covers the land, and the sun is unable to pierce it before noon.

The *Angin Jawa* is the hot southerly wind which blows from Java across the Straits of Malacca, affecting Singapore and a few miles inland along the coast of the Malay peninsula.

Towards the end of July a hot easterly wind sets in on the plain to the north of the Caucasian range, continuing for about two months and blowing at times with great violence, but it is rarely felt at night. At sunrise a strong glare and a hazy atmosphere precede the advent of this hot *Mistral*. Under its influence the Sea of Azov is diminished by as much as four or five feet, leaving ships aground in shallow water.

The most remarkable feature of the Australian climate is the *Hot Wind*. The flat sandy interior of the continent resembles the deserts of North Africa and Arabia, and the winds, therefore, are very similar. Immense quantities of sand are drifted about by the wind and carried beyond the coast a considerable distance out to sea. On January 21, 1845, Captain Sturt's thermometer rose to 131° in the shade; the mean temperature for December was 101° , for January 104° , and for February 101° . So parched was the ground that there were great cracks in it from eight to

ten feet deep. At Cooper's Creek on November 11, 1845, he experienced one of these hot air currents and thus describes it :

'The wind, which had been blowing all morning from north-east, increased to a gale, and I shall never forget its withering effects. I sought shelter behind a large gum-tree, but the blasts of heat were so terrific that I wondered the very grass did not take fire ; everything, both animate and inanimate, gave way before it ; the horses stood with their backs to the wind and their noses to the ground, the birds were mute, and the leaves of the trees fell like a shower round us. At noon I took out my thermometer, graduated to 127°, and put it in the fork of a tree, and an hour afterwards, when I went to examine it, the tube was full of mercury and the bulb had burst ; about sunset the wind shifted to west, and a thundercloud passed over us, but only a few drops of rain fell.'

The bursting of the instrument shows that the temperature was much higher than 127°, the glass being unable to resist the expansion of the mercury. Vegetation suffers greatly from the parching character of this wind. Plants droop, leaves shrivel as if frost-bitten, and wheat crops have been destroyed. Its intense dryness is shown by the relative humidity falling to zero, and evaporation amounting to an inch of water a day. High up in the mountains to the east and south-east, in the midst of a frosty morning, occasional hot blasts are felt from the interior, and they cause a peculiar irritation of the nostrils and throat. Although disagreeable as heated air and fatal to vegetation, this dry wind, like that of India, is healthy. The dry climate is practically free from miasmatic diseases. In Somerset and Cape York Peninsula, in the north of the continent, the moist hot winds from north-west and south-east are ruinous to health—even the strongest men can only hold out against their debilitating effect for a short time, when they become listless and languid ; whereas the hot dry south-westerly winds from the superheated interior quickly evaporate the perspiration and leave the body cool and comfortable.

In the New World the distribution of physical features is very different to what it is in the Eastern Hemisphere. A high mountain range runs throughout the whole length of the continents from north to south along the west coast, furnishing copious supplies of water for the great rivers, all of which flow across the country to the east coast. There are, however, occasional periods of exceptional heat on the prairies of the Western

States, which dry up the country. With temperature rising to 100° and 110° the plains become sandy and dusty and a shimmering heat overspreads the land. Under the cloudless dazzling sky small dust tornadoes whirl about the gleaming country, exhausting human nature in their furnace-heat.

Vancouver Island has a dry and almost rainless season between April and October, and during this period the interior is so heated that in the southern districts the north wind, after traversing the island, is hot and dry.

The *Upasian Winds* of New Orleans are the north-easterly winds of summer. They were at one time considered to be the immediate cause of epidemic diseases along the northern shores of the Gulf of Mexico, but the swampy country over which they pass has long ago been farmed and well drained, and agricultural operations have thus shorn the upasian winds of their worst characteristics.

In South America the *Viento del Norte*, or northerly wind of the Grand Chaco of the Argentine Republic, bears a strong resemblance to the scirocco. People shut themselves up indoors and suspend business while this wind prevails, while to its irritating influence is ascribed the increase of crime reported by the police. It is related of one man condemned to death for murder that 'he admitted that it was the third murder he had been guilty of, besides having been engaged in more than twenty fights with knives, in which he had both given and received many serious wounds; but, he observed, it was the north wind, not he, that shed all this blood. When he rose from his bed in the morning he was at once aware of its cursed influence upon him; a dull headache first, and then a feeling of impatience at everything about him would cause him to take umbrage even at the members of his own family on the most trivial occurrence.'

Farther south, near the eastern slope of the Andes, in the neighbourhood of Tucuman and Mendoza, this hot northerly wind is called the *Sondo*. The air has become extremely dry, and while the sky overhead is a deep blue, clouds of dust are driven about by the wind.

The above list describes the chief hot winds of the globe which depend upon the nature of the country for their hygrometric characteristics; there is another class of quite a different nature, which would involve an additional explanation too long to be included in this article.

THE HOME OF TURKISH TOBACCO.

DETAILS concerning his tobacco do not, as a rule, trouble the smoker much; vague rumours of niggers licking the leaves to make them stick may have reached him and caused a shudder to pass over him as he lights his cigar; but undoubtedly no smoker of Turkish cigarettes is aware that they come from Thrace, that the emporium for them is a town called Cavalla, that, thanks to this industry, a more cosmopolitan town does not exist elsewhere, including Jews, Turks, infidels, heretics, and gipsies amongst its laborious population, more especially gipsies, for it is to the nomad tribes which range over the Balkans that the tobacco-growers chiefly look for their labour.

Cavalla is old, dirty, and Oriental. It has known several eras of prosperity during the world's history; under the name of Neapolis it was the port of Philippi—that is to say, the port of the California of the ancient world, for the Philippians rose to eminence owing to the gold-mines of their mountain Pangæus. It was the first spot in Europe on which St. Paul landed to spread among the Gentiles the new Gospel. So the pious successors of the apostle changed its name to Christopolis, adorned it with churches, and made for it a second era of prosperity. Now, under the name of Cavalla, it has become the centre of the tobacco trade. Gold, religion, and tobacco have contrived to give three eras of prosperity to this busy little town, which is built on a promontory jutting out into the sea. An old mediæval fortress crowns a rocky summit, old walls surround the old town, a huge mediæval aqueduct in three stories brings water to it from the hills, mosques and minarets peep up everywhere, the hillsides are covered with the cottages of those employed in the tobacco trade, and its bazaars give one an idea of what the Tower of Babel must have been like.

Respecting this confusion of tongues at Cavalla a good story is told. Two Anglo-Saxons, presumably tobacconists, entered the shop of a Jew whose knowledge of English was limited, though he spoke most other tongues. With the customary carelessness of our race when abroad, one Anglo-Saxon remarked to the other,

'The fool does not speak English.' This remark came within the radius of old Isaac's comprehension and drew from him the following questions:—'Do you spik Italian?' to which they replied 'No.' 'Do you spik Grik?' 'No.' 'Do you spik Turk?' 'No.' 'Do you spik Spanish?' 'No.' 'Do you spik French?' 'No.' After a pause the old man with considerable energy ejaculated, 'Me one times fool, you five times fool,' and the discomfited tobacconists retreated with the sage remark, 'Let us put that in our pipes and smoke it.' Old Isaac's score is applicable to most who travel; the paucity of our linguistic powers is nowhere more forcibly brought before us than when travelling in the East.

The tobacco factories of Cavalla are sorry places on a warm day. As many as three hundred men and women may be seen huddled together in a stifling atmosphere engaged in sorting the leaves which the country people bring in bundles from the tobacco farms on the plains of Philippi. In the different factories as many as four thousand are thus employed, four thousand of the dirtiest and most unwashed vagabonds of creation. I think the ignorance of those who indulge in tobacco concerning the process it has gone through is only to be compared to the bliss of those who enjoy a good dish of macaroni and who have never seen it manufactured at Naples.

The busy labourers and merchants of Cavalla have only one festival in the year. This tobacco festival takes place on the first Sunday in May; this day has recently been chosen instead of the time-honoured festival of May-day (a festival dear to Greeks, gipsies, and all Eastern races), because the old holiday interfered with work when it fell on a week-day. All Cavalla on this Sunday assembles on the rocks and hills surrounding a tiny plain, known, for what reason I cannot say, as the 'Black Forest'; this plain is dotted with tobacco gardens, and on the feast-day employed and employers, men, women, and children, all gather together to sing and dance and make merry. The population on this small plain has greatly increased during late years, and the object of the feast on the day on which I was present was to collect subscriptions for an Orthodox church and school for the dwellers on these tobacco farms. The method of raising money was to me very novel. A lamb was roasted whole, *à la Pallicari*, as the Greeks say, just as the brigands on the mountains roast theirs. It revolved on a stick before a slow fire, it was basted with cream and salt, and when it was done to a turn, it was put up to auction. The greatest enthusiasm

prevailed, and the rich men of the place manifested the keenest desire to possess this lamb, for he would be the recognised hero of Cavalla until the next feast-day. Our lamb was finally knocked down to the highest bidder for a sum equivalent to 33*l.*, a tidy addition to the church fund in a country where labour is so cheap.

Of all the workers in the tobacco factories of Cavalla none offer so interesting a study as the gipsies. Numbers of these vagabond inhabitants of the Balkans have congregated here in the hopes of work, and now that work seems definite, many of them have converted their tents and their wigwams into tiny stone houses with a view to a permanent residence. Dark, handsome Romany women, gay in colour as they always are, may be seen perpetually flitting about amongst these rude tenements, which they apparently only look upon as suitable for the night; their feet are bare, their legs only covered by white drawers, but then they always have the red or yellow jacket on, and the invariable bunch of gay flowers in their jet-black hair. With the kindly assistance of one of the tribe, who had acquired a sufficient amount of 'European' as they call all languages but their own, I was enabled to find out some highly interesting points concerning these gipsies, the most genuine and exclusive of the many gipsy tribes which are to be found in Europe.

The nomad gipsies of the Balkans are perhaps superior to any other class of mankind in enduring hardships and misery. Their winter dwellings, called *gushla*, are mere huts on the mountains, where they pass the six winter months huddled together in nakedness and misery. Towards the middle of April crowds of them assemble at a given spot in the green fields and near a well, where they celebrate the one gipsy festival called *kakkavá*, or feast of kettles; for three days they abandon themselves to dancing, eating, and song; each tent kills a lamb and invites those who pass by to partake of it; they deck their table with flowers, and when the meal is over they throw water three times on their temples, invoking the invisible genii of the spot to grant their wishes during the coming year. After the festival they pay the tribute imposed upon them by the Turkish Government, and then they disperse towards their accustomed haunts; some north, as far as the plains of Hungary, some east into Asia Minor, and some south to Cavalla, to assist in the production of tobacco. These are the Zapari, or most nomad of the nomad gipsies; they

visit fairs with tame bears and monkeys, they supply the Turks with executioners when required, they wear a curious head-gear and large baggy trousers, and their appearance is wild and fierce. About the Zapari the Turks have many sorry stories to tell; they believe them to be cannibals, and given to the most brutal orgies. A few years ago a Zapari contingent, which was passing within a few hours' distance of Constantinople, assassinated some labourers who had insulted them by nailing them to the ground with their tent-pegs.

These Zapari are tinkers by trade; and though they frequently visit Cavalla, and find much work there, they seldom seek for employment in the tobacco factories; it is too permanent for them, and the employers are afraid of them. If asked their origin, they will vaguely answer that they learnt tinkering from Job; if asked where they come from, they will say Persia. In all their ideas concerning themselves there seems to run a faint glimmering of some nearly forgotten truth; theirs is the purest Romany language, and the Turks with their usual callousness have not troubled themselves much about legislation for them. Orders from time to time have been issued by the Porte commanding them to live in villages, or to pass at least six months in one encampment, but the Zapari care for none of these orders, but set off 'like fire' (*yak*) as they express it, with their wooden huts covered with bark on wheels, and drawn by ten or twelve oxen, which answers to the caravan of their English kinsfolk; the family follows on foot, and they are miles away before the Turk has thought of enforcing his orders. It is currently believed that a Moslem curse was the origin of the gipsies, so the Turks particularly dislike having anything to do with them either for good or bad, lest part of the curse should fall on their own heads.

These are the gipsies of the mountains; there is yet another class in Turkey, and the one most common at Cavalla, and they are known as the sedentary gipsies, who settle on the outskirts of busy towns, and populate, as they are rapidly doing now at Cavalla, a village of their own. They sometimes intermarry with Greeks and Turks, and the result of their intercourse with civilisation is that the sedentary gipsy is the greatest rogue in the Levant. Their language is more or less corrupted by intercourse with others; for example, the language of the Zapari is void of every word in connection with a house, except the one word *ker*, which signifies the dwelling, and the word *vudâr*, which

signifies the door; window, roof, floor, bed, &c. are to them unknown words, and have been supplied by the sedentary gipsies from their neighbours.

The mode of life among these sedentary gipsies is rapidly changing, and they profess the greatest contempt for their barbarian brethren, who come with their bears and their monkeys and adhere to the old traditions of gipsydom. They laugh at their voices, their nakedness, and their ignorance; and the Zapari, in their turn, avoid if possible all intercourse with them as a degenerate race, unworthy of their recognition. I must say from what I saw of them I could not help admiring the fine athletic Zapari more than the false cringing-looking beings who toiled in the tobacco factories at Cavalla.

From all I could gather from my informants at Cavalla, I believe that the Zapari for the most part make an outward profession of Mahomedanism, whilst the others generally are believed to be Christians; but they accuse each other of great elasticity of religious belief, and of adapting themselves to the religion of those around them. This I quite believe, for it is impossible to find a race more utterly devoid of religion than the gipsy race of the Balkans. Their songs and their folk-lore do not show forth any religious ideas whatsoever. They have a word to express God—namely *Devel*, which is the same as that for the sky, and is connected with the Hindoo goddess *Dewul*; but it is only an idea of a supreme being that they thus express; their word for the spirit of evil—*Beng*, is only known to the converted ones who have been brought in contact with religious nations, and have learnt to go to the church or to the mosque, to be baptized or to be circumcised. They are false Mussulmans, false Christians, and the Greek Church publicly recognises this fact by refusing Christian burial to a gipsy pure and simple, even though he may have made a profession of Christianity; if, however, he is married to a Greek woman, or is in any way descended from a mixed marriage, this objection is waived and Christian burial is allowed. Wretched though these gipsies are, the tobacco merchants of Cavalla would be hard set to know how to get on without them, for there is more work in them than in all the other nationalities put together, and every encouragement is given to them to build their small houses and become permanent residents in the place.

Cavalla being a purely mercantile community, and being

moreover in Turkey where no protection is given to commerce, has developed in itself a remarkable system of guilds; tradespeople, both Christian and Mahomedan, have arranged themselves into certain *esnafs* which correspond to the guilds as they existed in England a few centuries ago. The barbers, the linen-draper, the tobacconists, all govern themselves by their own fixed laws, and are better governed than anybody else in Turkey; each guild has one or two chiefs who regulate disputes, and who are master workers in their various trades; the apprentices, who are known as *chiraks*, obtain promotion according to ability, after a certain number of years, and when they are sufficiently advanced to become masters themselves, they are admitted into the confraternity with the approval of the corporate body. The meetings or *longas* of the several guilds are held in a large room over the chief café down by the seashore; they generally end in an orgy, when all get drunk. Orientals, more especially Greeks, are never habitual drunkards, but can get drunk to order, nay even would look upon it as a disgrace not to become so at any public festivity. On the great tobacco festival each guild has its own private dissipation, and to meet the expenses of this, money is taken from the reserve fund of the *esnaf* for the purchase of food and drink for the revellers.

Perhaps the most curious of all guilds in an Oriental town, and one which flourishes exceedingly in Cavalla, is the beggars' guild. Like other guilds they have their own laws, their president, and their council; this council gives a diploma to those who wish to beg, and without permission no one durst seek alms at the churches, mosques, or street-doors; all the legitimate beggars would rise up in arms against him, and his life would not be worth much. Friday is the recognised beggars' day, on which they go round from door to door and get their wallets filled with bread and beans; these are divided by the community, nothing is private property; it is against their creed. The beggars' brotherhood is rich; they possess house-property, the income of which is spent for the benefit of the community, and once a year, on the day of St. John the Charitable, they have a feast. They all go to church on this day; it would be difficult to recognise the tidily-dressed members of this honourable community in their best clothes; rags and tatters are only *de rigueur* for them when they are on their rounds. Beggary pays very well; if a beggar's daughter marries she is dowered by the com-

munity, the president sees to the betrothal, and his consent is essential to the union. At Salonica, Blind Demetrius is the president; he is easily recognised as he parades the streets, singing his everlasting wail:—

Day and night, day and night I live in the dark.

Wretch that I am! I hear the world, but I cannot see it.

And though you know him to be a rich man, that his wife is well dressed and that his daughter will receive a handsome dower, his plea for alms is almost irresistible.

The tobacconists of Cavalla do not love the beggars' guild; 'it makes useful men idle,' they say, but nevertheless it is not nearly so objectionable to them as another institution, which is almost unique in Turkey, and is well deserving of a visit. This is an '*imaret*' and a '*medresseh*,' established by Mahomed Ali in Cavalla, that is to say a place where education and alms are distributed for the asking to worthy Mussulmans. Mahomed Ali, the great Viceroy of Egypt, was a native of Cavalla, and, wishing to benefit his native place, he asked them whether they would prefer an institution which would provide a daily meal for the poor, or a college; with one accord they begged for the former, and Mahomed Ali, in his disappointment at their choice, for education was his hobby, said he would give them both. The result is that a large building has been erected all along the western side of the harbour, bristling with domes and minarets, a very imposing object indeed to look upon. The college is composed of a series of light arcades and gardens, out of which numerous rooms open, accommodating 80 to 100 Turks. These Oriental studies are exceedingly picturesque: four students and one master live in each; here they eat and work on the divan which runs all round; there is the usual profusion of Eastern carpets, pretty nooks and corners, texts from the Koran; they brew themselves coffee on their brazier, they smoke their long hubble-bubbles—a completer contrast to an Oxford college could not be found. Then there are the large schoolrooms where the students squat and sing their lessons, the two mosques where the students pray, and the library, which was fitted up at a cost of 3,000*l.* Everything, for Turkey, is excessively comfortable, so comfortable that the students, many of them, take a long time in finishing their course; nay some remain here till they are quite old men, taking their education easily, as the Turks take everything else.

Adjoining the college is the almshouse, where every morning at five o'clock the poor Mussulmans assemble, each with a platter, to receive their dole of bread and pilaf, and on Thursday mornings they get in addition a good meal of meat. The kitchen where all this is cooked is very clean and tidy; huge brazen cauldrons are kept for boiling the rice, and brick ovens for baking the bread. Adjoining the kitchen is the grinding-mill, where blindfold horses toil at turning the old-fashioned grindstone; the cellars are full of wine and oil from the island of Thasos, which was given to Mahomed Ali as a present by the Sultan, and still is governed by an Egyptian Bey whose palace is at Cavalla. Thus are the poor of the place supported by the tithes from Thasos and certain usufructs left for the purpose by Mahomed Ali in Egypt. This curious system of charity is a great annoyance to the tobacco merchants of Cavalla, for it encourages an immense amount of idleness, and makes the poor very independent.

Rousseau has said that from the food of a nation you can tell its characteristics; if this is true, no better spot for the study of ethnology could be found than Cavalla. Doubtless, if it be desired, an opportunity will occur of dining with many nationalities. By all means accept an invitation to dine with a Turkish Pasha. I had the pleasure of taking a meal with the governor of Drama, who is passing rich for a Turk, seeing that he rules over the plain where the chief tobacco farms are, and his opportunities for amassing wealth are many and varied. Silence and expedition are the chief characteristics of a Turkish meal. The table preparations are few, but the dishes are many; olives, caviare, cheese, &c. are dotted about, and perhaps as many as ten dishes are handed round on covered brazen dishes, consisting of rice or barley, meat or boiled fish, cakes seasoned with vegetables, roast lamb, beans, a species of rissole wrapped up in vine leaves, the inevitable pilaf and fruits, and, as wine is forbidden, an intoxicating substitute is found in liqueurs and brandy. Each person has his glass of sherbet by him, and his piece of unleavened bread, for the Turks love half-baked dough. It will comfort the European to see everyone wash his hands before his meal, for forks are unknown, and each is expected to dip his fingers into the savoury morsel as it is handed to him. During the whole of the feeding process scarcely four or five words will be uttered, and at the most your repast will last twenty minutes, but then afterwards, with the coffee and the hubble-bubble, conversation will flow freely. To the Turk

eating is a serious gastronomic exercise, which will not admit of any conversation being entered into during its progress.

There are many Jews in Cavalla, most of them engaged in the tobacco trade; they are not nice people to dine with, seeing that from their *menu* is excluded butter, oil, lamb, hare, dove, &c.; the only flesh offered to you is calves' flesh, and that when the butcher has drained every drop of blood out of it. If it is Saturday evening, as it happened to me, you will see an enormous amount of food spread on the table, and a seven-branched candlestick; this table is left there all Saturday, for no cooking must be carried on on the Sabbath. Their favourite food is certain black-looking cakes made of cheese from which all the fat has been squeezed. Beside this you will have tunny fish, small fruits, and a gourd of wine; all will be scrupulously clean, but then this does not give one an appetite for their insipid food.

A dinner party at an Armenian house is the greatest contrast to this; everything is reeking with grease and fat, and the Armenians eat as if they had been created for no other purpose but to gormandise. To a European unaccustomed to such things it is a period of the greatest trial, for nothing will be handed to him which is not overflowing with oil and fatness. Perhaps an Armenian's capacity for eating is only equalled by their capacity for fasting during the long period in which their Church enjoins an abstention from food. A certain kind of black bread (*somonium*) is made expressly for the Armenians at Cavalla during their fast; over this they pour a phial of warm oil, and eat it with onions, olives, and cucumbers. This is their only food during Lent, and it seems to agree with them right well, for the Armenians are as a rule excessively strong, having far more physical strength than other Oriental nations. Perhaps it is the oil they eat during their fasts, which occur on 189 days out of the year, that contributes to this, as it seems to give them an immunity to pestilence, whereas the hotbed of any epidemic is always in the Jewish quarter.

By far the most respectable of the tobacco merchants at Cavalla are Greeks, rich and well-educated members of society, who have built themselves handsome villas outside the town, and who own most of the tobacco farms up the country; their aptitude for successfully working industries is marked even in Turkey, where they receive every discouragement.

M. Charnaud, a rich Greek, and generally known as the King of

Cavalla, was anxious a short time ago to open a railway across the plain of Philippi to Cavalla, requiring only a short tunnel through a ridge of hills which cuts off the plain from the seaboard. But no, the Turks would not hear of it, even though M. Charnaud promised 60,000*l.*, and to take all the arrangements of the company on himself. The feeble Turks suggested that it would form an outlet for the wild tribes who live up in the mountains, and troubles would be sure to arise. In spite of all hindrance M. Charnaud has made his tobacco farms exceedingly lucrative, and if you dine with him you may be sure of getting a most excellent dinner, for a Greek has always made a study of eating; his table is at the same time European and Asiatic, and from the opportunities which have been afforded him of a varied choice he has made his own selection, so at a Greek table you may be sure of getting a good pilaf, a good dish of *côtelettes*, a good *yiaourte*, and a good cream.

M. Charnaud was most civil to us when at Cavalla, and on our expressing a wish to visit the ruins of Philippi and the tobacco farms in the immediate vicinity of this venerable old town, he at once provided us with an escort, for the country round is a hot-bed of brigandage, and the King of Cavalla himself pays blackmail to these kings of the mountains, who otherwise would make it impossible for him to carry on his cultivation of the tobacco plant except on the tiny little plains which appear from time to time along the seaboard. The road we followed to Philippi was an atrocious one, but it was probably the one along which St. Paul travelled on his journey thither, for all along we saw *débris* of ancient buildings, and as we neared the conical hill on which the town was built we saw many tombs of Roman date, on one of which was the inscription, 'Whoever shall place in this sarcophagus another body shall pay to the republic of Philippi 1,000 denarii.' It was empty now indeed, and the debt was not owing, but what a parody on human vanity and the desire to perpetuate one's tenure of something even after death!

The plain of Philippi is a vast fever-stricken marsh, into which penetrate reclaimed strips of land devoted to the cultivation of tobacco. M. Charnaud's scheme of a tunnel for a railway combined also that of draining this marsh and conducting the stagnant water by this means to the sea, and as we drove past, many acres of this marsh were on fire, the reeds sending up scorching flames and volumes of smoke, which almost hid from our view the lofty

mountain Pangæus. We admired the scene immensely, and thought what an excellent study it would make for an artist.

After seeing the ruins of Philippi and the so-called prison of Paul and Silas which crowns the heights, we visited the tobacco farms of M. Charnaud at the village of Ratscha. Men were busily engaged in ploughing the land for the reception of the young plants, and very picturesque they looked in their bright costumes, blue trousers, scarlet girdles, blue vests, and scarlet fezes, following their yoke of oxen. We halted at a *cheflik*, or fortified farm, where all the labourers assemble at night with their tools and their cattle for fear of marauders. It was a queer, ramshackle house, full of rafters ready to receive the leaves of tobacco when ready to be strung for drying. Before they are quite dry and brittle, quantities of women assemble in these farms, smooth out the leaves and pack them in bundles for transportation to the factories of Cavalla.

The growth of tobacco is a weary process at Ratscha. First they sow the seed in nurseries, and as the young plants appear they carefully cover them with brushwood to protect them from the sun and birds. Then when they are strong enough they transplant them to the fields, and if a shower of rain comes in May, after they are transplanted, they are sure of a good crop. But these showers do not always come, and then occasionally a hailstorm when the leaves are nearly grown will come peppering down and destroy the whole crop. But nevertheless it is a very profitable trade, and produces an industry in a country where all other things are paralysed.

As evening came on we left Ratscha and abandoned our intention of passing the night there; for the population of this hamlet looked anything but pleasing, and in spite of our escort and the magic name of M. Charnaud, we felt that it would be prudent to make a forced march, and return to our quarters at Cavalla for the night.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XV.

MRS. BAXENDALE'S GUESTS.

A SERVANT went to Banbrigg each morning for tidings; Emily, so the report said, moved steadily towards recovery. On the second day after Wilfrid's arrival, Mrs. Baxendale took him with her in the brougham, and let him wait for her whilst she made a call upon Mrs. Hood; Wilfrid saw an upper window of which the blind was down against the sun, and would gladly have lingered within sight of it. Beatrice had excused herself from accompanying the two.

'I believe,' Mrs. Baxendale said on the way, 'she has gone to some special service at St. Luke's.' She was mistaken, though Beatrice had in truth been diligent at such services of late. 'Now there,' she added, 'is a kind of infatuation I find it difficult even to understand. How can a girl of her sense and education waste her time in that way? Don't think I have no religious belief, Mr. Athel; I'm not strong-minded enough for that. But this deliberate working of oneself into a state of nervous excitement seems to me, to speak plainly, indecent. Dr. Wardle, with whom I chat rather wickedly now and then, tells me the revivals are quite a windfall, subsequently, to him and his brethren. And, do you know, I begin to see bad results even in my niece. I certainly wouldn't have had her down just at this time if I had suspected her leanings that way. Didn't you notice how absent she was last night, and again at breakfast this morning? All revival, I assure you.'

'It's the want of a serious interest in life,' remarked Wilfrid, remembering, with a smile, a certain conversation between Beatrice and himself.

'Then it's so inconsistent,' continued the lady, 'for—you won't abuse my confidence—a more worldly girl I never knew. In her heart I am convinced she thinks nothing so important as the doings of fashionable society. She asked me, the first day

she was here, how I lived without—what was it? I quite forget, but some paper or other which is full of what they call fashionable intelligence. “My dear,” I said, “I know none of those people, and care not one grain of salt about their flutterings hither and thither, their marryings and givings in marriage, their dresses and their—never mind what.” And what do you think she answered? “But you will care when my name begins to be mentioned.” And she went off with—just so much—toss of the head; you know how Beatrice does it. Well, I suppose she really does do me an honour by coming down to my poor, dull house; no doubt she’s very brilliant in the world I know nothing about. I suppose you have seen her at her best? She won’t waste her graces upon me, wise girl; only the—you know the movement—when I’ve shown my ignorance now and then. Did you ever dance with her?’

‘Oh yes; frequently.’

‘I should like to see her in a ball-room. Certainly there are few girls more handsome; I suppose that is admitted?’

‘Certainly; she queens it everywhere.’

‘And her singing is so lovely! Do you know a thought I often have? When I hear her singing it seems to me as if she were not quite the same person as at other times; she affects me, I can’t quite tell you how; it’s a sort of disenchantment to talk to her immediately afterwards.’

Wilfrid liked Mrs. Baxendale the more, the more he talked with her; in a day or two the confidence between them was as complete as if their acquaintance had been life-long. With her husband, too, he came to be on an excellent footing. Mr. Baxendale got him into the library when the ladies retired for the night, and expatiated for hours on the details of his electoral campaign. At first Wilfrid found the subject tedious, but the energy and bright intelligence of the man ended by stirring his interest in a remarkable way. It was new to Wilfrid to be in converse with such a strenuously practical mind; the element of ambition in him, of less noble ambition which had had its share in urging him to academic triumphs, was moved by sympathetic touches; he came to understand the enthusiasm which possessed the Liberal candidate, began to be concerned for his success, to feel the stirrings of party spirit. He aided Baxendale in drawing up certain addresses for circulation, and learned the difference between literary elegance and the tact which gets at the ear of

the multitude. A vulgar man could not have moved him in this way, and Baxendale was in truth anything but vulgar. Through his life he had been, on a small scale, a ruler of men, and had ruled with conspicuous success, yet he had preserved a native sincerity, and wrought under the guidance of an ideal. Like all men who are worth anything, either in public or private, he possessed a keen sense of humour, and was too awake to the ludicrous aspects of charlatany to fall into the pits it offered on every hand. His misfortune was the difficulty with which he uttered himself; even when he got over his nervousness, words came to him only in a rough-and-tumble fashion; he sputtered and fumed and beat his forehead for phrases, then ended with a hearty laugh at his own inarticulateness. Something like this was his talk in the library of nights:

‘There’s a man called Rapley, an old-clothes dealer—fellow I can’t get hold of. He’s hanging midway—what do you call it?—trimming, with an eye to the best bargain. Invaluable, if only I could get him, but a scoundrel. Wants pay, you know; do anything for pay; win the election for me without a doubt, if only I pay him; every blackguard in Dunfield hand and glove with him. Now pay I won’t, yet I’m bound to get that man. Talked to him yesterday for two hours and thirty-five minutes by the parish church clock, just over his shop—I mean the clock is. The fellow hasn’t a conviction, yet he can talk you blue; if I had his powers of speech—there it is I fail, you see. I have to address a meeting to-morrow; Rapley ’ll be up at me, and turn me inside out. He’d do as much for the other man, if only I’d pay him. That isn’t my idea; I’m going to win the election clean-handed; satisfaction in looking back on an honest piece of work; what? I’ll have another talk with him to-morrow. Now look at this map of the town; I’ve coloured it with much care. There you see the stronghold of the Blues. I’m working that district street by street—a sort of moral invasion. No humbug; I set my face against humbug. If a man’s a rogue, or a sot, or a dirty rascal, I won’t shake hands with him and pretend—you know—respect, friendship, how are your wife and children, so on. He’s a vote, and I’ve only to deal with him as a vote. Can he see that two and two make four? Good; I’m at him by that side. There are my principles; what have you to urge against them? He urges damned absurdities. Good; I *prove* to him that they are damned absurdities.’

At times Wilfrid managed to lead the talk to other subjects, such as were suggested by the books around the room. Baxendale had read not a little, and entirely in the spheres of fact and speculation. Political economy and all that appertained to it was his specialty, but he was remarkably strong in metaphysics. Wilfrid had flattered himself that he was tolerably familiar with the highways of philosophy, but Baxendale made him feel his ignorance. The man had, for instance, read Kant with extraordinary thoroughness, and discussed him precisely as he did his electioneering difficulties; the problems of consciousness he attacked with hard-headed, methodical patience, with intelligence, moreover, which was seldom at fault. Everything that bore the appearance of a knot to be unravelled had for him an immense attraction. In mere mental calculation his power was amazing. He took Wilfrid over his manufactory one day, and explained to him certain complicated pieces of machinery; the description was not so lucid as it might have been, owing to lack of words, but it manifested the completest understanding of things which to his companion were as hard as the riddle of the universe. His modesty, withal, was excessive; to Wilfrid's humane culture he deferred at all times; for all the learning which lay outside his own sphere he had boundless reverence. Wilfrid's gain by him was not only of a pleasant personal acquaintance; the intercourse extended his views, and in particular gave direction to much that had hitherto been vague potentiality in his character. In more than one sense this visit to Dunfield was to prove a turning point in his life.

Beatrice, in the meantime, held herself apart; Wilfrid had never before felt himself so little at ease in her presence. It was as though the short time which had elapsed since their last meeting had effected a permanent change in their mutual relations. Previously their intercourse had gone as far in familiarity as was possible if it were not to take quite a new colour; now all at once this past seemed to go for nothing. Beatrice was the active source of change; she was deliberately—he could not doubt it—extending the distance between them, annulling bygone intimacy, shifting into ineffective remoteness all manner of common associations. Things she would formerly have understood at a half-word she now affected to need to have explained to her. He was 'Mr. Athel' to an extent he had never been before; and even of his relatives she spoke with a diminished familiarity. She

emphasised at every moment the characteristics which were alien to his sympathies, talked of the 'revival' *ad nauseam*, or changed with alarming suddenness from that to topics of excessive frivolousness. Wilfrid little by little ceased to converse with her, in the real sense of the word; he even felt uncomfortable in her presence. And Mrs. Baxendale had clear eyes for at all events the outward features of the situation.

On the fifth day of Wilfrid's presence in the house, Beatrice took the opportunity of being alone with her aunt to observe that she must go southwards by a certain train next morning.

'Oh, surely not!' protested Mrs. Baxendale. 'I can't spare you yet. And your mother is still in Berkshire.'

'Yes, but that makes no difference to me, you know,' said Beatrice. 'I'm often at home by myself. Indeed I must go to-morrow.'

'Won't you stay if I beg you? It's four years since you were here, and who knows how long it will be before I entrap you again. You've already threatened me, you know, with the peerage, and I'm very sure you won't deign to honour me when that day comes. Now, there's a good girl—to the end of the week at least.'

It seemed as though Beatrice would persist.

'Now, if it were not such an unlikely thing,' said her aunt, 'I should be disposed to think it was Mr. Athel who is driving you away.'

'Mr. Athel!' the girl exclaimed, almost haughtily, and with a flush which disappeared as rapidly as it came, leaving the lovely face with a touch of exquisite paleness.

'I mean,' said Mrs. Baxendale quickly, averting her honest eyes, 'that I fear he has offended you.'

'How can Mr. Athel have offended me?' Beatrice asked, with a certain severity.

'I thought perhaps—a remark he made last night on the revival.'

Mrs. Baxendale felt ill at ease. Her first sentence had been inconsiderate; she knew it as soon as it was uttered, and indeed did not quite see what could have induced her to make such a remark. She had not the habit of nice conversation which endows with complete command of the tongue. But her wits had, as you see, come to her rescue.

'Mr. Athel's opinions on that subject are not likely to offend me,' Beatrice replied, with the shadow of a smile.

'I am so afraid lest he should suspect anything of the kind. I am sure it would grieve him dreadfully.'

The girl laughed outright, though not with much joyousness.

'Mr. Athel be grieved for such a cause! My dear aunt, you don't know him. He's as little sensitive as any man could be. Why, he holds it a duty to abuse people who do things he counts foolish.'

'You exaggerate,' returned her aunt, with a smile.

Beatrice continued, vivaciously.

'Oh, you don't know him as well as I do. We used to be always wrangling—in the days of my simplicity. I have been marvelling at his forbearance; it would have been nothing wonderful if he had called me an idiot. Frankness of that kind is the mark of his friendship—haven't you found that out? Hasn't he taken occasion yet to inform you that your life is conducted on an utterly mistaken principle, that you are shallow and inefficient, that you are worse than useless in the world, and ought, if properly constituted, to be a torment to yourself? None of these things he has said? Oh, then you are not admitted to Mr. Athel's intimacy; you are not of the inner circle.'

She spoke with a kind of reckless gaiety, a mocking merriment which her rich voice and command of facial expression made very effective. It startled her hearer, who, when the girl ceased, took one of her hands and patted it kindly.

'Why then,' she said, 'I have been altogether mistaken; for I did really think he had offended you. But now I'm sure you'll stay—won't you?'

'Rather than you should think I run away from Mr. Athel's high censure—certainly.'

Then she became silent, and shortly left the room. Mrs. Baxendale sat by herself musing.

She was a woman given to thoughtfulness, for all that she used her tongue freely when with those she liked. She did not greatly seek such society as Dunfield had to offer, and partly on that account, partly owing to alarms excited by her caustic comments on matters of popular interest, the ladies of the town left her abundance of leisure. She used it well. Though not a highly-educated woman, she read constantly, and books of a solid kind. Society in Dunfield had its book club, and Mrs. Baxendale enjoyed the advantage of choosing literature which her fellow-members were very willing to let her keep as long as she liked.

Beatrice derived much amusement from her aunt's method of reading. Beatrice, with the run of Mr. Mudie's catalogues, would have half-a-dozen volumes in her lap at the same time, and as often as not get through them—*tant bien que mal*—in the same day. But to the provincial lady a book was a solid and serious affair. To read a chapter was to have provided matter for a day's reflection; the marker was put at the place where reading had ceased, and the book was not re-opened till previous matter had been thoroughly digested and assimilated. It was a slow method, but not without its advantages, I assure you.

Perhaps to relieve her worthy aunt of any lingering anxiousness, Beatrice, throughout the day, wore an appearance of much contentment, and to Wilfrid was especially condescending, even talking with him freely on a subject quite unconnected with her pet interests. That evening two gentlemen, politicians, dined at the house; Beatrice, under cover of their loud discussions in the drawing-room, exchanged certain remarks with Wilfrid.

'My aunt was so good as to apologise to me on your behalf this morning,' she began.

'Apologise? What have I been guilty of?'

'Oh, nothing. She doesn't appreciate the freemasonry between us. It occurred to her that your remarks on my—well, my predilections, might have troubled me. Judge how amused I was!'

She did not look at him from the first, and appeared to be examining, even whilst she spoke, a book of prints.

'I sincerely hope,' Wilfrid replied, 'that I have uttered no thoughtless piece of rudeness. If I have, I beg you to forgive me.'

She glanced at him. He appeared to speak seriously, and it was the kind of speech he would never have dreamed of making to her in former days, at all events in this tone.

'You know perfectly well,' she answered, with slow voice, bending to look more closely at a page, 'that you never said anything to me which could call for apology.'

'I am not so sure of that,' Wilfrid replied, smiling.

'Then take my assurance now,' said Beatrice, closing her book, and rising to move towards her aunt. As she went, she cast a look back, a look of curious blankness, as if into vacancy.

She sang shortly after, and the souls of the politicians were stirred within them. For Wilfrid, he lay back with his eyes closed, his heart borne on the flood of music to that pale-windowed room

of sickness, whose occupant must needs be so sadly pale. The security he felt in the knowledge that Emily grew better daily made him able to talk cheerfully and behave like one without pre-occupation, but Emily in truth was never out of his mind. He lived towards the day when he should kneel at her feet, and feel once more upon his forehead those cold, pure lips. And that day, as he believed, was now very near.

To her aunt's secret surprise, Beatrice allowed the end of the week to come and go without any allusion to the subject of departure. It was all the more strange, seeing that the girl's show of easy friendliness with Wilfrid had not lasted beyond the day; she had become as distant and self-centred as before. But on the morning of the following Tuesday, as Mrs. Baxendale sat reading not long after breakfast, Beatrice entered the room in her light travelling garb, and came forward, buttoning her glove.

'You are going out?' Mrs. Baxendale asked, with some misgiving.

'Yes—to London. They are calling a cab. You know how I dislike preparatory miseries.'

Her aunt kept astonished silence. She looked at the girl, then down at her book.

'Well,' she said at length, 'it only remains to me to remember the old proverb. But when is the train? Are you off this moment?'

'The train leaves in five-and-twenty minutes. May I disturb uncle, do you think?'

'Ah, now I understand why you asked if he would be at home through the morning. I'll go and fetch him.'

She went quickly to the library. Mr. Baxendale sat there alone.

'Beatrice is going,' she said, coming behind his chair. 'Will you come and say good-bye?'

Mr. Baxendale jumped up.

'Going? Leaving?'

His wife nodded.

'Why? What is it? You haven't quarrelled with her about the prayer-meetings?'

'No. It's a fancy of hers, that's all. Come along; she's only twenty minutes to catch the train.'

When they reached the drawing-room, Beatrice was not there. Upon Mrs. Baxendale's withdrawal she had gone to Wilfrid's door

and knocked at it. Wilfrid was pacing about in thought. It surprised him to see who his visitor was; yet more, when she advanced to him with her hand extended, saying a simple 'Good-bye.'

'Good-bye? Wherefore?'

Her attire explained. Beatrice possessed the beauty of form and face which makes profit of any costume; in the light-brown cape, and hat to match, her tall, lithe figure had a womanly dignity which suited well with the unsmiling expressiveness of her countenance. The 'good-bye' was uttered briefly and without emphasis, as one uses any insignificant form of speech.

Wilfrid resolved at once to accept her whim; after all, it was but another instance of frequent eccentricities.

'Who is going to the station with you?' he asked.

'No one. I hate partings on the platform.'

She moved away almost as far as the door, then turned again.

'You will be in town before going back to Oxford?'

Wilfrid hesitated.

'Oh, never mind,' she said; and was gone.

Ten minutes later Wilfrid went to the drawing-room. Mr. and Mrs. Baxendale were talking together; they became silent as he entered.

'Has Miss Redwing gone?' he asked.

'She took leave of you, didn't she?' replied the lady.

'Yes. But it was so unprepared for, I half thought it might be a joke.'

'Oh, she's fond of these surprises,' Mrs. Baxendale said, in a tone of good-natured allowance. 'On the whole I sympathise with her; I myself prefer not to linger over such occasions.'

Later in the day, Mrs. Baxendale drove out to Banbrigg, this time alone. On her return, she sought Wilfrid and found him in his room. There was concern on her face.

'I have heard something very painful from Mrs. Hood,' she began. 'It seems that Emily is in ignorance of her father's death.'

Wilfrid looked at her in astonishment.

'I told you,' Mrs. Baxendale pursued, 'that she had not been altogether well just before it happened, but it now appears that the dreadful incident of her entering the room just when the body was brought in must have taken place when she was delirious. The poor woman has had no suspicion of that; but it is proved by Emily's questions, now that she begins to talk. Of course it

makes a new anxiety. Mrs. Hood has not dared to hint at the truth, but it cannot be concealed for long.'

'But this is most extraordinary,' Wilfrid exclaimed. 'What, then, was the origin of her illness?'

'That is the mystery. Mrs. Hood's memory seems to be confused, but I got her to allow that the feverish symptoms were declared even the night before the death was known. I hardly like to hint it, but it really seemed to me as if she were keeping something back. One moment she said that Emily had been made ill by anxiety at her father's lateness in coming home that night, and the next she seemed, for some reason, unwilling to admit that it was so. The poor woman is in a sad, sad state, and no wonder. She wishes that somebody else might tell Emily the truth; but surely it will come most easily from her.'

Wilfrid was deeply distressed.

'It is the very worst that still remains,' he said, 'and we thought the worst was over. What does the doctor say? Can she bear it yet? It is impossible to let her continue in ignorance.'

It was at length decided that Mrs. Baxendale should visit the doctor, and hear his opinion. She had got into her mind a certain distrust of Mrs. Hood, and even doubted whether Emily ought to be left in her hands during convalescence; there was clearly no want of devotion on the mother's part, but it appeared to Mrs. Baxendale that the poor woman had been overtaxed, and was herself on the point of illness, perhaps of mental failure. From going well, things had suddenly taken an anxious turn.

CHAPTER XVI.

RENUNCIATION.

WHEN Emily returned from the wastes of ravaged mind, and while yet the images of memory were hardly distinguished from the ghosts of delirious dream, the picture that haunted her with most persistency, with an objective reality the more impressive the clearer her thought became, was one which she could least comprehend or account for. She saw lying before her a closely muffled form, the outline seeming to declare it that of a man. The struggle of new-born consciousness was to associate such a vision with the events which had preceded her illness. Perchance

for a day, perchance only for an hour, however long the unmeasured transition from darkness to the dawn of self-knowledge, she suffered the oppression of this mechanical questioning. At length the presence of her mother by the bedside became a fact, and it led on to the thought of her father. Her eyes moved in search for him.

The act of speech, in health a mere emphasis of thought, was only to be attained by repetition of efforts; several times she believed herself to have spoken whilst silence still pressed her lips. Only when the recollection of her last waking day was complete, and when the absence of her father from the room linked itself to memory of her anguished waiting for him, did she succeed in uttering the words which represented her fear. Her mother was bending over her, aware of the new light in her questioning eyes.

‘Where’s father?’ Emily asked.

‘You shall see him, dear,’ was the reply. ‘Don’t speak.’

‘He came home?’

‘Yes, he came home.’

Emily fell back into thought; this great fear allayed, the past continued to rebuild itself within her mind. And now, only now, like an angel coming from afar over dark waters, there gleamed the image of her love. It had been expelled from memory by the all-possessing woe of those last hours; it returned like a soothing warmth, an assuagement of pain. As though soul-easing music sounded about her, she again lost her hold on outward things and sank into a natural sleep.

Mrs. Hood feared the next waking. The question about her father, she attributed to Emily’s incomplete command of her faculties, for she had not doubted that the muffled figure on the couch had been consciously seen by the girl and understood. Yet with waking the error prolonged itself; it became evident at length that Emily knew nothing of her coming down to the sitting-room, and still had to learn that her father no longer lived. It was a new suffering under which the poor woman gave way. Already her natural affliction was complicated with a sense of painful mysteries; in her delirium, Emily had uttered words which there was no explaining, but which proved that there had been some hidden connection between her mental trouble and her father’s failure to return at the usual hour. Dagworthy’s name she had spoken frequently, and with words which called to mind the sum of money her father had somehow procured. Mrs. Hood

had no strength to face trials such as these. As long as her child's life seemed in danger, she strove with a mother's predominant instinct to defend it; but her powers failed as Emily passed out of peril. Her outlook became blank; physical exhaustion joined with mental suffering began to render her incapable of further efforts. Fortunately, Mrs. Baxendale perceived this in time. A nurse was provided, in addition to the one who had assisted Mrs. Hood, and the mother became herself the object of care.

Emily had been told that her father was ill, but this fiction it was soon impossible to maintain. Three days after the last reported conversation between Wilfrid and Mrs. Baxendale, it was determined that the latter must take upon herself the office of telling Emily the truth. Mrs. Hood implored her to do so; the poor mother was sinking into a state which scarcely left her the command of her mind, and, though she could not sustain the duty herself, it was her harassing desire that it might quickly be performed. So at length the revelation was made, made with all the forbearance and strengthening tenderness of which a strong-souled woman is capable. But the first syllables prepared Emily for the whole truth. A secret dread, which she had not dared to confess to herself on that last evening, though probably it brought about the crisis in her suffering, and which the false assurances recently given her had perhaps not wholly overcome, rushed forth as soon as evil was hinted at. The softened statement that her father had been stricken down by a natural malady did not for a moment deceive her. She closed her eyes; the pillows which supported her were scarcely whiter than her face. But she was soon able to speak with perfect self-control.

‘Was he brought home wrapped in something?’ she asked.
‘With his face covered?’

‘He was, Emily.’

‘How and where did I see him? For I know I did see him.’

‘Your mother has told me that you rose from your bed, and went to the room below. She did not realise that you were unconscious; she believed that you knew of this.’

This was her dread vision. As if to protect herself from it, she raised her hand and laid it across her eyes. Then it fell again to the coverlet—thin, flower-like hand, which in its translucency of flesh seemed to have been created by spirit for its chosen abode.

When silence had lasted some moments—

‘Now that I know he is dead,’ Emily resumed—oh, the sad

music of the last word!—‘I can bear to hear the manner of it without disguise. Will you tell me the whole truth, Mrs. Baxendale?’

It was spoken like herself. Ever clinging to sincerity, ever ready to face the truth of things, in how many a matter of less moment had the girl spoken with just this directness, inspiring respect in all who heard her clear, candid voice.

Mrs. Baxendale sank her eyes, and hesitated.

‘He died by his own hand,’ Emily said, below her breath.

The lady kept silence. Emily again closed her eyes, and, as she so lay, felt warm lips touch her forehead.

Mrs. Baxendale believed for a moment that the sufferer had lost consciousness, but the utterance of her name caused Emily to raise her lids.

‘Why did he do this?’ she asked, regarding her friend fixedly.

‘No one can say, dear.’

Emily drew a deep sigh; a gleam passed over her face.

‘There was an inquest?’ she asked.

‘Yes.’

‘Is it possible for me to see a newspaper in which it was reported?’

‘If you really desire it,’ said Mrs. Baxendale, with hesitation.

‘I do; I wish to read it. Will you do me that great kindness?’

‘I will bring it you in a day or two. But would it not be better to delay——’

‘Is there anything,’ Emily asked quickly, ‘that you have kept from me?’

‘Nothing; nothing.’

‘Then I need not put off reading it. I have borne the worst.’

As Mrs. Baxendale left the house, she was passed at a short distance along the road by a man on horseback. This rider gave a sign to the coachman to stop, and a moment after presented himself at the window of the brougham. It was Dagworthy; he wished to have news of Mrs. and Miss Hood. The lady gave him full information.

‘I fear I could not see Mrs. Hood?’ Dagworthy said.

‘Oh, she is far too ill!’ was the reply.

Having assured himself on this point, Dagworthy took his leave, and, when the carriage was remote, rode to the house. He made fast the reins to the gate, entered, and knocked at the door. A girl who did subordinate work for the nurses opened.

'I want you,' Dagworthy said, 'to give this note at once to Miss Hood. You understand?—to Miss Hood. Will you do so?'

'I will, sir.'

He went away, and, immediately after, Emily was reading these lines:

'I wish to tell you that no one has heard, and no one ever will, of the circumstances you would desire to have unknown. I send this as soon as you are able to receive it. You will know from whom it comes.'

She knew, and the message aided her. The shock of what she had just heard was not, in its immediate effect, as severe as others had feared it would be. Perhaps Emily's own sojourn at the gates of death lessened the distance between her and him who had passed them; perhaps the vast misery which lay behind her, the darkness threatening in the future, brought first to her mind death's attribute of deliverance. This, in the hours that followed, she strove to dwell upon; nothing could touch her father now, he was safe from trouble. But, as the current in her veins grew warmer, as life held her with a stronger hand and made her once more participant in his fears and desires, that apparition of the motionless veiled form haunted her with access of horror. If she slept it came into her dreams, and her waking thoughts strove with hideous wilfulness to unmuffle that dead face. When horror failed, its place was taken by a grief so intense that it shook the fabric of her being. She had no relapse in health, but convalescence was severed from all its natural joys; she grew stronger only to mourn more passionately. In imagination she followed her father through the hours of despair which must have ensued on his interview with Dagworthy. She pictured his struggle between desire to return home, to find comfort among those he loved, and the bitter shame which forbade it. How had he spent the time? Did he wander out of the town to lonely places, until daylight failed? Did he then come back under the shadow of the night, come back all but to the very door of his dwelling, make one last effort to face those within, pass on in blind agony? Was he on the heath at the very hour when she crossed it to go to Dagworthy's house? Oh, had that been *his* figure which, as she hurried past, she had seen moving in the darkness of the quarry?

A pity which at times grew too vast for the soul to contain absorbed her life, the pity which overwhelms and crushes, which

threatens reason. That he should have lived through long years of the most patient endurance, keeping ever a hope, a faith, so simple-hearted, so void of bitter feeling, so kindly disposed to all men—only to be vanquished at length by a moment of inexplicable weakness, only to creep aside, and hide his shame, and die. Her father, whom it was her heart's longing to tend and cherish through the brighter days of his age—lying there in his grave, where no voice could reach him, remote for ever from the solace of loving kindness, his death a perpetuation of woe. The cruelty of fate had exhausted itself; what had the world to show more pitiful than this?

No light ever came to her countenance; no faintest smile ever touched her lips. Through the hours, through the days, she lay heedless of things around her, solely occupied with the past, with affliction, with remorse. Had it not been in her power to save him? A word from her, and at this moment he would have been living in cheerfulness such as he had never known. She would have had but to turn her head, and his smile would have met her; the rare laugh, so touching to her always, would have become less rare; his struggles would have been over. She had willed that he should die, had sent him forth relentlessly to his last trial, to his forsaken end. Without a leave-taking he had gone forth; his last look had been at her blank windows. That hour was passed into eternity, and with it the better part of her life.

On the first day that she rose from her bed, she went, with the nurse's aid, to her mother's room. What she saw there was a new shock; her mother's face had aged incredibly, and wore a look of such feeble intelligence that to meet her eyes was more than painful. Upon the artificial maintenance of her strength throughout Emily's illness had followed a collapse of the vital powers; it seemed doubtful whether she would ever regain her normal state of mind and body. She knew her daughter, and, when Emily kissed her, the muscles of her haggard face contracted in what was meant for a smile; but she could not use her voice above a whisper, and her words were seldom consequent.

Two days later, Mrs. Baxendale again paid a visit. Emily was sitting in her bed-room, unoccupied, on her countenance the sorrow-stricken gravity which never quitted it. The visitor, when she had made her inquiries, seemed to prepare herself to speak of some subject at once important and cheerful.

‘For a fortnight,’ she said, ‘I have had staying with me someone whom you will be glad to hear of — your nearest friend.’

Emily raised her eyes slowly to the speaker’s face ; clearly she understood, but was accustoming herself to this unexpected relation between Mrs. Baxendale and Wilfrid.

‘Mr. Athel came from Switzerland as soon as he heard of your illness.’

‘How did he hear?’ Emily inquired, gravely.

‘My niece, Miss Redwing, whom you knew, happened to be visiting me. She wrote to Mrs. Rossall.’

Emily was silent. The lines of her mouth showed a slight tremor, but no colour sought her cheeks. The news was affecting her strongly, but only in the way in which she now received every impression ; physical weakness had the effect of reducing outward demonstration of feeling, and her spiritual condition favoured passiveness.

‘He has asked me to give you a letter, Emily,’ pursued Mrs. Baxendale, saddened by the sight of such intense sadness.

Emily took the letter, and laid it on a table near her, murmuring her thanks.

‘He is well?’ she asked, as the other did not speak.

‘Quite ; his holiday has completely restored him. You can’t think how glad I am to have come to know him, and to have him near me. Such excellent friends, we are ! You can think how anxious he has been ; and his father scarcely less so. The inquiries have been constant. The others have just got home ; Mr. Athel had a letter from London this morning. The little girls send you a message ; I believe you will find the letter enclosed.’

At the mention of the twins, the slightest smile came upon Emily’s lips.

‘You are fond of them, I see,’ said the lady. ‘That they are fond of you, needs no telling. Oh, and Clara writes from Germany to ask if she may write to you yet. Shall I let her?’

A few more words, and Mrs. Baxendale rose. Emily retained her hand.

‘You have not yet had from me one word of gratitude, Mrs. Baxendale,’ she said. ‘Indeed, I have no words in which to thank you.’

The lady kissed her forehead, pressed the thin hand again,

and went for a few moments to Mrs. Hood's room before departing.

It was nearly an hour before Emily took up the letter to open it. When at length she did so, she found that it covered only a small sheet of notepaper. Enclosed was a letter from Mr. Athel, announcing the family's arrival in London, asking in a kind tone for the latest news, and repeating the message from the twins of which Mrs. Baxendale had spoken. Wilfrid wrote with admirable delicacy and feeling; he forgot himself wholly in her affliction, and only in those simplest words which can still be made the most powerful uttered the tenderness which he hoped might speak some comfort to her heart. He did not ask to see her; would she not bid him come to her in her own good time? And only if her strength rendered it quite easy, he begged for one word of reply. Mrs. Baxendale would visit her again very shortly, and to her the answer could be given.

Emily returned the writings to their envelope, and sat through the day as she had sat since morning, scarcely ever moving, without heed of things that were said or done in the room. Before quitting the chair for her bed, she went to spend a quarter of an hour by her mother, whose hand she held throughout the time. Mrs. Hood lay in the same state of semi-consciousness alternating with sleep. In the night she generally wandered a little. But she did not seem to suffer pain.

To-night Emily could not sleep; hitherto her rest had been profound between sunset and early morning. As she had sat through the day, so she lay now, her eyes fixed in the same intent gaze, as on something unfolding itself before her. When the nurses had ceased to move about, the house was wrapped in a stillness more complete than of old, for the clock had not been touched since the night when the weight fell. In the room you might have heard now and then a deep sigh, such sigh as comes from a soul overcharged.

Mrs. Baxendale allowed one day to intervene, then came again. She did not directly speak of Wilfrid, and only when she sat in significant silence, Emily said:

'To-morrow I shall go downstairs. Will you ask Mr. Athel to come and see me?'

'Gladly I will. At what hour shall he come?'

'I shall be down by eleven.'

Later in the day, Mrs. Cartwright and Jessie called. Hitherto

Emily had begged that no one might be admitted save Mrs. Baxendale ; she felt it would be unkindness to refuse her friends any longer, and the visitors came up and sat for a while with her. Both were awed by the face which met them ; they talked scarcely above a whisper, and were sadly troubled by the necessity of keeping a watch upon their tongues.

Emily was now able to descend the stairs without difficulty. The first sight of the little parlour cost her a renewal of her keenest suffering. There was the couch on which his dead body had been placed ; that the chair in which he always rested after tea before going up to the laboratory ; in a little frame on the mantelpiece was his likeness, an old one and much faded. She moved about, laying her hand on this object and that ; she took the seat by the window where she had waited each evening, till she saw him at the gate, to rise at once and open to him. She had not shed tears since that last day of his life, and now it was only a passing mist that dimmed her eyes. Her sorrow was not of the kind which so relieves itself.

She had come down early, in order to spend some time in the room before Wilfrid's arrival. She sat in her father's chair, once more in the attitude of motionless brooding. But her countenance was not as self-controlled as during the past days ; emotions, struggles, at work within her found their outward expression. At times she breathed quickly, as if in pain ; often her eyes closed. In her worn face, the features marked themselves with strong significance ; it was beauty of a kind only to be felt by a soul in sympathy with her own. To others she would have appeared the image of stern woe. The gentleness which had been so readily observable beneath her habitual gravity was absorbed in the severity of her suffering and spiritual conflicts ; only a touching suggestion of endurance, of weakness bearing up against terrible fatality, made its plea to tenderness. Withal, she looked no older than in the days of her happiness ; a young life, a young heart, smitten with unutterable woe.

When the sound of the opening gate made itself heard, she lay back for a moment in the very sickness of pain ; it recalled the past so vividly, and chilled her heart with the fear of what she had now before her. She stood, as soon as the knock came at the front door, and kept the same position as Wilfrid entered.

He was startled at the sight of her, but in an instant was holding both her hands, gazing deep into her eyes with an ecstasy

of tenderness. He kissed her lips, and, as he did so, felt a shudder in the hands he pressed. A few whispered words were all that he could speak; Emily kept silence. Then he sat near to her; her hand was still in his, but gave no sign of responsive affection, and was very cold.

'It was kind to let me see you so soon,' he said. Her fixed look of hard suffering began to impress him painfully, even with a kind of fear. Emily's face at this moment was that of one who is only half sensible to words spoken. Now she herself spoke for the first time.

'You will forgive me that I did not write. It would have been better, perhaps; it would have been easier to me. Yet why should I fear to say to you, face to face, what I have to say?'

The last sentence was like self-questioning uttered aloud; her eyes were fixed on him, and with appeal which searched his heart.

'Fear to say to me?' Wilfrid repeated, gravely, though without apprehension. 'Has your suffering made strangers of us?'

'Not in the way you mean, but it has so changed my life that I cannot meet you as I should have done.' Her utterance quickened; her voice lost its steadiness. 'Will you be very generous to me—as good and noble as it is in your heart to be? I ask you to give me back my promise—to release me.'

'Emily!'

He gazed at her in bewilderment. His thought was that she was not herself; her manner since his entrance seemed to confirm it; the tortured lines of her face seemed to express illusory fears.

'Emily! Do you know what you say, dearest?'

'Yes; I know what I say, and I know how hard you find it to believe me. If I could explain to you what it is that makes this change, you would not wonder at it, you would understand, you would see that I am doing the only thing I can do. But I cannot give you my reasons; that must be my sad secret to the end of my life. You feel you have a claim to hear the truth; indeed, indeed, you have; but you will be forbearing and generous. Release me, Wilfrid; I ask it as the last and greatest proof of the love you gave me.'

He rose with a gesture of desperation.

'Emily, I cannot bear this! You are ill, my own darling; I should have waited till you were stronger. I should have left

you more time to turn your thoughts to me from these terrible things you have passed through.' He flung himself by her side, grasping her hands passionately. 'Dear one, how you have suffered! It kills me to look into your face. I won't speak; let me only stay by you, like this, for a few minutes. Will not my love calm you—love the purest and tenderest that man ever felt? I would die to heal your heart of its grief!'

With a great sob of uttermost anguish, she put back his hands, rose from the chair, and stood apart. Wilfrid rose and gazed at her in dread. Had the last calamity of human nature fallen upon her? He looked about, as if for aid. Emily read his thoughts perfectly; they helped her to a desperate composure.

'Wilfrid,' she said, 'do I speak like one not in her perfect mind?'

'I cannot say. Your words are meaningless to me. You are not the Emily I knew.'

'I am not,' was her sad answer. 'If you can bring yourself to believe that truth, you will spare yourself and me.'

'What do you mean when you say that?' he asked, his voice intensified in suppression. 'If you are in full command of yourself, if your memory holds all the past, what can have made of you another being? We dare not play with words at a time such as this. Tell me at least one thing. Do I know what it was that caused your illness?'

'I don't understand you.'

Her eyes examined him with fear.

'I mean, Emily—was it solely due to that shock you received? Or was there any previous distress?'

'Has anything led you to think there was?' she asked, urgently.

'Mrs. Baxendale tells me you——Emily, why have I to pain you in this way?'

'But tell me—tell me! What did she say?'

'That on coming to yourself you did not know of your father's death.'

'It is true; I did not. My illness began before.'

Wilfrid stood with his eyes on the ground.

'Tell me, again,' she said. 'What else did Mrs. Baxendale say?'

'Nothing. Her surprise when she heard this from your mother was as great as mine when it was repeated to me.'

‘It is true,’ Emily repeated, more calmly, as if relieved. ‘I don’t try to conceal that there is a reason I may not speak of. Will you not believe that it is strong enough to change my life? If I did not tell you this, you might indeed refuse to listen to me, thinking I was not myself. I cannot tell you more—I cannot, I cannot!’

She pressed her palms upon her forehead; it throbbed with pain scarcely to be borne. Wilfrid, after a moment of wretched hesitation, said gravely:

‘What *you* forbid me to ask, I may not even wish to know. I have come to regard your will as the seal upon everything that is true and right. Knowing this, seeing me here before you with my best hopes at stake, do you tell me that something has happened which makes the bond between us of no effect, which lays upon you a duty superior to that of the pledge you gave me?’

She met his gaze, and answered firmly, ‘I do.’

‘Some duty,’ he continued, with quivering voice, ‘compared with which the sacredness of our love is nothing?’

She trembled from head to foot; then, as if clutching at a last help, said:

‘I do not love you.’

And she waited with her head bowed. Wilfrid, taking up his hat, went to her and offered his hand. When hers was given:

‘Raise your eyes and look at me, Emily.’

She did so.

‘You are still in the shadow of a great grief, and it may well be that all other things seem trivial. I wish to respect you to the uttermost, and I will try to conceive that there is a motive high enough to justify you. But those last words must be repeated—when time has come to your aid—before I can regard them as final.’

He released her hand, and left her. . . .

What was her first sensation, when the door had closed, then the gate without, and Wilfrid in very deed was gone? Was it hopeless misery, failure, dread foresight of the life which she still must live? Rather her mood was that of the martyr who has held firm to the last wrench of torture, who feels that agony is overcome and fear of self surpassed. This possibility had there ever been in Emily, though associating with such variant instincts. Circumstances had brought the occasion which weighed one part of her nature against the other, and with this result.

You may not judge her coldly; yet it is possible to indicate those points which connect her enthusiasm of sacrifice with the reasonings and emotions of the impartial mind. In the moment that she heard of her father's self-destruction, she knew that her own destiny was cast; the struggle with desire, with arguments of her self-love, with claims of others, this also she foresaw and measured. Her resolve came of the interaction of intense feeling, feeling which only process of time could reduce from its morbid predominance, and that idealism which was the keynote of her personality. It was not that she condemned herself for having refused to pay the price which would have saved her father; she may have done so in her wildest paroxysms of grief, but in the silences which ensued she knew that there is an arbiter above natural affection, and that not with impunity could a life be purchased by the death of a soul. She had refused; it might be she would still have refused had she foreseen the worst; but could she move on over her father's body to a life of joy? Not only did piety forbid it; the compassionate voice of her heart cried against what she deemed such cruelty. Her father was dead; nothing that she did henceforth would concern him for good or ill; none the less in her eyes was his claim upon her, the claim of one she had tenderly loved calling to her for pity from that desolate grave. Which of us entirely out-reasons that surviving claim of the beloved dead? Which of us would, in his purest hour, desire to do so? She could not save him, but, as she valued her most precious human privileges, she dared not taste the fruits of life of which he was for ever robbed. Between her and happiness loomed that agonising face. She might disregard it, might close her eyes and press on, might live down the old sacred pity and give herself to absorbing bliss: what would be the true value of that she gained? Nay, it was idle to affect that she had the choice. She felt that the first memory of that face in the midst of enjoyment would break her heart. Those last dark hours of his she must live and relive in her own mind. Dead? He was dead? Oh, did not the very tones of his voice linger in the rooms where she sat? Could she not see him enter, hold to her his hand, bend and kiss her? Did she not fancy constantly that his foot sounded on the floor above her, up in the bare little room, where she had parted from him unkindly? Why, death meant but little, for at any moment he was in truth standing by her. Years of unhappiness, and then to be put aside and forgotten as soon as

the heavy clods of earth had fallen upon him? To think of that was to be driven almost to madness by the impotence of grief. Rather than allow a joy to tempt her thought, she would cast life from her and be his companion in that narrow home.

And her character brought it about that the very strength of her love for Wilfrid acted as another impulse to renunciation. Which had been the stronger motive in her refusal to sacrifice herself—the preservation of her chaste womanhood, or the inability to give up him she loved? Could she, at the tribunal of her conscience, affirm that her decision had held no mixture of the less pure? Nay, had she not known that revolt of self in which she had maintained that the individual love was supreme, that no title of inferiority became it? She saw now more clearly than then the impossibility of distinguishing those two motives, or of weighing the higher and the lower elements of her love. One way there was, and one way only, of proving to herself that she had not fallen below the worthiness which purest love demanded, that she had indeed offered to Wilfrid a soul whose life was chastity—and that must be utterly to renounce love's earthly reward, and in spirit to be faithful to him while her life lasted. The pain of such renunciation was twofold, for did she not visit him with equal affliction? Had she the right to do that? The question was importunate, and she held it a temptation of her weaker self. Wilfrid would bear with her. He was of noble nature, and her mere assurance of a supreme duty would outweigh his personal suffering. On him lay no obligation of faithfulness to his first love; a man, with the world before him, he would, as was right, find another to share his life. To think that was no light test of steadfastness in Emily; the image of Wilfrid loving and loved by another woman wrung the sinews of her heart. That she must keep from her mind; that was more than her strength could face and conquer. It should be enough to love him for ever, without hope, without desire. Faithfulness would cost her no effort; to purify herself in ideal devotion would be her sustenance, her solace.

What of her religion of beauty, the faith which had seen its end in the nourishment of every instinct demanding loveliness within and without? What of the ideal which saw the crown of life in passion triumphant, which dreaded imperfectness, which allowed the claims of sense equally with those of spirit, both having their indispensable part in the complete existence? Had

it not conspicuously failed where religion should be most efficient? She understood now the timidity which had ever lurked behind her acceptance of that view of life. She had never been able entirely to divest herself of the feeling that her exaltation in beauty-worship was a mood born of sunny days, that it would fail amid shocks of misfortune and prove a mockery in the hour of the soul's dire need. It shared in the unreality of her life in wealthy houses, amid the luxury which appertained only to fortune's favourites, which surrounded her only by chance. She had presumptuously taken to herself the religion of her superiors, of those to whom fate allowed the assurance of peace, of guarded leisure wherein to cultivate the richer and sweeter flowers of their nature. How artificial had been the delights with which she soothed herself! Here, all the time, was the reality; here in this poor home, brooded over by the curse of poverty, whence should come shame and woe and death. What to her now were the elegance of art, the loveliness of nature? Beauty had been touched by mortality, and its hues were of the corpse, of the grave. Would the music of a verse ever again fill her with rapture? How meaningless were all such toys of thought to one whose path lay through the valley of desolation!

Thus did Emily think and feel in this sombre season, the passionate force of her imagination making itself the law of life and the arbiter of her destiny. She could not take counsel with time; her temperament knew nothing of that compromise with ardours and impulses which is the wisdom of disillusion. Circumstances willed that she should suffer by the nobleness of her instincts; those endowments which might in a happier lot have exalted her to such perfection of calm joy as humanity may attain, were fated to be the source of misery inconceivable by natures less finely cast.

(To be continued.)

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CHAPTER I.

LADY WINDYGATES'S INSTRUCTIONS TO BRAEHEAD.

‘AND, Braehead, you'll see that young Windygates gets into no ill company. It is one thing to have his manners improved, and another to have his morals corrupted. It is one thing for him to acquire the last French polish, and another for an innocent lad to be introduced to French vices.’

‘I am not so sure that there is a great odds,’ said a gentleman who was not the person to whom the instructions were addressed.

The place was the white wainscoted parlour, with its evidences of gentility in satin-wood chairs and a jingling spinnet, in the country-house of Windygates.

The first speaker was Mrs. Wedderburn of Windygates, or, as she was best known to herself and her contemporaries, ‘Lady Windygates,’ the influential wife of the laird of a good estate in the south of Scotland, a century and a half ago, in round numbers.

The audience consisted of two persons. The one was Windygates, who did not see ‘a great odds’ between the improvement of manners and the corruption of morals. He was a ‘personable,’ middle-aged man, in his long-waisted coat, laced vest, and knee-breeches. He was well known to his own and succeeding generations as a man of active habits, a great planter of wood, rearer of cattle, spearer of trout, shooter of hares and partridges, drinker of toasts after meetings of the Justices and election gatherings. But he was a man of far less social weight than Lady Windygates, in

her well-preserved 'mode' gown and tippet, lace 'head,' and ruffles, was a woman.

The second listener, and the one to whom Lady Windygates spoke particularly, was a kinsman of the head of the house, Wedderburn of Braehead, a bachelor in the prime of life, of independent means—in all those respects likely to be useful to the elder branch of his family.

Braehead had disputed many a proposition in his day—indeed, the mere assertion of a proposition was often enough to rouse the latent opposition of a man hard-headed, logical to the last degree, cool, with a slow-blooded coolness, and good-natured, with the imperturbable good nature bred of a complacent sense that his neighbours were idiots and wisdom dwelt with him. His philosophy was so perfect and unassailable on all sides that it had gauged heaven and earth, discovered their secrets, and brought them within the bounds of his reason. Such a man could afford to be hated by his more impassioned, enthusiastic, devout countrymen and women with a blind hatred, and abused with an abuse wide of the mark. For he was as thick-skinned as his vision was clear and cutting like a diamond, so far as it went; he was as deficient in sympathy as he was destitute of imagination, and, as a natural consequence of reverence, clever without idealism—a materialist to the core.

But there was one obligation which Robbie Wedderburn of Braehead never denied, and that was the allegiance he owed to Windygates. Feudal rights still asserted their lingering sway over the man who had renounced the worship of a God, in whose existence he declined to believe without sensible proofs; who had no further feeling for a king than that to be entertained for a prominent figure in a nation's history, raised to prominence by extremely natural causes—namely, the folly and superstition which ruled the mass of mankind. This glaring inconsistency in Braehead was matched by another incongruity. He was not only good-natured; he was kind-hearted, in a constitutional, shame-faced way, of which his relations and neighbours reaped the benefit. They did not hesitate to reap it, though they inveighed against his heretical opinions in religion and politics, and regarded him as theologically in a very bad way. They made use of him without scruple, while they called him 'that poor heathen Braehead.' They did not content themselves with cherishing a sneaking kindness for him; they confidently entrusted him with

delicate commissions, which he discharged, if not to their entire satisfaction, certainly to the best of his ability.

Braehead was a very different man in physique from his cousin and friend Windygatès. Windygatès was a strapping long-limbed man. He had led a wholesome, open-air life, full of hard exercise. His colour was fresh, his blue eyes were keen, and he was not cumbered with more flesh than he could easily dispose of, though, in this respect, Lady Windygatès outdid him, as she surpassed him in many things. She had been a beauty in her youth, but always on a small scale. She was now as lean as a well-bred, but undersized, greyhound. The effect produced by her presence, which was worthy of remark, arose from the dauntless spirit and determination of the woman that had worn thin the tabernacle which contained them.

But no amount of shrewd, daring speculation had wasted the superfluity of solid bulk with which Braehead was endowed. He was not far above the middle size in height, but he made up in breadth for what he lacked in height. He was a temperate man both in eating and drinking, as became his strong sense, but the sedentary habits in which he indulged had early developed and maintained a comfortable-looking amount of corpulence, which no mental conflict, no poignant regret for the creed learnt at his mother's knee, and the Christian's heaven on which he turned his back, had served to diminish. His rearing and his descent from sport-loving country lairds had doubtless done something to restrain the tendency before it reached an unwieldy, oppressive climax. From the same cause, probably, his full, beardless face, with its double chin, was pleasantly rosy, instead of sallowed o'er with the pale cast of thought. The absence of sunburn on his round cheeks and plump hands was the chief indication of a student who, when he was at home, sat more in his book-room, where he wrote as well as read, from which he spread abroad the tenets of a new gospel, than traversed his fields or climbed and descended the brae on the top of which stood his narrow, steep-roofed, white house, in its small grounds surrounded with gnarled fir-trees.

Braehead's plain brown suit and cambric cravat seemed to set off his stoutness and rosiness. Withal there was a certain clumsy dignity about the man born of the courage of his opinions, and of the fact that he had opinions to be courageous about. There was also something comical in the blooming bountifulness of aspect, the placid, well-nigh benign, outward well-being of the individual

who, beyond his kindred and personal friends, was either ardently admired and eagerly followed as an apostle of enlightenment and civilisation, or heartily detested and profoundly dreaded as one of the scourges of a backsliding country and an atheistical age.

The commission with which Lady Windygates was about to entrust Braehead was so serious and important a charge that one wondered how a lady who was so orthodox in her generation and so dogmatical in her orthodoxy could have ventured on running such a risk, but she was fortified and confirmed in her purpose by several weighty arguments. She had a large reliance on Robbie Wedderburn's honour as a gentleman and a Wedderburn, which should prevent his interfering with and damaging her work. She had a still greater faith in the excellence of the work itself, so that it might be held sufficient to defy danger. Lastly, she had no choice unless that of resigning a cherished plan. If she did not avail herself of Braehead, she had nobody else to fall back upon in order to carry out her scheme.

The great occasion was that of sending away young Windygates—not on a campaign in the Low Countries, for which Braehead would have been an utterly unsuitable Mentor; not on the grand tour, which would have implied too heavy expenses for Windygates to sanction, and too prolonged an association with an avowed Freethinker for even the most dutiful lad, the best instructed in the Shorter Catechism, the most guiltless of doubt, to sustain without injury. The proposal meant merely a few months' stay in Paris, where there was the finest Court, the grandest manners, and the latest fashions, in order that young Windygates might get rid of what was rustic and homespun in his tone and bearing, and come back the finished gentleman no less than the good Christian and sound Calvinist his mother desired him to be. She could not rest, poor soul, with his being an honest lad or a smart young fellow; he must be a mirror of distinction to the whole waterside.

Lady Windygates never dreamt of accompanying her son herself; none of the ladies up or down the Deer Water went farther than to Edinburgh, or, in rare instances, to London, to be presented to King George and Queen Caroline and see the playhouses—if the visitors' principles did not interfere with their enjoyment of the spectacle. She was too clever a woman to wish to tie her son to her apron-strings, though she liked to exercise her influence in putting the finishing touch to his education.

Windygates had not visited France, though he had been across the borders in his youth, and he had no inclination to repair to foreign parts in his middle age. For that matter he did not greatly approve of his son and heir, his only child into the bargain, going abroad and spending good money needlessly in order to get into unknown scrapes, and all with the unsatisfactory result in view that he might be licked into a French fop instead of kept a manly Scotch laird. At present young Allan was as fair a judge of trees, corn, and cattle, as good a shot, as dexterous a spearsman of salmon, and, at the same time, as clever with the rod and reel, as first-rate a football player, as nimble a dancer, as frank and truth-speaking a lad, as a pleased father could wish to see. What was to become of all these honourable attainments in Paris (as Windygates had heard of the city)? he asked himself ruefully. What practice could the French capital afford for what were equally the duties and delights of a Scotch laird's life? The lad would be clean spoilt. He would lose all his natural gifts, and gain worse than nothing to make up for the loss.

It was not so long ago, quite within Windygates's remembrance, that honest folk, who were sometimes of his own sturdy Whig opinions, and sometimes held the very opposite political creed, had to travel, just as the wind blew, whether they liked it or not, and bide in Holland or France, when the poor bodies were sighing sorely for the caller air and the rushing water, the bear and the oats, the saughs and the whins, and the heathery knowes of auld Scotland. Why should a birkie who had not to go whether he would or not, and could not tell what lay before him, quit the country of his own free will, or rather—for the young chap had little will in the matter—to satisfy the idle whim of a woman? She was his mother, and had been a good mother—Windygates would not deny that—and a good wife into the bargain. Windygates was far too just and generous to 'smother' Lady Windygates's honour, though he did hold her a little high-headed and masterful, like the rest of her kind—especially like a large proportion of the lairds' ladies up and down the Water; yet, when all was said, she was but a woman, full of a woman's fykes and flings about manners and fashions, as well as about the duty of attendance at the kirk and the impropriety of spending money in change-houses where he was in question, and the evils of Dalbeath Fair where the whole household were concerned.

But Windygates was too indolent mentally as a balance to his

bodily activity, and too much accustomed to allow Lady Windygates to decide what was good for the family, to interfere even for the boy's sake. His mother had looked after him hitherto in everything except what might be called—though it was not so termed then—his muscular development, and it did not occur to Windygates to deprive her of her authority at this hour of the day. Besides, young Allan was not without relish for the expedition, with its promise of novelty and adventure.

If his son was to go, Windygates was well content that it should be under the escort of Braehead. Not that the head of the house had the smallest sympathy with his cousin Robbie's heresies, but he had an immense faith in his kinsman's pawkiness as a man of the world, while he shared Lady Windygates's confidence in his fidelity to his mission. The last was in spite of the fact that the lady would have for many things preferred the parish minister, who had been her son's tutor, to be his guide among the pitfalls of Popery and infidelity. But the Rev. Andrew Brydone had a wife and a family as well as his parish of Deerholms to detain him at home; and it was candidly admitted by his greatest admirers that, though he might have successfully conducted a controversy with the Pope of Rome himself, the Rev. Andrew was not much more capable of keeping the contents of a purse of louis-d'ors together, and piloting his former pupil through the custom-house, the diligences, the inns, and the shops, not to say the brilliant society of Paris, than the last baby in the Manse cradle could have accomplished the task. So Lady Windygates consented to accept Braehead as a travelling tutor whose expenses were to be paid; and Braehead, who was a prudent man in money matters, caught at the chance of visiting Paris again without cost, and renewing his acquaintance with the Encyclopædists, for whom he entertained a genuine fellow-feeling and half-patronising regard—his nearest approach to reverence.

'There is another thing I have to say to you, Braehead,' said Lady Windygates oracularly, 'and mind I am putting you on your mettle here—you're to keep your profane notions to yourself. There is to be no tampering with my son's religion. You're to put no maggots of sinful doubt and presumptuous questioning into young Allan's head, or not a foot does he stir from this door in your company.'

'I'll comply with your conditions, madam,' said Braehead, in no way offended, but turning aside his head to conceal the smile

which flickered over his big, florid, hairless face. 'The truth will work its way all the same.'

'Hear to him,' cried the lady indignantly; 'as if he knew the truth any more than Pontius Pilate. As if the Lord could not take care of divine truth without the like of him! But you'll not tar young Allan with the same stick.'

'No frights, madam,' answered Robbie composedly, yet with the tendency to a grin still lurking about his substantial sagacious face, whose sagacity was only marred by its strong dash of conceit. 'To doubt or to question,' he explained deliberately, 'implies some thought on the subject in hand. Now I've yet to learn that the callant has any thought—that is, any to spare from his breeks and his shoe-buckles, his horse, and the tyke at his heels; least of all,' added Braehead, with a *soupeçon* of malice, 'from the young lass for whom he bought a ribbon or a pair of mittens at Dalbeath Fair the other week.'

'What do you mean, Robbie Wedderburn?' cried Lady Windygates, with a gasp of indignation and alarm. 'I know of no young lass and no token that my son Allan bought her at the fair, which I should have been the first to hear of, had there been any such gallivanting going on. And I would have you to acknowledge that my Allan, young Windygates, is as intelligent a youth as is to be found in this part of the world.'

'I never disputed it,' said Braehead, totally unmoved by her heat; 'as for the lass and the ribbon or the mittens,' he went on demurely, 'I only employed them as figures of speech.'

'Then I would have you keep such figures to yourself, or for them that may like them,' said the lady sharply. The next moment she softened a little. 'You do not understand, sir. Ah! Braehead, if you had been a mother with an only bairn, you would have seen most things in a different light.'

'God forbid,' said the man, who did not believe in the significance of the word he used.

'You're a hardened auld sinner,' cried Lady Windygates, shaking her lace 'head,' and speaking in the tone of a woman who derives some subtle satisfaction, nay amusement, from the painful truth thus unceremoniously proclaimed.

'Nevertheless, madam,' said Braehead, as complacently imperturbable as ever, 'I'll do your behests to the best of my ability—I'll bring your laddie back as raw and prejudiced in his notions, and as unharmed in his behaviour, as I can manage it. I'm glad

to think, for the credit of a Wedderburn and a Calderwood' (quoting her maiden name), 'that young Allan is not a coof; but he is innocent enough for his sex and years, and his innocence shall not be defiled in my care if I can help it.'

'Aye, Robbie, to give the De'il his due, you've lived as cannily as your neighbours—not even your worst enemies can blacken you there,' said Windygates, once more breaking his silence; 'whether it has been for lack of temptation or from superior sobriety and decency, you yourself can best tell.'

'You had better give me the benefit of the doubt,' said Braehead drily.

'If it had been otherwise,' continued Windygates, beginning to walk up and down the room, 'I do not say what the lad's mother might have done, as she is here to answer for herself, but I can tell you I for one would have put down my foot on this haver of a visit to Paris. Even as it is, I think it would be more to the purpose to speak of your guarding a fellow of his years and condition from dicing and brawling like a young spendthrift and bully, and from wanton and wicked courses generally, than of protecting him from heresies that will go in at the one lug and come out at the other, since he is neither of an age nor of a turn to pay heed to them.'

'I flatter myself my son's virtue and discretion will stand the test,' said Lady Windygates loftily.

'Keep the woman!' Braehead relieved himself by a private unspoken protest. 'Is he *her* son any more than his father's, and has she taken out an exemption from error in his name? The fule woman, it will be a wonder to me if she is not brought to her senses without any fault of mine.'

'There are other safeguards,' said Lady Windygates, innocently unsuspecting of Braehead's reflections, 'though, of course, they are not to be mentioned in the same breath with a godly upbringing and the grace which is promised in such a case. The Countess of Lathones, who was three years in France with her man when he was in trouble about the last rising, has given young Allan a letter of introduction to one of the first families among the French quality. She was on terms of intimacy with the Duchesse de Châlons and her family. Some of them visited the Lathones at Queensmuir a year or two since. It was the year that we were not going into company, because of the death of Windygates's worthy mother, or I would have met them; and I would have seen them at the kirk, had it not happened that, being Romanists,

of course they did not go to the kirk. I need not say the Châlons command the entrance to the French Court at all times.' Lady Windygates, though she was a well-born woman, was not above referring to the Châlons and their Court favour with a mixture of pomposity and exultation, as of one who would say, 'Who can match that? What other laird's son in the neighbourhood can boast such an advantage as I have secured for young Windygates?'

'I fail to see what help that will be to Allan's measure of propriety, not to say of integrity,' Braehead was considering sardonically in his own mind; 'his most Christian Majesty is a disreputable old scoundrel if all tales be true, and very likely these Châlons are as brazen-faced and depraved a crew as he has about him. However, ignorance may be bliss here, and I need not try to dispel it. I'll get no thanks for my pains. I've been already forbidden to speak my mind.'

'It may be as well to let you know also,' continued Lady Windygates in her dogmatic way, which there was no contradicting, 'that I do not, and neither does Windygates there, I am sure,' she added, as if by a courteous afterthought, 'contemplate the possibility of any alliance between us and the Châlons, or other members of their circle, such as has been occasionally entered into between the Scotch and French nobility and gentry. It would not do on any account. We could not entertain it for a moment. The young lady's French origin and upbringing, together with her being a Papist, would utterly prevent it. Besides, I may tell you young Allan is as good as troth-plighted to my cousin Maisie Hunter of the Haughs.'

'It is the first word that I ever heard of it; I'm the lassie's principal guardian!' exclaimed Windygates, suddenly coming to a halt in his walk, sitting down on the most fragile of the satin-wood chairs, leaning back, and swinging himself to and fro.

'Look what you are about, Windygates,' his wife called him to order; 'my parlour chairs are not seats to jow upon like the big, clumsy, carved things in the dining-room and in your closet. And, now that you have heard that there is a prospect of marriage between Allan and Maisie Hunter, what have you to say against it?' she asked with discomfiting briskness.

'I have nothing to say against it,' admitted the laird, scratching his head, after he had recovered from the shock of so instant and direct a challenge. 'If the lad and the lass are willing when the time comes, I'll not stand between them. The Haughs is a

nice place, with a fine lie to the sun, grand for grazing purposes, though it does not match with Windygates.' He had found his tongue in the support of an idea far from displeasing to him, which had probably passed through his own mind ere now. 'Davie Hunter, come of the Polmood Hunters, was one of my oldest friends. Maisie is his sole representative, as Allan will be mine, and she is a fine lassie, well-favoured, with good parts and good principles. Her old Auntie Peggy has not cheated her of an excellent education both at home and in Edinburgh. But had you not better wait and see whether the pair incline that way before you settle matters for them?' the speaker caught himself up cautiously.

'Allan is barely of age, and Maisie Hunter is not out of her teens,' Windygates began again; 'if I recollect rightly the date of the funeral of her mother, who died at the bairn's birth. It was the snowy year, when so many sheep were smothered in the drift in Cairnie Cleugh. Mrs. Hunter's funeral had to be put off three or four days to let us get through to the old kirkyard at Kirkbeath, where he had a maggot that she should lie among his kin.'

'Well, I had nothing to do with the poor woman's funeral, and you may leave the sorting of my son and her daughter's marriage to me,' said Lady Windygates with dauntless confidence. 'It will be a capital down-sitting for Maisie, and I'm not sure but that young Windygates might do worse. I'm not speaking merely with respect to the estate, for nobody can say that I'm dead set on this world's goods, though the Haughs is a nice place, as you say, laird, and it is no more than fair that our son, who will get all we have, should claim a good tocher with his wife. But, apart from her bawbees, my cousin Maisie is not only a very bonnie lassie,' insisted Lady Windygates, ringing the changes on the much-thought-of damsel's attractions, 'she's just an uncommonly bright, sensible young creature, to whom I've taken a great fancy.'

'I should say it would be more to the purpose if it were young Windygates who had taken a fancy to the young lady,' Braehead took it upon him to hint—a hint to which Lady Windygates did not deign to reply. 'But, no doubt, madam, you do not speak without authority,' Braehead made the amendment, 'and I've to thank you for a piece of information that, as it lets me know what your plans are for my young cousin, will make me all the more alive to any danger of their being circumvented which I may be able to detect and ward off.'

‘Thanks to you, Braehead, there is no danger,’ said Lady Windygates composedly; ‘my Allan knows better than to entangle himself in strange, forbidden bonds, when there is something so much better worth having in every way awaiting his home-coming.’

Lady Windygates had arrived at the end of her instructions at last. Braehead was at liberty to pursue his cogitations as he strode down the hill, striking into a by-path through the fields, which led up again to Braehead. ‘It is odd,’ pondered the philosopher, ‘how like draws to like, and the same types reproduce themselves perpetually. Maisie Hunter of the Haughs is a younger edition of Ann, Lady Windygates, as she was at the time of her marriage. If two of a trade never agree, and the dowager lady survive her gude man and be spared to ripe old age, we need not look for much peace in the next reign at Windygates. There is not a more striking likeness between the father and the son, Windygates and young Windygates, though that is what one would naturally look for, than there is between these two women. But, when I come to think of it, there is a wonderful resemblance between man and man and woman and woman in this dead-alive corner. And invariably the women have the best of it. The grey mare is the better horse in the yoking. The fighting and the farming, the electioneering speeches and political riots, the keeping down of the game, big and small, the sitting over the bottle, may be safely left to the men—the ladies will not dispute their husbands’ and sons’ superiority in these lines—and it is a proof that the women are but simpletons after all, since they will look up to the men as so many Solomons where this superiority is concerned. But let it come to the management of a household, to looking after a family exchequer, to sending out sons and daughters into the world and settling them in life, and there would be a fine kettle of fish without the women. I’ve never put my head under the yoke, and never will, but I can see the truth well enough. I am not altogether clear if it is a peculiarity of the families on this waterside, or if it hold good throughout the nation, throughout humanity. Anyway, it would take my ten fingers to check off the lairds’ ladies and farmers’ wives in this parish and the next who are as clever hizzies and as good hands at ruling the roost in their different departments as Lady Windygates has shown herself in hers. Their name and fame will never die, for there is a younger generation, among

whom I'm safe to say is the heiress of the Haughs, growing up to take their place. Young Allan, you had better look to yourself, for you'll not be out of your mother's clutches before you'll be in your wife's, as your father has been in his wife's long ere your day. She'll take great care of you, it will all be for your good, you will thank her for it, if you have a heart of grace, every hour you live. At the same time, my fine lad,' finished Braehead, with a hitch of his obstinate bachelor shoulders and a twitch of his contumacious, yet ludicrously mild lips, 'you'll not call your soul your own without Madam's permission.'

CHAPTER II.

AN OLD FRENCH HÔTEL AND ITS OCCUPANTS.

BRAEHEAD and young Windygates had arrived in Paris—the older Paris, of which there are only scattered fragments to-day. It was the city of great family hotels, in their green courts and gardens within their walls and gates; of ancient battlemented palaces akin to fortresses, destined to be prisons crowded with strange prisoners before their part was played out; of numerous noble churches and religious houses, which, in spite of the Encyclopædists, survived to be gutted out in order to form halls for the assemblies, not of the learned, but of the brutally ignorant, the people's representatives, and their masters and mistresses for the time, the fierce rabble of the streets, the shrieking chafferers of the *halles*. It was the Paris of narrow filthy trottoirs and lamps swinging midway across them; of tall, crowded shops, and inconvenient corner quays, by which market boats and rowing boats jostled each other for places. Gilt coaches drove along, carrying superb gentlemen in velvet coats and lace ruffles, and exquisite ladies in brocades and plumes of feathers. Frocked monks, as well as priests in their *soutanes*, picked their steps in the *mêlée* among sharp-eyed workmen in out-at-elbow blouses and women with ragged skirts and pinched faces, dragging along children more meagre than themselves. The twin towers of Notre Dame looked down in solemn serenity on it all, and the clustered towers of the Bastille frowned grimly, for did not they mark the giant prison, with its wall within wall and labyrinths of cells, like a mighty spider's web, to which a King's Letter might send the most unsus-

pecting citizen on an hour's notice, from which only the most tedious and one-sided of trials or another King's Letter could bring him back again?

Young Windygates was excited and delighted with what he saw, for everything was novel and striking to him. Braehead had seen it all before, besides getting peeps behind the scenes, which caused him to have his doubts—as he said, with national and individual caution—and to shake his big head in its somewhat diminutive wig.

The travellers put up at an inn familiar to Braehead, where he interpreted for his young friend, whom he kept carefully under his eye. Indeed, as Allan, in spite of the Rev. Andrew Brydone's extensive erudition, which he had made the most conscientious efforts to transmit to his pupil, could not speak a word to foreign humanity which foreign humanity could understand, though he could address horses, cattle, dogs, and sheep with a perfect mastery of the vocabulary invented for their benefit, he was of necessity tied to his kinsman. The younger man did not at first care to stray far beyond the sound of the voice which interpreted all his wants, whether of meat and drink or of purely mental aliment.

Braehead vindicated the trust reposed in him by doing his duty to young Windygates in the beginning as precisely as if the bear leader had been an elder of the kirk, and not next door to a heathen. He showed the lad the sights—the public buildings, the statues—especially that of Louis XIV. in the Place Vendôme, and that of Louis XV. ('Vice, riding on horseback') in the Place Louis Quinze; the quays, the squares, the gardens. Braehead even sat out and yawned through an opera to gratify young Allan. His guardian ventured so far as to take the lad to one of the meetings of a learned society, secure that, in young Windygates's ignorance of the language, he could pick up no audacious theory, catch no sneering epigram, which might endanger the perfect soundness of his creed. For that matter, poor stupid Allan was profoundly weary of the bony and grimacing metaphysicians and mathematicians with whom his companion was hand-in-glove. What the young man called their gibberish was doubly incomprehensible to him; and, though it might be an honour, as he was ready to admit—for he was ingenuous and modest, not brutally self-sufficient and arrogant—for him merely to look on their eager, ugly, yellow faces, he could have desired that the honour were abridged, or bestowed on a worthier recipient. He was tempted to wish himself back at Windygates, practising his flageolet, playing a game of bowls with

his father and a visitor, reading a page or two of the 'Annual Register' or the 'Scot's Magazine' to his mother, going out with Muirland Willie the game-keeper to have a shot at a wild cat, setting off for some gathering of young folk at a house-warming or harvest-home where he would dance till break of day.

It was a good deal better for young Windygates when the pair delivered their letter of introduction from Lady Lathones to the Duchess de Châlons. There they were detained first in the *porte cochère*, and afterwards in an ante-chamber, where a page in the Châlons livery took their open sesame and disappeared with it. Even when the page returned the sole result for the moment was that Madame the Duchess did not receive at that hour, and that she would communicate with them by a messenger—a beginning which was a little like a satire on French politeness. But Allan was decidedly impressionable through his senses as well as his heart. He walked away fascinated by the pictures, the tapestry, the mirrors, the gilt and carved furniture, the sweet scent of the flowers through the open window from the summer garden, though the travellers were in the heart of Paris.

And when the morning did come, with a perfumed note from the Duchess, her delay in receiving the strangers and the ceremony in which she was entrenched were amply atoned for. Even in the matter-of-fact rendering of Braehead, who translated the lady's gracious phrases, her response to Lady Lathones's appeal was full and free. She invited the two men whom she had never seen to be with her every evening she received, in order to become acquainted with her family and introduced to her circle. She announced that the Duke, her husband, and the Marquis, her son, would have the felicity of calling on Madame de Lathones's friends. She went so far as to add that she hoped her relations would induce the Scotch gentlemen to quit their inn and become for the rest of their stay in Paris the guests of the Châlons.

'What a kind woman! What an open house the Châlons must keep! Was there ever such hospitality?' demanded Allan warmly.

Braehead cleared his throat and tickled his right ear.

'We must wait on the lady, that is certain,' he said. 'As for the Duke and the Marquis, we'll wait till they call, which may be the day before we leave; or, if the gentlemen turn up sooner, you may depend upon it they will not keep us at home five minutes. However, as we have nothing to do with the fine cattle beyond

inspecting them like the rest of the marvels, and perhaps having them to fall back upon if we have a difficulty about Versailles, or get into any trouble, we may let them and their manners take care of themselves.'

Young Windygates had no objection to this course, since, in spite of Braehead's proving a true prophet with regard to the amount of time and attention which the two French noblemen spared to their Scotch visitors, one of these visitors was inclined to think the manners of his host, and especially of his hostess, the most charming in the world—far before anything he could have imagined.

Both the Duke and Duchess understood a little English, which was a rare accomplishment in that day, before any Anglomania had arisen in France. The origin of the accomplishment was that husband and wife had in their youth been brought into contact with many of the exiles at St. Germain, and that the couple had once visited England in the suite of their Ambassador, and had even made a descent on Scotland in order to renew old acquaintanceships. The smattering of English possessed by the heads of the house of Châlons, and courteously used for the visitors' benefit, was an inestimable advantage to Allan, inasmuch as it enabled his new friends to understand his first blushing and stumbling attempt at patchwork French. They listened to it without the ghost of a smile on their high-bred faces—unless such a frank, gay response to his half-vexed, half-amused, laugh at his tremendous mistakes as was the most successful thing for setting him at ease in all their bland graciousness.

It was of comparatively little consequence that the Marquis de Beauval was far less familiar with English and far less forbearing in following young Windygates's flounders among strangely-sounded vowels and more strangely used idioms than his parents showed themselves, since he was little at the Hôtel de Châlons. He was an officer in a regiment then stationed in Paris, and appeared to live chiefly at his quarters, and to have his own engagements, with an amount of independence of the paternal roof which caused the son of the Scotch laird to open his blue eyes widely.

Even Monsieur the Duke, though he resided in his own hôtel and was present almost every evening at his wife's receptions, so that the pair might have passed as a model French couple, had his apartments in the great rambling building entirely distinct from those of the other members of the family, appropriated to

his own use and frequented by his own company. Young Windygates had a difficulty in realising that the Duke and Duchess held the same relations to each other that were held by Windygates to Lady Windygates, who was at the heels of everything that concerned her husband, down to the length and strength of the points which knotted up his hose and knee-breeches, and the paying of his farrier's bill. When Windygates was within doors—which, to be sure, was seldom save at meal times, after nightfall, and in the worst weather—the couple were bound to be together, or constantly encountering each other. This was for the very good reason that the dining-room and Lady Windygates's parlour were common to both, and not a room in the house was sacred to its owner, be it man or maid, or exempt from tours of inspection, to investigate whether Ritchie or Pate, or Jenny or Ailie, were faithful in his or her office. The Wedderburns were only Scotch lairds of fair position: the Châlons were powerful French noblemen; but the difference between their *ménages* was not merely a difference of rank and state.

Young Allan did not pause to measure the comparative excellence of the two systems. A dim comprehension came to him, however, that the unbroken politeness, even the strain of gallant and witty compliment, that struck him so much in the intercourse of the elderly Duke and Duchess (elderly according to his reckoning), which formed so strong a contrast to his mother's pragmatism laying down of the law and brisk fault-finding, and his father's stolid indifference or gruff retorts, were only possible, in the highly civilised atmosphere of Paris, in a great house like that of the Châlons, in a division of forces and interests polished as steel, and as clear and cutting. That did not prevent the effects being delightful to a newcomer, full of balmy serenity which yet had its piquant elements, for this French race was very quick and bright, never lacking in keenness and cleverness, in lively emotions and desperate passions, with their tragic situations far below the surface, while always preserving the agreeable *convenances*.

Braehead might do what he liked, and he accepted the *carte blanche* quietly; but young Windygates was determined he should avail himself of his *entrée* to the Hôtel de Châlons. He would never fail to be present at Madam's evenings, where she softly made much of him, and helped him to enjoy himself. His mother wished him to have manners, and where was there a better school for learning them than with those friends of the Lathones to whom he had been sent, who deigned to notice and entertain him,

and did it so well and with so little apparent effort that, though he felt a clown in their company, still he was happy?

Braehead smoothed his smooth chin, gave a grunt, and left young Windygates to follow his devices so far as frequenting the Hôtel de Châlons was concerned. As to other resorts, his senior had his thumb on the lad, who mispronounced woefully his small amount of French words, and, though he had known his Cæsar and his Virgil, could no more fall back on Latin as a medium of conversation than he could fall back on Chaldee.

Further, Braehead had ascertained, by discreetly conducted inquiries, that of Madame the Duchess's daughters who were out of their convents the elder had been married a year ago, at the age of thirteen years, though she still resided with her father and mother, because the Comte de Haute-Blois, her husband of nineteen years, was with the army on the frontiers, and the young couple's establishment had yet to be formed. As for the second daughter, she was vowed to the Holy Virgin, and destined to be the future Abbess of Châlons. There was a young widow, a relation of the family, whom they called cousin, who stayed in the hôtel; but Braehead's informant—none other than the Major-domo—made a face when he mentioned Madame Ste. Barbe, and said that she did not count. She was only a poor relation, a hanger-on, with antecedents as smirched as such fine ladies' origins and actions often were, so that she needed the Duke and Duchess's protection, in return for which she entertained them when they wanted entertainment, and served them in various social ways which were open to her; but, as to terms of equality and matrimonial overtures, there was nothing to be feared from her. The Duke was a man of honour, and would not permit such a thing where a visitor, a foreigner, a gentleman introduced by an old friend, was concerned.

Braehead was satisfied that there was nothing at the Hôtel de Châlons which could endanger the interests of Maisie Hunter, of the Haughs, or rather of Lady Windygates's selection of Maisie for her daughter-in-law and successor. Young Windygates was disposed of with tolerable safety when his host and hostess were of the *haute noblesse*, owing some responsibility to members of his country-people, and when play did not run high in their house. Braehead was rather thankful to have his charge off his hands at times. The lad was not a bad lad, but he was like his kind, and there was very little in them, according to Robbie Wedderburn. What did young Allan care for the laws of the universe, or the laws

of nations, the enlightened political economy and the advanced physics, which were so much to Robbie Wedderburn?

The Hôtel de Châlons was a world of wonder to young Windygates, and its inner sanctuary was Madame's room. What would his mother—what would Maisie Hunter—think of its glass and gilding, its parquetted floor and Turkey rugs, its luxurious fauteuils, its great bed in the alcove, its public toilet-table, its dogs and birds and flowers? How would small wizened Lady Windygates in her thrifty gown and tippet and lace hood look beside the tall and stately Duchess in her brocade with her towering *chevelure*? Instead of keeping accounts, spinning fine flax, concocting cordials and medicines, and converting the darning of the household linen into a fine art, the great lady contented herself with occasionally picking out the gold thread from bullion lace, and slowly raising a glittering pile at her side. She fanned herself with languid elegance or fitful fervour, she sniffed at a gold vinaigrette, or took snuff from a snuff-box set in brilliants. All the time she heard everything which passed around her, and guided the conversation unerringly—not stiffly dogmatising, according to Lady Windygates's habit, but exercising an unquestioned supremacy with a tact which was as delicate as it was irresistible. Young Allan was not disloyal to his home and his mother, but that did not prevent him from being dazzled by their opposite.

The Duchess was not handsome according to Scotch notions; if looked at without partiality, when she was silent and still, she was somewhat heavy-looking in her grandiose size, and not all the rouge and powder of the day could altogether hide the sallowness of her complexion, in keeping with the universal sallowness of hue which young Windygates and Braehead encountered in the faces they met on French ground. For the friends had not gone to Normandy, where there are apple cheeks as well as red and white pippins, or to the southern provinces, where the yellow is qualified by brown as in the African marigolds which the damsels of Provence sometimes wear in their dark hair in the *rondes* which the peasants dance on a fête day.

Young Windygates went to the most splendid Court in Europe, and saw a king who, when young, cooked, by fits and starts, in silver pots and pannikins, or took a turn at an embroidery frame, and, when old, was as depraved and cruel a cynic as any heathen Roman emperor of them all. The young man saw the haughty reigning favourite, and the Mesdames, the king's elderly daughters, who under the choice names of 'Rags,' 'Bones,' etc., were the

butts of their far from venerable parent. The honest lad was not particularly edified; not all the dignity of the King's hunt, the stately splendour of the Palace rooms, the glories of the terraced gardens, could compensate for the drawbacks they contained—patent even to a youth of one-and-twenty. But he was struck by the illustrious gatherings which met at the Hôtel de Châlons—the marshals, the abbés, the lieutenants of provinces, the playwrights, the poets, the ladies of the first quality and the most charming attributes, who were the men's contemporaries and their fitting mates. As young Windygates was never likely to cross their paths, and would not be worth reckoning if he did, they were for the most part graciously affable to him, and, as he was a modest unassuming lad, he was pleased by their affability, and grateful for it.

But the undoubted queen of the circle, whom he was proud to know, was his friend Madame the Duchess. Madame, with her grand air, her becoming languor, and her equally becoming vivacity, her swift smiles and frowns, her wide range of glances, her marvellous gestures, was a delightful person to watch. She was the most captivating of patronesses and friends. She would admit young Allan to her *petites entrées*, where only her secretary, confessor, hairdresser, and *femme de chambre* shared with him the mysteries of her earlier toilet. She would tell him the most delightful piquant stories in a mosaic of French and English, recalled for his benefit, which he could understand, of Royal progresses, of the return of great warriors from the wars, of the Scotch regiment and its valiant deeds, of Scotch families in exile like the Lathones, to whom it had pleased her to be a generous ally. When she saw how the listener sat enthralled by her eloquence she was charmed in her turn; she felt an agreeable, if not a unique sensation—made up of her gratification at exercising with the old success an old accomplishment, and of having won a fresh adoring servant. Nay, her quick sensibilities were really touched by the humility and sincerity of his homage, just as her eyes were pleased with his comely young manhood. For young Windygates was stalwart, fair, and ruddy, on the same lines as his father, and blonde, big, simple-hearted Scotchmen had always taken the Duchess's fancy. They had the same attraction for her that the upright, pure-minded young Count de Fersen had for the Frenchwoman of quality of another generation. Madame's eyes melted, her voice softened, in addressing Allan Wedderburn, and the term *mon fils* dropped naturally from her lips. The sound thrilled

him through; he was doubtful how Lady Windygates would have relished the invasion of her prerogative. Yet to be styled *mon fils* by this very fine lady and exquisite woman was something to prize and remember.

Young Windygates saw comparatively little of the true son of the house, and of the daughters, who were so fenced off from him that Braehead, his temporary governor, could regard their existence and near neighbourhood with absolute unconcern. Those last specimens of the Châlons family puzzled the young laird, and rather repelled than attracted him. They were very young certainly, and he was still enough of a boy to be shy with big children (even Geneviève Comtesse de Haute-Blois was barely fourteen, and Bertrande, the coming Abbess of Châlons, was little more than twelve), in their stiff brocades and piled-up curls. The girls' complexions were as sallow as their mother's, while their long noses were still too pronounced, and their arms were all elbows under their ruffles. The Countess and the Abbess were the oddest mixture of old women of the world and children that young Allan could have conceived possible. They were, if he had known it, in a state of semi-emancipation. They stood behind their mother and shared in her receptions, though they did not receive themselves; they saw company at home, though they did not go into it abroad. Geneviève, on account of her early marriage, Bertrande, by reason of her dedication to the Church, were already half free from the silken bonds, impassable as iron bars, which held the demoiselles of France in a state of utter helplessness, inexperience, and practical ignorance till they passed in a twinkling from demoiselles into dames—dames of the provinces, dames of the Parisian *salons*, powers in politics and letters. Why, Braehead was proud to visit one of those dames, who, though getting up in years and threatened with blindness, had all the philosophers—French and English—at her feet. It was the transition from such short-sighted doves into such wideawake eagles which was so inexplicable to the uninitiated bystander. It could not be from intimate association with their seniors, for the only two girls of whom Allan Windygates could form an opinion stood at such a distance from their mother as well as their father that it was remarkable even to him, accustomed to the strict Scotch training of his generation. He could quite understand that they must be in entire subjection to their mother—that was only proper and becoming; but, in addition to that, though mother and daughters addressed each other as *ma chère mère* and *mes chers enfants*, though she

saluted them on both cheeks every morning and evening (nobody had thought of exchanging kisses at Windygates since Lady Windygates was a bride and young Allan was a baby), he could see that mother and daughters were still to all intents strangers to each other. He, a man according to his own definition, and Lady Windygates, the greatest disciplinarian up and down the Water, were far more intimate than the mature woman who was at once the softest and the most spirited, the frankest and the sweetest, of her sex whom he had ever known, showed herself with her young daughters.

Little Madame, or the little Countess, as Madame de Haute-Blois was called, and Mademoiselle de Châlons, though they had considerably more liberty and many more privileges than ordinary girls of their rank, could not stir on foot beyond the gates of their father's hôtel; they could not go out save in the family coach with a train of *femmes de chambre* and lacqueys in attendance. The girls could do nothing for themselves, any more than when they began to walk and speak. Young Windygates did not believe they had ever read a book, except what their priests and preceptors had given them, or cherished an idea which had not first been put by somebody else into those curly dark heads of theirs. He caught the two once handling *poupées* or dolls in a way that strongly suggested the owners had not given over playing with the china babies, though the bigger babies were ashamed of their occupation and huddled away the toys on his unexpected appearance.

‘Madame la Comtesse and Mademoiselle, I pray you, do not permit me to disturb you,’ the intruder had struggled to say in his best French.

‘But no, Monsieur,’ the daughters of the house had answered, with their heads in the air as became their birth and breeding, and had gone on minding him nevertheless. The present Countess and the future Abbess quarrelled openly over *pralines* and *gâteaux*, much as the sisters might have done half a dozen years before. The girls could beck and bridle with the best, but they had not a rational word to say to young Windygates, or to any other friend of their mother's, and he was far from exacting in his demands. They had nothing to tell of the Court, to which the young ladies had been frequently. They had nothing to tell of the old convent in which they had been brought up. Yet, hear them discussing dress with a *modiste*, or a shopman come for orders, and even a tyro could recognise not only that the juvenile maidens had all their wits about them when these were

called into play; more than that, the wits were of the sharpest. Or put cards into the small, mittened hands, and their owners would play lotto and *écarté* as well as their father and mother played the games, with the skill of accomplished experts, in a style which left the bungling performances of Allan Windygates, who was only learning French games, far behind.

Young Windygates had no sisters, but in the healthy kindly freedom of intercourse between Scotch gentlefolks of his generation he knew a good many girls almost as well as if they had been his sisters. He recalled Maisie Hunter when she was no older than these French girls—how fearlessly she ran about the loanings and leas, and went in and out of the cottages where she was a cherished guest. She would race with him from the top of the hill on which Windygates stood to the bottom. She could go to the kirk, or the Manse of Deerholms, or over to Windygates, or across to some other country house, by herself on her white pony, with no other escort than her colley dog Heather, when her old auntie Peggy was laid up with her winter cough and rheumatics. The young heiress of the Haughs could be depended upon to behave with the greatest propriety, and everybody respected her as the child respected herself. He remembered what he had heard his mother say in praise of Maisie's early attainments in needle-work, house-keeping, the dairy, the poultry-yard. He knew by experience how soon she could keep her own with him in the books she read of her own free will—the English Classics (Shakespeare, Pope, Addison, Shenstone), the Scotch Classics (Barbour, Blind Harry, Allan Ramsay, Rutherford's Letters, the 'Cloud of Witnesses'), nay, even French Classics ('Telemachus' and 'Paul and Virginia'), which, though they had been translated from the French, the author's young countrywoman had never read in the original, notwithstanding that their mother went into ecstasies over the Mauritius, the faithful negroes, the peerless boy and girl, with their sweet sad fate.

And how quick Maisie was in storing up and retailing all that she observed and experienced when she went to Edinburgh for dancing and carving, and finishing lessons generally! How she was apt to call him back and set him right in his assertions of what he had seen on his limited travels! It had been one of his inducements to go to France to get beyond her bounds and power of correction, and to be able just to crow a little over her in what would be his superior knowledge of the world. For young Allan was by no means blinded, either by conceit or partiality, in his

estimate of what had been the terms on which he had stood with Maisie Hunter in the past. In spite of what Lady Windygates had said, he had felt considerably piqued by the bright, alert piece of juvenile womankind who had often been held up to him, notwithstanding the difference of sex, as a mingled example and reproach. He had been inspired on occasions with a boyish heartiness of resentment against Maisie, till dawning manhood and womanhood softened and transformed both of them. He had been beginning to take a bracing, shamefaced satisfaction, made up of pleasure as well as of annoyance, in thwarting and being thwarted by Maisie Hunter, and in cherishing a resolve deep down in his heart to get the better of her at last. Now he thought she was worth a hundred of those demoiselles of France, and he could not restrain a secret laugh when he reflected how Maisie and other girls on his Deer Water—Katie Cranstoun and Bell Dalrymple—would stare, stiffen, and wax disdainful over these silly childish daughters of the great house of Châlons.

Yet let us say, though young Windygates little foresaw such an ending, when the day of doom came, these slight sprigs of quality were not found wanting any more than women like Maisie Hunter had failed in the turbulent annals of the Kirk and Covenant.

Noblesse oblige prevailed, where the frivolous material was concerned, in a manner so strangely heroic and pathetic that the rest of the world, looking on, held its breath in wonder, admiration, and pity. But there was no word of a national knife and the heaped-up guillotine baskets in the days when Allan Windygates was in Paris decorously and doucely sowing his wild oats, having his comb cut, picking up crumbs of wisdom and wit and French polish to give him the pre-eminence at kirk and market over his fellows up and down the Water, and over the saucy lass, Maisie Hunter. She was betimes assuming the overweening superiority and authority which, according to Braehead, every lady on the Water did not hesitate to claim and exercise over the laird—be he ever so certain a shot, successful a farmer, sagacious a planter, energetic a politician, and gallant a yeoman.

CHAPTER III.

OUR COUSIN JEANNETTE—THE WIDOW STE. BARBE.

BUT there was another inmate of the Hôtel de Châlons who was fated to have more to do with young Windygates in the sequel than the Duchess herself found; more to do than any woman in

France either attempted or accomplished—than any woman in Scotland, unless, perhaps, his mother and Maisie Hunter.

Yet he did not take much notice of this member of the family at first, or dream of associating her with himself, till the association was forced upon him.

She was our Cousin Jeannette, Madame Ste. Barbe, the young widowed kinswoman and hanger-on, a constant figure in the scene—at the same time a figure which was never either still or stationary. It did not occur for a long time to Allan that she was a person of marked individuality, that she was really the most companionable and, after the Duchess, the most amusing of the Châlons household. He never calculated that she was not more than two or three years older than himself, though she had been so long a widow. He hardly even saw in those days that she was very handsome. She was a tall, black-browed, black-eyed woman, with full red lips and a dash of natural carmine in her brown cheeks—the last peculiarity said to betray a Burgundian descent on one side of the house at least. The lines of her figure were rounded and supple. She had long before resigned every trace of her widowhood, though she dressed, when not in white, in black, like many of her countrywomen to this day.

Next to Madame the Duchess, Madame Ste. Barbe was beyond comparison the best talker in the Hôtel de Châlons, and if she had liked she could have picked up more English in a week than the others had acquired in years. She understood young Windygates's Anglo-French in the course of the first evening she spent in his company. She made him understand her, dense as he was in comparison, by a glance—a turn of the head. She had genuine conversational talent, with a character of its own—not so winning as that of the Duchess, but more daring. She never entered the lists, however, with her kinswoman for the acclamations of the *salon*. It was when the great Madame was absent, or chose to be silent, that Madame Ste. Barbe came to the front and consented to entertain the company. Then the boldness of her flights might have arrested Braehead himself, a possibility which did not prevent him from having a strong prejudice against her. If he had entertained no great appreciation for the good wives of the Deer Water—patterns of virtue and excellent management—but had, on the contrary, pitied the husbands in such estimable toils, he had a positive abhorrence of widows, especially high-spirited, enterprising widows, and a blind contempt for their victims. It was

the blindness or the disdain which caused Braehead to be so easily led by the Majordomo into ignoring any danger to young Allan's bachelor freedom at the Hôtel de Châlons from the presence of the widow Ste. Barbe. Most people would have regarded her as the most formidable antagonist whom the young man could encounter. But Braehead was a contradictory being from his mother's arms, and he persisted in slighting her for the very qualities of double-facedness and shiftiness, slanderous spite, and brazen dishonesty, which he liberally attributed to her, that would have aroused the liveliest apprehension in the friend of any other lad exposed to such wiles. But what had young Windygates to do with a steeple of a woman, a toad-eating jade, whose tongue at the same time could wag on her own account when opportunity offered—a lady who had been at her crafty tricks and evil practices when Lady Windygates's son was flying his kite and finding birds' nests—an impudent, irreverent gipsy, for all her fine manners? Who gave her, a woman—above all, a young woman—the right of thinking for herself? What could she know, and, if she knew, how could she weigh and balance evidence? Set her up! to even herself to wise men. Let women stick to their priests and kirks, to their men and bairns, their wheels and baking boards. Nobody asked them to do anything else or to put their fingers into the world's pie. Women brought disrepute on philosophy, turned it into ridicule, made it out to be a vehicle for wantonness and wickedness. Madame Ste. Barbe was a black-avised beauty, if you would have it that she was a beauty, and she was old enough to be Allan Wedderburn's great-grandmother.

In the beginning Allan agreed to some extent with Braehead. Madame Ste. Barbe's mature charms—for women grow up soon in France, the moment they are emancipated from a cloister, and poor Madame had not even possessed that safeguard in her youth—did not impress him. They would have impressed nine out of ten very young men when the charms were combined with the implied flattery of her marked deference to their opinions, her scrupulous attention to their wants and wishes, and her thinking it worth while to address to these youngsters her brilliantly erratic theories of religion, morals, and government, which might have been listened to with astonishment and respect by an Encyclopædist. But Allan was not among the nine young men. He did not altogether undervalue either her bodily or mental gifts. He considered her a handsome, 'strapping' woman, amazingly clever;

only she was not in his line. Either his fascinated admiration of the Duchess served him in good stead, as an antidote to preserve him from a similar bondage to Madame Ste. Barbe—or young Windygates, unlike as he was to Braehead, and good-naturedly despised by him in consequence, had inherited a constitutional share of Robbie Wedderburn's mental twist. It was this twist, together with his immense, yet cool-headed, conceit and large reasoning powers, which made Braehead.

Young Allan's impenetrability to Madame Ste. Barbe's weapons was certainly not the result of the panoply provided by a special knowledge of evil on his part. He was utterly unsuspecting of any superior acquaintance on hers. He would no more have leapt to the conclusion that there were smirches and stains on her reputation because of her undefined position, and the well-understood, half-scornful exemption that was granted to her from the surveillance exercised over other young women, than he would have been brought to believe without great difficulty that it was convenient to the Châlons to ignore these flaws in Madame Ste. Barbe's escutcheon. He could not guess that the Duke and Duchess did not hesitate to avail themselves of all that was *vaurienne* in Cousin Jeannette's experience in order to learn what it concerned and interested them to hear of that French Bohemia with which, according to their blandly dignified profession, they had nothing whatever to do. He could not conceive that they would deliberately expose the young daughters of the house, who were apparently hedged round by every barrier which could protect *jeunes ingénues* from premature communication with a wicked world, to constant intercourse with a cousin tainted in her antecedents, and yet possessed of such influence over her kinswomen as her seniority in years and priority in intellect were calculated to lend her in spite of her state of dependence.

Young Windygates was incapable of compassing these things, and, though Braehead did not include the prohibition of an acquaintance with them in his pledge to the lad's mother, there was sufficient manliness in him to keep him from enlightening his twenty-one-years old charge on these and similar topics. Allan knew that Madame Ste. Barbe had been a penniless orphan, suffered to grow up anyhow among the *femmes de chambre* and lacqueys of her better endowed relations. He had heard that she had been disposed of by means of a marriage, when she was no older than the little Madame, to a man who was, like herself, the penniless offshoot of a noble family. To enable him to marry, he had held

a sinecure in connection with the Government office of *Fermier Général*. In this he had subsequently managed to fail, not to say signally, but disgracefully. Afterwards he had relieved his wife and connections of any obligation to bear with him further by blowing his brains out, and Madame had claimed the hospitality of the Hôtel de Châlons, which had been thenceforth granted to her.

For these particulars of Madame Ste. Barbe's history Allan simply pitied the handsome—or, as he called her, 'strapping'—clever young widow. He did not in the least comprehend what they had to do with such an incongruous, unaccountable incident as his occasionally coming across her alone and unattended, while she was muffled up, as if to avoid recognition, going quickly in a *fiacre*, or even on foot, along the streets which he was traversing, towards midnight, on his way from the Hôtel de Châlons to his inn.

There was an amount of independence in this proceeding beyond anything of the kind which young Windygates had ever advocated for any member of Madame Ste. Barbe's sex. Indeed, he was so astounded by the amazing contradiction which it presented to French customs as he had found them, and so alarmed at the risk the lady might run, that he would have followed her and begged her to accept his company, had he not been stopped by Braehead the first time the thing happened.

'Don't, man,' said the philosopher gruffly; 'you'll get no thanks for your interference. That lady can take care of herself.' He did not add that there were adventures for such as she—nay, for women of far higher standing and less damaged character than this poor woman could claim—opera suppers, Porcheron balls, card-tables where unlimited stakes were allowed—which the sinners of the Hôtel de Châlons winked at, though neither the adventures nor the fields for them were fit to be repeated in the ears of a raw Scotch lad uninitiated even in the milder forms of depravity, and entrusted to Braehead's care.

So Braehead did not explain what was glaringly inconsistent, nor did he repeat to young Allan another tale told by the communicative Majordomo. It was to this effect:—A few years before, just when Madame Ste. Barbe had come, a young widow, to the Hôtel de Châlons, she had the inconceivable ingratitude and impertinence to make eyes at the Marquis de Beauval, who was then more at home than he had since been, while he had not yet cut his wisdom-teeth. Luckily, the affair, on the first blush of it,

had been detected by Madame the Duchess, who had, of course, reported the circumstance to Monsieur the Duke, and he had put down his foot on it with such force that it was stamped out of existence on the instant. Serve the spying, scheming, little-worth widow, with her *beaux yeux*, right! She had always been rather a favourite with Monsieur—that is, she entertained him with her sharp tongue, and he had supplied her with more indulgences than the ladies of the family had it in their power to bestow, while he did not exact from her in return the concessions which they would have demanded. But on this occasion he required her presence at the interview which he had with the Marquis. Then the Duke politely reminded her to her face, in his son's hearing, of sundry items in her origin, and of certain lapses in integrity of which she had already been guilty—and *crac!* there was an end to that scandal. Oh yes, Monsieur the Duke and Madame the Duchess and Madame Ste. Barbe were all as good friends as ever. Bah! she could not afford to quarrel with them if they were generous enough to look over her heinous offence. Monsieur the Marquis came little to his father's house from that date, and was as cold as ice to *Madame ma belle cousine* when he did come; and she was more than ever a termagant and a *diabliesse* among the servants and retainers.

Young Windygates took it into his honest head, as a solution to the riddle which had been presented to him, that Madame Ste. Barbe had doubtless poor relations as well as rich ones, and that she visited and relieved the former at odd hours. This conclusion made him rather sorry for the curbed and fettered dashing beauty and *bel esprit*.

Therefore, whereas there had crept into the scrupulous politeness with which the Duke and the other gentlemen frequenting the Hôtel de Châlons treated her a dash of sarcasm and mockery, there stole into Allan Windygates's behaviour a very different quality—a tone of kindly sympathy and manly good-feeling.

Madame Ste. Barbe was quick to mark and appropriate the unwonted tribute. This home-bred, inevitably rustic, Scotch laird either believed in her still, or made allowance for her as none of the other men did. The conviction moved the retainer much as Allan's enthusiastic admiration had touched her superior.

Ma cousine Jeannette's great glittering black eyes found a mist come across them, and the eyelids drooped a little; her tongue, shrill in the diamond-cut-diamond of her *persiflage*, flagged for

an instant when she weighed the difference between Monsieur Allan Wedderburn's manner towards her and the manner of some other gentlemen who ought to have been the last to condemn her. There was danger of her making too much of the difference, for she was young yet, and, ardent as she was undisciplined, prone to act on impulse and to repent at leisure. She might be so far left to herself as to seek to throw her spells over him, and to snatch at a chance of release by his means from her horribly ambiguous, often torturing, position. And it was a fact that Jeannette Ste. Barbe had never, to this hour, woven her spells and plied her allurements without these being in some fashion disastrous alike to the victim and to the enchantress who sought to make him her prey.

The great chance for poor young Windygates, entangled in the meshes of his own single-heartedness, was, if his mother could have comprehended it, not his virtuous upbringing, or any passages of the nature of 'Scotch folks' wooing,' that might have passed for calf-love between him and Maisie Hunter of the Haughs. It was the circumstance that, after all, he and his, as Madame Ste. Barbe could make them out, did not offer very great inducements to a Frenchwoman of gentle birth, though clouded descent, with the run of her cousin the Duke's house—though it was only as a poor relation and tolerated hanger-on—to cast in her lot with a foreigner. She could not give up all she prized most for his sake, or, for such advantages as he could bring, turn her back on Paris, which was the centre of the universe for luxury, culture, free thought, and the sparkling gaieties, which she had by no means outgrown, in order to sink into a provincial dame.

The province was not even in France, but in the bleak gloom of bearish, poverty-stricken, bigoted, yet heretical Scotland, an ally of France in the past, she had been told, but always a rude and turbulent ally.

Neither was the splendid life of the Hôtel de Châlons, in spite of its humiliations and torments, without compensations. There was a magnanimity about Madame the Duchess in the middle of her fits of tyranny and the outrageous extremes of which she could be guilty, else Madame Ste. Barbe had not continued a member of the household after a certain piece of unheard-of presumption. The Duke had constituted himself her lazy, *nonchalant* patron, and was in the mind to permit no one else to punish her as he had not scrupled to do. The little Countess and the Demoiselle were insolent children at times, but at other times the sisters hung on

la cousine Jeannette for amusement, and for such support as she could afford them in any of the small independent acts of their small lives. No servant—not the Duchess's arrogant *femme de chambre*, or the Duke's Machiavellian valet, or the brisk, senseless Majordomo, who had babbled of the affairs of the family to the pompous, heavy old Scotch *savant*—dared contradict Madame Ste. Barbe to her face.

While she continued in Paris she had various sources of private income. She had the amount settled on her by her cousin the Duke, together with the capricious gifts of Madame the Duchess and her daughters; she had her winnings from the gaming-tables at which she assisted, where she recommended herself to the owners quite as much by her intimate knowledge of what went on in half the *hôtels* of the quality in the aristocratic faubourg, and her skill in discussing the politics and news of the day, as by her adroitness in playing cards. She was one of the most accomplished weavers of lace in the country, and she was a thousand times more industrious with her pillow and bobbins, which her supple white fingers flung about like the swift play of sunlight, in wonderful rhythmical mazes, than even the Duchess was with her *mouton*. Though Madame Ste. Barbe did not acknowledge it, there was little question that she disposed in one fashion or another of some of her treasures of lace—the varieties of Point d'Alençon and Valenciennes. She had made herself mistress of the tricks of the craft, and copied from old patterns with as fine a sleight of hand as ever was acquired by the regular lace-weavers, with the secrets of lace-weaving handed down from mother to daughter as a family possession, or by the painstaking nuns in the tranquil leisure of their convents. The widow did not grow sick of her lucrative art in its delicate fruits. She was known from her habit of atoning for any deficiencies in the expensive toilets of the time by having her gowns and mantles, hoods and fichus, sleeves and gloves, profusely trimmed with her exquisite handiwork. There was a saying among her acquaintances that Madame Ste. Barbe, under whatever disguise, in the mask which was much affected in the dubious festivities of the period, could be still more speedily and surely detected by the lavishness and superbness of her costly cobweb lace than by her tall figure, the half haughty, half crafty, bend of her neck, and the flash of her magnificent eyes under their long lashes.

(To be continued.)

A COACH DRIVE AT THE LAKES.

PART I.

FROM WINDERMERE TO RYDAL WATER.

THE Rebellion of 1745 was a boon to those who horsed the mails in the north, for it called attention to the need of good roads, and many are the blessings that were poured upon the heads of the 'bare leggit' laddies from across the border by old Tom Preston and David Johnson, the long-remembered whips who drove their chocolate-bodied coaches betwixt Whitehaven and Lancaster, a distance of eighty-one miles, in twelve hours and a quarter.

In those days people bound for the south from the coast either went to Carlisle, paid their six guineas for an inside place, and, leaving the town of the Red King at 6 P.M., arrived in London at twilight of the second morning; or they took the coach by Workington, Cockermouth, Keswick, Ambleside, and Kendal to Lancaster, and a very popular stage it was too. They did not enter into the deeper meaning of scenery as we do, but all the way up to London they had memories of Skiddaw and Helvellyn to solemnise, and visions of Bassenthwaite, Derwentwater, Thirlmere, Grasmere, Rydal, and Windermere to make a sad man smile. There was at the beginning of the century, too, a chance of a 'crack' with some of the literary heroes and local characters of the day. Southey would certainly come down in his clogs and with his 'nebbed' cap to fetch or dispatch a parcel of rare books when the coach pulled up in the Keswick market place. Parson Bird would probably handle the ribands over the Raise and be chaffed unmercifully because of his thus driving the 'Cuckoo,' for so the coach was called.

De Quincey would get up at the Nab on his way to see Wilson of Elleray. Hartley Coleridge would be offered a ride for his talk's sake, young Faber or gentle Charles Lloyd might have taken places for London, and it was almost certain that 'Mr. Wordsworth, him o' Rydal,' would meet the coach at Ambleside for proofs or letters.

Yes, it was a memorable stage, that stage from Whitehaven to Kendal and Lancaster in the olden time—memorable for

scenery and society alike. Then came the iron horse, and, though poets and coach-drivers were one in their opposition, it snorted up the long incline from Kendal to Birthwaite, and the mail from Windermere to Lancaster ceased.

But still the merry tootling of the horn is heard for part of the year over the twenty-one miles that stretch between Windermere and Keswick. So well does 'the beautiful Romance of Nature' which Wordsworth apostrophised in his sonnet, on hearing of the approach of the Kendal and Windermere railway, plead for 'the peace' of the district, that an attempt to substitute the swift wings of the steam god for the humbler pace of a four-in-hand coach over a portion of the stage before us was last year frustrated in Parliament.

Still one nook of English ground, a little nook twenty miles across, is secured from the rash invader that Trevethick planned, and anyone who loves for old Dake's sake a bit of coaching, can find a choice of sixteen well appointed four-in-hands ready to scamper off north, east, or west, to any part of the Lake District from Windermere, on any day of the week during the tourist season.

The coach drive of the future will take us up Langdale over the Stake down Langstrath and Borrowdale to Keswick, and bring us back by Thirlmere and the Raise to Windermere, but the Stake pass road 'will bide a deal o' makking,' as the Northmen say, and so we must just be content with a coach drive 'there and back,' over the same line from Windermere to Keswick, and we may be well content.

There is not anywhere in England a drive so full of that mingled natural and human interest which makes scenery so impressive. It is well-nigh impossible for sensitive minds not to feel something of 'the light that never was on sea or land' as they pass the thresholds of the good and great, whose thoughts have helped our England to be pure. In this coach drive to Keswick they not only go by the homes of the thinkers and poets and philosophers, but their foreheads feel the wind and rain that gave such freshness to the seers of the last generation; the sunlight on lake or mountain head that filled their minds with glory fills ours to-day. The woods and waterfalls that speak to us upon our way spoke also to them. We can in fancy see their familiar forms upon the road, and, as in eastern travels the 'weli' or wayside tomb made the journey's stage rememberable, so we find in

this pilgrim stage through poet-land that the great dead lend it a kind of solemn sweetness, and the dust of two Laureates hallows the wonder-giving way.

Taken all in all, there is no twenty-one miles' coach drive that so stirs the imagination as this coach drive from Windermere to Keswick, and yet, as one listens to the chatter on the box or the chaff on the seat behind the driver, one feels that few journeys are so little known about as having worthy associations.

It is a fact that the only object of interest on the whole way for a whole coach-load has often proved to be the shape of a rock on Helen Crag and the traditional cairn of the legendary 'last king of rocky Cumberland' on Dunmail Raise. I had taken the coach drive in mid-May, when all the land seemed lit with living gold, so golden were the oaks, so golden-green the beech-leaves fluttering into beauty, so yellow were the fields with buttercups. Then the woods we passed through were starred with anemones, and just beyond Ambleside, by the Scandale beck, the copse and meadow-land was purple with the blue-bell. Now it was mid-June, the hawthorns hardly past their prime, the fields full of ox-eye daisies and lilac crane's-bill, the gardens gorgeous with rhododendrons.

The coach would not start from Rigg's for an hour, so I climbed up Orrest Head and realised there how poets were made, and how poet-hearts are given to the yeomen sons who from their white-shining farms 'and ample stores beneath their burnished sycamores' pass forth to labour until the evening from such secluded, happy, upland homes as Orrest Head gave sight of. The strange sleep that lay upon the conical ridge of High Street to the north—High Street that the Roman conqueror knew; the marvellous beauty of the hill-clusters to the west; the varied distances of their groupings as they rose from Ironkeld to Bowfell, and beyond the Langdale Pikes to Scafell Pike; the dropping of the larch-covered Furness Fells towards the lake; the beauty of the smooth emerald knolls and interspaces of grass that broke up the woody places and thickets full of song at my feet; the way in which the whole land seemed to be cheered by the dwellings of men yet quite unmarred by their presence—made the view from Orrest Head over Appleshwaite remarkable. And then the lake of Winander, how like unto a glorious river, rolled among its islands to the sea, it gleamed; and how the distant sands of Morcambe shimmered seaward, how white the Farleton Knot glittered, how

grey Sedbergh Fells and Ingleborough's table mountain gloomed to the east and south!

As I stood on Orrest Head 'I made no vows, but vows were made for me.' I realised how such 'bright scenes' 'given to the pausing traveller's rapturous glance' were likely to raise more surely, year by year, antagonism to any Vandal schemes of desecration, and, walking downwards 'in thankful blessedness that yet survives,' found myself beneath the sycamore that shadows the cottage home of Christopher North's happy married days.

A great branch has gone from the tree, but one can agree with Professor Wilson's soliloquy as one gazes up into its beemurmuring massy dome of foliage—'Never in this well-wooded world,' said he, 'not even in the days of the Druids, could there have been such another tree! It would be easier to suppose two Shakespeares.' The trees hard by have somewhat obscured the view, but De Quincey is right when describing it as such a view as you might expect 'on Athos seen from Samothrace.' He wrote: 'I cannot recollect any spectacle in England or Wales which so much dilates the heart with a sense of power and aërial sublimity as this terrace view from Elleray.'

The cottage is beautiful still, though it is not so embowered with roses as on that 'tranquil day of nature and delight,' the 11th day of May, 1811, when hither Christopher Wilson led his bright and beauteous bride, Miss Jane Penny, to begin a halcyon honeymoon. And yet the cottage is not much changed; one can see the Professor, clad in sailor suit, leaning his Ciceronian chin on his hand at yonder window to look which way the wind lies on Windermere, for it is Regatta day, and faithful Billy Balmer has come up to ask whether his master will sail the 'Endeavour' or the 'Jane' or the 'Palafox.' And we can hear his hearty laugh as he slaps Bishop Watson of Calgarth on the back, and tells him how the other day he threw the lithest dalesman at Wastdale Head, and flung himself out of a boat in mid-lake, pretending he was taken with a bad fit and that he could not swim, or how De Quincey and he were near being taken up for sheep-stealers a few nights past upon the Fells. That large room at the southern end of the cottage is much as it was when Wilson built it for a drawing-room. Now on a Sunday it is filled with Bible-class scholars. Once on a time, before the flooring was down, it was covered with turf and crammed with the Professor's friends from all the neighbouring farms 'to see as gay good a main o' cocks

fowt as ever was seen i' Westmorland.' History does not tell us whether it was Lord Derby, the Keswick grey, Caradice, or the Black Brass winged cock, that beat the bird that belonged to the Bishop's son on that occasion, but it was a famous victory, and when the victor's silver drinking-cup went round at 'the genteel supper' after the main, much luck was wished to the man who could sail a boat, or jump a long jump, or wrestle, or fight a cock, or write a stanza in his Isle of Palms descriptive of Elleray, against any man in the country.

We leave Elleray and descend to the station through a perfect glory of rhododendron flower either side our way—'Jump up, sir, coach can't wait!' and away we rattle. Past the church with its painted clock-dial to tell the present as it goes, and its ice-planed-and-scratched boulders in the graveyard to mark the time that is past and gone. We are soon at the Cook's House Crossway. The road to the left is the old road to Bowness, that to the right will take us to Troutbeck—Troutbeck of Hogarthian memories, for it is said that both the father and the song-making satirical uncle of the painter lived at 'the Crag' in the vale. There are Hogarths still at Keswick, as all lovers of good pencils know.

Troutbeck is famous too for its giant of olden time, who so pleased King Henry IV. by the feats of strength he performed that the King granted him house and rights of wood and turbary at Troutbeck Tongue. We have our giants still in Troutbeck; the grandson of Auld Peggy Longmire, who lived there till she was 104 years old, was champion wrestler in his day, and is hale and hearty still. We might have giants in the valley for far generations if, instead of drinking 'washy' tea, the country folk would remember the recipe for strength that old giant gave to Henry IV., who, in answer to the King's question as to his fare, replied, 'Thick pottage and milk that a mouse might walk upon dryshod, for breakfast, and the sunny side of a wether to his dinner when he could get it.'

Now by graceful beech-trees, till, in a moment, as fine a panoramic scene as we shall see all the way to Keswick opens out above the hollow lawns of old Calgarth. Resting like couchant lions above the woods lie the Langdale Pikes, serenely blue, while, white as frosted silver, the lake shines above and on either side the ancient roof-tree of the Philipsons—the haunted hall of unhappy fame.

Dorothy and Kraster Cook, so runs the story, owned 'Kale-gards,' or, as some old chroniclers spell it, 'Calf-garth,' and one Myles Philipson, a wealthy neighbour, coveted this Naboth's plot, bade the couple to supper, sent them away with a pie in which previously had been concealed a bit of valuable silver plate, then accused them of stealing, brought them to trial, and obtained judgment against them. Dorothy rose in the court-room and cursed her murderer thus: 'Guard thyself, Myles Philipson, thou mayest think thou hast managed grandly, but that tiny plot of garden ground will be the dearest ever bought. Time shall be that no Philipson shall own an acre, and, while the Calgarth walls shall stand, we will haunt it night and day.'

The skulls of Dorothy and Kraster, so the local legend is, do what men will, return, and are found in the wall-niches or behind the wainscot, and all that is left of the Philipsons in the hall is the beautiful coat-of-arms, in floriated intricacies curiously wrought, that adorns the kitchen of to-day.

We are spinning on now downhill to the Troutbeck bridge. That sycamore on the right is worth looking at. Son of Anak, among trees. The hammers are clinking at the forge, and the man who comes out to gaze as we rattle by is one of the shrewdest votaries of Vulcan hereabout. You do not often find a village smith a connoisseur of water-colours, but, as I hear, his father's hobby is to collect these, and his house is full of good examples.

On by Calgarth Park, where lived the Bishop whose face once hung for a sign, so the saying is, at a public-house in a dale not far from here, with these words inscribed above it, 'This is the Real Old Cock.' There had been much rivalry among innkeepers, and the original 'Old Cock' house-of-call refused to have its nose put out of joint by any newer bird of its breed and sign episcopal.

We note the simple beauty of a Westmoreland farm-house, its milk-white porch, its welcome retirement in the fields just off the road to the right, wish we were lodgers there, then plunge into the Ecclerigg woods—the air full breathed of the sweet rowan flowers. How gay the rhododendrons shine, and if it were but rose time we should marvel at the show of roses in this close-ket sanctuary of rest on our right.

Now Lowwood is seen—the tall dark pines by the lake shore, the white water gleaming across to Wray, with its castled height not old in story, for the castle was only built this century, and that too out of a bit of spleen with the wild north-wester which

had unroofed Dr. Dawson's little cottage close by. But, if the castle is but young, so well is it built of native stone that it seemeth truly no new or inharmonious thing, and high above it towers the larch-covered barrow where Lather the Norse chieftain had his village and found his burial.

One cannot gaze from Lowwood across to Wray without going over the hill beyond, in fancy, to that little Norwegian-looking town of Hawkshead, lying in its happy hollow by Esthwaite Lake, and thinking of the schoolboy who there

From Nature and her overflowing soul
 . . . received so much that all his thoughts
 Were steeped in feeling ;

and here at our feet, as we sight Lowwood, is running across the road a little unpretending rill, whereby that schoolboy, grown to be a man, once rested with his sister Dorothy as they were trudging from Kendal to pay their first visit together to the land they have jointly immortalised. I say jointly, for Dorothy was an inspiration to him. In his sonnet—written years after the event—descriptive of this Skel-ghyll Beck (it may be found sixth of the first series of Miscellaneous Sonnets) Wordsworth tells us

The immortal spirit of one happy day
 Lingers beside that rill in vision clear.

As long as travellers who honour purity and simplicity of verse pass this way they will surely in fancy see the forms of the young poet and his sister Dorothy resting to refresh themselves by the side of the lake, just there where the Skelgill streamlet enters it.

Lowwood is reached—Lowwood, that haunt of happy lovers ; Lowwood, whose hostel-keeper Thomas Jackson had so befriended the poet Hartley Coleridge that, on hearing of his death by an accidental fall from a tree, Coleridge was moved to write a memorial poem. Lowwood surroundings are little changed—

The lake is there, the hills their distance keep,
 The tall trees stand as if they mourned for ever ;

but, dark though the Scotch firs are, the waters of Windermere, just now leaden-hued with a drift of rain, ripple into sudden sunshine. Yes, Hartley Coleridge, you are right—

Sage Nature is not bound to sympathise
 With every passion of a single soul.

There is as much sun as shadow of memory on Lowwood's hostel roof.

We leave a pair of very happy people behind us at the welcoming door. We have had a good gaze towards the Langdales; we are off, with a cheery cry to the smoking team, and a crack of the whip that echoes to the hill. Above us, up in the tangled copse, now wreathed with wild roses, sweet with the scent of the birches and fragrant with the elder-flower, there is floating the bluish vapour from a single cottage chimney. That smoke curl betrays the one time home of her whose fortune belied her name. Here, in 1830, Felicia Hemans lived and sang. I have sometimes thought that she was picturing Dove's Nest when in her poem to Wordsworth she describes the spirit of Wordsworth's poetry in its calm

As fitly to be taken
To the still breast in sunny garden bowers,
Where vernal winds each tree's low tones awaken,
And bud and bell with changes mark the hours.

Certain it is that from her woodland retreat she watched many a time, as she describes it in the same verse,

The day
Sink with a golden and calm decay

over the Langdales to the west.

I looked across the shining water to beautiful Loughrigg, and my eye was carried away towards Piko Blisco, Crinkle Crag, the solemn Bowfell, and the Langdale Pikes, but it was on old Brathay Vicarage, this side of the Italian-looking church tower of Brathay, and on Croft Lodge among its rhododendrons beneath the hill, that my gaze rested. At that latter house how many a time in the days of Mr. Branker's hospitality had Wordsworth rested when he took his favourite walk from Rydal right round Loughrigg Fell! there how many a dinner party had Hartley Coleridge brightened with his sallies of wit! Poor Hartley, it was on his way home from that house on a dark night that he missed his footing by the Rotha's stream, and took such cold from his wetting that he never recovered.

But the white house beneath the pines—old Brathay Vicarage—that too has its memories. There dwelt that wise and pretty little Quakeress, whose son was the late learned saintly Bishop of Lincoln; there too, in days of flute and dance, came Wilson and De Quincey. And by the Bratha river, as it flows hard by over its rocky bed, many a time after dusk, as was De Quincey's wont, he and his friend Charles Lloyd used to listen to the water's chine

and 'with profound emotion and awe hearken to the sound of pealing anthems as if streaming from the open portals of some illimitable cathedral.' Gaze up the valley toward the Langdales, and think how many a time passed up the valley to his pastoral work, from that old Brathay vicarage, the young clergyman Owen Lloyd, whose heart was with the dalesmen and the hills, of whom his school companion wrote—

He rests in peace : in Langdale's peaceful vale
 He sleeps secure beneath the grassy sod.
 Ah no, he doth not—he hath heard, 'All hail,
 Thou faithful servant,' from the throne of God ;

and whose epitaph in the little Langdale churchyard will be read as long as Wordsworth is held in honour. Now, ere the coach hurries on, look at yonder meadow between the boat-landing and the river's mouth : in that meadow was dug up years ago a Roman tripod kettle. Altars and handmills of grit-stone have been unearthed there ; glass vials and coins, now in the Ashmolean at Oxford, tell us that there the Roman soldiers had their camp. And doubtless from Loughrigg Fell the sentinels watched the convoys bring from east and west the metal for the smelting in the Ambleside vale.

The 'three-foot Brandreth field' is desolate, and all we see to-day is the rampart they raised about what Camden calls 'the dead carcass of an ancient city.' From it those Romans made a paved way, over part of which our coach will trundle as we pass by Rydal Park. Still, to-day, when the wrestlers meet for their annual contest at Grasmere, they hold their sport in the meadow called the 'Pavement End.'

What those legionaries called their camp, unless it be Dictis, as in the 'Notitia,' none know, for after the Roman came the Dane. He pastured his flocks on 'Wangs' or Wans Fell, that rises to the right. And yonder circling majesty of hill in front took from him and his shepherd life its name 'Fåårfeld,' or Fair-field of our time ; and he it was who sat himself down by the shining Rotha and the thundering Stock-Ghyll Force and gave his own name to his seat or sitting, Amil's or Hamil's Seat—Ambleside of to-day.

We drive on and pull up short at the Salutation Hill.

Times have changed since the tall cluster of Scotch firs stood in the market place, and men looked down from the balcony beneath the broad eaves of the weavers' shed upon the new-fangled coach

express. But there are old people in the throng of on-lookers who remember a tall, gaunt-faced, serious-looking man in a 'bit of an old boxer, or a cap with a neb to it, and an all-round cloak,' who would, regular as clock-work, walk out in all weathers to meet the coach, and give and take his despatches to the driver, and hear the latest political news, and so back to Rydal.

'Time's up, gentlemen,' and away over the Stock with its picturesque old mill-wheel, past a cluster of houses grouped for an artist, with a sycamore springing like a fountain of green, and cool, 'above the milk-white walls and sunny eaves,' we speed, and we can echo the words of a local sonnet-writer as we turn to gaze back upon the tree and the village—

Long may the woodman's axe to wanderers spare
Thy monumental presence, high in air!

That house in its sloping garden grounds to the right is still tenanted by a lady who remembers how half afraid of Hartley Coleridge the little girls with whom he played, when he was at school at Ambleside, were. Scale How to-day, it was called Green Bank in the time half-a-century ago when it received as tutor to the boys of the family a man of whom Wordsworth used to say, 'He is the only one I know who sees more things in Nature than I do in a country walk.'

There Father Faber, then fresh from Oxford, lived and wrote. One cannot, as one gazes across the field to the left and sees the shoulder of Loughrigg Fell glimmer into green and gold between the houses, forget that by the Brathay stream in those meadows Faber poured out his soul in verse, and on that bossy upland height of broken ground thought out the broken snatches of his song and refreshed his soul. Let the readers of his poem on 'Loughrigg' and his 'Brathay Sonnets' be our witness.

The house to our left, behind the chapel, is the Knoll. There Miss Harriet Martineau dwelt, and still in the north terrace garden stands the dial, with her prayer inscribed thereon, 'Come light, visit me.' A little further, and the one time home of a learned man of the old school, old Doctor Davy, is passed—Lesketh How. There in the old days was often seen the manly figure of Sir John Richardson, of Arctic fame, for Doctor Davy, Sir Humphry's brother, married the sister of beautiful Lady Richardson, one of the Fletchers of the country, whose name is gracious still. We look now keenly to the left, for away under Loughrigg may be

seen Dr. Arnold's holiday haunt, Fox How, and again, as we sweep on past Fidler's Farm, we gaze thither again.

The glades of Arnold's mimic Cithæron, above Fox How, have other shades upon them than the shadow of passing clouds. Matthew the poet is dead; and one of the strongest and stoutest-hearted statesmen of his time will never again be seen climbing the woodland path above Fox Ghyll. Yet, as we roll by, we can think of the power of yonder hillside to help the 'Fausta' of Mat Arnold's verse to be his nation's help in time of need.

It is not easy to make it out, but the lady whom Wordsworth addressed in his sonnet as

Rotha, my spiritual child,

lives in one of the grey cottage houses beyond Fox Ghyll, and the daughter-in-law of the poet Wordsworth is resident in a similar house further on, which we can catch a glimpse of as we near Pelter Bridge.

But we are passing Fidler's Farm, to lovers of Wordsworth interesting chiefly, because the poet, who was 'a deal thowt of in the daales' as an architect, used at the time of the building of the farm to come down most days to be consulted as to the work. He said it should be called Model Farm; we are sorry its name was altered. The chimneys of Fidler's Farm, like the chimneys of Fox How, appear to be 'creations,' or at any rate 'preservations,' of the poet.

Wordsworth, it is reported, liked to see chimneys built 'square hauf-way and round the tother,' and it seems he had a word in the building of many of the chimneys Rydal way.

We shall, as we drive on, note that the oldest farm-houses of Westmoreland were so built as to their chimney stacks, and we shall have to thank the poet for his picturesque conservatism.

That great clump of fir trees on a knoll to our left after we have passed Fidler's Farm is an historic site. For though, as described in the twenty-seventh of the Duddon Sonnets,

Fallen and diffused into a shapeless heap,
Or quietly self-buried in earth's mould,
Is that embattled house whose massy keep
Flung from yon cliff a shadow large and cold,

there seems to be little doubt that centuries ago the forerunner of the hall Sir Michael Le Fleming built up in the park was situated somewhere on this craggy knoll. And the traditions of

the Le Fleming family tell us that the castle occupants were driven to desert 'that embattled house' by reason of the fact that

Nightly lamentations, like the sweep
Of winds, though winds were silent, struck a deep
And lasting terror through that ancient hold.

Now a kingly-looking old oak tree, half built into the wall, is seen; that is 'the Lord's Yak' in the vernacular, and probably has seen gathered about it in olden time the tenants of the Lord of the Manor come to swear fealty, to pay their dues, or to have justice done them.

What a site for a house is yonder! How the stateliness of the hills and the majesty of the woods enshrines the Rydal Hall! In silver tones, after flood, comes borne down the ox-eye daisy strewn field a sound of falling waters such as makes one feel the presence of an enchanter's wand, and possibilities of the merry greenwood faerie.

And we are back in old days truly here, for yonder crag on the left of Loughrigg goes by the name of the 'Gate' Crag. In early British times the wild goat sprang from ledge to ledge, while the deer swept up the lawn, and, dark against the sky, stood magnified. Blow your horn, coachman, blow your horn, and wake all echoes that will not break our dream.

'Pelter Bridge, sir,' said the coachman, 'it was a most partic'ler favourite walk over that bridge, and round by Red Bank, for Mr. Wordsworth and his sister, Miss Dorothy, so the saying is. And that is Backhouse's spot. You have heard tell of Backhouse. He was Mr. Wordsworth's man i' the house, you know, sir. He was living to within a year since, and I used to see him creepin' along with his stick to bridge end and back. Ah, many a crack he and me have had together about Mr. Wordsworth. He used to break plates, you know, at his master's study door, to bring him to his dinner, so the sayin' is, for Mr. Wordsworth was that deaf in study. Ay, and he had his master's old stable lantern which he and Miss Dorothy used to walk the roads with after dark; he was as proud of that lantern as if it was his only child, was old Backhouse, sir, and no wonder either, for Mr. Wordsworth, so the sayin' is, did a deal of his po'try after dark.'

'You see those spruces, sir,' continued the coachman, who, from pre-Amblesidian silence, had warmed up to Rydalian volubility, 'they was the first spruces planted in this part, so they tell, and they've done their best, sir, them; none this-a-way better.'

Saying this, the coachman threw a daily paper over a garden palisade, to be picked up by the Rydal vicar, chattered to his horses, and on we sped beneath the shadow of as fair a line of beeches as I had seen in Westmoreland. Rydal Church obscured the Haunt of the Muses, which I had hoped to see, but on passing the house where, in Wordsworth's time and after, dwelt a certain Mr. Ball, a Quaker of capacity for admiring the poets of the Lake district, and for cultivating roses, my eyes caught sight of 'Dora's Field,' there where rests the rough boulder stone which, saved from the builder's hand, his drill and charge of gunpowder, 'for some rude beauty of its own,' was rescued by the bard; there where in 1838 the old poet watched the gardeners shape a garden path and steps out of the rock, and wrote, as a kind of memorial inscription, this solemn advice:—

Would'st thou be gathered to Christ's chosen flock,
Shun the broad way too easily explored,
And let thy paths be hewn out of the rock—
The living rock of God's eternal Word.

Away, up above Dora's Field, through the oaks—alas! too well foliaged to admit fair view—I knew there was somewhere hid that moss-lined shed—green, soft, and dry—in which so often the poet and his sister paused and, resting, gazed either on that

Aërial rock whose solitary brow
From this low threshold daily meets the sight—

the beautiful Gate Crag—or, westward, watched Crinkle Crag, beyond Silver How, 'slope ladderlike to Heaven'—'those bright steps that heavenward raise their practicable way,' for so in his evening voluntary he describes them.

But I also remembered that close beside it was that 'Bandusian fount of clearness crystalline' to which 'the water-drinking bard' so oft repaired for a draught of Nature's giving—the well-known Nab Well. Close beside us on the road was a rude rocky throne, to which several rough-hewn steps led. It was 'Muster Wordsworth's favourite seat,' said the coachdriver; 'made a deal of his po'try there, I dar'say, sir;' and he relapsed into silence.

He may, thought I, have 'mused o'er flood or fell from this rocky roadside knell,' but, if what I know of his habits is at all correct, this man, 'retired as noontide dew,' would not have risked the intrusion of public wayfarers. No; rather he would have strolled with his sister on yonder path across the mere and beside the lake, and there have listened, as he tells us he did

listen, to the blythe newcomer, the cuckoo, not knowing whether to call 'her bird or but a wandering voice;' or he would have 'wandered lonely as a cloud' on yonder mountain path beneath Nab Scar—that 'little hoary line and faintly traced'—and have realised that a man's thoughts 'admit no bondage if his words have wings,' and that to the unsubstantial brotherhood of clouds the visionary splendours of a poet's mind may owe deep debts of inspiration.

My companions on the coach were not Wordsworthians, but, as we neared the great ash and sycamores that overshadow the road in front of the Nab Cottage, the sun broke out upon the hills to the north; the fresh fern that seemed to powder Silver How with dust of emerald, the wild roses dancing in the hedge, the foxglove spires and yellow poppies beneath the walls, the far flashes of light among the crags above our heads, the beauty of the Rydal Water beside our way, conspired to make them feel

the place so beautiful

That if a man should plant his cottage near,
Should sleep beneath the shelter of its trees,
And blend its waters with his daily meal,
He would so love it that in his death hour
Its image would survive among his thoughts;

and they expressed themselves with much enthusiasm; and I could question with Wordsworth whether there really 'lives a man whose sole delights are pomp and city noise.'

The coachdriver caught up the infection of the scene and sunlight, and saying, 'Nab Cottage, where Hartley Coleridge lived and died,' he cracked his whip and whistled to his horses, well content.

Nab Cottage, or, as it is better known, the Nab, who can ever pass its homely little roof-tree without trying to spell out the meaning of the quaint letters on the black, lozenge-shaped stone above its door? Those initials, I. A. 3. P., are meaningless, but the date 1702 beneath tells us that the yeomen of nigh two centuries ago built themselves houses into the which they built their hearts' blood, even as they built in the solid walls the initials of their names.

The great ash-tree, the twin sycamores, red with a thousand seedlings to-day, tell us little of the Nab proprietors of old, though the yew-tree at their side proclaims that they came of a stock of men who handled the bow in the rude border days, and

grew, by edict of Henry VIII., the tree that should supply their battle-arms.

But there is about the Nab a graciousness of creeping foliage and flowers, a gentleness of order in its tiny garden plot, a fragrance of refined care from the great laurustinus that shades the tiny dormer window, that one feels that Nathaniel Hawthorne was right when he described it as 'a small, buff-tinted, plastered stone cottage, I should think of a very humble class originally, but it now looks as if persons of taste might sometime or other have sat down in it and caused flowers to spring up about it.'

Those who care to inquire will find that there dwelt here, in the beginning of this century, a yeoman, Simpson by name, a silent man, who joined to his farm avocations study of Milton and Shakespeare, and read with pleasure such classics for English readers as then existed. Man of taste as he was, his beautiful daughter Margaret was not less refined—'a woman of a steady mind, tender and deep in her excess of love, it was given to her to win the heart of a dark-eyed man of letters who dwelt at Townend, Grasmere, and patience was granted her to help up great depths of pitiable suffering the genius that opium had so nigh wrecked.'

One cannot pass the Nab without thoughts of the happy wooing of the maiden Margaret, who, at a time when De Quincey was driven along these roads nigh maddened with the dream of some awful crocodile that pursued him, became to him a very Electra, to soothe and to give him strength.

It was in 1816 she left this quiet home to be De Quincey's wife. It was some years after she dwelt here for a short time with him, driven out of Townend by her husband's increase of books and bairns.

But other persons of taste, as Hawthorne suggests, have sat down at this cottage. Here Derwent Coleridge dwelt a while, and here, too, affectionately cared for by one of Nature's gentlemen, lived till his death one who to the end preserved 'A young lamb's heart amid the full-grown flocks,' one who 'without a strife slipped in a moment out of life' on Saturday, January 6, 1849,—Hartley Coleridge.

Truly Nab cottage has seen the tragedies of heavenly minds at war with human frailties. Hartley Coleridge, stumbling along the road after dark; De Quincey returning from a midnight ramble—the little candle in the window ever kept to light the weary

dreamers home; the fair form of Margaret Simpson; the tall figures of Southey or of Wordsworth bending as they stoop to pass the low doorway; the sound of high argument, such impassioned discourse—these are memories of sight and sound that haunt this little roadside cottage.

But we can never pass without a thought of good, faithful old Richardson and his wife Eleanor, who ‘sarvat lãål Hartley so weel the time they kep him at the Nab,’ the last twelve years of the poet’s life.

And from that upper window came the sound of agony of prayer. He who wrote that exquisite sonnet—

Be not afraid to pray, to pray is right,

spent almost his last breath in availing prayers, and old Richardson used to speak with tears in his eyes of the solemn way in which ‘Mr. Wadsworth came down fra the Mount, and they all gethered round Hartley’s bed and took the Communion together, and prayed a deal, they did, before lãål Hartley died.’

Farewell, Nab Cottage—

I thought of times when Pain might be thy guest,
 Lord of thy house and hospitality;
 And Grief, uneasy lover, never rest
 But when she sat within the touch of thee.

But there is that about thee that has so ministered to minds diseased, that thou hast the benison of every traveller that gazes and goes by.

WALLED OUT.

I.

In last Septimber it was, whin the weather is mostly grand,
 Wid the sunshine tarnin' the colour o' corn all over the land,
 An' the two young gintlemin came to shoot wid their guns an'
 their dogs,

A-thrampin' just for divarsion about the hills an' the bogs.
 An' I thramped afther thim, tho' it's little divarsion I had,
 Carrin' the baskits an' all, but sure its mesilf was glad
 To arn the shillins at sunsit, an' iligant loonch be the way ;
 Mate an' bread, an' a dhrop to dhrink—ye naded no more that
 day.

For, tho' 'twas thick o' the harvest, down here the bogs an' the
 hills

Lave on'y narrow slips o' fields for the furrows an' pratie dhrills ;
 Terrible quick they're raped an' dug ; but what should the farmer
 do ?

If there's on'y wark for wan, he can't find wages for two.

II.

An' wanst we were ristin' a bit in the sun on the smooth hill-side,
 Where the grass fild warm to yer hand as the flace av a shape, for
 wide

As ye'd look overhid an' around 'twas all a-blaze an' aglow ;
 An' the blue was blinkin' up from the blackest bog-houles below ;
 An' the scint o' the bogmint was sthrong on the air, an' niver a
 sound

But the plover's pipe that ye'll seldom miss be a lone bit o'
 ground.

An' he laned—Misther Pierce—on his ilbow, an' sthared at the
 sky as he smoked,
 Till just in an idle way he sthretched out his hand an' sthroked
 The fithers o' wan o' the snipe that was kilt and lay close by on
 the grass ;
 An' there was the death in the crathur's eyes like a breath upon
 glass.

An' says he: 'It's quare to think that a houle ye might bore wid
a pin
'Ill be wide inough to let such a power o' darkness in
On such a power o' light; an' it's quarer to think,' says he,
'That wan o' these days the like is bound to happen to you an'
me.'

Thin Mither Barry, he says: 'Musha, how's wan to know but
there's light
On t'other side o' the dark, as the day comes afther the night?'
An' 'Och,' says Mither Pierce, 'what more's our knowin'—save
the mark—
Than guessin' which way the chances run, an' thinks I they run
to the dark;
Or illsé agin now some glint av a bame 'd ha' come slithered an'
slid;
Sure light's not aisy to hide, an' what for should it be hid?'
Up he stood wid a sort o' laugh: 'If on light,' says he, 'ye're sit,
Let's make the most o' this same, as it's all that we're like to git.'

III.

Thin were his words, as I minded well, for often afore an' sin'
The 'dintical thought 'ud bother me hid that samed to bother
him thin;
An' many's the time I'd be wond'rin' whatever it all might mane,
The sky, an' the land, an' the bastes, an' the rist o' thim plain as
plain,
An' all behint an' beyant thim a big black shadow let fall;
Ye'll sthrain the sight out o' yer eyes, but there it stands like a
wall.
'An' there,' says I to mesilf, 'we're goin' wheriver we go,
But where we'll be whin we git there it's niver a know I know.'
Thin whiles I thought I was maybe a sthookawn to throuble me
mind
Wid sthivin' to comprehind onnatural things o' the kind;
An' quality, now, that have larnin', might know the rights o' the
case,
But ignorant wans like me had betther lave it in pace.

IV.

Praste, tubbe sure, an' Parson, accordin' to what they say,
The whoule matther's plain as a pikestaff, an' clare as the day,

An' to hare thim talk av a world beyant ye'd think at the laste
They'd been did an' buried half their lives, an' had thramped it
from wist to aist ;

An' who's for above, an' who's for below they've as pat as if they
could tell

The name av ivery saint in Hiven an' ivery divil in Hell.

But throth it's mesilf niver sit much sthore be Parson nor yit
be Praste—

Whereby the wife she says I'm no more nor a haythin baste—
For mighty few o' thim's rael quality, musha, they're mostly a pack
O' playbians aich wid a tag to his name an' a long black coat to
his back ;

An' it's on'y romancin' they are belike ; a man must sthick be his
thrade,

An' *they* git their livin' by littin' on they know how wan's sowl is made.
An' in chapel or church they're bound to know somethin' for sure,
good or bad,

Or where'd be the sinse o' their prachin' an' prayers an' hymns an'
howlin' like mad ?

So who'd go mindin' o' thim ? barrin' women, in coorse, an' wanes,
That belave most aught ye tell thim if they don't understand what
it manes.

Bedad, if it worn't the nathur o' womin to want the wit,
Parson an' Praste I'm a-thinkin' might shut up their shop an' quit.
But, och, it's lost an' distracted the crathurs 'ud be widout
Their bit o' divarsion on Sundays whin all of thim gits about,
Cluth'rin' an' pluth'rin' togither like hins, an' a-roostin' in rows,
An' matin' their frins an' their neighbours, an' wearin' their dacint
clothes.

An' sure it's quare that the clargy can't iver agray to kape
Be tellin' the same thruе sthory, sin' they know such a won'erful
hape ;

For many a thing Praste tells ye that Parson says is a lie,
An' which has a right to be wrong the divil a much know I,
For all the differ I see 'twuxt the pair o' thim'd fit in a nut :
Wan for the Union, an' wan for the Lague, an' both o' thim bitter
as sut.

But Mither Pierce, that's a gintleman born, an' has college
larnin' an' all,
There he was stharin' no wiser than me where the shadow stands
like a wall.

V.

An' soon afther thin, it so happint, things grew that conthráy an'
 bad
 I fell to wond'rin' a dale if beyant there's aught betther at all to
 be had ;
 For the blacker this ould world looks, an' the more ye're bothered
 an' vexed,
 The more ye'll be cravin' an' longin' for somethin' ilse in the next ;
 While whiniver there's little that ails ye, an' all goes slither as
 grase,
 Ye don't so much as considher, bedad, if there's e'er such a place.
 The same as a man comin' home from his wark av a winther's
 night,
 Whin the wind's like ice, an' the snow an' the rain have him
 perished outright,
 His heart'll be sit on a good turf blaze up the chimney roarin'
 an' rid,
 That'll putt the life in him agin afore he goes to his bid ;
 Tho' on summer evenin's, when soft as silk was ivery breath that
 wint,
 He'd niver have asked for a fire, but tarned to his slape contint.

VI.

The first thing that wint agin us, an' sure we were rael annoyed,
 Was when Smithson, he that's steward at the Big House, he tuk
 an' desthroyed
 Rexy, our little white dog, who we'd rared from no more than
 a pup,
 For a matther o' four or five yare, an' had kep' him an' petted
 him up.
 Hoontin' the shape ? If ye'd sane him ye'd know they were tellin'
 a lie,
 He that wasn't the size av a rabbit, an' wouldn't ha' hurted a
 fly.
 An' the frinliest baste, morebetoken, ye'd find in a long day's
 walk,
 An' knowin' an' sinsible, too, as many a wan that can talk.
 I might come home arly or late, yit afore I was hard or sane,
 He'd be off like a shot an' mate me a couple o' perch down the
 lane ;

An' whiles ye'd be kilt wid laughin', that quare were his ways an'
 his thricks—
 But there he lay stone did be the gate at the back o' Hourigan's
 ricks;
 For it's crapin' home the crathur was in hopes to die nare his
 frins,
 On'y he couldn't crape no furdher wid the leg o' him smashed
 into splins.
 An' och but the house was lonesome whin we'd buried him down
 be the dyke,
 An' the childher bawled thimsilves sick, for they thought that
 there wasn't his like;
 An' just this night, comin' up to the door, I was thinkin' I'd give
 a dale
 For the sound o' his bark, an' the pat o' his paws, an' the wag o'
 his tail.

VII.

An' thin the winther began, on a suddint it samed, for the trees
 Were flamin' like fire in the wood when it tuk to perish an' freeze;
 An' thro' yer bones like a knife wint the wind that came keenin'
 around,
 An' afther that wid the pours o' rain we were fairly dhrowned,
 For the wather'd be runnin' in sthrames benathe the stip at the
 door,
 An' t'ould thatch that's thick wid houles let it dhrip in pools on
 the floor,
 Till sorrow the fire ud' burn, wid the pate-sods no betther than
 mud,
 Sin' the sthacks thimsilves outside samed meltin' away in the
 flood.
 But the warst av it was those times, that, what wid the wet an'
 the frost,
 Ne'er a hand's tarn could be done in the fields, so wan's wages
 were lost.
 Many's the wake I could scarce git a job from wan ind to the
 other,
 An' many's the night they wint hungry to bid, both childher an'
 mother—
 An', begorra, the hardest day's wark a man iver did is to sit
 Wid his hands afore him at home, whin the childher haven't a bit.

Thin the wife tuk sick, an' was mortal bad, an' cravin' a dhrink
 as she lay,
 An' I couldn't so much as git her, the crathur, a sup o' tay ;
 An' the floor was says o' mud, an' the room a smother o' smoke,
 Till betwane thim all, begorra, me heart it was narely broke.

VIII.

But I mind wan Sathurday's night, whin we just were stharved
 wid the could,
 Me mother, she that we kape, an' that's growin' terrible ould,
 All av a hape she was crooched be the hearth that was black as yer
 grave,
 For clane gone out was the fire ; an' her ould hid niver 'ud lave
 Thrimblin' on like a dhrop o' rain that's riddy to fall from the
 row,
 The faster it thrimbles an' thrimbles the sooner it is to go.
 An' her poor ould hands were thrimblin' as she sthriched thim out
 for the hate,
 For she'd gone too blind to see that there wasn't a spark in the
 grate ;
 Nor bit nor sup she'd had but a crust o' dhry bread that day,
 'Cause our praties had rotted on us, an' we'd had to throw thim
 away ;
 An' I knowed she was vexed, for, sure, it's but doatin' she is
 afther all,
 An' 'ill fret like a child whin she fales that her slice is cut skimpy
 an' small ;
 But other whiles she'd be gravin' that we'd not got quit of her yit,
 An' misdoubtin' we grudged away from the childher aich morsel
 she'd git.
 An' watchin' her sittin' there, an' remimb'rin' the life she'd
 led,
 For me father dhrank, an' she'd throuble enough to kape the pack
 av us fed,
 An' nary the comfort she'd now, an' she grown fable an' blind—
 I could'nt but think 'twas a cruel bad job for such as she if behind
 The blackness over beyant there was nought but could for the
 could,
 An' dark for the dark—no new warld at all to make aminds for the
 ould ;

Tho' in throth it 'ud have to be the quarest warld ye could name
That 'ud make it warth wan's while to ha' lived in the likes o'
this same.

IX.

But the dhrame I dhrint that night was as strange as strange,
for thin
I thought I had come to a place whose aquil I niver was in,
An' nobody'd tould me 'twas out o' this warld, yit as soon as I
came
Just o' mysilf I knew it, as pape will in a dhrame.
An' it looked an iligant counthry, an' all in a glimmerin' green,
The colour o' laves in the spring, with a thrimble o' mist between ;
An' the smell o' the spring was in it, but the light that sthramed
over all
Was liker the shine av a sunsit whin laves are beginnin' to fall.

X.

An' two were talkin' together, that must ha' been standin'
nare,
Tho' out of me sight they kep'; an' their voices were plisant to
hare.
An' wan o' thim says to the other : 'It's this I don't undherstand,
The sinse o' this wall built yonder around an' about the land'—
An', sure, as he spoke I saw where it paped thro' the boughs
close by—
'For,' says he, 'it hides our warld, as the thruth is hid be a lie,
From ivery sowl that's alive on the wary arth below,
Till ne'er such a place there might be at all, for aught they can
know.
But grand it 'ud be some mornin' to make it melt off like the
haze
An' lave thim a sight o' this land that they're comin' to wan o'
these days.
For look ye at Ireland, now, where they're just in a disperit state,
Wid the pape slapin' on mud, an' wantin' the morsel to ait ;
If they knew there was betther in sthore I dunno what harm could
be in't,
Or what it 'ud do but hearten them up, an' kape thim a bit
contint.'

XI.

Thin t'other: 'Mind ye, there's many that's new to this place,'
says he,

'Comes askin' the same as yersilf. But considher the way it
'ud be.

For whin wanst we' downed wid the wall, an' nothin' was lift to
purvint

The poor folks yonder behouldin' the grandeur we've here behint,
An' narer a dale, belike, than they'd iver ha' thought or belaved,
Who are the fools that 'ud stay any more where they're throubled
and graved,

An' wouldn't be off wid thim here? Why, now, when there's
nought but a vast

O' shadow and blackness afore him who looks to his death an' past,
Why, even so there's a few comes in that life wid its wary wark
Has dhruv intirely mad, till they laped to their inds in the dark.

An' in Ireland, sure, this instiant there's crowds o' thim sailin'
bound

Off to the States an' Sthralia, that's half o' the whoule warld round,
Miles an' miles thro' the waves an' sthorms, an' whin they've got
there, indade,

No such won'erful lands, but just where their livin's aisier made.
An' it's mostly the young folks go, so the ould do be frettin'
sore,

For thim that are gone they doubt 'ill come home in their time
no more.

An' dhrary as e'er the long winther's night is the lonesome
summer's day,

Whin there's nivir a sthir in the house, an' the childher are over
the say.

An', arrah, now, wouldn't it be the worst day that ould Ireland
has known,

Whin she'd waken an' find all the pable had quitted an' lift her
alone?

Niver a voice to be hard, or a hover o' smoke to be spied,

An' sorrow a sowl to sit fut on the green o' the grass far an' wide,
Till the roads ran lone thro' the land as the sthrame that most
disolit flows,

An' the bastes, sthrayed away in the fields, grew as wild as the
kites an' the crows,

An' nowan to care what became o' the counthry lift stharin' an'
sthark—
But that's how 'twould happen if iver we let thim look clare
thro' the dark.'

XII.

An' the other, says he: 'Thru for ye; but what sames sthrange
to me yit
Is the notions they've larned down yonder in spite o' the scrane
ye've sit;
For there's many hares tell av a plisint place where a man 'ill go
whin he dies,
An' some be that sartin sure, you'd think they'd sane it all wid
their eyes.'

XIII.

'The rason o' that,' says he, 'is, we wouldn't let thim despair
Cliver an' clane, any more than we'd show thim the whoule av it
clare;
So wanst in a while we've given to some poor crathur o' thim
A glimpse at this place, but on'y lapt up in a mist like an' dim.
An' soon as it slips from their sight 'tis dhrowned in the darkness
dape,
Till sometimes they doubt afther all if 'twas aught but a dhrame
in their slape.
An' the rist spy nothin' at all, but they hare from the folks
that do,
An' they wish it so bad that often they belave they belave it's
thru.
But supposin' wan that was hungry could watch unbeknownst
thro' a chink
Where some had a faste preparin', the finest ye iver could think,
If he thought he'd a chance o' the thrate, sure it's quiet and still
he'd wait,
For fare if he came ere they called they'd be puttin' him out av
it sthraight.'

XIV.

That's all their discourse I remimber, for thin, as sure as I'm
born,
It was Rexy's bark that I hard—no other baste's, I'll be sworn;

An' I couldn't till ye the plisure I tuk in't, for somehow the
 sound
 Samed givin' a nathural fale to whativer I'd sane around.
 An' I just was thinkin': 'It's mad wid joy, poor Rexy, he'd be if
 he knew
 There was wan av us come from t'ould place at home'—whin, och
 wirrasthrew,
 All in a minyit I opened me eyes where I lay on the floor,
 An' the child was keenin' away, an' the wind moanin' undher the
 door,
 An' the puddle was freezed by the harth, that hadn't a spark to
 show,
 An' outside in the could daylight the air was a-flutther wid snow,
 An' the black bank sthraked wid white like the bars on a magpie's
 wing—
 For sorrow a ward o' thruth was in't, an' I'd naught but dhramed
 the thing.

xv.

Sorrow a ward o' thruth—yit some says that they've niver a
 doubt
 But there's plenty o' thruth in a dhrame, if ye tarn it the right
 side out ;
 An' I mind me mother, wan night she dhrint av a ship on the say,
 An' next mornin' her Micky, the sogger, came home that was yares
 away.
 Thin a notion I have, as I woke, I'd hard one o' thim two inside
 Sayin': 'Slape, that's the chink for a glimpse, but death, that's
 the door set wide.'
 An' whin things do be cruel conthráry, wid could an' the hunger
 an' all,
 Some whiles I fall thinkin': 'Sure, maybe, it's on'y a bit o' their
 wall ;'
 So p'haps it's a fool that I am, but many's the time, all the same,
 I says to mesilf I'd be wishful for just a dhrame o' that dhrame.

AN ORIGINAL EDITION.

It was at a shabby second-hand book shop in H—— Street that I picked it up—or is that the right way to express it—should I not rather say it picked me up? Such was the marvellous attractive power which it possessed! I didn't want the book, I'd never even heard of it, and though, of course, the name of its author, Jean Jacques Rousseau, was familiar enough to my ears, I knew little enough really of either himself or his writings to desire to possess any of his works. Beyond a vague idea that he was a celebrated author and rather a bad lot, I was quite ignorant. Another thing, too, which prejudiced me against the man was, that having (to my mind) the misfortune to be born a Frenchman, he habitually wrote in the French language.

Now I am not a good linguist; the French language (and indeed every other, except the one which is my mother tongue) is to me comparatively unknown.

I still possess faint recollections, fast dying away and receding into the dim distance of the past, of painful and ineffectual struggles with certain odious and irregular verbs, the result of which was failure and many a weary hour spent in the company of a slate and a French grammar, while the shouts of my school-mates were borne by the breeze upon my longing ears, from the playground or the cricket-field to the lonely school-room, where I sat immured, the victim of a vindictive verb. Consequently I became possessed of a feeling of unutterable contempt for the benighted being who voluntarily submitted to be born a Frenchman and form one of a nation which commonly spoke of a tooth-brush as 'she,' and indulged in the imbecility of a masculine mustard-pot.

Have I advanced sufficient arguments to show why I, above all people, should be free from the weakness of desiring to possess a work in a language the understanding of which would involve the necessity of searching out the meaning of every other word in a dictionary? I think so; but there is yet another. The book was evidently an original edition, octavo, bound in—what I couldn't exactly say; it wasn't calf, but had rather the appearance of vellum or parchment of some description, as far as I could judge, who

was no connoisseur of books or bindings. Just the sort of thing, you will say, to make an antiquarian's mouth water, only I was no antiquarian, and my bookcase, such as it was, rejoiced in a goodly array of books bound in all the colours of the rainbow, blue and green and red, together with a not inconsiderable number of the two-shilling railway novels, such as my soul loved. When I bought a book I liked it to be brand new, with gilt edges, and got up in a style which reflected credit on its possessor : none of your second-hand rubbish for me.

Why on earth, then, did I buy that book which I didn't want, in a language I couldn't understand, written by a man I knew nothing about? I asked myself at the time and I ask myself now, why did I do it? and give the only answer I have ever been able to give, at that or any other time—I don't know and I never shall know.

I was walking calmly and peacefully along, taking the middle of the road in preference to the path, which involved jostling and being jostled by others who were in a hurry themselves, and resented the fact of my having so much spare time on my hands. I was walking, I repeat, up the middle of the narrow thoroughfare with my hat at the back of my head and my hands in my pockets, at peace with myself and the world. Even towards those who came into collision with me, who trod on my toes viciously and poked me in the ribs aggressively, I had no feeling save that of a gentle pity, to think that they so little understood the art of taking things easily, when suddenly my eye was struck by the title-page of an open book, which, though on the top shelf of a shop window, and of no great size or of a particularly alluring aspect, seemed to stand out from among its fellows and forcibly compel my attention.

'Du Contrat Social, ou Principes du Droit Politique,' was what I read on the title-page, and at the same time I was seized with a perfectly irresistible and unaccountable desire to possess the volume. I came to a full stop in the middle of the roadway, causing an impolite remark to issue from the lips of a stout gentleman carrying a basket of strawberries, who was walking immediately behind me. I did not resent the remark; indeed, when I saw the strawberries rolling in the gutter, I felt that under the circumstances it was even justifiable.

I did not help him to pick them up, as perhaps I should have done, for I was too much occupied in feeling in my pockets and

making an inventory of their contents. Seventeen-and-six, a cigar holder (cracked), a three-bladed knife, two toothpicks, and a latch-key were the sum total. There was no price marked on the book, strange to say, though all its companions were duly ticketed. Did that mean that its value was 'far above rubies,' or that 'no reasonable offer would be refused'?

I was now standing on the pathway staring hard at the bait, which somehow or other, without my having the faintest idea why, exercised such a powerful influence over me; then all at once it struck me what an egregious ass I was to think of throwing away my money in purchasing what I didn't want; and I didn't want the thing in the least, no, not I. So, jamming my hat firmly over my eyes (an expression of determination) and taking my hands out of my pocket, I set off at a good round pace for, it might have been 50 yards, more or less, probably less, when I suddenly came to a full stop. It was no good; I was thinking about that wretched book all the time and wondering what it was about (which I never succeeded in finding out), and to whom it had belonged originally. 'Hang it all!' I thought to myself, 'I'll go and ask what the price is. Perhaps'—and there was a sense of relief in the idea—'it's more than seventeen-and-six, old and shabby as it looks,' though I was not so ignorant as to be unaware that, generally speaking, it is the oldest books which fetch the highest prices.

This time I entered boldly at the door of the dark little den, which was piled from floor to ceiling with volumes of every description and size. The proprietor was an unwashed gentleman of the Hebraic type, who, emerging from a background of so much dust and cobwebs, had the air of a species of human spider in a greasy smoking-cap and carpet slippers. To him, after a pretence of turning over and examining some of the mouldy-looking volumes which littered the counter, I put the question, 'Oh—er—what do you want for that book of what's-his-name's? French chap, you know—Rousseau's the name, I think; it's in the window. I don't particularly want it, but if it's going cheap I don't mind——' I stopped short, for the old reptile was regarding me with a look I couldn't understand, in which exultation seemed to struggle with malice and produce a result which was as unbecoming to himself as it was unpleasant to the beholder.

'You want to know the price of Rousseau's "Social Contract"?' Ah, there is a book, a most rare book! A book that is worth its weight in gold. There is probably not its fellow to be found in

this country—or any other' (I bade a mental farewell to this literary treasure). 'It is, in fact, unique of its kind.'

'Well,' I said, 'if it is such a rare and curious edition as all that, I'm afraid I shan't be able to afford it; though I don't know why you should set so much store by it; it isn't much to look at, at any rate the binding's nothing.'

To my surprise this innocent remark appeared to cause him the most profound and exquisite amusement. As I looked at him in astonishment, his dirty sallow complexion became suffused with a purple tinge, the veins in his forehead swelled as though they would burst, and a sort of hoarse wheezing sound bore evidence that some inward disturbance was taking place.

'The binding,' he croaked at last, 'the good gentleman objects to the binding. I assure him the binding is most uncommon and costly beyond anything of the sort ever met with.' 'All right,' I thought to myself, 'go on—pile it up. It's quite evident that he's going to ask something quite beyond my means, the lying old impostor.' 'In fact,' he continued with a fiendish chuckle, which would have done credit to Barnaby Rudge's raven, 'it is an "édition de luxe," and the price is,' looking me up and down, from my hat, which had seen considerable wear, to my boots, which had been re-soled twice, 'the price is—three-and-six.'

By Jove! I thought to myself, what a come down after the rhapsody he'd been indulging in. Somehow I didn't seem to care so much for the book now that it was within my reach. 'Three-and-six!' and I moved towards the door. 'I don't know, after all, that I care about the thing. I——'

'But, my good gentleman,' he continued, in tones of anxiety, 'consider what a bargain! A rare work, an original edition, and only—— You shall have it for half a crown!'

'Perhaps,' I remarked, surprised by his eagerness to rid himself of this, according to him, valuable edition, 'it is imperfect?'

'Not a leaf injured. You shall examine it for yourself.' He went towards the window, and mounting a pair of steps, proceeded to remove the volume from its position. In some way or other, in doing this, it slipped and fell, one corner striking him in the eye with considerable force. It evidently inflicted some pain, and he responded in curses not loud, but deep, and evidently coming from the bottom of his heart. 'Take it,' he said, blinking at me out of his uninjured eye, 'take it; you shall have it for two shillings.' With this offer, after a brief inspection which showed the book to be uninjured and the title-page intact, I closed, and left

the shop with my purchase under my arm. Something caused me to look back on reaching the end of the short street, and I saw my bookselling friend standing at the door of his shop, with a red cotton handkerchief tied over one eye, which made him appear still less inviting than before, and rubbing his hands with what looked like great glee and self-gratulation.

‘Queer old fish!’ I thought to myself, ‘he can’t have made much out of this bargain. Anyone would think he was new to the business to let a book like this go so dirt cheap. Yet he looked ‘cute enough too!’

I took an omnibus at the Circus. There were three or four other people in it besides myself, including a gouty old gentleman and a woman with a baby. I dislike a woman with a baby—or, indeed, any other combination which includes a baby. With regard to the old gentleman, I had the misfortune to drop my new purchase on his gouty foot. I had no wish to drop it on that particular foot, but would just as soon have dropped it on the other, if the choice had been given me; but from the language in which he indulged you might have thought that the outrage had been premeditated and carried out of malice prepense.

Then I sat down by the baby, and the baby screamed itself black in the face in less than five minutes; to whom its fond parent vainly addressed words of mystic consolation. ‘Didn’t ‘um like a nasty man, then, and did ‘um frighten ‘um’s precious pets out of ‘um’s pretty wits?’

After all, when I inspected my purchase there didn’t seem to be much to congratulate myself upon with regard to it. It was large octavo in size, of rather less than 200 pages in thickness, the paper yellow, the print faded, and the binding—I turned it over and over, but there was nothing in the least to justify the extravagant encomiums lavished upon it by its last owner. What it was bound in seemed to be a species of parchment or vellum, which had also become yellow and discoloured by time and use. I shut it up after a brief inspection of its contents, and laid it aside while I discussed a nondescript meal, which began with cold mutton and ended with marmalade. I had closed the book and laid it on the mantel-piece out of the way; and here I may mention that I found the back very stiff, and the book not easy to open in consequence—in fact, it shut immediately of its own accord, directly one removed one’s hand.

It was a peculiar creaking sound which made me turn my head in the direction of the empty fireplace, which now, in the month

of June, contained nothing but torn envelopes, burnt matches, and other untidy litter of a bachelor's apartment. To my amazement, I found that the noise came from the book I had just bought, and which was slowly and deliberately opening of its own accord. There must be something peculiar about the binding, which allowed the volume thus to open when I had found considerable difficulty in making it do so, and when even then it obstinately refused to remain open without being held.

I rose and looked at it where it lay flat open on the shelf, at Chapter V., the title of which was, 'Du droit de vie et de mort,' and even my limited stock of French allowed me to translate the phrase as 'The right of life and death.' I shut the book up, and then tried whether it would open again at the same place—perhaps this had been a favourite chapter with one of its previous owners, which might account for it. But no! the book once shut refused to reopen without a considerable wrench; the leaves seemed to adhere together in a peculiar manner, and felt damp and clammy to the touch, so I put it down again, and lighting a pipe, went and sat by the open window and watched the passers-by. Presently I was almost startled to hear the same peculiar sound coming from behind me. This time I knew at once where to look. There was that confounded 'Social Contract' slowly and deliberately opening again, just as though some invisible hand had hold of it. I made two strides to the fireplace. Yes, there it was, open at the same place as before—Chapter V., 'Du droit de vie et de mort.' 'Hang Chapter V. and its confounded title!' I muttered to myself as I banged the lids together and clapped a big dictionary on the top to keep it shut. I was tired of M. Jean Jacques and his vagaries.

I could have taken a solemn oath as to the manner in which I left it, but in the morning I found the position of affairs reversed—the dictionary was underneath, and on the top was that blessed book, lying wide open at Chapter V.!

I spoke pretty sharply to the woman who looks after my chambers. 'Look here, Mrs. Jenkins! I've told you, once for all, that I won't have my things touched or meddled with in any way, and if you and your duster can't be content with the tables and chairs, you'll have to go.'

'The Lord bless and save us, if I've so much as laid a finger tip on one of them books or papers, much as they want it, seeing it was your orders, and me a widder with two pore orphans depending on me for their daily bread and treacle, let alone a bit of something tasty now and then, sich as tripe or liver, or——'

‘Then you’re sure you haven’t touched any of my books, or moved anything on the mantel-piece?’

‘I give you my word, solemn, and on my bended knees, if thought necessary, though what with the stairs and the scrubbing they’re that stiff—that what with your boots and the breakfast, and me oversleeping myself, through cow-heels for supper, I haven’t so much as touched the leg of a chair, or been within a yard of the mankel-piece, whatever my wishes might have been.’

I began to think that either I or the book, or both, were bewitched. I was out nearly all that day, and hardly know whether I was surprised or not when, on coming home, I found the ‘Contract Social,’ which I had left shut up in a drawer with several other odd volumes and magazines, lying on its face on the floor, still open at Chapter V., while the other contents of the drawer, which was standing open, were in a state of the wildest disorganisation. I had left the windows shut and the door locked, and found both in the same condition on my return. No one could possibly have gained admission. What did it mean? I was lost in wonderment!

That night when I retired to rest I took the thing with me and placed it under my pillow, thinking that I should thus be sure of no one meddling with it. Of the horrors of that night I can hardly speak without fear of incurring the charge of extravagance and exaggeration.

I suppose I must have gone off to sleep very quickly, though what followed seemed so real—so horribly, so fantastically real—that it is hard, even now, to believe that after all it was only a dream. I thought that I suddenly found myself in a vast gloomy cavern. So dark was it that at first I could not distinguish its dimensions and extent, but after a time a ray of ghostly white light pierced through the darkness, which increased and broadened slowly but surely, until it lit up all surroundings with a lurid ghastly radiance. Then I saw that what I at first took for a cavern was, in reality, a vast charnel-house, from the damp, noisome walls of which rills of water trickled ceaselessly down upon dark, inanimate, recumbent forms which covered the ground, so that it was impossible to stir without coming in contact with some one of them.

Once I moved or tried to move, for I was palsied with horror, but at the first motion something fell rattling down from a niche above my head—something which passed so closely that it brushed my face as it fell, and then lay motionless at my feet—a

human skull, with wide, empty eye-sockets, and white, grinning teeth! Then from the gloom at the farthest end of the cavern there came a voice! Such an unearthly, awful voice, which sounded as though the tongue of the speaker were swollen and protruding. 'Brothers and sisters of the guillotine, rise and greet the stranger!' There was a sound as of the rustling of grave clothes on every side, as the dark, shapeless forms rose upright upon their fleshless feet; row upon row, men and women, every one of them with features distorted with agony—blackened lips drawn back showing the clenched teeth, quivering eye-balls, and distended nostrils—while round the neck of almost every one was a thin red line. They came nearer and nearer, closing me in on every side, rank behind rank; in a moment more I should be pressed and trodden underfoot by their bloodless skeleton feet. Again there came the voice—that indescribably horrible voice from the gloomy unseen recesses of that fearful place. 'Brothers and sisters, take him; he is yours, serve him as they served you at Meudon!' Hundreds of bony arms were stretched out to seize me. I was almost in their grasp, when with the supreme horror of the moment I shrieked and woke. Woke with the sound of my own voice ringing in my ears and the perspiration pouring from me. Woke shaking as with an ague, with horrible voices still gibbering in my ears. It was some moments before I could sufficiently command myself so as to rise and strike a light. When I did so I found it was ten minutes to three o'clock, and on beholding my ghastly face in the glass, found it hard to believe that I had merely suffered from an extra bad attack of nightmare.

I looked towards the bed, when I saw on the pillow close to where my head had lain, that cursed 'Social Contract,' which I knew I had placed under it, standing up on end, balancing itself carefully on the soft, uneven surface, wide open as before. Opening my window wide, I took the book in my hand and flung it from me with all my strength.

The next evening, when I was congratulating myself on having got rid of my tormentor, I received a visit from my old chum Jack Margreaves, who had been out of town and whom I had consequently not seen for a week or two. I was delighted to see him again, and we smoked two or three pipes together, while he told me all he had been doing since we last met. Suddenly he stopped short.

'By Jove! I'd quite forgotten,' putting his hand in his pocket. 'Is this yours, old man? I found it lying on the door-

step as I came in, as though someone had dropped it there,' and he laid before me on the table the book I had thought myself well rid of. My look, I suppose, surprised him, for he asked, 'What's up? Isn't it right?'

'Yes, yes,' I hastened to reply. 'It's my book, but I don't care much for it, because it's written in French, and that's a language I don't know much about.'

Now Jack's a capital French scholar—spent two years at a school near Rouen, so when, after looking at the book, which he knew well by repute and declared to have been a powerful instrument in helping forward the French Revolution, he asked me to lend it to him for a day or two, I was only too glad to let him have it. He took it away with him, and I slept in peace that night, undisturbed by any of the horrors which had haunted my dreams of the night before. It was some two or three days afterwards that he came to my rooms again. He seemed rather thoughtful, and several times seemed on the brink of saying something; finally he remarked:

'That's a queer sort of book you lent me, that work of Rousseau's. Is there—though it seems ridiculous to ask such a question—is there anything uncanny about it? I can't make the thing out.'

'Why—how?' I put in breathlessly.

'Why,' he continued, 'it's always shifting itself about, as though it were a live thing. If I put it in one place, I'm bound to find it in another. Once I locked it up in my cupboard, but it was no good; I found it lying outside on the floor and everything in the greatest confusion inside, as though it had been having a battle royal with the other books and upset them all. One night I kept it in my bedroom——'

'Ah!' I interrupted, 'and what was the result? Tell me; I am anxious to know!'

'Then there *is* something in it?' he replied, removing his pipe and looking at me steadily, 'and it isn't all my confounded liver, as I persuaded myself, or tried to.'

'I'll tell you all I know about it afterwards; only go on, tell me what happened in your bedroom.'

'Oh, nothing very much, only when I woke up suddenly in the middle of the night, I heard, or thought I heard, a sound as though someone were turning over the leaves of the book, which I had left on the chest of drawers—turning them over very fast. I sat up in bed, but couldn't see anything, and then the book seemed

to be suddenly shut up with a bang, and there came a sound as though it had been thrown from one end of the room to the other. I don't mind telling you, old fellow, that I felt a bit scared for a minute or two.'

I nodded my head at him in encouragement and he continued. 'But when I struck a light, there was nothing and no one to be seen, except the book, lying face downwards, at the other end of the room, farthest from the chest of drawers where I had laid it.'

We both remained silent for some time when he had finished his statement; then I told him my experience from the time of my purchasing the book (not forgetting the extraordinary eagerness on the part of the old bookseller to part with it), and my awful dream, including the mysterious occurrence of his finding the book on the doorstep after I had thrown it out of window the night before. When we parted it was with the agreement that he should deliberately set himself to lose the volume, which must surely have had an evil spell laid upon it by some former possessor. The next evening he came rushing in upon me with great satisfaction depicted on his countenance. He had laid it upon a seat in one of the parks, then retired behind a tree and watched the result. In a short time an evil-looking, cadaverous individual (I quote from my friend's description) had, after loitering about for a few minutes, seized the book and made off with it under his arm. So we were free from that pest. I ordered up the hot water and lemons, and we prepared to enjoy ourselves for the rest of the evening. An hour or more had passed in convivial intercourse, when there came a knock at the outer door—a single loud knock which struck us into instant silence. Mrs. Jenkins had long left my chambers for the bosom of her family and something hot for supper. Instinctively we both rose together, and went to ascertain who was the intruder at that late hour of the night. Throwing open the door, we were confronted by a tall dark figure, who, by the light of the hall lamp, seemed possessed of a singularly unprepossessing countenance. We regarded him in silence and suspicion. Stretching out his arm he offered me an object. 'Yours!' was the only word he uttered, and then turning away, disappeared into the darkness without.

Who was he and whence came he, and how, without a scrap of evidence or a word of writing to guide him, had he sought me out and restored the book to me? for we both knew, without a syllable being spoken on either side, what it was that had been returned so mysteriously.

‘What’s to be done now?’ at last I asked, after we had laid the volume on the table in my sitting-room. Jack thought for a moment, then pointing towards the empty grate briefly uttered the words, ‘Burn it!’

Instantly we began looking about for the materials with which to construct a fire. A cigar-box or two were broken up, newspapers were added, and there was soon a cheerful blaze roaring away up the chimney. I took the book in my hand to cast it on its funeral pyre, but even then, much as I desired to see the end of it, something made me hesitate. As I held it loosely in my hand, half open, I saw that the leaves had once more parted at the old place. ‘Chapitre V. Du droit de vie et de mort.’

Holding it thus exposed to the heat of the fire, while Jack added the remains of yet another cigar-box to help the blaze, I saw that on the broad margin of the book were faint marks, as of written characters, gradually becoming plainer as the fire acted upon them.

‘See,’ I said, my words almost falling over each other in my excitement, ‘see, here is something written in what must have been an invisible ink—red ink, too—and the heat of the fire is bringing it out plainer every moment. Read it, read it,’ I said, thrusting the book into his hands; for the sentence thus revealed was written in crabbed characters and in the French language. I saw his face change, and a look of gradually increasing horror steal across it as he first deciphered the meaning of the sentence and read it over to himself.

‘What is it, man? Speak out, for Heaven’s sake!’ I exclaimed in an agony of excitement and agitation. Almost in a whisper came the answer. ‘At Meudon, in 1794, there was a tannery of human skins, where such of the guillotined as were deemed worth the flaying were tanned, and their skins made excellent soft leather for the binding of books and many other purposes, but it is said there is a curse upon all things thus made. This book is bound—’ The writing was fading out again as I looked over his shoulder while he read these words.

Snatching the volume from his hand, I turned to the title-page—‘Meudon, 1794.’ We both saw the inscription and looked at one another in blank horror and amazement. The next moment I had cast the accursed thing upon the blaze. There it curled and writhed like a living thing, until a tongue of flame caught it, and in a few seconds there was nothing left but a handful of white ashes.

NOTES BY A NATURALIST.

THE HERON AND ITS HAUNTS.

THE heron—the Jack Hern of the marsh-men—was at one time a common bird in those localities which were suited to that bird's habits and means of living. His being a notable figure in history has been, and is still, a disadvantage to him, for he has suffered from an ill reputation which clings to him to this day, but which he only gained through being misunderstood. His appearance and bearing are remarkable, and have always commanded attention. Hungry as a heron, lean as a heron, long-shanked as a heron, are common expressions with people who do not take the trouble to investigate his character more closely. Much has been written about him from an able and a more scientific point of view than I care to take here, but a great deal of nonsense also. One author, speaking of the heron and his habits, calls him 'a picture of wretchedness, anxiety, and indigence, condemned to struggle perpetually with misery and want; and sickened by the cravings of a famished appetite.' Fine sounding words these, but there is no sense in them. Such a description is noways applicable to my old acquaintance, the common grey heron. He is a bird of many qualities, patient, strong, and brave. Very rarely does he put himself in a temper; when he indulges in that luxury it is the same with him as with some people who are usually quiet; and the further you get away from him the better.

But why men and boys should rush for a gun to shoot him down as though he were some dangerous animal I cannot tell. That mark of attention has been paid him for successive ages; but in the olden time only the great could deal with him, as he was then in grace of sanctuary. The monks might grumble when they saw him round their fish-stews, but they were compelled to let him be. A cast of jerfalcon or peregrines used to bring him to earth, and then the falconer had to be quick to prevent mischief, for if his neck was free, that long bill would be used with deadly effect, and his claws would clutch like a cat's. When living he was held in the highest estimation, and when dead also. For the heron and his near neighbour and kinsman, the bittern, graced

the abbot's table as well as that of the nobility. A royal bird of those days one might style him, for royalty itself framed laws for his protection and special benefit.

Even now they will kill him for eating in the wild marsh-lands when they can get him. I have seen him hanging up in the poulterers' shops for sale as an article of diet. He commands a good price in some places. A clean feeder he is, and his food is fresh, for he has it alive.

From my childhood I have known the bird well, and all his habits and characteristics. With an inborn passionate love for all wild creatures, I was left, as a boy, to my own devices in that wild marsh-land district which I have already written about; and I knew practically as much about the birds that frequented our shore then as I do now. My knowledge was gained by wading through reeds, crawling between hillocks, lying flat and wriggling like an eel, to watch the waders and gulls feed and wash in the pools from morning to night. A lonely boy, I tried to scrape acquaintance with the creatures about me, and it grew to be the delight and pastime of my youth, and the interest and pleasure of maturer years.

Jack Hern, as I called him then, is a bird of sober-coloured plumage, grey, black, and white. The bill has a yellow tint, and the legs are a dull light olive-green. These tones are so disposed, however, that the eye is satisfied. Everyone who has studied birds and animals in their haunts must have noted how the colouring of the creatures harmonises with their surroundings. So much the better for them.

I have studied him in many different places since my boyhood—on the moorlands, by river and stream, in the meadows and ploughed fields; among the lush tangled herbage of a bog swamp, and in the trees; and my affection for the heron has strengthened with my knowledge of him and his ways.

Let us observe him where I knew him first. Morning, noon, and night, according to the flow and ebb of the tide, you will find him on the sea-shore. Speaking from my own experience, the herons are more numerous there in winter than in summer. The parts of the shore close to the marshes left bare by the tide are singularly lonely. The sun shines hotly on the dreary flats, and the pools flash and glitter. With the exception of a pair of Ring Dotterels piping about, not another sound is to be heard. The hot air quivers over the flats and saltings; not even a gull is to be

seen, for they are having a rest by some shallow pool, clear as crystal, in the marshes near at hand.

Mud flats and pools mingle together in a blue flickering haze in the distance. There is no life overhead, but you will find plenty close to your feet. The mud flats here are hard slub; you can walk over them without fear of quags to swallow you up to the knees, and deeper, unless you throw yourself backwards and scratch out somehow. Winkles are all over the place, crawling slowly like snails, and leaving their tracks behind them. Here is a pool left by the tide; so clear the water is that the most minute crab or fish can be distinctly seen. What a collection of creatures dart about hither and thither as we lift up a mass of snapper-weed in the pool: small fish of various kinds, the greater part young plaice and flounders, with the common green crab of the saltings, from the little nippers no larger than a shilling to those near the size of your closed fist, which congregate in hosts, thousands upon thousands of them, in some parts of our coasts. Some would imagine it to be a wild-goose chase coming to look for the heron on these bare, hot, steaming flats, but we have found him here before, and shall do so now.

Mussel scalps, as they are called, abound here.

There is a fitness in local terms which strikes one more forcibly than pleasantly, as you would find if your bare shins were to scrape an acquaintance with the sharp edges of the shells, which cut like knives. These scalps vary in height from that of a gallon to a bushel measure. Advancing with slow steps between them and the pools, we startle a heron from behind one of the larger ones. Up he springs, with rough, croaking scream, and flaps away with a lazy flight, for his stomach is full, and he has been disturbed from a nap in the shade of the mussel scalps. Presently another rises, with a small eel about a foot long wriggling about in his bill, and this gives the alarm to a couple more who were near at hand. It would seem strange to a casual observer that so large a bird could escape notice on the bare flats, but the reason he so often does so—and they are rarely seen until you get close to them—is that the slub is grey in tone of colouring, also the white breast of the bird falls in with the bright flash of the pools lit up in the sunlight; one is blended into the other, and the instinct of self-preservation, which is very fully developed in him, saves him often from harm. Like the rook, he has some means of knowing if it is a gun you are carrying, or merely a stick. I have

proved this to be so, over and over again. I cannot account for it in any way, but the fact remains: if you point a stick at him in gun fashion, he does not mind it in the least; but a gun presented is the instant signal for speedy flight.

Like other living creatures, he finds change necessary to him at times, and he quits the marshes for the sea-shore at his own time and pleasure. He finds the pools about the right depth for wading, and altogether convenient; for, as a rule, they are merely depressions in the slub, a few inches deep. The flounder may scuttle down, leaving only his head and eyes exposed, the head slightly raised, looking more like the head of the cobra than anything else in nature. What curious likenesses we find at times in creatures whose mode of life is so utterly different! Well hidden as Mr. Flounder thinks himself, it is not enough, for Jack Hern's quick eye has seen him. The bird's neck is drawn back for one moment, and the stroke is made. Far better than any large fork lashed on to a stick is the bill of the heron. The fish may kick and wriggle as only a flounder can, but he will not get away from that grip. This victim is some three inches in width; watch it in the process of disappearance. The fish is tossed up and caught head foremost, and he gulps him down as far as his neck. That is long and thin, but its power of expansion is very great. The passage of the fish can be plainly seen, for the neck becomes fan-shaped where the fish sticks for a moment on its way to the bird's stomach. However, the matter is soon over, as the fish folds in on both sides, and the devourer is ready to repeat the process with something else. Small tender crab, shrimp, prawn, or sand-hopper, also sand-worms, and many more little pickings are there for him. He lives well in summer, but he does not get fat any more than the great marsh-hares that often sit up and look at him as he prowls about, especially when the tiny leverets are located in some slight hollow between the mole hillocks. Fat is not found on either them or him—not in the proper sense of the word.

Let us have a good look at him after he has been shot, dead; certainly not till we are sure of that fact, for I have a profound respect for the fighting capabilities of the heron. Falcons, hawks, and owls can use their bills and claws with effect—I can speak feelingly on that subject—but I would rather deal with the three of them together than with Master Heron when he is only wing-tipped by the shot and his temper is roused.

There he is dead at our feet, however. Pick him up and

examine him. Begin with his dagger of a bill; it is six inches long. Feel the tip and its serrated edges. Look at the gape he has. Pass your hand down his neck to the shoulders; there is muscle there. Press the eyelids back with the finger tip and look at his keen hawk-like eye. Notice the bend of the wing from the shoulder, and feel the muscles that move his broad wings in flight. Grand wings they are. Take the tip of one flight feather and stretch the wings; or, better still, hold them out in front of you with both hands. You will be surprised at their length and width. Now finish with his legs and feet. Wonderful feet they are, and the same may be said of the other members of his tribe. Surely the stilts of the marsh-men, with the flat pieces at the ends to prevent their sinking and sticking in the soft surface of the marshes, had their origin in the first instance in a close examination of the heron's legs and feet. Feel his long toes. How lithe they are! You can bend them at your will, up and down and sideways. So could the bird when alive, and in twenty different directions to your one; for he could climb and cling to anything with them, perch on trees, step about as gingerly as a cat, wade anywhere, and, when he thought fit, swim also. He is a bird of varied accomplishments, and they are all useful to him, serving his purpose each one in its turn, which is more than can be said of the accomplishments of some members of the human family.

Take him for all in all, he is a feathered Moss-Trooper. Luxuriously as he fares in summer, in winter the tune is changed. No more lazy flappings over the marsh from pool to pool, and from one dyke to another through an atmosphere bathed in the soft, hazy, golden light of sunset—bird and sky, land and water, alike glorified in its long slanting rays. How often have I gazed on such a scene in my old marshland home! A few more years and it will be a rarer sight; for the marshes have been drained in many counties, and where the heron had his home you will soon see cornfields and fruit orchards.

Winter has come, but no snow has fallen yet; the air is too cold for it to come down. Marsh and dykes are frozen hard; the keen winds from the sea cut bitterly, making the reeds and flags, now dry and withered, clash and rattle again as they rush over the flats. In that clump of tangled reed, flag, rush, and coarse bents is the heron, standing on one leg, warm and snug, his head and neck drawn in to his shoulders. The wind may blow its

hardest, but it only knits the tangle closer. It is no trouble for him to make a way in and out as he requires it. The tide is just near the ebb turn; when it is fairly on the ebb he will be moving. Although there is no town clock to tell him the time, he knows, in some way or other, to a minute when the tide has fairly turned. And now he rises from his place of refuge, right in the middle of the tangle in which he had been hiding. His long, limber, clinging toes enable him to grasp the reeds and flags in order to climb sufficiently high to give room for his wings to play. His cousin the bittern is more expert in the art of getting up out of cover than is the heron, but then he is also more given to hiding himself.

Now he is well up, and he comes on with some more herons after him. This is the time to note his play of wing, for the wind blows strong. The birds try to beat to windward, but the blast catches them, turning them fairly up on one side. They thresh and flap vigorously to recover their balance, and succeed in doing so after a time, to be caught again in the same manner. Over the sea wall and on over the saltings they flap, and they drop down close to the edge of the ebbing tide. But what a change is this from their summer haunts. The haze that flickered over the slub and softened the distance has given place to the keen clear air of winter, when the dry black frosts hold the marsh and dykes in their icy grip. Sails of ships can be seen in the offing, and the minster tower stands out in clear relief against the sky. About a mile away a dark cloud appears to hang over the water, towards which it falls and rises again. On the water a long line of black shows. It is a gaggle of Brent geese, part of which are on the water, paddling on the ebb; the rest have risen on wing and are dipping and flapping up and down, impatient for the long sea grass to show bare for them to graze on. Other birds rush up for their share from the shingle of the beach five miles away—dunlins, sanderlings, and knots. The curlews are there as a matter of course; where the lug or sandworm is abundant you will find those birds in great numbers. The heron has no longer the shore to himself as he had it in summer; others share it with him, as well as the food that the tide leaves. The dunlins run nimbly over the surface left bare, busily pecking and dibbing at something in or on the slub. If you rouse a flock of them and look at the place where they were, you will see thousands of little depressions left by the tips of their bills. Their prey must be

very small—minute crustaceans, probably, or the spat of some mollusk. The sanderlings and knots keep more apart. The tangle round stones finds favour with them. They will mix with the dunlins at times, and with curlews in close company, but not one of them will get within reach of the heron. One blow and a grip, a dabble in the water to wet the poor victim's feathers and make them lie closer, and little Master Dunlin, or any other bird of his size, goes down his gullet at a gulp. Look at them following the tide, with neck stretched out and bill a little open, ready for anything. Now and then it looks as if a squabble were going on, as some one heron, more fortunate than another, gets a better find; of course the one next to him wants to share it, and then ensue sundry flappings of wings and extraordinary dancing movements. One or two rise and drop down again a few yards away to continue their search. What they feed on could only be found out by first shooting one, and then examining the contents of his stomach. Scores of birds of all sorts are shot, skinned, and stuffed, and their bodies eaten, but in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred the stomach is never inspected. It is very convenient to say this bird, or that small animal, feeds almost exclusively on such and such a diet, but that proves nothing: you can only really tell what a creature feeds on, as the seasons vary, by the contents of its stomach.

I will give a few of the favourite morsels of the heron. Eels, being a standing dish with him, must come first; after these the young of land and water birds, water rats, mice, frogs, fish of all sorts, shrimps, and small crabs. And if any little bunny happened to be dotting round a mole-hill—having come out of the burrow for the first time just to see how large the world was—when the heron was gliding near with his noiseless step, it would certainly never see its mother again.

Now our birds have neared the ferry, and that is the extent of their feeding ground; they will soon fly back into the marsh.

They are on wing. Very slowly they make headway, for the wind is against them, and they are low down. A shot is heard from the base of the sea wall close to a sluice. A great commotion follows, for the leading bird, a fine cock heron, is hit in one wing. He loses his balance at once, and drifts back on his companions. The others are alarmed, and for a moment there is a flapping and whirl of wings in dire confusion, the fierce wind huddling them up one on the other. It lasts only a few minutes;

they get clear and fly over the marsh in different directions. The wounded bird tries with all his might for a time to keep up, for he is only tipped; soon he begins to wobble and flap, and at last drops on the marsh. The shooter has a water spaniel with him; the dog has been intently watching the effect of the shot, and, seeing the bird drop, makes for it at once. The shooter tells me his dog is a young one, and his training is not yet finished. 'Come back, Nep! come back, Nep! Come back, I tell you! Ah, by Jove, he's got it! pretty hot, too; hear him yelp.' He had got it, and no mistake, for the bird, half raising himself on the ground with his sound wing and feet, had let drive as the dog rushed in to fix him. The first stroke, aimed at one of his eyes, missed, and took effect on the forehead, making a wound you could put the tip of your finger in. The second stroke crippled a foreleg, and the dog needed no more calling, but limped back to his master.

'Come here and let's see the mischief. Well, you've got something to remember this time. It's been a precious near squeak for you, Nep, but you'll get over it, and you'll not try to pick up a live Jack Hern again; you'll let 'em alone as long as you live, I'll warrant.'

The bird lay with crest raised, his long neck moving snake-like from side to side, and the feathers of the breast spread out, all ready to do battle. Walking up to him, the man said, 'No, you don't; not with me, at any rate; take that!' hitting him a crack on the head with the butt-end of his gun. The heron raised himself for a last stroke at his enemy's legs.

A keeper once said to me, 'No; I never lets a retriever pick up one o' they hungry varmint unless they're dead. If they only gets winged I give 'em a cut across the neck with a stick—a thundrin' good un, mind ye, and that settles 'em.'

'And what do you do with them then?' I asked.

'Nails 'em up on the side o' the old barn along o' the hawks an' the owls; because, don't ye see, in my mind they belongs to the birds o' prey; if they don't they ought to; they kills anything, and so I'll do for they.'

To have a stuffed heron is the ambition of many would-be gunners, to put in a case and to be able to say they shot it. One man I knew had a perfect craze for it, amounting in time to an attack of heron on the brain. Many were his plans and schemes to gain his desire. If you happened to mention you had

seen a heron you were buttonholed at once. 'Eh! what! Seen one? Why, bless my soul, where? Eh! Here, come and have a glass of something and tell me all about it. Ah, it's always the case; anybody can see 'em but me!'

A dozen could have been brought to him, but that would not do; he must shoot one himself. At last news reached him that a heron came regularly, night and morning, to a fishpond near a lonely farmhouse. 'Could he see it?' Certainly he could.

He went post-haste to the place, and sure enough up rose the bird. Over unlimited grog, and amidst the smoke puffed forth from long 'churchwardens,' the question 'how to get him' was discussed with the farm bailiff, who was a good-hearted fellow, and in comfortable circumstances.

Many plans were made and tried, but all failed. As a last resource it was suggested that this sportsman should have some kind of rough shelter made, and should watch for his heron all night, the bailiff, nothing loth, agreeing to sit up with him there till eleven o'clock, the moon being full and bright. A square dumpy bottle, holding a quart and hailing from Holland, together with some first-rate tobacco that had come with it, which the enthusiast had promised to supply, probably made the companionship a congenial one. Near midnight the bailiff took his departure, after shaking hands with our friend many times over, remarking as he did so that the moon twinkled a goodish bit, and things looked hazy round about. 'Steady does it, old boy, steady does it. When he comes, hold your powder straight an' knock him over. Steady does it, old boy. Good-night! Good-night!'

Early in the morning the heron passed overhead and settled on the opposite side of the small pond, almost in front of the sportsman. It ought not to have been very hard to hit the bird; but the contents of that queer-shaped bottle, or may be only the excitement of the moment, made his hand shake, and when his finger touched the trigger he only winged the coveted prize. Down went his gun, round the pond he rushed, and, not knowing the nature or tactics of the bird, he knelt down to pick him up. At the same moment the heron made one of its lightning-like strokes at one of his eyes. Luckily for him the bird's neck came in contact with his arm, spoiling the aim. As it was the bill cut a shallow furrow on the cheek-bone under the eye aimed at. Undaunted, he made a loop with one end of his handkerchief and placed it round the neck just below the head. The other end he tied round the heron's

legs. In fact, he haltered him. Then he tucked him under his arm like a goose, and picking up his gun, marched home, a proud and happy man, arriving just as the village folks were going in to breakfast. Seeing a friend coming down the street he exclaimed, 'I've got him!' 'I see you have; but what is that cut on your cheek?' replied the friend, adding, when he had been told how it occurred, 'Why, man alive! never do such a thing again; why, if that bird had made his stroke good, you would certainly have lost your eye, if not your life. You have had a very narrow escape.'

'Eh! what! bless me! you don't say so? Really now, dear me, dear me, eh!' Then, in a tone of voice evincing great determination, he said, 'I'm going to have him stuffed; expense no object.' The bird was stuffed, I have seen it many times; a wondrous work of art it is. The bird stands in a case about the size of a large clothes box, which is painted black outside and bright ultra-marine blue inside, in order to show him up well. At regular distances are tufts of flag three inches high. Close to his feet on the asphalt-looking gravel is a bit of stone tinted in many colours. Great efforts seem to have been made to give a natural effect to the whole, but, strange to say, the bird does not look happy; he squints for one thing, and he has the gout in his legs, for the wire used in the mysteries of stuffing would have supported a New Zealand emu.

But that matters not; the genial old fellow is happy, for he imagines nothing better, and his friends, to their credit be it spoken, have never undeceived him. When he invites them to his house, as he frequently does, to spend a sociable evening, at a certain point of the proceedings he invariably gives them for about the fiftieth time the account of his scuffle with that heron. It is so much enjoyed, that many go to sleep over it, but he does not observe it, for his eyes are fixed on the black box and its inmate—memory is busy with him, and it is very late.

On the wild moorlands you will find the heron close to the rills which have communication with the trout streams. An autumn evening is the time to look for him there, when the mists are rising from the low meadows and floating round the woods on the hill sides. Over the tops of the trees, which are in all their warm bright colouring, you will see him coming leisurely along. No sound is heard save the hoot of the brown owl; and, with the

exception of a woodman returning home after his day's work, there is no one to be seen. The air is so quiet that the distant slamming of a gate, the bark of a dog, and now and again the lowing of cattle in the distance falls on the ear with singular distinctness. The heron knows well the time best suited to him; slowly he flaps over the meadows, his form showing dim through the rising mists of evening. He does not settle yet; he has a recollection of a shot having been fired at him from the cover of the woods close by, when the shot knocked some feathers out of him, without further damage. 'Once bit, twice shy' is his motto now. Rising again he makes for the upland moor, where he has a good look out. It is not needed, for, with the exception of the owls, hooting out their jubilate, he will have no company unless another of his family joins him. Sometimes you will see two of them together, more rarely three, oftenest a solitary one. The moor rills are full of small trout about the size of gudgeon. If a fly tumbles into the water or rests on it, twenty rush for him at once. They will rush, too, for shelter in shoals when alarmed—in *droves* one might say. Just the size for Jack Hern they are, and he finds them a dainty morsel. No angler would take the trouble to catch these. So many mouths too, though small, require a great amount of food to fill them. You will not find a fish the size of a herring in the rills that run down from the moor. Besides which the bottom is peaty, and large trout do not run up to spawn there; they want a gravel bottom and a clean one for that. There is a certain amount of policy in allowing the heron to fish undisturbed in these rills. Better it is for him to visit the moor rills than the streams below where the trout are larger; for very few trout of a pound in weight and larger ever recover from a stroke made by the heron if they do manage to escape at the time. Some gentlemen, through whose property these little streams trickle, have made them wider in places, and formed ponds. Where this has been done the small moorland trout have vanished, you will not find one. Large trout have come in their place, much to the satisfaction of the gentlemen fishers, but not to that of the heron. The large fish give him more trouble, he is not able to fill his belly so quickly. All manner of destructive work is attributed to him, some of which he is quite innocent of. Such things as fish spears are made at home, in view of trout capture. Occasionally the fish will slip off one of these spears after being struck, and it is found dead or dying in the pond or stream. If that

intelligent person the keeper catches sight of it he exclaims, 'Them mischiefull varmint has been here agin, workin' the trout.' And so they have, but it was not the herons in this instance. Clever and quick as the bird is, he is not able to give three wounds at one stroke and all in a line. He will pick at a fish too large for him to swallow whole, but as a rule he feeds on the smaller fry. Necessity knows no law, however, and there is no reasoning with an empty stomach. When that troubles him he will fill it with the first food that presents itself. Anyone who has seen a mole hill heaving near the top of a hillock knows how the earth rises up and down and rolls down the sides. The heron knows the meaning of it, for he makes a dart and has the mole between his bill in an instant. This he will only do when very hard up for a meal; he is bound to have something then. Nearly all his food, however, is taken from the edge of the water or from shallow pools. He can swim but he never does that when fishing. His attitudes are varied, like his diet. The usually accepted position for him is standing with his head and neck drawn down on to the shoulders, with both feet on the ground or in the water, as the case may be. Though represented thus in most illustrations, you will find him so but rarely. His usual position is, neck held upright, head, bill, and body carried horizontally, one foot on the ground, the other just raised off it with the toes bent inwards. When the heron is after his prey, and moving, the head and neck are stretched out, and the body carried in a line with them. A curious-looking bird he is, when he squats down to rest; and he looks still more grotesque when standing, if seen from behind; after he has partaken of a good feed. His shoulders are lumped up and his head and bill are not visible, for they are sunk in his shoulders, the bill pointing a little downwards. But see him when and where you will, and in whatever position he may place himself, he is a most interesting bird to all true lovers of life in a state of nature, and must always command attention.

If a field has been ploughed and left fallow for a season anywhere near his haunts, he and his companions—if he chance to have any—are certain to visit it, for he is sure of safety and food there; but catch him within gunshot of the hedge or trees that surround it if you can. On the ploughed field he has a view all round him. The food he picks up there consists of plump field mice and frogs.

Speaking of frogs, it is generally supposed, and the supposition

is accepted, that the proper place to look for them is in or near the water. Excepting in spring, when all the shallow pools are well stocked with them, at spawning time, I have only found a very few, at rare intervals, near water; but never one of the kind which I have seen so often a long distance from it.

Reptiles have a great attraction for me, and, as far as our English ones are concerned, I have made close acquaintance with them all, and handled them freely—the viper not excepted.

It is possible that we have a variety of frog that has not been generally recognised; which is to be found in places supposed to be unlikely, I mean. The heron knows all about that matter. Large, bright, and plump fellows with beautiful eyes, their colour a warm Sienna yellow, spotted with warm brown spots. A kangaroo-like leap they have, and they conceal themselves under any tuft of grass or plant large enough to give them shelter—not haphazard fashion, but in regular homes. If you examine the place where one has sprung from, you will find the depression where the frog squatted; and if you catch sight of him before he springs you will see that his back is just on a level with the ground, and he is completely hidden by a plant or tuft of grass. A footstep will start him or make him move uneasily and betray his whereabouts.

Mice make their shallow runs and holes a few inches deep in the same locality; they are in first-rate condition, plump and sleek; you may see them running up the stems of different plants to get at the seeds, and then follow them to their holes. Other small things besides mice and frogs there are about the field frequented by our heron, but his attention is principally directed to these. Very few creatures in a wild state, furred or feathered, that are in the least carnivorous, can resist the temptation of making a meal of a mouse, or including it in one, whenever the chance offers.

Jack Hern nests rook-fashion in the trees, where these and the locality are suited to his taste. In some parts which are treeless, he will make a virtue of necessity and nest in the fern or stunted cover on some rock or island; for a bird of many resources is the common heron.

WORKING PRINCES.

VERILY the world owes a debt of gratitude to the old Duke Maximilian in Bavaria, if it be for nothing but the education he gave to his sons. It must be the result of their early training that two of these, Prince Ludwig and the Duke Karl Theodor, have been able to solve the problem, How, in this democratic age, can princes earn an honest livelihood? They have solved it simply and manfully, never forgetting the while that, by the old royal signification of their title, they must be the first, not to receive, but to render aid.

In the palace of Luxemburg there is a picture of the five elder children of Duke Maximilian, every one of whom, even at that early age—the eldest does not look more than fifteen—shows signs not only of great personal beauty but of intelligence of a most unusual order. It is impossible to look into the large, dark, earnest eyes they all possess, to note their mingled expression of wistfulness and reckless daring, and not feel that Nature herself has stamped them as something apart from ordinary, commonplace mortals. Enthusiasm and genius are written too plainly on their faces for them ever to be found among the crowd of those who patiently submit to the monotonous routine of every-day existence. Nor have their fortunes belied their faces. In the lives of each of those five there have been bright touches, vivid patches, episodes—tragic or comic as you may view them—such as rarely fall to the lot of princes. Caroline, the eldest and perhaps the most beautiful of the daughters, was, whilst still a child, selected as a fitting bride for the heir to the Austrian crown, and although there was no formal betrothal her father was informed that she must be educated in such a way as would fit her for her future grandeur. This was more easily said than done, for money was scarce in the ducal palace; but the whole family, from the Duke himself to his youngest child, seem to have thrown themselves *con amore* into the work, and to have cheerfully economised for the sake of the fortunate Caroline. She had professors and teachers of the best, and she well repaid all the care that was lavished upon her, for at nineteen, clever,

accomplished, and regally beautiful, she was the very ideal of what a queen should be. But

The best laid schemes o' mice an' men
Gang oft a-gley.

When the time for the marriage drew near, the young Emperor Joseph came on a visit to the Duke in Bavaria (the family title is 'in,' not 'of'), that he might make the acquaintance of his future wife. He gazed at the stately young creature who had been so carefully trained for him with respectful admiration, but he fell violently in love with her madcap younger sister, Elizabeth, who, regarded in the family as a mere child, and one, too, for whom no high destiny was in store, had been allowed to pass her days on horseback scouring the country-side. Ministers and courtiers stood aghast, but argument and persuasion were alike wasted on the Emperor, who refused to see that a lack of accomplishments was a blemish in the one whom he loved; and a few months later Elizabeth, thorough child as she was, knowing no more of the etiquette of courts than the veriest little *gamine*, entered Vienna in state, as Empress of Austria and Queen of Hungary. Although this happened more than thirty years ago, she has not yet learnt to submit with patience to the restraints that hedge in the lives of sovereigns; and the Viennese, in spite of their love for their beautiful Empress, openly mourn that the Emperor should have chosen one who regards a court ball as a penance, and a state ceremony as a thing scarcely to be lived through. From the day of her marriage it seems to have been her constant endeavour to shake off the fetters of her station; and perhaps the happiest hours of her life are those in which, whilst following the hounds in England, or hunting the chamois in her native land, she is able to forget that she is Empress-Queen.

For her age, the Empress Elizabeth is the youngest-looking woman in Europe. When one sees her slight, graceful form, eyes brilliant with life and vigour, and complexion that flushes and pales with every passing emotion, it seems absurd that she should be the grandmother of big boys and girls.

Caroline, the forsaken one, seems to have met her fate with true royal equanimity. Perhaps she thought that as her sister gained what she lost it did not really matter. If one may judge by her face, her life has not been a happy one. When she was about four-and-twenty she was married to the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, who died some nine years later.

Marie Sophie, too, the youngest of the three sisters in the picture, has had her share of adventures. Married before she was eighteen to the Prince Royal of Naples, afterwards King Francis II., she was not destined long to wear a crown; and it is as ex-Queen, not as Queen, that we all think of her. If report be true, this winter she is going to try what hunting and horse-racing in England will do towards satisfying her craving for excitement.

It is in the sons, not the daughters, however, that the peculiar gifts of the family come most to the fore. The work Karl Theodor, Duke Maximilian's second son, is doing has already attracted no little attention in Europe. The veriest medical student whose life and bread depended upon his work never threw himself into the study of medicine with half the ardour of this young scion of royalty. When a boy, botany and chemistry were his favourite pursuits; and no sooner were his school-days over than he undertook medicine as a serious study, attending the lectures, going through the hospitals, and finally passing the examinations that qualified him to practise as a doctor. Nor did his work end here. Having chosen the eye as his speciality, he devoted some years to a careful study of the various theories concerning the treatment of the blind. This done, he travelled through Europe, seeking the advice and help of every oculist of special eminence in his profession; and it was only when he had learned from them all they could teach him that he returned to his palace at Tegern, where he established himself as a regular oculist. Anyone may consult him, his door stands open to all the world; the only difference between him and any other practitioner being that his rate of charges varies in direct ratio with the wealth of those who seek his aid. If he perform an operation for a rich man, the prince's fee is the same as that of any other doctor of equal skill, neither more nor less; if, however, the patient be one of those whose means do not allow of their indulging in such expensive luxuries as great doctors, well, he lowers his charges to what they can afford to pay; whilst, as for the poor—not merely mendicants, but officers with thirty pounds a year, civilians with perchance forty—all such as these Duke Karl Theodor not only attends without fee, but whilst they are under his care he receives them as guests, feeding and caring for them with the most kindly thoughtfulness.

Surely this is an ideal social arrangement! Other princes before now have received fees, but which of them ever rendered real honest value in return as Duke Karl Theodor is doing? The

old Duke's eldest son, Prince Ludwig, is in some respects more interesting even than Karl Theodor. He is now a man about fifty-five, tall and dark, with a haggard, care-worn face, the result of constant ill-health. There is a subtle resemblance, both in appearance and manner, between him and the well-known actor Mr. Henry Irving; one of the Prince's favourite gestures—the way he throws over his left shoulder the long military cloak he generally wears—might have been studied at the Lyceum.

When about four-and-twenty Prince Ludwig fell violently in love with a beautiful young actress who had just taken the world by storm, and insisted upon marrying her. But this could not be done without a terrible battle, for a hundred petty restrictions hem in the liberty of German princes; and although his father took no active steps to prevent the marriage, the King of Bavaria, his grandfather, opposed it most vehemently, and even the Emperor Joseph, in whom one might have thought the Prince would have found a stout ally, turned traitor, and declared one love-match in a family was enough.

But threats and entreaties were alike powerless to turn Prince Ludwig from his course; even the declaration that if he persisted he would forfeit his *majorat* failed to move him, and in 1857, in order that he might be able to marry the woman he loved so passionately, he cheerfully surrendered all his rights and allowed his younger brother, Karl Theodor (who did so most reluctantly and only under strong compulsion), to take his place as future head of the family.

The marriage seems to have proved a singularly happy one; to this day the Prince's manner to his wife, the Baroness von Wallersee, as she is styled, is more that of a lover than a middle-aged married man. She, too, unlike the generality of her profession, is a model wife, with a perfect genius for diffusing brightness and happiness around her. They have no children, and live for the greater part of the year in a simple suite of apartments at Bad-Kreuth—that strange anomaly, a lucrative business combined with a most generous charity—over which Prince Ludwig presides, a royally courteous and kindly host.

Bad-Kreuth, perhaps the most ancient of the Alpine health-resorts, consists of some half-dozen houses built by the side of a spring of mineral water, on an elevated plateau on the north-western side of the Hohlenstein, one of the higher Alps that form the boundary between Bavaria and the Tyrol. In 754 A.D. the

Burgundian Princes Adalbert and Otkar presented the valley of the Weissnach, in which it lies, to the Benedictine monks of Tegern, who were not long in discovering that the water in their new domain possessed strange, if not miraculous, qualities. They built a bath-house at Kreuth to which they used to send the invalids of their order. This building was accidentally burnt down in 1627, but a new one, larger and more commodious, replaced it; and the old monastic chronicle relates that in 1707 Abbot Quirinus IV. further enlarged the baths, built a chapel, 'and furnished these valuable healing-waters with special conveniences for his folks.' When, in 1803, the Benedictine Order at Tegern was suppressed, Bad-Kreuth passed into the hands of a farmer, who thought more of its fertile soil than of its healing-waters. Ten years later, however, King Max of Bavaria bought the land and laid the foundation of the present establishment. At his death it passed into the hands of his widow, Queen Caroline, from her to her son, and then to her grandson, Karl Theodor. But although he, as Duke in Bavaria, is the owner of Kreuth, the real moving spirit of the institution is his brother Prince Ludwig.

The whole of Bad-Kreuth—houses, spring, land, and everything you can see for miles around—belongs to the ducal family. The servants are theirs, and the entire management of the establishment is more or less under their immediate superintendence. For three months in the year—June, July, and August—Kreuth is simply a health-resort for Southern Germans, who engage their rooms, give their orders, and pay their bills as in any other hotel. These are the paying guests, and this is the Prince's harvest-time; for, as he is his own butcher, brewer, dairyman, and baker, after defraying all expenses a handsome surplus must remain to him. He does not profess that during these months his terms are lower than those of other hotels; the visitors are in the midst of exquisite scenery, have comfortable rooms, and are provided with dainty food: for these advantages they must pay; and it is only fair to add that for the additional luxury—the halo of royalty that is cast around them—they are not charged. During May and September the Duke will have none of these paying guests, but fills his house with what he calls his 'friends,' that is, with the people found everywhere, but nowhere in such quantities as in Germany—those who are too proud to ask for charity and who yet stand sorely in need of a little help. Officers who have nothing but their pay to depend upon, university students trying to combine

teaching and learning, poor professors, struggling literary men, artists who have got their way to make, failures of every shape and sort, all make their way to Kreuth. For two months in the year there are between two and three hundred of these visitors at the hotel, where they are all housed, tended, and fed as carefully as the wealthiest guests, and that, too, without it costing them one penny. Nor is it only at this time that the Prince's 'friends' are to be found at Kreuth; if, at the height of the season, a room is left vacant, some poor invalid is invited to occupy it, and you would never guess from the manner of the host or his servants that the new arrival was not a millionaire.

Kreuth hospitality does not even end here. There is one unpretentious house, standing a little apart from the rest, that is called *Das Könighaus*, and is reserved for the use of the royal family; but as the Bavarian princes never live in it they have made it into a kind of house of refuge for those poor little German princes and nobles, with their long pedigrees and empty purses, to whom an outing gratis is as welcome a boon as to their more plebeian fellows. Occasionally real kings and queens, attracted by the beauty of the surroundings and the marvellous purity of the air, spend a few weeks in *Das Könighaus*. The Empress of Austria and her youngest daughter are staying there now. During the summer I spent at Kreuth the King of Würtemberg, the ex-Queen of Naples, the Princess Frederica of Hanover (who was entered in the list as Princess of Great Britain), and a score of other 'royalties' were there; but they seemed to have cast aside all thought of etiquette or rank, and mingled with the other guests on terms of the most friendly equality. The scarlet coat of the Princess Frederica's one attendant was the only sign of royalty I detected. To one and all, whether paying guest, royal visitor, or 'friend,' Prince Ludwig's manner is the same—that of a friendly, courteous host. He has the true royal gift of never forgetting a face or a name, and as he walks on the long covered terrace or in the grounds no one is overlooked; he has a kindly greeting, a sympathetic inquiry, a pleasant word, for each in turn.

It is strange that Bad-Kreuth should be so little known to English travellers, for it is certainly one of the most lovely of the Alpine health-resorts; and although, fortunately for those who stay there, it is off the tourists' highway, it is easy of access. The railway journey from Munich to Gmund, on the Tegern-See,

takes less than two hours, and Bad-Kreuth lies some eight miles beyond.

From Tegern-See, a large beautiful lake surrounded by tiny villages, the road winds up the valley of the Weissach, a river, or rather a raging, tearing torrent, which starts on its course high up in the Alps beyond Kreuth, and is soon joined by two other mountain streams—the Gerlosbach and the Klambach—which come dashing down the rocks, forming a thousand cascades, fountains, and waterfalls on their way; the three rush on together, always meeting other streams and dragging them along in their own wild race until they all reach the Tegern-See. The rugged heights of the Blaubeurg shut in the valley on the south; on the east are the Walberg, Setzberg, and Rosstein—lofty forest-covered mountains; whilst on the west, the great conical Leonhardstein towers above the Raucheck and the Hirschberg. At the head of the valley, standing as it were under the shadow of the Blaubeurg, is the Hohlenstein, which on its north-western side, at an elevation of nearly 3,000 feet, forms a terrace-like projection, so regular in form that at a first glance it seems impossible it should be the unaided work of nature. On this terrace is the sulphur-well to which the little health-resort owes its origin.

Bad-Kreuth lies in the region of meadows where the beech, birch, ash, silver fir, and pine flourish; the forests around being almost impenetrable from the Alpine honeysuckle and other shrubs that cling to the ground. A thousand feet higher, however, few trees are to be found with the exception of firs and pines, and soon even these become stunted and meagre, and the grey barren mountains are left without cover. It is curious how colour seems to vary with height. In the villages around Tegern-See the flowers are quite startling from their brilliancy; the huge beds of scarlet geraniums and pinks at Eger are almost overpowering on a hot summer day; but as you advance up the valley you soon lose sight of these, and their place is taken by the columbine, yellow violet, campanula, orchid, and fern, all of delicate colouring; and these in their turn must make way for the gentian-yellow, violet, and blue Alpine rose, nigritella, mountain forget-me-not, and yellow auricula; whilst in the higher crevices of the rocks, maidenhair and edelweiss flourish. Nor is the fauna of the Weissach Valley less varied than its flora. Although the bear and lynx are now unknown there, half a century

ago it was one of their favourite haunts; it is still no unusual sight, whilst breakfasting at Kreuth, to see a herd of chamois grazing on the Grüneck, and after nightful stags and red deer may often be encountered in the woods; legends speak, too, of the golden eagles that are there, but it was not my luck to see them.

For the restless—those unhappy beings whose only conception of bliss is movement—Kreuth has another charm: it is a perfectly ideal centre for excursions. Not half a mile from the hotel is the highway from Bavaria into the Tyrol, from which roads and paths of every description branch off in all directions. The Tyroler road itself is well made and well kept, and passes through scenes of marvellous beauty. On this road, about seven miles from Kreuth, is the little hamlet of Glashütte, only a church and a few cottages now, but 800 years ago a flourishing industrial settlement. It was here that the good monks of Tegern had their glass-manufactory—perhaps the first in Germany—and the old chronicle says that ‘by the year 1005 their skilful hands could not execute all the orders they received. The Grosse Wolfschlucht, where the valley ends abruptly in an immense gloomy cavern, and the Kleine Wolfschlucht, a less majestic but more picturesque ravine, both offer charming expeditions. The Langenau, a lovely little valley that winds round the foot of the Hohlenstein; the Kaiserklause, where on St. Bartholomew’s Day the peasants, in their picturesque costumes, with zithers in their hands, hold their dances; and Tegern, with its old Benedictine abbey, are all within easy distances. A drive of thirteen miles brings you to Archensee, the largest lake in Northern Tyrol, in the midst of the wildest and most romantic scenery. After the bright flowers and green fields of Tegern, Archensee, with all its beauty, is certainly depressing. The high mountains which, rising sheer from the water-edge, tower above the lake seem to have a lowering, sinister aspect, as if the deities who dwell there view humanity with little favour. The heights, too, are hard and barren, and have lost those fantastic curves, points, and crevices which give such endless variety to the Hohlenstein and its neighbours.

Geisalp, Blauberg, Königsalp, Schildenstein, Halserspitz, Risserkogel, may all be ascended from Kreuth; but perhaps the finest panorama is obtained from the top of the Schinderberg, a mountain lying rather to the east. From there you see in the far

distance the mountains of Salzburg and Styria, the Gletscher Range, and the snow-covered Gross Glockner; near at hand the Blauberg, with its surface all worn and furrowed by the force of the rushing torrents that spring from its side, and the Allgäuer Alps, stretching up their heads above their neighbours; then, between the Leonhardstein and the Rossstein, is the Schwarzenbach-Thal, with the lovely Schwarze Tenne elm, and the valley in which the Weissach winds and twists as if in no hurry to reach the silvery Tegern. On all sides lofty mountains towering above forest-covered hills, shady valleys, barren peaks, foaming rivers, silvery streams, and tiny lakelets reflecting dark firs and pines: all these combine to render the view unequalled for variety and beauty.

As to all these natural beauties is added the attraction of a cordial royal welcome, and the chance of studying an interesting eleemosynary experiment, surely Bad-Kreuth is well worth a visit.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XVII.

THEIR SEVERAL WAYS.

As Wilfrid quitted the house, the gate was opened by Jessie Cartwright, who, accompanied by one of her sisters, was bringing Emily some fine grapes, purchased, in the Cartwright manner, without regard to expense. The girls naturally had their curiosity excited by the stranger of interesting, even of aristocratic, appearance, who, as he hurried by, cast at them a searching look.

'Now, who ever may that be?' murmured Jessie, as she approached the door.

'A doctor, I dare say,' was her sister's suggestion.

'A doctor! Not he indeed. He has something to do with Emily, depend upon it.'

The servant, opening to them, had to report that Miss Hood was too unwell to-day to receive visitors. Jessie would dearly have liked to ask who it was that apparently had been an exception, but even she lacked the assurance necessary to the putting of such a question. The girls left their offering, and went their way home; the stranger afforded matter for conversation throughout the walk.

Wilfrid did not go straight to the Baxendales'. In his distracted state, he felt it impossible to sit through luncheon, and he could not immediately decide how to meet Mrs. Baxendale, whether to take her into his confidence or to preserve silence on what had happened. He was not sure that he would be justified in disclosing the details of such an interview; did he not owe it to Emily to refrain from submitting her action to the judgment of any third person? If in truth she were still suffering from the effects of her illness, it was worse than unkind to repeat her words; if, on the other hand, her decision came of adequate motives, or such as her sound intelligence deemed adequate, was it possible to violate the confidence implied in such a conversation between her and himself? Till his mind had assumed some

degree of calmness, he could not trust himself to return to the house. Turning from the main road at a point just before the bridge over the river, he kept on the outskirts of the town, and continued walking till he had almost made the circuit of Dunfield. His speed was that of a man who hastened with some express object; his limbs seemed spurred to activity by the gallop of his thoughts. His reason would scarcely accept the evidence of consciousness that he had indeed just heard such things from Emily's lips; it was too monstrous for belief; a resolute incredulity sustained him beneath a blow which, could he have felt it to be meant in very earnest, would have deprived him of his senses. She did not, she could not, know what she had said! Yet she spoke with such cruel appearance of reasoning earnestness; was it possible for a diseased mind to assume so convincingly the modes of rational utterance? What conceivable circumstances could bring her to such a resolution? Her words: 'I do not love you,' made horrible repetition in his ears; it was as though he had heard her speak them again and again. *Could they be true?* The question, last outcome of the exercise of his imagination on the track of that unimaginable cause, brought him to a standstill, physically and mentally. Those words had at first scarcely engaged his thought; it was her request to be released that seriously concerned him; that falsehood had been added as a desperate means of gaining her end. Yet now, all other explanations in vain exhausted, perforce he gave heed to that hideous chime of memory. It was not her father's death that caused her illness; that she admitted. Had some horrible complication intervened, some incredible change come upon her since he left England? He shook off this suggestion as blasphemy. Emily? His high-souled Emily, upon whose faith he would stake the breath of his life? Was his own reason failing him?

Worn out, he reached the house in the middle of the afternoon, and went to his own sitting-room. Presently a servant came and asked whether he would take luncheon. He declined. Lying on the sofa, he still tormented himself with doubt whether he might speak with Mrs. Baxendale. That lady put an end to his hesitation by herself coming to his room. He sprang up.

'Don't move, don't move!' she exclaimed in her cheery way. 'I have only come to ask why you resolve to starve yourself. You can't have had lunch anywhere?'

'No; I am not hungry.'

'A headache?' she asked, looking at him with kind shrewdness.

'A little, perhaps.'

'Then at all events you will have tea. May I ask them to bring it here?'

She went away, and, a few minutes after her return, tea was brought.

'You found Emily looking sadly, I'm afraid,' she said, with one of the provincialisms which occasionally marked her language.

'Yes,' Wilfrid replied; 'she looked far too ill to be up.'

He had seated himself on the sofa. His hands would not hold the tea-cup steadily; he put it down by his side.

'I fear there is small chance of her getting much better in that house of illness,' said Mrs. Baxendale, observing his agitation. 'Can't we persuade her to go somewhere? Her mother is in excellent hands.'

I wish we could,' Wilfrid replied, clearly without much attention to his words.

'You didn't propose anything of the kind?'

He made no answer. A short silence intervened, and he felt there was no choice but to declare the truth.

'The meeting was a very painful one,' he began. 'It is difficult to speak to you about it. Do you think that she has perfectly recovered?—that her mind is wholly——'

He hesitated; it was dreadful to be speaking in this way of Emily. The sound of his voice reproached him; what words would not appear brutal in such a case?

'You fear——?'

Wilfrid rose and walked across the room. It seemed impossible to speak, yet equally so to keep his misery to himself.

'Mrs. Baxendale,' he said at length, 'I am perhaps doing a very wrong thing in telling you what passed between us, but I feel quite unable to decide upon any course without the aid of your judgment. I am in a terrible position. Either I must believe Emily to speak without responsibility, or something inexplicable, incredible, has come to pass. She has asked me to release her. She says that something has happened which makes it impossible for her ever to fulfil her promise, something which must always remain her secret, which I may not hope to understand. And with such dreadful appearance of sincerity—such a face of awful suffering——'

His voice failed. The grave concern on Mrs. Baxendale's visage was not encouraging.

'Something happened?' the latter repeated, in low-toned astonishment. 'Does she offer no kind of explanation?'

'None—none,' he added, 'that I can bring myself to believe.'

Mrs. Baxendale could only look at him questioningly.

'She said,' Wilfrid continued, pale with the effort it cost him to speak, 'that she has no longer any affection for me.'

There was another silence, of longer endurance than the last. Wilfrid was the first to break it.

'My reason for refusing to believe it is, that she said it when she had done her utmost to convince me of her earnestness in other ways, and said it in a way—— How is it possible for me to believe it? It is only two months since I saw her on the Castle Hill.'

'I thought you had never been here before?'

'I have never spoken to you of that. I came and left on the same day. It was to see her before I went to Switzerland.'

'I am at a loss,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'I can only suggest that she has had a terrible shock, and that her recovery, or seeming recovery, has been too rapid. Yet there is no trace of wandering in her talk with me.'

'Nor was there to-day. She was perfectly rational. Think of one's being driven to hope that she only *seemed* so!'

'Did you speak of correspondence?'

'No. I said that I could not agree to what she asked of me until she had repeated it after a time. I left her scarcely knowing what I spoke. What shall I do? How can I remain in doubt such as this? I said I wished for your help, yet how can you—how can anyone—help me? Have I unconsciously been the cause of this?'

'Or has anyone else consciously been so?' asked the lady, with meaning.

'What? You think——? Is it possible?'

'You only hinted that your relatives were not altogether pleased.'

Wilfrid, a light of anger flashing from his eyes, walked rapidly the length of the room.

'She admitted to me,' he said, in a suppressed voice, 'that her illness began before her father's death. It was not that that caused it. You think that someone may have interfered? My

father? Impossible! He is a man of honour; he has written of her in the kindest way.'

But there was someone else. His father was honourable; could the same be said of Mrs. Rossall? He remembered his conversation with her on the lake of Thun; it had left an unpleasant impression on his mind—under the circumstances, explicable enough. Was his aunt capable of dastardly behaviour? The word could scarcely be applied to a woman's conduct, and the fact that it could not made disagreeably evident the latitude conceded to women in consideration of their being compelled to carry on warfare in underhand ways. Suppose an anonymous letter. Would not Mrs. Rossall regard that as a perfectly legitimate stratagem, if she had set her mind on resisting this marriage? Easy, infinitely easy was it to believe this, in comparison with any other explanation of Emily's behaviour. In his haste to seize on a credible solution of the difficulty, Wilfrid did not at first reflect that Emily was a very unlikely person to be influenced by such means, still more unlikely that she should keep such a thing secret from him. It must be remembered, however, that the ways of treachery are manifold, and the idea had only presented itself to his mind in the most indefinite form. As it was, it drove him almost to frenzy. He could not find a calm word, nor was it indeed possible to communicate to Mrs. Baxendale the suspicion which occupied him. She, watching him as he stood at a distance, all but forgot her anxious trouble in admiration of the splendid passion which had transformed his features. Wilfrid looked his best when thus stirred—his best, from a woman's point of view. The pale cast of thought was far from him; you saw the fiery nature asserting itself, and wondered in what direction these energies would at length find scope. Mrs. Baxendale, not exactly an impressionable woman, had a moment of absent-mindedness.

'Come here and sit down,' she said, the motherly insistence of the tone possibly revealing her former thought.

He threw himself on the couch.

'Of course,' she continued, 'this must remain between Emily and yourself; my own relations to her must be precisely as they have been, as if I had heard nothing. Now I think we may conclude that the poor girl is perfectly aware of what she is doing, but I no more than yourself believe her explanation. In some way she has come to regard it as a duty to abandon you. Let Emily once think it a duty, and she will go through with it if

it costs her life; so much I know of her; so much it is easy to know, if one has the habit of observing. May I advise you? Do not try to see her again, but write briefly, asking her whether the mystery she spoke of in any way connects itself with you. You will know how to put it so as to exact the answer you require. Suppose you write such a note at once; I will send it as soon as it is ready. You are in the torment of doubts; no misery as bad as that. Does this plan recommend itself to you?’

‘Yes; I will write.’

‘Then I will take myself off whilst you do so. Ring the bell and send for me as soon as you are ready. It is only half-past four; Emily will have your letter in an hour, and surely will reply at once.’

The letter was written, at greater length perhaps than was quite necessary, and Mrs. Baxendale speeded it on its way. Wilfrid begged that he might be excused from attendance at the dinner-table.

‘By all means,’ was Mrs. Baxendale’s reply. ‘The more so that we have politicians again, and I fear you would not be in the mood to make fun of them as you did the other night.’

‘Make fun of them? No, I was in earnest. I got interested in their subjects, and found I had more to say than I thought.’

‘Well, well; that is your politeness. Now lie down again, poor boy. But you must promise to eat what I send you; we have quite enough illness on our hands, remember.’

‘I may have the answer before then,’ Wilfrid said, moodily.

He had; it came in less than two hours from the messenger’s departure. He was alone when the servant brought it to him. Emily wrote:—

‘Wilfrid,—The change is in myself, in my heart, in my life. Nothing have I heard against you; nothing have I imagined against you; the influence of which I spoke is in no way connected with you. Let this, I implore you, be final. Forgive me, forgive me, that I seem to inflict pain on you so heedlessly. I act as I must; my purpose is unchangeable.’

Having been apprised of the messenger’s return, Mrs. Baxendale entered Wilfrid’s room as soon as she had dressed for dinner. He sat at the table, the letter lying open before him. As Mrs. Baxendale approached, he held the sheet to her.

‘Then my last conjecture is fruitless,’ she said, letting her hand fall. ‘We cannot doubt her word.’

'Doubt it? No. There is nothing for me but to believe all she said.'

He let his face fall upon his hands; the bitterness of fate was entering his inmost heart.

'No, no, you shall not give way,' said his friend, just touching his fingers. 'It all looks very sad and hopeless, but I will not believe it is hopeless. Refuse to believe that one worst thing, the only thing for which there is no remedy. Come, defy yourself to believe it! You are strong enough for that; there is manhood in you for anything that is worth bearing, however hard.'

He could not reply to her encouragement; who cannot devise words of exhortation? and what idler than such words when the heart agonises?

'Try and listen to me, Wilfrid. If I make you angry with me, it is better than abandoning yourself to despondency. I firmly believe that this is a matter which time will bring right. Emily is acting hastily; I am convinced of that. Time is on your side; try and accept him as a friend. We are not living in a novel; there are no such things as mysteries which last a lifetime. Your part is to draw upon all the manliness you own, to have faith in yourself, and to wait. Have faith in her, too; there are few like her; some day you will see that this only made her better worth winning.—Now answer me a question.'

Wilfrid raised his head.

'Do you not in your heart believe that she is incapable of folly or wrongheadedness?'

'I believe that no truer woman lives.'

'And rightly, be sure of it. Believing that, you know she cannot break her word to you without some reason which you would yourself say was good and sufficient. She imagines she has such a reason; imagines it in all sincerity. Time will show her that she has been in error, and she will confess it. She has all her faculties, no doubt, but a trial such as this leads her to see things in ways we cannot realise.'

'You forget that it is *not* this shock that has so affected her.'

'Wilfrid, remember that her father's death is itself mysterious. She may know more of what led to it than anyone else does. She may very well have foreseen it; it may have distracted her, the cause, whatever it was. She could not disclose anything—some secret, perhaps—that nearly concerned her father; you know how strong were the ties between them.'

Perhaps it was inevitable that a suggestion of this kind should ultimately offer itself. Wilfrid had not hit upon the idea, for he had from the first accepted without reflection the reasons for Hood's suicide which were accepted by everyone who spoke of the subject. Mrs. Baxendale only delivered herself of the thought in fervour of kindly-devised argument. She paused, reviewing it in her mind, but did not like to lay more stress upon it. Wilfrid, also thoughtful, kept silence.

'Now, there's the gong,' Mrs. Baxendale continued, 'and I shall have to go to the politicians. But I think I *have* given you a grain of comfort. Think of a prosy old woman inciting *you* to endure for the sake of the greatest prize you can aim at? Keep saying to yourself that Emily cannot do wrong; if she did say a word or two she didn't mean—well, well, we poor women! Go to bed early, and we'll talk again after breakfast to-morrow.'

She gave him her hand, and hurried away. Even in his wretchedness, Wilfrid could not but follow her with his eyes, and *feel* something like a blessing upon her strong and tender womanhood.

Fortunate fellow, who had laid behind him thus much of his earthly journey without one day of grave suffering. Ah, something he should have sacrificed to the envious gods, some lesser joy, that the essential happiness of his life might be spared him. Wilfrid had yet to learn that every sun which rises for us in untroubled sky is a portent of inevitable gloom, that nature only prolongs our holiday to make the journeywork of misery the harder to bear. He had enjoyed the way of his will from childhood upwards; he had come to regard himself as exempt from ill-fortune, even as he was exempt from the degradation of material need; all his doings had prospered, save in that little matter of his overtaxed health, and it had grown his habit to map the future with a generous hand, saying: Thus and thus will I take my conquering course. Knowing love for the first time, he had met with love in return, love to the height of his desire, and with a wave of the hand he had swept the trivial obstacles from his path. Now that the very sum of his exultant youth offered itself like a wine-cup to his lips, comes forth the mysterious hand and spills relentlessly that divine draught. See how he turns, with the blaze of royal indignation on his brow! Who of gods or men has dared thus to come between him and his bliss? He is not wont to be so thwarted; he demands that the cup shall be refilled

and brought again; only when mocking laughter echoes round him, when it is but too plain that the spirits no longer serve him, that where he most desires his power is least, does his resentment change by cold degrees to that chill anguish of the abandoned soul, which pays the debt of so many an hour of triumph. For the moment, words of kindness and sustaining hope might seem to avail him; but there is the night waiting in ambush for his weakness, that season of the sun's silence, when the body denuded of vestment typifies the spirit's exposure to its enemies. Let him live through his fate-imposed trial in that torture-chamber of ancient darkness. He will not come forth a better man, though perchance a wiser; wisdom and goodness are from of old at issue. Henceforth he will have eyes for many an ugly spot in his own nature, hidden till now by the veil of happiness. Do not pity him; congratulate him rather that the inevitable has been so long postponed.

He put on a bold face at breakfast next morning, for he could not suppose that Mrs. Baxendale would feel any obligation to keep his secret from her husband, and it was not in his character to play the knight of the dolorous visage. You saw the rings round his eyes, but he was able to discuss the latest electioneering intelligence, and even to utter one or two more of those shrewd remarks by which he had lately been proving that politics were not unlikely to demand more of his attention some day. But he was glad when he could get away to the drawing-room, to await Mrs. Baxendale's coming. He tried to read in a volume of Boswell which lay out; at other times the book was his delight, now it had the succulence of a piece of straw. He was in that state of mind when five minutes of waiting is intolerable. He had to wait some twenty before Mrs. Baxendale appeared. Only a clinging remnant of common-sense kept him from addressing her sourly. Wilfrid was not eminently patient.

'Well, what counsel has sleep brought?' she asked, speaking as if she had some other matter on her mind—as indeed she had—a slight difficulty which had just arisen with the cook.

'I should not be much advanced if I had depended upon sleep,' Wilfrid replied cheerlessly. Always sensitive, he was especially so at this moment, and the lady seemed to him unsympathetic. He should have allowed for the hour; matters involving sentiment should never be touched till the day has

grown to ripeness. The first thing in the morning a poet is capable of mathematics.

'I fear you are not the only one who has not slept,' said Mrs. Baxendale.

Wilfrid, after waiting in vain, went on in a tone very strange to him :

'I don't know what to do ; I am incapable of thought. Another night like the last will drive me mad. You tell me I must merely wait ; but I cannot be passive. What help is there ? How can I kill the time ?'

Mrs. Baxendale was visibly harder than on the previous evening. A half-smile caused her to draw in her lips ; she played with the watch-chain at her girdle.

'I fear,' she said, 'we have done all that can be done. Naturally you would find it intolerable to linger here.'

'I must return to London ?'

'Under any other circumstances I should be the last to wish it, but I suppose it is better that you should.'

He was prepared for the advice, but unreason strove in him desperately against the facts of the situation. It was this impotent quarrel with necessity which robbed him of his natural initiative and made Mrs. Baxendale wonder at his unexpected feebleness. To him it seemed something to stand his ground even for a few minutes. He could have eased himself with angry speech. Remember that he had not slept, and that his mind was sore with the adversary's blows.

'I understand your reluctance,' Mrs. Baxendale pursued. 'It's like a surrendering of hope. But you know what I said last night ; I could only repeat the same things now. Don't be afraid ; I will not.'

'Yes,' he murmured, 'I must go to London.'

'It would be far worse if you had no friend here. You shall hear from me constantly. You have an assurance that the poor thing can't run away.'

In the expressive vulgar phrase, Wilfrid 'shook himself together.' He began to perceive that his attitude lacked dignity ; even in our misery we cannot bear to appear ignoble.

'I will leave you to-day,' he said, more like his old self. 'But there are other things that we must speak of. What of Emily's practical position ?'

'I don't think we need trouble about that. Mr. Baxendale

tells me he has no doubt that the house in Barnhill can be sold at all events for a sum that will leave them at ease for the present. As soon as Mrs. Hood gets better, they must both go away. You can trust me to do what can be done.'

'It is my fear that Emily will find it difficult to accept your kindness.'

'It will require tact. Only experience can show what my course must be.'

'I sincerely hope the house *will* be sold. Otherwise, the outlook is deplorable.'

'I assure you it will be. My husband does not give up anything he has once put his hand to.'

'I shall keep my own counsel at home,' Wilfrid said.

'Do so, certainly. And you will return to Oxford?'

'I think so. I shall find it easier to live there—if, indeed, I can live anywhere.'

'I had rather you hadn't added that,' said Mrs. Baxendale with good-natured reproof. 'You know that you will only work the harder just to forget your trouble. That, depend upon it, is the only way of killing the time, as you said; if we strike at him in other ways we only succeed in making him angry.'

'Another apophthegm,' said Wilfrid, with an attempt at brightness. 'You are the first woman I have known who has that gift of neatness in speech.'

'And you are the first man who ever had discernment enough to compliment me on it. After that, do you think I shall desert your cause?'

Wilfrid made his preparations forthwith, and decided upon a train early in the afternoon. At luncheon, Mr. Baxendale was full of good-natured regrets that his visit could not be prolonged till the time of the election—now very near.

'When your constituents have sent you to Westminster,' said Wilfrid, 'I hope you will come and report to me the details of the fight?'

So he covered his retreat and retrieved in Mrs. Baxendale's eyes his weakness of the morning. She took him to the station in her brougham, but did not go on to the platform. Their parting was very like that of lovers, for it ended with mutual promises to 'write often.' Mrs. Baxendale was down-hearted as she drove home—in her a most unusual thing.

Two days later she went to Banbrigg, carrying the satisfactory

news that at last a sale of the Barnhill property had been negotiated. To Emily this intelligence gave extreme relief; it restored her independence. Having this subject to speak of made the meeting easier on both sides than it could otherwise have been. Emily was restlessly anxious to take upon herself the task of nursing her mother; with the maid to help her, she declared herself able to bear all responsibilities, and persisted so strongly that Mrs. Baxendale had no choice but to assent to the nurse who had remained being withdrawn. She could understand the need of activity which possessed the girl, but had grave fears of the result of an undertaking so disproportioned to her strength.

‘Will you promise me,’ she said, ‘to give it up and get help if you find it is trying you excessively?’

‘Yes,’ Emily replied, ‘I will promise that. But I know I shall be better for the occupation.’

‘And you will let me still come and see you frequently?’

‘I should miss you very much if you ceased to,’ was Emily’s answer.

Both felt that a difficulty had been surmounted, though they looked at it from different sides.

October passed, and the first half of November. Mrs. Hood had not risen from her bed, and there seemed slight chance that she ever would; she was sinking into hopeless imbecility. Emily’s task in that sick-room was one which a hospital nurse would have found it burdensome to support; she bore it without a sign of weariness or of failure in physical strength. Incessant companionship with bodily disease was the least oppressive of her burdens; the state of her mother’s mind afflicted her far more. Occasionally the invalid would appear in full possession of her intellect, and those were the hardest days; at such times she was incessantly querulous; hours long she lay and poured forth complaints and reproaches. When she could speak no more for very weariness, she moaned and wept, till Emily also found it impossible to check the tears which came of the extremity of her compassion. The girl was superhuman in her patience; never did she speak a word which was not of perfect gentleness; the bitterest misery seemed but to augment the tenderness of her devotion. Scarcely was there an hour of the day or night that she could claim for herself; whilst it was daylight she tended the sufferer ceaselessly, and her bed was in the same room, so that it often happened that she lay down only to rise before she could sleep. Her task was lighter

when her mother's mind strayed from the present ; but even then Mrs. Hood talked constantly, and was irritated if Emily failed in attention. The usual subject was her happiness in the days before her marriage ; she would revive memories of her school, give long accounts of her pupils, even speak of proposals of marriage which she had had the pleasure of declining. At no time did she refer to Hood's death, but often enough she uttered lamentations over the hardships in which her marriage had resulted, and compared her lot with what it might have been if she had chosen this or that other man. Emily was pained unspeakably by this revelation of her mother's nature, for she knew that it was idle to explain such tendencies of thought as the effect of disease ; it was, in truth, only the emphasizing of the faults she had always found it so hard to bear with. She could not understand the absence of a single note of affection or sorrow in all these utterances, and the fact was indeed strange, bearing in mind Mrs. Hood's outburst of loving grief when her husband was brought home, and the devotedness she had shown throughout Emily's illness. Were the selfish habits of years too strong for those better instincts which had never found indulgence till stirred by the supreme shock ? Thinking over the problem in infinite sadness, this was the interpretation with which Emily had to satisfy herself, and she saw in it the most dreadful punishment which a life-long fault could have entailed.

Though to her mother so sublimely forbearing, in her heart she knew too well the bitterness of revolt against nature's cruelty ; her own causes of suffering became almost insignificant in her view of the tragedy of life. Was not this calamity upon her surviving parent again a result of her own action ? Was it possible to avoid a comparison between this blasted home and the appearance it might at this moment have presented if she had sacrificed herself ? What crime had she ever been guilty of that such expiation could be demanded of her ? She mocked at her misery for so questioning ; as if causes and effects were to be thus discerned in fate's dealings. Emily had never known the phase of faith which finds comfort in the confession of native corruptness, nor did the desolation of her life guide her into that orthodox form of pessimism. She was not conscious of impurity, and her healthy human intelligence could only see injustice in the woe that had befallen her. From her childhood up she had striven towards the light, had loved all that is beautiful, had

worshipped righteousness; out of this had it issued that her life was sunk in woe unfathomable, hopeless of rescue for ever. She was the sacrifice of others' wrong-doing; the evil-heartedness of one man, the thoughtless error of another, had brought this upon her.

Her character, like the elemental forces of earth, converted to beneficent energy the burden of corruption thrust upon it. Active at first because she dreaded the self-communings of idleness, she found in her labour and her endurance sources of stern inspiration; her indestructible idealism grasped at the core of spiritual beauty in a life even such as this. She did not reason with herself hysterically of evil passions to be purified by asceticism, of mysterious iniquities to be washed out in her very life's blood; but the great principles of devotion and renunciation became soothing and exalting presences, before which the details of her daily task lost their toilsome or revolting aspect in a hallowed purpose. Her work was a work of piety, not only to the living, but to the beloved dead. If her father could know of what she was now doing, he would be comforted by it; if he knew that she did it for his sake it would bring him happiness. This truth she saw: that though life be stripped of every outward charm there may yet remain in the heart of it, like a glorious light, that which is the source of all beauty—Love. She strove to make Love the essence of her being. Her mother, whom it was so hard to cherish for her own sake, she would and could love because her father had done so; that father, whose only existence now was in her own, she loved with fervour which seemed to grow daily. Supreme, fostered by these other affections, exalted by the absence of a single hope for self, reigned the first and last love of her woman-soul. Every hard task achieved for love's sake rendered her in thought more worthy of him whom she made the ideal man. He would never know of the passion which she perfected to be her eternal support; but, as there is a sense of sweetness in the thought that we may be held dear by some who can neither come near us nor make known to us their good-will, so did it seem to Emily that from her love would go forth a secret influence, and that Wilfrid, all unknowing, would be blest by her faithfulness.

CHAPTER XVIII.

A COMPACT.

ON the last day of the year, a Sunday, Dagworthy sat by his fireside, alone; luncheon had been removed, and decanters stood within his reach. But the glass of wine which he had poured out, on turning to the fire half an hour ago, was still untasted, the cigar, of which he had cut the end, was still between his fingers, unlighted. For the last three months our friend had not lacked matter for thought; to do him justice, he had exercised his mind upon it pretty constantly. To-day he had received news which gave a fresh impulse to his rumination.

Dagworthy had never, since the years of early manhood, cared much for any of the various kinds of society open to him in Dunfield, and his failure to show himself at the houses of his acquaintance for weeks together occasioned no comment; but during these past three months he had held so persistently aloof that people had at length begun to ask for an explanation. At all events, when the end of the political turmoil gave them leisure to think of minor matters once more. The triumphant return of Mr. Baxendale had naturally led to festive occasions; at one dinner at the Baxendales' house Dagworthy was present, but, as it seemed, in the body only. People who, in the provincial way, made old jokes last a very long time, remarked to each other with a smile that Dagworthy appeared to be in a mood which promised an item of interest in the police reports before long. One person there was who had special reason for observing him closely that evening, and even for inducing him to converse on certain subjects; this was Mrs. Baxendale. A day or two previously she had heard a singular story from a friend of hers, which occupied her thought not a little. It interested her to discover how Dagworthy would speak of the Hood family, if led to that topic. He did not seem to care to dwell upon it, and the lady, after her experiment, imagined that it had not been made altogether in vain.

With that exception Dagworthy had kept to his mill and his house. It was seldom that he had a visitor, and those persons who did call could hardly feel that they were desired to come again. Mrs. Jenkins, of the Doric tongue, ruled in the household, and had but brief interviews with her master; provided

that his meals were served at the proper time, Dagworthy cared to inquire into nothing that went on—outside his kennels—and even those he visited in a sullen way. His child he scarcely saw; Mrs. Jenkins discovered that to bring the ‘barn’ into its father’s presence was a sure occasion of wrath, so the son and heir took lessons in his native tongue from the housekeeper and her dependents, and profited by their instruction. Dagworthy never inquired about the boy’s health. Once when Mrs. Jenkins, alarmed by certain symptoms of infantine disorder, ventured to enter the dining-room and broach the subject, her master’s reply was: ‘Send for the doctor then, can’t you?’ He had formerly made a sort of plaything of the child when in the mood for it; now he was not merely indifferent—the sight of the boy angered him. His return home was a signal for the closing of all doors between his room and the remote nursery. Once, when he heard crying he had summoned Mrs. Jenkins. ‘If you can’t stop that noise,’ he said, ‘or keep it out of my hearing, I’ll send the child to be taken care of in Hebsworth, or somewhere else further off, and then I’ll shut up the house and send you all about your business. So just mind what I say.’

Of late it had become known that he was about to take a partner into his business, a member of the Legge family—a name we remember. Dunfieldians discussed the news, and revived their pleasure in speculating on the sum total of Dagworthy’s fortune. But it was as one talks of possible mines of treasure in the moon; practical interest in the question could scarcely be said to exist, for the chance of Dagworthy’s remarriage seemed remoter than ever. The man was beginning to be one of those figures about whom gathers the peculiar air of mystery which ultimately leads to the creation of myths. Let him live on in this way for another twenty years, and stories would be told of him to children in the nursery. The case of assault and battery, a thing of the far past, would probably develop into a fable of manslaughter, of murder; his wife’s death was already regarded very much in that light, and would class him with Bluebeard; his house on the Heath would assume a forbidding aspect, and dread whispers would be exchanged of what went on there under the shadow of night. Was it not already beginning to be remarked by his neighbours that you met him wandering about lonely places at unholy hours, and that he shunned you, like one with a guilty conscience? Let him advance in years, his face lose its broad

colour, his hair grow scant and grey, his figure, perchance, stoop a little, his eyes acquire the malignity of miserly old age—and there you have the hero of a Dunfield legend. Even thus do such grow. . . .

But he is sitting by his fireside this New Year's Eve, still a young man, still fresh-coloured, only looking tired and lonely, and, in fact, meditating an attempt to recover his interest in life. He had admitted a partner to his business chiefly that he might be free to quit Yorkshire for a time, and at present he was settling affairs to that end. This afternoon he expected a visit from Mr. Cartwright, who had been serving him in several ways of late, and who had promised to come and talk business for an hour. The day was anything but cheerful; at times a stray flake of snow hissed upon the fire; already, at three o'clock, shadows were invading the room.

He heard a knock at the front door, and, supposing it to be Cartwright, roused himself. As he was stirring the fire a servant announced—instead of the father, the daughter. Jessie Cartwright appeared.

'Something amiss with your father?' Dagworthy asked, shaking hands with her carelessly.

'Yes; I'm sorry to say he has such a very bad sore-throat that he couldn't possibly come. Oh, what an afternoon it is, to be sure!'

'Why did *you* come?' was Dagworthy's not very polite inquiry. 'It wasn't so important as all that. Walked all the way?'

'Of course. I'm afraid the wet 'll drip off my cloak on to the floor.'

'Take it off, then, and put it here by the fire to dry.'

He helped her to divest herself, and hung the cloak on the back of a chair.

'You may as well sit down. Shall I give you a glass of wine?'

'Oh, indeed, no! No, thank you!'

'I think you'd better have one,' he said, without heeding her. 'I suppose you've got your feet wet? I can't very well ask you to take your shoes off.'

'Oh, they're not wet anything to speak of,' said Jessie, settling herself in a chair, as if her visit were the most ordinary event. She watched him pour the wine, putting on the face of a child

who is going to be treated to something reserved for grown-up persons.

'What do they mean by sending you all this distance in such weather?' Dagworthy said, as he seated himself and extended his legs, resting an elbow on the table.

'They didn't send me. I offered to come, and mother wouldn't hear of it.'

'Well——?'

'Oh, I just slipped out of the room, and was off before any one could get after me. I suppose I shall catch it rarely when I get back. But we wanted to know why you haven't been to see us—not even on Christmas Day. Now that, you know, was too bad of you, Mr. Dagworthy. I said you must be ill. Have you been?'

'Ill? No.'

'Oh!' the girl exclaimed, upon a sudden thought. 'That reminds me. I really believe Mrs. Hood is dead; at all events all the blinds were down as I came past.'

'Yes,' was the reply, 'she is dead. She died early this morning.'

'Well, I never! Isn't poor Emily having a shocking Christmas! I declare, when I saw her last week, she looked like a ghost, and worse.'

Dagworthy gazed at the fire, and said nothing.

'One can't be sorry that it's over,' Jessie went on, 'only it's so dreadful, her father and mother dead almost at the same time. I'm sure it would have killed me.'

'What is she going to do?' Dagworthy asked, slowly, almost as if speaking to himself.

'Oh, I daresay it'll be all right, as soon as she gets over it, you know. She's a lucky girl, in one way.'

'Lucky?' He raised his head to regard her. 'How?'

'Oh well, that isn't a thing to talk about. And then I don't know anything for certain. It's only what people say, you know.'

'What do people say?' he asked, impatiently, though without much sign of active interest. It was rather as if her manner annoyed him, than the subject of which she spoke.

'I don't see that it can interest you.'

'No, I don't see that it can. Still, you may as well explain.'

Jessie sipped her wine.

'It's only that they say she's engaged.'

'To whom?'

‘A gentleman in London—somebody in the family where she was teaching.’

‘How do you know that?’ he asked, with the same blending of indifference and annoyed persistency.

‘Why, it’s only a guess, after all. One day Barbara and I went to see her, and just as we got to the door, out comes a gentleman we’d never seen before. Of course, we wondered who he was. The next day mother and I were in the station, buying a newspaper, and there was the same gentleman, just going to start by the London train. Mother remembered she’d seen him walking with Mrs. Baxendale in St. Luke’s, and then we found he’d been staying with the Baxendales all through Emily’s illness.’

‘How did you find it out? You don’t know the Baxendales.’

‘No, but Mrs. Gadd does, and she told us.’

‘What’s his name?’

‘Mr. Athel—a queer name, isn’t it?’

Dagworthy was silent.

‘Now you’re cross with me,’ Jessie exclaimed. ‘You’ll tell me, like you did once before, that I’m no good but to pry into other people’s business.’

‘You may pry as much as you like,’ was the murmured reply.

‘Just because you don’t care what I do?’

‘Drink your wine, and try to be quiet just for a little.’

‘Why?’

He made no answer, until Jessie asked—

‘Why does it seem to interest you so much?’

‘What?—all that stuff you’ve been telling me? I was thinking of something quite different.’

‘Oh!’ exclaimed the girl, blankly.

There was a longer silence. Jessie let her eyes stray about the room, stealing a glance at Dagworthy occasionally. Presently he rose, poked the fire with violence, and drank his own wine, which had been waiting so long.

‘I must have out the carriage to send you back,’ he said, going to the window to look at the foul weather.

‘The carriage, indeed!’ protested the girl, with a secret joy. ‘You’ll do no such thing.’

‘I suppose I shall do as I choose,’ he remarked, quietly. Then he came and rang the bell.

‘You’re not really going to——?’

A servant answered, and the carriage was ordered.

‘Well, certainly that’s one way of getting rid of me,’ Jessie observed.

‘You can stay as long as you please.’

‘But the carriage will be round.’

‘Can’t I keep it waiting half through the night if I choose? I’ve done so before now. I suppose I’m master in my own house.’

It was strictly true, that, of the carriage. Once the coachman had been five minutes late on an evening when Dagworthy happened to be ill-tempered. He bade the man wait at the door, and the waiting lasted through several hours.

The room was growing dusk.

‘Aren’t you very lonely here?’ Jessie asked, an indescribable change in her voice.

‘Yes, I suppose I am. You won’t make it any better by telling me so.’

‘I feel sorry.’

‘I dare say you do.’

‘Of course you don’t believe me. All the same, I *do* feel sorry.’

‘That won’t help.’

‘No?—I suppose it won’t.’

The words were breathed out on a sigh. Dagworthy made no answer.

‘I’m not much better off,’ she continued, in a low-spirited voice.

‘Nonsense!’ he ejaculated, roughly, half turning his back on her.

Jessie fumbled a moment at her dress; then, succeeding in getting her handkerchief out, began to press it against her eyes furtively. Strangely, there was real moisture to be removed.

‘What’s the matter with you?’ Dagworthy asked, with surprise.

She no longer attempted concealment, but began to cry quietly.

‘What the deuce has come to you, Jessie?’

‘You—you—speak very unkindly to me,’ she sobbed.

‘Speak unkindly? I didn’t know it. What did I say?’

‘You won’t believe when I say I’m sorry you feel lonely.’

‘Why, confound it, I’ll believe as much as you like, if it comes to that. Put that handkerchief away, and drink another glass of wine.’

She stood up, and went to lean on the mantelpiece, hiding her face. When he was near her again, she continued her complaints in a low voice.

'It's so miserable at home. They want me to be a teacher, and how can I? I never pretended to be clever, and if I'd all the lessons under the sun, I should never be able to teach French—and arithmetic—and those things. But I wish I could; then I should get away from home, and see new people. There's nobody I care to see in Dunfield—nobody but one——'

She stopped on a sob.

'Who's that?' Dagworthy asked, looking at her with a singular expression, from head to foot.

She made no answer, but sobbed again.

'What Christmas presents have you had?' was his next question, irrelevant enough apparently.

'Oh, none—none to speak of—a few little things. What do I care for presents? You can't live on presents.'

'Can't live on them? Are things bad at home?'

'I didn't mean that. But of course they're bad; they're always bad nowadays. However, Barbara's going to be married in a week; she'll be one out of the way. And of course I haven't a dress fit to be seen in for the wedding.'

'Why then, get a dress. How much will it cost?' He went to a writing-table, unlocked a drawer, and took out a cheque-book. 'Now then,' he said, half jestingly, half in earnest, 'what is it to be? Anything you like to say—I'll write it.'

'As if I wanted money!'

'I can give you that. I don't see what else I can do. It isn't to be despised.'

'No, you can do nothing else,' she said, pressing each cheek with her handkerchief before putting it away. 'Will you help me on with my cloak, Mr. Dagworthy?'

He took it from the chair, and held it for her. Jessie, as if by accident, approached her face to his hand, and, before he saw her purpose, kissed his hard fingers. Then she turned away, hiding her face.

Dagworthy dropped the garment, and stood looking at her. He had a half contemptuous smile on his lips. At this moment it was announced that the carriage was coming round. Jessie caught at her cloak, and threw it over her shoulders. Then, with sunk head, she offered to shake hands.

'No use, Jessie,' Dagworthy remarked quietly, without answering her gesture.

'Of course, I know it's no use,' she said in a hurried voice of shame. 'I know it as well as you can tell me. I wish I'd never come.'

'But you don't act badly,' he continued.

'What do you mean?' she exclaimed, indignation helping her to raise her eyes for a moment. 'I'm not acting.'

'You don't mean anything by it—that's all.'

'No, perhaps not. Good-bye.'

'Good-bye. I'm going away before very long. I dare say I shan't see you again before then.'

'Where are you going to?'

'Abroad.'

'I suppose you'll bring back a foreign wife,' she said with sad scornfulness.

'No, I'm not likely to do that. I shouldn't wonder if I'm away for some time, though—perhaps a couple of years.'

'Years!' she exclaimed in astonishment.

He laughed.

'That startles you. I shan't be back in time for your wedding, you see.'

She sobbed again, averting her face.

'I shan't ever be married. I'm one of those wretched things nobody ever cares for.'

'You'll have to show you deserve it. Why, you couldn't give your word and keep it for two years.'

Through this extraordinary scene Dagworthy was utterly unlike himself. It was as if a man suffering physical agony should suddenly begin to jest and utter wild mirth; there was the same unreality in his behaviour. Throughout it all the lines of his face never lost their impress of gloom. Misery had its clutch upon him, and he was driven by an inexplicable spirit of self-mockery to burlesque the subject of his unhappiness. He had no sense of responsibility, and certain instincts were strongly excited, making a kind of moral intoxication.

Jessie answered his question with wide eyes.

'I couldn't?—Ah!'

She spoke under her breath, and with sincerity which was not a little amusing.

'It's New Year's Eve, isn't it?' Dagworthy pursued, throwing

out his words at random. 'Be here this day two years—or not, as you like. I'm going to wander about, but I shall be here on that day—that is, if I'm alive. You won't, though. Good-bye.'

He turned away from her, and went to the window. Jessie moved a little nearer.

'Do you mean that?' she asked.

'Mean it?' he repeated, 'why, yes, as much as I mean anything. Be off; you're keeping that poor devil in the snow.'

'Mr. Dagworthy, I shall be here, and you daren't pretend to forget, or to say you weren't in earnest.'

He laughed and waved his hand.

'Be off to your carriage!'

Jessie moved to the door reluctantly; but he did not turn again, and she departed.

(To be continued.)

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CHAPTER IV.

THE YOUNG LAIRD FALLS SICK.

It was hardly possible, much as the high-handed lady of Windygates might cling to the possibility, that young Windygates would get out of the Paris of his day, with his improved manners and increased knowledge of the world, without his ever being in jeopardy, or without his carrying away any damage from the inflammable materials around him. This had been far from the judgment of Windygates; and Braehead himself, however self-satisfied, however faithful and discreet a guide, would have been the last man to profess to work miracles—he who had renounced miracles in every form, at every date, with the rest of the Christian creed.

It was a matter of uncertainty beforehand what would be the nature of Allan's peril and the penalty paid for braving it; he might be so mad as to stake and lose the price of the estate of Windygates—supposing it in the market. He might fight one or more duels and either be killed or badly wounded, or have to flee the French country to escape from the vengeance of the relations of the man he had slain. He might be betrayed into a shameful entanglement with a profligate married woman or a ballet girl, or a wanton of a peasant-born grisette—according to his depraved taste. He might be perverted and join the apostate Church of Rome after he had been reared in the pure doctrine of the reformed Kirk of Scotland. He might go with Braehead to the meetings of the encyclopædists, till young Allan's

faith had not a leg left to stand upon, and he returned to Scotland an avowed atheist. That would be worse in some of his kindred's eyes than if he had committed murder and were about to pass under the hangman's escort 'up the long ladder, and down the little tow.' Thus, all things considered, it was perhaps the very lightest blackmail that could have been levied on the lad when he was suddenly attacked by one of the fevers for which the state of the streets and gutters of Paris afforded ample reasons, and lay sick and helpless for many days at his inn.

The mischance was not a trifle to Braehead; he was at his wits' ends what to do—how he was to bring young Windygates round; whether he—Braehead—ought not to summon Lady Windygates to come at once to her son. But, deficient as Braehead was in imagination, he could not help realising the consternation his letter would excite. There would be an overthrow of the whole domestic economy at Windygates, while there would be the greatest difficulty in Lady Windygates' making the journey alone, since one of the heads of the house must bide at home to see that everything did not go to wreck and ruin, especially with the harvest coming on. Braehead's hands would be full with a vengeance if he were left with Allan in extremity, and with Lady Windygates set down at a Paris inn, unable to speak a word of French, determined to have her own way, and distracted with the state of her son. Why, there were the smells alone—she would not stand them for a day; she would not swallow this, or let young Windygates drink that; she would not listen to the apothecary, or have anything to do with his medicines. Her presence, instead of furthering Allan's recovery, would lessen his chance of pulling through; she would have him—Braehead—and herself in fevers of their own before they had done with the young laird's version of the complaint. And all this was happening just when there was to have been a discussion on Berkeley's views by a few qualified spirits, and when a hope had been held out that the little billie from Ferney, whom the bullies had beaten in the dark ages, might visit the city, and Robbie Wedderburn and he might measure spiritual swords, to the edification of the bystanders!

Many a time Braehead vowed that never again would he saddle and bridle himself with the charge of a laird's heir and a wife's son in order to lessen the expense of his holiday.

In Braehead's dilemma he had recourse to the Hôtel de Chalons, for which he had shown no great inclination hitherto.

The people there were young Windygates's friends, whom he had misspent his time in running after. They ought to know of his condition, when they might suggest something for his relief.

Braehead stood again in the ante-chamber where he and Allan Wedderburn had taken their places for the first exchange of civilities, among a small crowd of applicants for the family's acquaintance and patronage, and made a page carry his card, with the news of the young man's illness scrawled on it, to Madame, in her demi-toilette on her great bed. Robbie could distinguish the reception which his missive met with. 'The governor of Monsieur Alain—the fat man with the plump hands—I abhor a plump hand—what does he here? His pupil ill—the poor boy! Fever! Mon Dieu! My vinaigrette, Ninon, make haste—fly! Those fevers are frightfully infectious—what is it that the man seeks here? Is it that he would poison us all, and have the fever over the hôtel, over Paris, before he stop?'

'Is it like small-pox, ma chère mère?' cried the shrill voice of the little Countess; 'will it make us hideous—dye us purple,¹ or cover us with black spots?' 'Ah ciel! what shall we do?' chimed in the future Abbess in accents of still deeper dismay.

'Monsieur the apothecary, it is your business,' resumed Madame in a calmer tone; 'you go with his tutor to the unfortunate young man. Heavens! who would have thought it, when he looked like an ox? See what you can do for him, order for him what he needs. Monsieur the Duke's larder and cellar are at your disposal, I answer for it, but you must answer for the infection. I depend upon you.'

'Permit me to go, Madame the Duchess,' said another voice, fuller, but harsher also. 'For me—I am not frightened, and I can go everywhere; it is the privilege of one who has been a wife, and yet is a nobody, like a young girl. I shall see to what extent the young gentleman ails; he will be better for a woman to look after him a little; at the same time, Monsieur the apothecary will take care that I do not bring away the infection in my reticule or my capôte. He can smoke me all over if he likes, and if you prefer that I enter not your presence while Monsieur Wedderburn's illness lasts I consent to so wise a precaution.'

'A thousand thanks, our cousin Jeannette—it is thou who art wise,' said the Duchess, with more than one shade of mocking

¹ Scarlet fever was long known as purple fever, and spotted fevers were only too common.

meaning in her voice. 'I did not think to see you play the part of a nursing sister—but who knows? the transition has been made before now—that may be your final destination. In the meantime discharge all the duties which the family owe to this Scotch gentleman, since the poor boy was not only *un brave homme*, he was also recommended to our good offices by Lady Lathones. Let me know by Ninon or Monsieur the Duke—he has no fear of the infection either—how the patient goes on. The governor out there will serve you for a chaperon, even if you were not, as you say, so happy as to be able to dispense with that troublesome commodity.'

'So much for the tender mercies of fine ladies,' said Braehead to himself bitterly. 'I am turned over to a dulcinea, a harpy, who will only prey for her own ends on the simple laddie, simple enough, when he had all his wits about him, to be taken in by such a crew.'

But Windygates was unjust in his wrath. In the first place, all fine ladies were not heartless; witness the pink and perfection of fine ladies, of *spirituelles*, and sweet women—Madame de Sevigné. She caught her death by insisting in her old age on nursing one of her distant kindred of a younger generation, who lay sick of a dangerous epidemic, but recovered from the disease, while her self-appointed nurse paid the penalty. After all, young Windygates was no kinsman of Madame la Duchesse de Chalons, and if she had been attracted by his youthful enthusiasm, and had inspired him in turn with eager, reverent devotion to her person, he was by no means the first person, nor would he be the last, to whom she had extended like grace, who was bound to her by similar ties. The flowers know but one moon, the moon knows many flowers.

It was also true that Madame St. Barbe, in putting into practice her amiable suggestion, was not solely impelled by hardened levity and grasping far-reaching selfishness. She was constitutionally fearless to recklessness, so that she had no nervous dread of disease to overcome. Apart from this natural qualification, and whatever underlying motives might influence her, the 'weeping blood' in woman's breast was not wholly dried up in the worldly, passionate nature, though, as far as man could see, it had not, in spite of some wealth of original endowment, had the shadow of a chance given it. On the contrary, it had been tossed here and there, now played with, now spurned, anon galled

in the most sensitive quarter, or mortally shamed. When and where could Madame St. Barbe have entered a nobler world, and risen to higher things, with purer, truer, tenderer aims? Yet she was touched by the unwonted sight of the helplessness and delirium of the strong young man as she had known him. She was willing to do all she could for his relief. She got more and more interested in her voluntary task; she came again and again to his sick room, always as one of those angels of common sense, self-control, patience, and pity which women—even those of them who are least esteemed—often show themselves to benighted man under the circumstances. Soon Braehead, with all his self-sufficiency and contradictoriness, looked forward to Madame St. Barbe's entrance on the scene, and clung pusillanimously to the support of her presence and advice.

The first thing that young Windygates saw when consciousness returned to his eyes was the tall figure and dark handsome face of Madame St. Barbe bending over him with anxious kindness, while her arm was under his head and she held a cordial to his lips. The whole thing was done as if she was courageously indifferent to personal risk and magnanimously insensible to all that was depressing and repellent in the surroundings.

'Is it you, Madame the Duchess?' murmured the poor lad, still dazed and dumbfounded, while his breast heaved at the unimaginable condescension.

'Nothing so fine, Monsieur,' said the lady with a little scoff, but still speaking softly, for her heart was full with the satisfaction of seeing him restored to the use of his senses. 'You must put up with the poor cousin Jeannette in lieu of somebody vastly better.'

'Cousin Jeannette is very good,' he said hastily, recognising her, and vexed, in a dull way, at having mortified her.

'No, not very good,' she said quickly. 'You are too trustful, my patient, but she is your friend and servant, while you want her.'

If it had rested with Braehead, young Windygates would not have wanted his dubious benefactress long, after he had got the turn of the fever and was in a fair way of recovery.

That cool philosopher, who professed to expect nothing save selfishness from his fellow-creatures—in whom naturally his magnificently astute and logically narrow intellect saw no spark of divinity, waxed positively wrathful at the inevitable egotism of

one of his neighbours. Having got, as he was bound to admit, what he and young Windygates had urgently required out of the friendliness of Madame St. Barbe, Braehead was prepared to turn his back on such friendliness and have nothing more to do with it. His excuse was that necessity knows no law, and that he was answerable to Windygates and Lady Windygates at home for any scrape their son might get into abroad through his illness, as through the other incidents of his stay in Paris. So Braehead would have dismissed the obliging lady, whom he was already beginning to accuse of indelicate officiousness, without further ceremony, and would even have ignored her part in the matter. But he argued without his host when he counted on Allan's acquiescence in his prudent policy, and Allan and Madame St. Barbe together were too much even for Braehead's thick-skinned, dogged resolution. Young Windygates, in his gratitude and pleasure at finding a gracious woman at hand who could and would minister to his weakness, and charm away his *ennui* and his fits of home-sickness almost as well as Madame the Duchess could have done it, was not going to behave like a brute to Madame's cousin, who was handsome and witty in her own way, though it was not the exquisite way of his and her patroness. He was not going to have nothing further to say to Madame St. Barbe after his first great need, and with it her excess of generous self-devotion, had passed, in order to humour an unmannerly, unthankful maggot of Braehead's, which Windygates and Lady Windygates would have been the last persons to authorise. Young Windygates would not suffer himself to be guilty of disloyalty to his earlier goddess, the Duchess. He would not throw a shade of blame on her or allow others to do it in his hearing; yet it did pique him secretly, in spite of the irresponsibility of his goddess to the laws of common humanity, womanliness, and motherliness, binding on the rest of her kind, that she had taken so little notice of him—her sworn champion, her elected *fils*—in his illness. She had sent the Duke's apothecary, as she might have sent him to a lacquey. She had permitted her cousin to visit him and spend hours daily by his sick-bed; but, so far as he could learn, the great Madame had contented herself with the most perfunctory inquiries after his welfare. She had not deferred by a single day her annual sojourn at the Duke's country house of Les Sapins, near Choisy-le-Roi, when the Court was there. All this served to increase by force of contrast the sick man's dawning

appreciation of the widow St. Barbe, who had voluntarily stayed behind the rest of the household for his benefit, and instead of withdrawing her amiable attentions had redoubled them. She had done this at the very time when the fact that he was out of danger might have given her an excuse for acting on Braehead's ill-conditioned hints, and departing with the heads of the noble Chalons family. But for her, he might have had a relapse, and sunk and died far from his people—his mother, who would neither be to hold or bind because he had been ill and she had not presided over his illness; his father, who would be very quiet, but much exercised by it; all his friends—including 'set-up,' saucy Maisie Hunter—far from Windygates and Scotland. He would have had nothing to fall back upon save the tender mercies of Braehead, who was all very well—Allan did not wish to be ungrateful to Robbie Wedderburn either, or to say that he had not done his duty by the young man—but a man—an elderly man—a man who neither believed in God nor the Devil, was not a great stay to fall back upon in such a strait.

What pleasure could it be for Madame St. Barbe to come and sit with him when he was not able to do more than totter from his bed to the great armchair, whose pillows she, and only she, could arrange so that he could rest comfortably? He was horrified to think what a spectacle he must present to her when he looked into the glass and saw that his face was as thin and white as his hands, while his hair had been cut off to cool his head in the violence of the fever. He was sure that Maisie Hunter would have laughed if she had seen him, and would never have let him forget the appearance he presented, or else she would have treated him as a child, though she was years his junior. But Madame St. Barbe handed him her pocket mirror to convince him how well he 'set' the black velvet skull-cap she had made for him; she took pains to divert him with her animated accounts of the Court and the quality. He had never heard stories like hers except Madame the Duchess's stories, which were still more entertaining; but when a fellow could not have the best he was wise to take the second best. It was almost as agreeable for him to be encouraged to tell Madame St. Barbe all about Windygates—how long the snow lay there in spring, how the privet bushes and the very leaves of the potatoes were blighted by the winds, and how, when it was stormy weather, they—the family—would sometimes not see the face of a stranger for a week at a time. She would shiver and throw up her hands

at that, and he would laugh and tell her that the natives never found it cold or dull. Then she would make him tell her still more about his father and mother, the neighbours and the neighbourhood, the Pitblair races, which brought crowds of company while they lasted, Dalbeath Fair, which collected company of another description, and had its own fun. He would describe the birds he had shot and the fish he had caught, and the dogs and horses he had trained. She would listen to him with the most good-humoured patience—even press for more of the homely details, as if they had a real interest for her. But he was not such a puppy as to believe that she had any object in maintaining the conversation, except to entertain him. After all, his descriptions must sound very flat to a fine creature like her, who had been accustomed from her youth to mingle in the best company in Paris, which she was fitted to adorn. No doubt she saw it all, as it were, from the back windows apportioned to a poor relation. That did not prevent her from being a fine woman; nay, to a generous nature it lent a pathetic side to her gifts and graces when one thought of the disadvantages she had been forced to overcome, and the trials she had been sentenced to bear. Married, when no more than a child like the little Madame, to a rogue and villain; left destitute at his death, with no refuge to cling to save the cold and careless charity of her grand relations, whose grandeur separated her from them by an impassable gulf—yet, with the exception of the Duchess, the poor cousin Jeannette had a nobler presence and a keener wit than the whole set of them put together.

Yes, what a 'gallant-looking' woman she was! What a carriage, what eyes, what hair she possessed! Would she not 'look fine,' sitting in the chimney corner of his mother's parlour or standing at the hall window at Windygates? Would she not lend them an entirely new distinction, taking away from them all their hard homely lines, bestowing on them an air of grace, dignity, and *esprit* borrowed from this wonderful world of Paris, where she was to the manner born? How her long taper fingers picked up and dropped, rolled and unrolled, interlaced and disentangled, with a magical swiftness and sureness, those bobbins on the cushion at which she was accustomed to work, when she sat beside him, till she saw him do more than trifle with his chicken and truffles, his glass of red Burgundy, or his cup of frothed chocolate. What would his mother think of such ceaseless industry? She was inclined to hold by the rustic proverb that a woman's toger should lie in

her shoulders rather than in her head or her heels. For to that day in Scotland the virtuous woman, like her who figured in the last chapter of Proverbs, was known rather by the work of her skilful and diligent hands than by the offspring of her brain. Would not Lady Windygates, who cherished her wedding providing of French and Flanders laces and set great store on them—both for the beauty, which pleased her woman's eyes, and the marketable value, which delighted her thrifty Scotch mind—be greatly taken by Madame St. Barbe's cobweb work and her unrelaxing energy in its production? These coils and coils of real French lace meant something like a small fortune, while the time had not come in his country when even a laird's wife might not contribute to her husband's income, though it was a reasonably fair one. She furnished the profits of her own and her maids' flax spinning or thread bleaching; if she had any old neighbours settled 'across the water,' she even indulged in the still more enterprising importation and retail among her friends and acquaintances of French silks and cambrics. Young Windygates was not avaricious on his own account, but he could not help making certain calculations, as, for instance, how far Madame St. Barbe's enviable power as a worker, which equalled her delightful ability as a talker, might not to a certain extent counterbalance in Lady Windygates's eyes the many serious drawbacks of the younger lady's foreign origin, her Roman Catholic religion, her poverty, and her widowhood. Was it not just possible that this lucrative accomplishment alone might win for her one of the chief encomiums which Lady Windygates was ever heard to bestow on a favourite—that she was an active, 'eydent' lass, likely to become a thoroughgoing woman, with plenty of output, enterprise, and energy in her nature, a woman who would see neither herself nor anybody belonging to her come down in the world, for she would hold her own and her husband's goods well together, would double them in the turning over, would have enough and to spare for the poor and needy, in short would be a credit to the name she bore?

As young Windygates leant lazily back in his invalid's chair one fine July afternoon, and watched Madame St. Barbe and her occupation where she sat near him, weaving her lace like a very Arachne, he realised how much her graceful handiwork contributed to the elegance of her dress. The ruffles at her dimpled elbows were composed of it. It bordered the cambric neckerchief shading her supple throat, and coming down over her falling shoulders till

it veiled her rounded waist. It edged her gauze hat and was the material of which the great cockade was composed that held the brim of the hat where it was turned up at one side. It frilled both her silk gown, opening in front like a pelisse, and the cambric *jupe* which could be seen within the opening.

‘In my country,’ he said, moving his hand in the direction of the lace, ‘women call such bravery as you are always making and wearing, which sets you so well, “pearlins.” They would say you were very fond of pearlins, Madame St. Barbe.’

‘They would not say wrong,’ she answered with her flashing smile, ‘but why do you still call me Madame St. Barbe, Monsieur, after we have been such good friends; can I not be Jeannette to you? Not Cousin Jeannette, if you please, but quite simply Jeannette. Ah, you do not know how I sigh to hear once more the Jeannette without the Cousin,’ she ended, making an expressive *moue*. She was a born coquette; she would have coquetted with Braehead if he would have responded in kind. He did not dream of doing so; in fact, he would not have been moved in that way by the Duchess herself, though he was ready to oblige Lady Windygates. He was on friendly terms with the women of his kindred and water-side, but, as to philandering or the faintest approach to love-making, Braehead had neither time nor taste for such follies.

Madame St. Barbe had to fall back—nothing loth—on young Windygates, who, as in a sense her patient, was bound to acquiesce in her wishes. She had come to like the lad after her fashion, and liking with her meant, not a quiet kindly affection—rather a brief madness, a fierce transitory passion. Her life since her early girlhood had been made up of such *affaires de cœur*, more or less serious. These and high play had supplied her with her sensations, her romantic adventures, her engrossing occupations. In them she had frittered away what heart and conscience she had started with. It was a wonder that her sorry history had left in her so many grains of honesty and kindness as she had retained. For even in this wild wilful liking there was something different from such *tendresse* as Jeannette St. Barbe had experienced for other men. Just as an evil man will sometimes be touched with lingering respect and yearning regret for the innocence of a young girl who has no suspicion of him, who trusts him as a friend and brother, so Madame St. Barbe had a troubled reverence, a pained sorrow, a soft side, where the young Scot was concerned. She could never forget that he had always respected her and was

blind in his guileless manliness to the conditions which compromised her. Young Windygates, strong, brave, as she could not doubt him, with all his wits about him, and yet—*ciel!*—stupid and simple as a child, was a complete novelty to her. It said something for the young woman—fine lady and adventuress, whose chances in life had been so few and so fatally marred, that she did not despise young Allan any more than she hated him; she regarded him with wonder, and a little fear, at which she tried to laugh at the time, in the middle of her violent fancy for him. But neither the fancy nor the fear prevented the woman who had shifted for herself all her life, and learnt no end of craft in the shifting, from mixing up her miserable self-interest with her regard for the stranger.

Though Madame St. Barbe was enslaved by Paris, and believed in her inmost soul that she could not live out of it, there were always intervals when her life became wearisome and intolerable to her. Then she would turn over with frequency and persistency, and with her understanding getting warped and confused in the process, such means as presented themselves for escaping from her humiliating subjection—with the still more humiliating revolts from it which she had perpetrated, and her worst objections to the means would dwindle dangerously for the moment.

‘I will call you Jeannette if you wish it, Madame,’ said young Windygates in a voice which did not sound like his own. He had never called even Maisie Hunter—his early playmate—to her face by any mode of address more familiar than ‘Mrs. Maisie’ or ‘Mrs. Hunter’ since she had been put into gowns with trains, and had her hair rolled up. He was not sure whether Maisie might not deal him even yet a rousing cuff if he failed in the ‘Mrs. Maisie’ or the shorter ‘Mrs.’

‘But if I call you Jeannette,’ Allan went on, forgetting all about Maisie, ‘then I must be Allan to you, mind.’

‘Like Paul and Virginia,’ said Jeannette with a ringing laugh; ‘very well, Alain;’ and another sort of thrill than that which had passed through young Windygates when Madame the Duchess styled him *mon fils* tingled in his veins.

CHAPTER V.

BRAEHEAD'S FLIGHT WITH HIS CHARGE.

'I'll Janet and Allan you ! This pernicious nonsense must be put a stop to instantly, instantly. The silly callant would ruin himself because a Frenchified hussy has condescended to mix a draught for him. My word to his mother will not be worth a bodle if I do not take care. I would like to see how his father would look.'

It was Braehead who said these wrathful words to himself after he had paused behind the screen which had been put up before the door of the ante-room to shelter the heedless Allan from draughts, and caught the drift of the conversation which was going on without so much as the precaution of undertones in the room within. Braehead had not set himself to listen ; the words had been wafted to him whether he would or not. At the same time it is doubtful if, after overcoming so many prejudices, he might not have been ready to agree with gentle King Jamie of pious memory that the use of an available 'lug,' when the interest of kinsman or friend required it, was perfectly allowable both in love and war. From that morning Braehead altered his tactics, though the alteration was exceedingly inconvenient to him and rendered him more dry-haired and opinionative than ever, because he was baulked in mastering the data of the encyclopædists. To think that a trifle so contemptible as a foolish flirtation should come between a wise man and his search for further wisdom ! Braehead, in his sense of honour, of what was due to the lad's mother and the head of the house, kept a lynx eye on all further intercourse between young Windygates and Madame St. Barbe. Robbie Wedderburn took care that he should make the third person at each meeting, or should be so liable to walk in upon the pair at any moment that they were never safe from interruption. He even hired Baptiste, the skinny, grizzled waiter told off for the sick gentleman's service, whom Braehead appropriated under the abbreviated title of 'Bappy,' to perform the same office of marplot. It was all in vain that Bappy's other master ordered him out of the room, even threatened to fling him out of the window, when Allan could hardly raise himself in his chair, for what he considered Bappy's rank impudence. Young Windygates was quick enough in thinking the waiter a spying, officious rascal, but never suspected Braehead of being at the bottom of the man's spying, nor

understood why the complacent Mentor was so disturbed in his mind and walked so often in and out of the hotel in those days. Young Allan was thick-headed in many respects.

Madame St. Barbe saw much more clearly, but, as it happened, she was not to be held back or rebuffed. It belonged to her passionate, undisciplined nature to be bent on having her own way even in trifles. Braehead could not have pursued any line of conduct which would have rendered her more determined to attach herself to M. Alain and make her own out of him. She positively enjoyed the tug of war with his guardian, in which her woman's wit was tolerably sure to win the day. Braehead might be fretted out of his usual heavy self-complacent good-humour, and call her in his own mind a brazen-faced intriguing 'hizzy' a dozen times a day, to no purpose. He was hounding her on to the step which would be fatal alike to her and young Allan. For none save a simple-hearted boy could ever dream of her fitting in to the domestic economy of Windygates; a Turkish Sultana or an Indian Begum could hardly have been a more incongruous or hopeless mistake. And, unhappily for them both, he was of age, while he was too honest and modest, under Lady Windygates's and the Rev. Andrew Brydon's training—ininitely too far behind Madame St. Barbe in knowledge of the world—to think of a disgraceful compromise. He might give her his promise and consider himself bound as a man of honour to stick to it at whatever cost. It was a comfort to know that on French ground he could not enter into an actual contract of marriage as he might have done in Scotland. For once Braehead, who was bound to be liberal in his social and political views, did not consider the boasted freedom of his native country an advantage to swear by. Finding himself foiled in every cautious effort to shut Madame St. Barbe out of the inn, to get her to leave town and join the Duchess in her play of entering into rustic interests, gathering walnuts and picking grapes, as a sequel to haymaking, Braehead took a desperate resolution, which with his habitual 'pawkiness' he kept to himself to the last moment.

Young Windygates had been talking by moments all day of certain excursions he was disposed to take in pleasant company up and down the river, and out into the neighbouring forest land as far as Compiègne or Fontainebleau. For he too was sick of the summer heat in the fermenting crowds and foul air of the city, and was pining for fresh air and country sights and sounds.

‘I am glad to hear it, Allan, my man,’ said Braehead in answer to one of those rhapsodies, spoken towards night-fall, when there was no fear of further visitors for the next twelve hours. In consideration of the sultriness of the weather and of young Windygates’s advancing convalescence, he and Braehead had their chairs carried out on the balcony with the little table bearing their bottle of Bordeaux placed between them. ‘I’m glad to hear it,’ repeated Braehead cheerfully, ‘for you’ll soon have your fill of caller air and the crowing of cocks, and maaing or baaing of sheep. I believe it will be the first thing which will fairly set you on your feet again. Don’t you think it is time that we were turning our faces homewards, now that you are on your legs once more? I’m so sure of it that I’ve got our passports made out and given orders for the first relays of post-horses to be ready. I propose that we should start to-morrow not earlier than mid-day, in order to make the first stage an easy one and sleep at the end of it.’

His companion stopped him in astonishment and indignation. ‘What do you mean? Why was I not told of this before? What is the reason of this stolen march?’

‘Stolen is not the word, sir,’ Braehead took up the accusation calmly, but with some dignity; ‘I for one always apprehended that our tour was to finish some day. Indeed, we were to have been back at Windygates before the end of June, which we should have been but for your untoward illness—I hope you’re not going to wyte me with that?’ Braehead put in by way of parenthesis, in an accent of injured innocence, ‘As to not telling you before the preparations for our departure were made, I thought it would only fyke you to hear them discussed and you not strong yet. And, as for farewell calls, purchases, and settling accounts, you ken you have to-morrow morning for that business. At the same time I would advise you to make as short a work of it as possible, for, as I said, you’ve not regained your fair share of health and strength. Another thing, young man—we’ve a good auld proverb, which you and fellows like you would do well to lay to heart, ‘the least said is the soonest mended,’ Braehead ended with plausible ambiguity.

Young Windygates sat frowning and staring before him down the narrow street, with the wine shops and the seats before their doors fully occupied, and the lights beginning to be kindled in the tall houses; then he turned and looked straight into Braehead’s round, smooth, sagacious face—‘I don’t care whether you return or not, Braehead,’ he said vehemently, ‘but I tell you

flatly, I'll not go with you to-morrow. I'm not going to rise and ride at your word when you have not so much as thought it worth while to give me intimation of your intention beforehand.'

'I don't know what you call intimation,' said Braehead with provoking coolness and reiteration; 'isn't this intimation? And I've taken care to allow you all the time that any reasonable creature can want.'

'Reasonable creature!' echoed young Allan, fuming, and taking fresh umbrage at the words. 'I'll not stir a foot till I'm ready.'

'There are two at a bargain-making, Mr. Allan Wedderburn,' retorted Braehead, not at all discomposed, though he spoke firmly. 'I have your father and mother's authority for seeing you home without further loss of time. Will you dispute that?' He pulled out his pocket-book, drew forth a letter in the well-known handwriting of Lady Windygates, who wrote all the family letters, among her other multifarious duties, and placed it before her son. Allan could not in his greatest heat refuse to read the home missive.

The letter had been written in answer to an announcement of the son and heir's illness, which it treated, in the middle of the writer's evident concern, as if young Windygates had no business to fall sick away in France, far from his mother's doctoring and nursing.

'It must be all your and his doing,' Lady Windygates told Braehead emphatically. 'You must have been neglecting to take the different cooling waters of which I furnished you with a good stock, and you'll not have troubled to get yourselves blooded when you felt out of sorts. I thought you would have had more sense—especially you, Braehead, at your years. Windygates is nigh out of his wits, and, as I cannot travel at an hour's notice, there is nothing for it but that you and my son should start for Scotland and the port of Leith the moment he is fit to travel. Both his father and me insist upon this. You'll not attempt the diligences, which might be too "shochling" and too crowded for a man new out of a fever. To avoid more fatigue than you can hinder, and save time, you'll just take a travelling carriage, though I'm advised it is throwing away a good deal of money, and post right through to Dunkirk. You'll not forget my cordials, that may be of use against the fatigue of the journey. Perhaps Madam the Duchess, of whom Allan has written very favourably, may

have some of her own brewing that she would like him to have, or the Duke will get you some of the best French brandy. As the heat you complain of will not last you across the water, and you may—for men are very “through-other,” and have much need of a woman to look after them—have mislaid some of your haps, or let them be stolen by the dishonest gentry that, as I’m told, abound in Paris, you’ll lay in what substitutes you can find, though I suspect they will be but poor ones, for your good Scotch greatcoats and cloaks. And, Braehead, I’ll never forgive you if you do not see to it that young Windygates is not put into a damp bed when he is lying on the road; a warming-pan must be used over the sheets to air them. It can be made to do it perfectly without singeing. Tell the lass just to pass it lightly up and down about a quarter of an inch from the surface; a damp bed is most dangerous. Another thing I will not forgive is that you delay needlessly about any of your nonsense of infidel books an hour after you get this letter. You’ll start with the lad in good time, before the Lammas floods set in.’

There was a postscript: ‘You can tell Allan from me that he may bring home a pair of buckles or solitaires for my cousin Maisie Hunter, of the Haughs; she will prize them coming from Paris—a young lady likes such a mindful piece of attention to be paid to her. Very likely Maisie will expect it, and it will be but a befitting compliment, considering the two families are sib, and that there has been a long-standing friendship between them.’

Young Windygates threw down the letter. ‘What had you to do, telling them of my illness?’ he demanded impatiently. It could do no good, it could only vex them.’

‘Young man, I’ll answer that question to your worthy father and mother, to whom alone I’m responsible,’ replied Braehead with some *hauteur*.

Young Windygates had been brought up in strict habits of obedience to his parents and to those to whom they delegated their authority over him. Though he was a manly young fellow enough, he had never really had such a fling as he was now having with Braehead with any other of his guardians—the Rev. Andrew Brydon, Muirland Willie, the head keeper, who had taught the boy to shoot, or Maucom, the head groom, who had instructed him in the art of sitting his pony, holding his reins and his whip, and keeping her head well up for a jump. It followed, as a matter of course, that Allan’s brief defiance collapsed

almost as soon as it was spoken, and that he submitted sulkily and grumblingly to the contract which he did not know how to set aside.

Indeed, if the truth were told, the sulks and grumbles were soon little better than a feint to keep up young Windygates's character for consistency. Even in the course of conversation, after the first shock to his self-importance in being thus summarily disposed of, without so much as asking his consent, a warm heart and the strength of old associations were proving too much for him. His desires were reverting in a bound to old Scotland, his own waterside, Windygates—even to Lady Windygates, in her domineering, yet devoted, way, scolding his shortcomings and ministering to his smallest want, with a mother's long memory and ungrudging pains. The fits of home-sickness which had been apt to beset him when his fever was at its worst returned in full tide, and swept everything else before them. Oh! to stand again on the brow of the hill at Windygates, as he had hardly hoped to do a few weeks since; to feel the fresh breeze, to drink the cold sparkling water from the Packman's Well among the bracken, to make a tryst with one or other of his old cronies—Bogriggs, or Boarhills, or Sauchwood—for a hunt or a day's coursing; to attend the hunt ball, and cause that proud madam, Maisie Hunter, to dance half the night with her old playmate! All the languor of his recent sickness fled before the rush of pleasant, familiar ideas. It was as if a bewildering and misleading glamour which had come over him since his arrival in Paris was rent asunder and dispersed at a single stroke. Allan was himself again—the old 'young Windygates'—with home and home interests welcome as ever. Nay, they were only the more keenly appreciated because he had been for a season beguiled into forgetting them in a dazzling, enervating dream of witchery and splendour; which could never come true for him; which, no sooner had he begun to return to his senses, than he was conscious that he did not really wish should become true.

Yet, though Allan Wedderburn had sprung back like an unbent bone to his old loves, and was ready—not merely to offer no serious obstacle to the speedy departure which Braehead was about to accomplish—but, in spite of that troublesome necessity of being consistent, felt inclined to enter with hardly suppressed eagerness into the preparations, the young man was neither heartless nor ungrateful. He regretted that he could not see the

Duchess again, though he admitted to himself with a new breadth of view that doubtless her many engagements would prevent even the relinquishment of so important a matter as a final leave-taking between mother and son from making any save the most momentary impression upon her. It would not cost her so much as a megrim. As for the little Countess and the future Abbess, they had never troubled their juvenile heads about him. The Duke would probably be rather glad to get rid of his obligation to a stranger—his inferior in social rank, as young Windygates was. The nobleman had discharged the obligation in the most exemplary, if perfunctory, manner; still, though the good breeding which had forced him to do so might prevent him from showing his relief consciously, nevertheless he must be relieved by being freed from a bore, however trifling.

But there was one friend with whom young Allan must have a leave-taking, and the simple anticipation of it tried his weakened nerves, shook his recently acquired equanimity, and caused him to feel hot and foolish. He would request an interview with Madame St. Barbe—Jeannette no longer, even in thought; and, as to the idea of her in the parlour chimney-corner, or the hall window at Windygates, it was preposterous, it could not be entertained for a moment. Nevertheless he would face the interview, beg her to accept his humble thanks for all her kindness, and implore her to receive the best keepsake he could find for her on so short a notice. His purse was not very full, and it was likely to be well-drained in furnishing other remembrances of his stay in Paris, whether to Maisie Hunter, according to his mother's recommendation, or to his remaining friends in Scotland. But, after all, it did not signify so much if his gift to Madame St. Barbe was not so handsome as he would have wished to make it—not nearly equal to her deserts, since he was satisfied that he had only to tell Lady Windygates of the kindness shown to him by Madame the Duchess's cousin when his mother would never rest till she had repaid her son's benefactress in every way in the elder woman's power.

It was too late for either visits or purchases that night, but young Windygates was abroad betimes next morning. He was humoured in the exercise of his recently restored powers by Braehead, who at the same time made the excuse of his young friend's deficiencies in the French language to accompany him wherever he went. Braehead professed it was his duty likewise to pay his parting respects at the Hôtel de Chalons, though the

noble owners were confessedly absent. No doubt the worthy gentleman shortened his own last calls and final words of controversy where his learned *confrères* were concerned, in order not to lose sight of young Allan. The bear-leader, who was more like the bear, danced attendance on the young man in half a dozen jewellers', perfumers', and confectioners' shops, and also when he made, not one, but three separate calls at the Hôtel de Chalons. For, as fate would have it, since Braehead was prepared to swear solemnly afterwards that he had nothing to do with the accident, not only had Madame St. Barbe failed to appear at the travellers' inn in the early part of the day, she was reported to be absent each time that the couple called at the family mansion. The whole proceeding was a strain on young Windygates's convalescence, and, though he had made up his mind to go through with it, he was not sorry to be spared the worst ordeal. He was almost thankful to put up in a small packet the amber and gold cross—to purchase which he had been fain to borrow a sum of money from Braehead, who had lent it without a murmur, and had not pulled a face till young Windygates's head was turned in another direction. Alas! for the exigencies of a slenderly accomplished young gallant. Allan was compelled again to have recourse to Braehead, in the light of a dictionary, for the letter which was to accompany the gift. Though Madame St. Barbe knew a little English, her practice was strictly *vivâ voce*; it was not to be supposed that she could read the language, and the writer's head was aching too badly for him to look up French words and put them together intelligibly, not to say idiomatically and elegantly, like a well-bred young gentleman. He was driven to fall back on Braehead to help him to render the little he wanted to say into French, which, although it might be stiff and pedantic after the manner of Braehead, would still be the correct language of a man of parts and education. How sorely young Windygates rued too late that he had not paid attention, in proper time, to the writing out of his grammatical exercises and the learning by heart of his columns of regular and irregular verbs—as inculcated on him only too mildly by the Rev. Andrew Brydon! The only thing Allan could do now was to trust to the honour of Braehead.

After all, neither the trust nor the temptation was very great; young Windygates was not dictating a love-letter. He merely sought to express to Madame St. Barbe his profound respect and heart-felt thanks for all her unmerited good deeds on his behalf.

He begged her to do him the great honour of accepting the little token which accompanied the letter as a poor mark of all he felt. As for him, he needed no such token. Her generous pity for his illness and help in nursing him back to health would always be a cherished memory with him. He would fain have presented his little trinket and taken leave of her in person, and he had called repeatedly that day at the Hôtel de Chalons for the purpose, but he had been singularly unfortunate in missing seeing her from the moment that he had got the unexpected summons which called him back at once to Scotland. He could only repeat his sentiments of respectful, lasting friendship, which his mother, when she was told of all the kindness which Madame St. Barbe had lavished on her son, would gladly endorse and confirm—a gratuitous assurance at which Braehead made another wry face. It might be that Madame St. Barbe would some day visit Scotland ('God forbid!' said Braehead under his breath) and give the Lathones family, and other ladies and gentlemen with whom she had been acquainted in their exile, the great pleasure of receiving her in their own houses. In that case he hoped she would not forget Windygates, where she would always be a welcome and honoured guest.

Braehead construed the concluding sentence with a decided pursing up of his usually full placid lips.

At last Allan signed himself, without further aid—

'Madame St. Barbe's humble, devoted servant, to command,
'ALLAN WEDDERBURN.'

CHAPTER VI.

THE LAST ENCOUNTER.

BRAEHEAD had planned sagaciously that he and young Windygates should not set out in the *berline* which he had hired for their journey to the coast till the middle of the day, so that a man lately risen from a sick-bed might not have to surmount, in addition to the agitating ceremonies of leave-taking, the fatigue of a long stage before the travellers rested for the night. But there had been more delay than Braehead had counted on, and it was towards a red sunset on a dull lowering day, on which rain was beginning to fall, that the coach approached the city gate out of which they were to drive, and had to wait there. Passports and everything

on the travellers' part had been in readiness, but extra traffic, carts laden with casks for the Médoc vineyards, and faggots from the neighbouring forests, to be laid up for winter use, blocked the way.

Young Windygates leant back, white and weary, a different man from the eager ruddy youth who had entered Paris not so many weeks before. Braehead puffed and panted a little because of his stoutness, and raised his three-cornered hat as if to give the crown of his head air, but was as philosophic as need be, until, looking out of the coach window on his side, he detected a hackney coach driving rapidly up behind. From the corresponding window of that coach he detected a head and shoulders, wearing a lace *fichu* over a lace-trimmed mantle, and a gauze hat turned up with a lace cockade instead of a plume of feathers, stretched forward eagerly towards the *berline*. Then, to be sure, Braehead lost his customary equanimity. He not only drew back hastily without remark, planting his shoulders doggedly against his window; he began to fret and fume, to use strong language, to rate the postillions, and to complain of the insult to the King of Great Britain in this uncalled-for detention of his subjects at a Parisian barrier.

Something of the storm, at which young Windygates languidly opened his half-shut eyes, rolled as far as the principal delinquents. It had sufficient effect upon them to cause them to hurry the clearance of the way, so that the driver of the *berline* began to crack his long whip, and he and the postillions together to raise the hideous uproar of shouts and yells with which the coachmen and postillions of French public carriages of the day were wont to inaugurate their starting. The *berline* did, in fact, roll a few paces forward between the loaded carts, amidst the stamping of the cart-horses, the struggles of their drivers, the hoarse or shrill protests of the foot-passengers—for the most part peasants from the outlying villages returning from market—and the bawled instructions and angry curses of the much-tried officials guarding the public welfare.

The next instant there was another jolting stop of the *berline*. Braehead, who seemed to have lost his head in the *mêlée*, thrust his triangular hat and brown wig again out of his window, and with the only English oath which foreigners understand ordered his servants for the time being to drive over whatever obstacle stopped the way, for, if they were detained much longer, they would be benighted, and they would not reach the town at which they had agreed to stop before darkness set in.

‘What ails you, Braehead?’ asked young Windygates, rousing himself, ‘have you got a bee in your bonnet? Are you fey? The coachman is doing his best, and so are the officers doing theirs. It is not winter time; what does the darkness of a summer night signify? It will not be well here when it will be gone again, and we have fairly good horses for foreign cattle. Stay! there is somebody tugging at the handle of the carriage-door on your side—a woman, I declare; open and see what she wants.’

‘I’ll do nothing of the kind,’ cried Braehead, in the troubled fury which was so great a contrast to his ordinary calm self-satisfaction and pompous wisdom, ‘some shameless Jezebel or wanton Delilah seeking to stop us or to get us to carry her with us.’

‘Touts, no, man,’ protested Allan, beginning to smile as well as to wonder at the towering rage and austere virtue of his companion, ‘some beggar-wife, or poor lass, selling broadsheets and laces.’

Though it was still, as young Windygates had said, broad, if dull, daylight, the heavy masonry of the gateway, with the crowd of people and carriages in its shadow, wedged in the outlet, and darkened the view. The goaded horses dragged the coach another pace forward, one of its wheels getting into ominous proximity to a wheel of the hackney coach which had managed to come abreast of the other carriage, the pedestrians scattering, as they best might, right and left.

‘You’ll have us coupet before you’ve done, Braehead, and there was no hurry,’ young Allan declared indignantly when his attention was further caught by a cry of alarm from the crowd of people outside.

The woman, whose efforts to open the coach-door had been fruitless, was not to be balked in her determination to attract the travellers’ notice. In desperation or bravado, she was having the singular temerity to raise herself on a level with the coach windows by placing her foot on the axle of the wheel next her.

‘My God!’ gasped young Windygates, in a voice of horror; ‘it is Madame St. Barbe. Stop, coachman, for your life!’

But, not even to save his own life—not to say that of another—could the man in the cocked hat with the many capes have stopped the ponderous lumbering wheel which, without his knowing it, had an infatuated fragile human being clinging to it like a fly. A rumble—a little crash—a weak, fluttering cry, almost like the bleat of a timid lamb—a roar of voices, which did not prevent the sensation of a hideous crunch—while Allan was on his feet,

staggering to get out. But the horror of the scene, following on the weakness left by his recent illness and the excitement and fatigue of the day, were too much for him, and he fell back against Braehead's broad shoulder in a dead faint.

When young Windygates came to himself after a considerable interval of unconsciousness and much agitated, unskilled, drenching with such restoratives as Braehead, in doing Lady Windygates's bidding, had happily taken the precaution to have at hand, the lad could not tell where he was; little blame to him, for the great city with its traffic and its barriers was gone—left far behind. The *berline*, containing him and Braehead and its complement of servants, was travelling along in the dusk on one of those tree-bordered, broad, comparatively smooth roads which the loathed *gabelle*, the compulsory road labour, kept in tolerable order. The air was fresh and sweet after that of the city; the silence and the deepening twilight, to which a young moon, rising, lent an element of cheerfulness to balance its pensiveness, were soothing to the jarred nerves and shocked brain before they could recall what had prostrated them.

'Where are we? Have we set out? What happened as we left? Braehead, speak out and tell me all, or I'll kill you,' panted Allan, as memory returned with its torture from that hour.

'Whisht! Compose yourself, or the driver and the other fellows will hear you. Be calm, and I will tell you all there is to tell,' said Braehead with a groan; 'why should I hide from you what you're bound to know sooner or later? There was a most terrible, piteous accident.'

'And Madam St. Barbe was in it. She was hurt. Why did you not wait? Why did you not put off our journey? I'll never forgive you after what she did for me,' protested the young man frantically.

'After what she did for you,' muttered Braehead with a peculiar emphasis, 'and now she has gone and done for herself—to lay at your door; though, poor wretched woman, I don't suppose that was in her calculation,' he ended in a softer tone.

'What are you saying? I don't understand!' cried young Windygates with the feverish fretfulness of bodily weakness and unfathomable overpowering distress. 'It cannot be too late to turn back yet. Hey, coachman, postillion!'

'Hold your tongue, sir; are you mad?' Braehead opposed him vehemently, starting up with something like a renewal of the

fury which had so astonished his companion a little time before, clutching Allan with the clutch of a vice, and speaking through his set teeth; 'are you aware of the danger we're in at the present moment, the difficulty I had to get away? If I had not pleaded that you were a dying man in addition to being a British subject, and appealed to the evidence of the bystanders' senses that we had done nothing to provoke the mad act, they would not have let us go.'

'But I will not go and leave Madame hurt in the streets without lending her help, whatever danger we may be in,' maintained her old patient, faint already from the effects of his passion and the effort at resistance.

'Allan Wedderburn, she wants no help of yours or mine,' said Braehead solemnly. 'If you will have it, she is beyond help; she was not hurt, but slain. How could it be otherwise?' demanded Braehead, in a tone more in character with his customary cool-headed marshalling and sifting of tangible proofs. 'The unfortunate female was thrown down by her own deed before the right wheel of the *berline*, and before that of a cart, heavily laden with wood, backing in front of her, that went grinding over her as well.'

'It cannot be, it is not possible, it is too horrible,' the lad refused, with strong shuddering, to believe the tale. 'You are deceiving me in order to get me away from Paris. You never liked her, you know you never did, Braehead.'

'My likes and dislikes have nothing to do with true or false statements, you foolish fellow,' retorted Braehead with professional scorn, which was only tempered by a lingering sense of the tragedy he had just passed through, and by compassion for the misery of his charge.

'Upon my soul it is as I say,' vowed the man, whose conception of a soul was that of a flickering light of bodily life which went out in death as a candle sinks in its socket. 'I leapt out of the *berline* when you fainted, and helped to drag her out from among the horses' feet. I can tell you it was no pleasant task;' and even Braehead shuddered in his turn at the recollection.

Then young Windygates saw by the light of the carriage lamps, which had been lit and shone in at the window, that Braehead's ordinarily precise dress, spotless and neat in its plainness, was in great disorder. His cravat was crumpled and soiled, one of his coat sleeves was torn and muddy, and his three-cornered hat, which lay on the seat beside him, was knocked in and had been

trodden on. In addition Braehead's usually smooth ruddy face was drawn and blanched—almost cadaverous. He looked ten years older. These were undeniable signs that something had occurred which had shaken even his complacence and equanimity.

'It may all be a mistake,' said young Wedderburn faintly, as they rolled along in the gathering darkness.

Robbie Wedderburn shook his head grimly. 'How can that be?' he asked, not unwilling to enter into the ghastly details, for a sort of stolid literalness was part of the man's nature. 'Her back was broken, and there was a gaping wound under one ear which had let out enough life-blood to stain her whole breast and shoulders scarlet in no time. She neither spoke nor stirred; it would have been a miracle indeed if she had done either. To the best of my belief she died instantaneously, and has been spared the pangs of dissolution and the useless meddling offices of friends and priests,' ended Braehead, meaning to afford some consolation; for he could hear and feel the smothered sobs, that seemed to shake the coach, which his too realistic narrative called forth.

'Oh! poor Madame, so handsome and so witty, and so good to me. Oh! Jeannette, Jeannette, as you bade me call you, poor unhappy Jeannette, what were you seeking there, if not to bid me farewell?' groaned young Windygates. 'What will Madame the Duchess say when she returns from her country seat? Will this deplorable event hurry her home-coming? Will they have buried the cauld corp in the Chalons' chapel and vault without waiting for leave, or in some unknown city graveyard, long before they can hear?' He started up afresh at the idea. 'Braehead, you need not speak, I can go no further, or if you will drive on to the town we're approaching I'll order out fresh horses and go back to Paris instantly. We'll be there before morning. We can make her the poor amends of being present—above all, if her grand relations are absent—at her kisting, and of walking as chief mourners at her funeral.'

'Are you taking leave of your senses, sir?' Braehead remonstrated sternly. 'Have you forgotten the duty you owe to Lady Windygates and the laird your esteemed father? Are you so besotted and idiotic as not to recognise the light in which the populace of Paris—of France, for that matter—regard foreigners, however they may be accredited by his most Christian Majesty and the respective ambassadors, and though the travellers may have their

passports in perfect order? Can you not guess that there will be a hue and cry through all the low faubourgs by this time that we two have murdered Madame St. Barbe, if not by driving over her of malice prepense, by luring her on and betraying her to her destruction? If we enter Paris within many a month, we'll be dead men in less than twelve hours. Even though the Chalons were reasonable and saw the lamentable misadventure in its true colours—and I'm none so sure of them either, she was their kinswoman, and their pride as well as their regard will be up in arms to revenge her—the rabble are never reasonable. They'll have their own way, let the Governor of Paris stamp and swear till he is black in the face. He may draw out his soldiers and hang some of the ring-leaders to the lamp-posts afterwards, but that will be of little avail to us after we are torn limb from limb, and it will be cauld comfort at Windygates. Hearken to reason and right, Allan Wedderburn, for my sake, who never got you into this scrape—as you will own, for you're a lad of honour no less than of grace—so there is the smaller reason that I should suffer for it. Why should I be made a sacrifice when I've half of my present book to write?' objected Braehead with his natural shrewdness and overweening egotism. 'Why should your father and mother be punished by the loss of their only bairn, their son and heir, who is thus going to repay them for all their love and pains on his behalf—and all for what was neither within their knowledge nor within any possibility of prevention on their part, just because a wilful woman would have her way, and has paid sweetly for it?'

There was some truth in Braehead's representations, yet it is doubtful whether young Windygates would have yielded to them had not circumstances been too much for him. By the time the travellers had reached the much-longed-for end of the first stage of their journey, the alternate stupor and delirium of Allan's late fever had returned with redoubled violence. He was in no case to give further trouble in thwarting the will of his guardian, unless, indeed, it were unwittingly by his inability to travel next day.

But Braehead dared not run the risk of tarrying by the way to nurse the patient back to his former state of health. All he could do was to summon a local leech, and, fortified by his unhesitating verdict that young Windygates was not likely to die on the road, got him carried insensible into the *berline* to pursue the course which was still clear to Dunkirk.

(To be continued.)

THE GREAT AMERICAN LANGUAGE.

EDGAR ALLAN POE, in his soberer moments, was fond of talking about 'the American language.' By that harmless phrase, the bard designated merely our common mother-tongue, which he himself spoke and wrote on the whole (when in a condition to articulâte distinctly) with tolerable correctness and purity of vocabulary. To be sure, Poe did personally enrich the speech of our fatherland with 'the distant Aidenn,' 'scoriac rivers,' 'the boreal pole,' and many other like gems of language marked by an almost Whitmanesque exuberance of fancy. But he meant no harm by them; it was only his playfulness. He thought the scoriac rivers were poetry. The real American language of the present day had not yet evolved itself, and if it had, Poe would have been the first to refuse it the right hand of fellowship. In the slang of the period, he would have called it 'a fraud.' The orgies of the cowboys, who emerge from the native obscurity of their ranches, 'toting derringers,' and prepared to 'go their pile' with the laudable intention of 'painting the town red,' would have struck no sympathetic chord in the sensitive bosom of Annabel Lee's unhappy lover. The author of 'The Raven' still spoke English: the westerner of the present day quite as distinctly speaks no language on earth except American.

Sometimes, indeed, even in the bold rancher's printed newspaper, it is difficult for an Englishman, unprovided with a pocket dictionary of the Transatlantic tongue, to make so much as a plausible guess at his probable meaning. Here for example is a short paragraph, entire as it stands, which I extract from an Illinois print, the *Bloomington Sentinel*, let us say, or the *Franklin Democrat*—'Chicago crooks pervaded town yesterday. They were shadowed.' Context can throw no light on this mysterious announcement, because there isn't any. Only by the aid of the yet unwritten 'Lexicon of the American Language' (for which valuable work the present article may be regarded in the light of a *mémoire pour servir*) could the baffled Britisher hope to discover that crooks are blacklegs, that to pervade is to pass through, and that to be shadowed means to be momentarily

subjected to police supervision of an unfavourable character. It is quite possible to take up a paper in the Far West and read column after column of its contents with merely a vague and general impression as to what may be the matter about which it is all treating.

The great American language, indeed, is not yet fully formed. It still remains in what Professor Sayce aptly describes as the 'jelly-fish stage' of its evolution. Languages in this stage are picturesque and plastic, but they exhibit, of course, a corresponding lack of definiteness and fixity. The great American language, though it 'fixes' everything ('fix' being in fact the verb universal) is itself unfix'd to a painful degree. It has as yet no backbone: it is highly invertebrate, not to say cartilaginous. A universal flux and ferment of components still characterises its general composition. Louisiana French jostles oddly in its mass with Breitmannic German; the cheerful Milesian of the Babies on our Block combines affectionately with the Pigeon English of the Heathen Chinee or of Ah Li the laundryman; Uncle Remus and Hosea Biglow contribute each his own quatum; Mark Twain's Jumping Frog and Bret Harte's Californian gamblers unite in their laudable endeavours to endow Columbia with an appropriate vocabulary adapted to her needs. The prominent citizens who have struck ile, or run a hotel which panned out well, cross the millpond to spend their heap, and introduce into unsuspecting Britain the germs of the new additions to our common tongue. From one source or another, the American language incorporates into itself the picked jewels of all known dialects and vocabularies, from Knickerbocker Dutch to plantation English, from the amenities of life on Poker Flats to the cultivated slang of the Waterside of Beacon.

As a whole, it must be allowed, the American language, above all others, palpitates with actuality. Like every language in the jelly-fish stage, its words and phrases come and go, flash and disappear again, in electric fashion, with marvellous rapidity. Spend a week in New York this year, and you will find it booming with the last new boom, reverberating wildly with the last new phrase, quoting from five hundred thousand mouths (and noses) the last new hit of the last new author. Return next year to the same hotel (which, though very fashionable when you last stopped there, will by that time have become painfully down-towny), and you will find high-toned New York booming once more, but with a

totally different boom, filled to the brim with a totally different contagious enthusiasm, frantically quoting a totally distinct and yet more recent writer. Still, in spite of its hasty evolution, the American language has a history of its own, and its growth must be treated on the historical method. It did not spring full-armed like Pallas from the head of Zeus: it did not even leap full-fledged in a volley of strange oaths from the unkempt head of a Montana cowboy: it grew, fast indeed, but by recognisable stages, from a vast number of separate historical elements. Let us look where the American language started, and what were the various ultimate factors from which the rich and beautiful tongue of the modern drummer and the Pulman-car conductor was finally compounded.

The fundamental basis and grammatical substratum of the American language is undoubtedly English. Widely as the two tongues now differ from one another in pronunciation, accent, idiom, and vocabulary, it would be impossible even for a sophomore to deny that the American language, in the clothes it stands up in, is an offshoot from the pure speech of Shakespeare and of Milton. Both those great authors can still be read, and to a certain extent comprehended of the people, even in Minnesota, Idaho, and perhaps New Mexico. Many peculiarities which nowadays pass for Americanisms, in fact, are really survivals from Elizabethan English. Obsolete words like 'chore' for errand, or words used in antique senses, like sick for ill (as in the authorised version of the Bible) form the first stratum of the New England dialect. In these matters and in sundry others even a prejudiced observer must frankly admit (and I confess to a prejudice against the adornments with which Mr. Huckleberry Finn and Five-Ace Bill have enriched the dictionary of the English language) that American usage is truer and better than the common wont of Southern Britain. Let it be granted (as Euclid says) without further parley, that the letter H is absolutely sacred in the Constitution of the United States; that the letter R is not yet menaced with extinction in Washington or Chicago; that 'towards' is never pronounced 'towards' in ranching circles; and that 'between you and I' is an unknown abomination in the huts of the innocent Comstock miners. The American still for the most part respects the alphabet, and declines to scandalise Lindley Murray. If in orthography his 'offenses' are rank; if even though 'traveled' he regards New York as an 'unrivaled center'; if he labors with practised

ingenuity to debase the 'mold' of our common tongue, and to make the printing press the 'theater' of his worst excesses; he is at least comparatively clear of blame in the important matter of pronunciation and of grammatical construction. His speech as a whole comes in many respects nearer than ours does to the pure model of Elizabethan English.

It is only in New England, however, and among cultivated people, that Elizabethan English in any purity is still spoken. Elsewhere it is largely overlaid by modern abominations of the cowboy order. But there and everywhere an invalid is still sick of a fever; a pretty child is still a cunning little fellow; a man's relations are still his friends; a married woman is still a notable housewife. Upon this substratum of English roots, the common language has built up a number of new senses. A clever man in America is generally a fool: for clever means amiable, and we all know what 'an amiable girl' is, even in England. To call a man 'a worthy person' is everywhere indeed the lowest depth of commendation. Therefore, in America, avoid by all means a reputation for cleverness. What you want instead is of course to be considered smart or cute: for smart people are not the fashionable world but what English turf slang describes as the knowing ones. Every shop is, I need hardly say, a store; every bar-room is a saloon; pavements are side-walks; trams are horse-cars; lumber does duty in America for timber; and fall stands in place of autumn. Corn means maize, instead of wheat; candy is the general name of all sweetmeats; toffee disappears in favour of taffy; railways are unknown, and in their stead one finds but railroads; for Christian names, the young American citizen (like the graceless florins) has only 'given' ones. If you go to a store to buy pop-corn or squashes, or to lay in a stock of clams and peanuts, you say 'Sir' to the gentleman who serves you, and you echo, 'Is that so?' instead of 'Indeed!' or 'Really!' to all his polite observations on the state of the weather. In the morning you draw on your vest and pants and walk around a bit before breakfast; you make a frugal meal off canned meats, Boston beans, buckwheat pancakes, and fried hominy; you ask for crackers when you want biscuits, and demand biscuits when you wish for light hot rolls. You hear the rooster crow in the adjacent yard, and you allude but delicately in passing to the limbs of the table. In short, you find your vocabulary considerably altered, partly because new names are invented for old things, and partly

because new shades of meaning are imposed upon familiar words and phrases.

Many of these Americanisms of the first crop—those, I mean, of more or less purely English origin—are really Americanisms only by virtue of the greater frequency with which they are commonly used in the States than in the Unnatural Old Parent. Take, for example, the familiar ‘I guess.’ Everybody everywhere guesses occasionally; it is only the Yankee who always guesses *à tort et à travers* as a matter of principle. His Puritan ancestors impressed upon him the undesirability of telling even an unintentional falsehood; and therefore, instead of boldly hazarding a statement which might prove untrue, he modestly contents himself to the present day by guessing or calculating. If you deprive him of this solace for his sensitive conscience by cruelly laughing at him, he takes refuge in a transparent substitute; he can’t say outright ‘It is so;’ he says, ‘I presume,’ ‘I reckon,’ ‘I expect,’ ‘I conjecture.’ Perhaps it is some surviving dislike to too definite an affirmation that is answerable also for the indirect affirmatives ‘You bet,’ and ‘You go your bottom dollar.’

Other Americanisms of this milder colloquial sort—mere slight deflections from English usage—are seen in the constant recurrence of *right* and *pretty*. ‘You put it right here;’ ‘Yes, sir, I’m right comfortable;’ ‘He’s a pretty ugly customer, he is;’ ‘I guess you got it pretty tolerable.’ These are phrases of everyday occurrence, differing only from pure English in a certain faint underlying flavour of Transatlantic idiom. When the Boys tote up from the lot back of the house and loaf around to the saloon, evenings, their tongue can most always be detected at once as pure American, even apart from the frequent repetition of *blamed* and *durned*, by the pretty or’nery nature of their mixed vocabulary. The Boys are death on cocktails at the saloon; their girls are equally death on chewing-gum, maple sugar, and cream-sodas.

But one very marked note of the common basis of the American language, apart from such decided variations of meaning, is the large extent to which, even in the mouths of cultivated speakers, it is a distinctly Latinised dialect. Words of Greek or Latin origin, which in England are used but sparingly, and then chiefly in the diction of the common newspaper, form in America component elements of everyday colloquial phraseology. The prominent citizens aforesaid, when dwelling in America, occupy palatial residences located on an elegant eminence near Central Park, and

furnished throughout with luxurious opulence; they operate on the Stock Exchange or run a newspaper; their proclivities are well known to be soundly democratic; they were alumni of various distinguished lyceums, academies, and other high-toned educational institutions; their sons are now pursuing their curriculum at the same seminaries, and take part with success in all the recitations. This love for long words of learned sound is eminently characteristic of the American intelligence. Where we in England talk of a lift, Americans take a ride in the elevator; where we in England grow up, the ingenuous youth of the great Republic with far greater dignity 'progress towards citizenship.' What even our newspapers would call an accident on the Great North-Eastern Railway, becomes in America an alarming catastrophe, and the leaded headings announce in large capitals full particulars of the Dreadful Disaster, the Paralysed Passengers, the Bruised and Bleeding Brakemen, and the Ghastly Holocaust of Mutilated Humanity. This is a harmless little American foible. The greatest people on earth prefer words of at least four syllables and upward, each beginning with an uncial initial.

The third element in the production of that very mixed pickle, the American language, is derived from scraps of the various other tongues spoken by the other European settlers who have peopled various parts of the great continent. It was the Dutch of New York who supplied us with the invaluable word 'boss;' Boss Tweed long bossed it over the original bosses, and the Maguires and Maloneys, enthroned in Tammaney, boss it in turn to-day over the empire city of the empire state. (This, by the way, is another pet form of Americanism; every state, county, city, town, village, river, and prominent citizen has some descriptive epithet, in the worst taste, given as a substitute for the simple name imposed by law or by his godfathers and godmothers, if any, at his baptism.) From the Spaniards of California, again, the American learned to plant his ranch upon the blooming banks of the grand cañon, to build adobe huts on his town lots, and to eat frijoles for breakfast with a judicious admixture of molasses and corn-dodger or of pure maple syrup. From the French of Louisiana he acquired the art of steering his canoe upon the broad bayous, or parading in state the levees of New Orleans. Finally from the Germans of the West he learned that charming mongrel dialect which Hans Breitmann's Barty has equally diffused over the astonished areas of two continents.

Moreover, the American, not content with absorbing all the tongues of his own continent, also travelled, or, as he himself would remark, 'traveled,' in 'European' countries. We all know that he loves France, and that good Americans when they die go to Paris. From Paris, therefore, he has imported no small proportion of his recent vocabulary, especially that which relates to new inventions, to Government arrangements, to organisation generally, and to the railway system in particular. There are no offices in America; they are all 'bureaus;' there are no exhibitions; they are all 'expositions.' When in search of a railway station you find only a 'dépôt'; if you wish to get your luggage labelled, you are compelled instead to 'check your baggage.' You carry your immediate necessaries in a valise, which you 'express through' to your hotel on reaching your destination. Guards and tips are equally unknown. The conductor on the railroad cars is generally civil, but he expects a gratuity from every traveller. And so on in a thousand particulars. The language of officialdom is entirely French, indeed, thinly cloaked in a departmental disguise of English terminations.

All these, however, are merely the beggarly elements of the American language, as spoken in the half-English eastern towns; you must 'go West, young man,' to hear the dulcet notes of the native tongue in all its primitive and unadulterated impurity. There every phrase is sweetly redolent of cowboys and miners, of derringers and bowies, of gold and silver, of saloons and gambling hells, of monte and poker, of bloodshed and robbery, of cruel sports and cruel lustfulness. It is there that one meets (on paper only) with the 'eighteen-carat desperado,' who has 'struck it rich' on the Pikes or in the ranches, and is popularly known as 'a bad crowd generally,' with a reputation for having made more prominent citizens 'hand in their checks' and 'take a through ticket to a better world,' than any other man in Calaveras County. It is there that 'a misunderstanding about a mule' leads to a little difference of opinion with six-shooters, which results at last in a coroner's inquest, with the modest verdict 'Died from the effects of having called Washington Wesley Smithers a liar.' Wherever you go 'prospecting around' you hear young ladies 'working the slang racket' to an extent that positively appals the timid soul from beyond the Atlantic. In appearance, indeed, these charming creatures are all that could be desired; they have elegant features, appropriately crowned by a most expensive bang; they can fix

themselves up lovely for dinner ; they are not unaccomplished, for they paw the ivories and warble many warbs ; and they freely mash the gentlemen of their acquaintance, who are often compelled to admit with a regretful sigh that the ladies hold the right bower over them every time, anyhow. And yet to the too fastidious Britannic taste these fair charmers seem a trifle too much addicted to going their pile, excessively devoted to the use of candy, and unnecessarily given to the free employment of possibly harmless but unlovely expletives.

The 'railroad towns' on the 'Sunset Route' are the very places to hear the American tongue, as she is spoke, professed in all her perfection and beauty. A conversation between the drummer who operates the section and his friend the gentleman who runs the saloon at one of these wayside stopping places would be quite enough to open the eyes of Dr. Murray to the inadequate preparations of the Philological Society for their new dictionary now in progress. I doubt whether the phrase 'To go heeled' will occur at all in that valuable treasury of the English language. I tremble for the chances of the verb 'To excurs'h.' I shall look with anxiety, *s.v.* 'Check,' for any reference to checking a fellow-citizen through to the Happy Land, an operation ordinarily performed, as I learn on credible authority, with a common derringer or a Georgia bowie. Even so simple a phrase as 'fooling around' or 'waltzing in' may possibly fail to receive due notice at the hands of an effete 'European' syndicate. To avoid such culpable defects the Society should employ a special stenographic reporter to visit the saloons of the Sunset Route ; and this ardent philological researcher, armed with Colt's best, ought to stand round and collect material from the generous spirits who crowd the bar, engaged in forming themselves into a hollow square around eight or ten able-bodied glasses of old Bourbon. But the researcher mustn't be too squeamish. He must expect to hear himself called on occasion a cowardly coyote, and reviled as a Britisher, a blowhard, and a mean body-snatcher, by the intelligent Hoosier or the raw-hide Texan. He may even be requested to dry up. Not that there is anything in it after all. Bull-dozing is, in reality, an amusement far more talked about than practised. Even the humorous cowboy himself doesn't shoot around as often as he pretends: his friends and admirers have given him away with excessive freedom. But American humour tends frequently to take a homicidal turn ; without six-shooters and gamblers where

would be half the fun of Mark Twain, Bret Harte, and the other students of morals and manners in the Far West? As well deprive Parisian caricaturists of the Bal de l'Opéra as try to run an American humorist without permitting him free access as occasion demands to revolvers and bowie-knives. He would 'feel mean' if he wasn't allowed to draw fire whenever necessary to point a moral or adorn a continuation.

Originally, of course, this rich tongue of the wild West, decked out as it is with a barbaric profusion of Californian gold and Nevada silver, mineral oaths and ranching blasphemies, was confined entirely to its native Pikes, or straggled eastward slowly by the Santa Fé trail and Wells and Fargo's express, in the old days before the Pacific Railroad brought Frisco and the Saints into close communication with the Bay State and the Empire City. But, in America, literature (in dime editions) gets rapidly and widely diffused; and when the Jumping Frog and the Luck of Roaring Camp had once familiarised the eastern world with the polished dialect of the Leads, the Strikes, the Gulches, and the boundless prairies, the lisping babes of Massachusetts and Connecticut began at once to prattle sweetly in the dulcet argentine tones of Buffalo Bill and the Silverado squatters. Artless childhood responded 'You bet' to the solemn remonstrances of reverend age; spectacled youth and beauty (home from Vassar College) offered to 'go you one better' in the common intercourse of conversation, or suggested in the intervals of the mazy dance that its partner should stop cavorting around like this, and just take a turn or two about the barn in peace and quietness. It is astonishing how rapidly such things attain popularity in the States. Guiteau had scarcely uttered the word before 'cranks' became familiar objects in every city. Joe Smiley had hardly made his bow to the public for a single fortnight before every child from Maine to Texas was remarking pensively about everything to which seniors called its momentary attention, 'I don't see no pints about that thar frog more nor about any other frog in partickler.'

Three main elements make up this peculiarly western dialect, which is now so rapidly spreading eastward, and even in part crossing the Atlantic, side by side with the canned meats, the Colorado beetles (called potato-bugs in their native land), and the dudes and mashers of go-ahead American civilisation. The first and oldest is the mining element—the Red Gulch stratum of

etymology—which ‘ pans out ’ and ‘ strikes it rich ’ in the familiar pages of far-western literature. The second, almost coeval with the first, is the gambling element—the Poker Saloon stratum—derived from the practice of Monte Joe and his confrères in the hells of San Francisco and Buttes City ; a sordid dialect, instinct with the mean chances of the vile trade ; a dialect in which men go through life marking the king, and holding the left bower, and passing the deal, and nicking the lady, and otherwise at every turn of fate imperilling their last red cent and their bottom dollar with reckless good-humour. The third, the newest and most offensive of all, is the cowboy element—the Snorting Jew’s-harp stratum—that profane language of the impetuous galloots, who corral horses and round up cattle in the dense chaparral or on the prairie ranches. There, the gentle tiger is freely bucked, and the scattered fragments of the much-broken Third Commandment darken the air with loathsome accompaniments. From these three wells of English most defiled the rest of America draws too plentifully ; cultivated men and women in the East are not ashamed to interlard their conversation with colloquial gems, derived direct from the reeking pandemoniums of vice, folly, and greed in the newest belt of advancing civilisation. In those outpost towns of saloons and gambling hells on the farthest frontier of human society, woman is seldom present save in her worst and foulest avatar. The language which springs up among the crowd of unrestrained gamblers, and speculators, and prospectors, and bar-men, and shameless courtesans, and Chinese cheap labour, not unleavened with criminals and murderers of the deepest dye, is just what might be expected from such hideous conditions.

Let us hark East again from these bare wooden towns of whiskey-shops and music-halls, and lurid courts of the strange woman. The atmosphere of Roaring Camp is lacking in oxygen. Let us return once more to Washington and Boston, where the responsible ‘ solid men ’ of a great free country (which at bottom, after all, I love and admire respectfully) fix up the business of a mighty nation, financially and otherwise. Let us look at the net result on human speech produced by this mingling of all possible linguistic and social elements.

The European philologist who lands upon the quays of New York, on words intent, hires a hack right away to convey him to his hotel (cabs being unknown), or expresses his baggage, receiv-

ing checks instead, while he himself proceeds to his destination by street-cars. At the Windsor or the Hoffman House, while missing the familiar boots and chambermaid, he will find the helps and the bell-boys all politeness. If he walks around at all, and makes the acquaintance of citizens at their own brown-stone residences in Fifth Avenue, he will be surprised to learn that many eminent politicians and leading financiers began life on their own account by teaching school, or even, in some cases, by keeping restaurant. If he desires amusement, he may hire a team, and observe life from a buggy in Central Park. When the metropolis palls, from Madison Square to the Bowery, he may light out for the country, railing West to a young city still on the boom, or taking the cars to some of the older sections of Pennsylvania, Jersey, or New England. If he scoots for the prairies, and examines life near the setting sun, he will find among the agricultural settlers a universal determination that the noble red man is a fraud, and that Howling Bull must go, in favour of the civilisation he sees East, a civilisation compounded of mammoth hotels, electric lights, Wagner cars, clam chowder, presidential booms, palace steamers, Goulds and Vanderbilts, anthracite coal, kerosene lamps, boss attractions, Jerome Park races, pork rings, caucuses, Coney Island pavilions, and Mr. Adam Forepaugh's great moral circus entertainment. If he makes tracks for wilder parts of the eastern states, he may enjoy the luxury of riding on a buckboard behind the careering mustang, listening to the conversation of the hired man, and observing the beauties of scenery agreeably diversified by stumps, frame houses, yards, and snake fences. Among the productions of nature which lavishly meet his eye, he will no doubt be particularly attracted by the skunk-cabbage and the squaw-root, the whahoo and the wicopy, the blue cohosh and the yellow puccoon; while the chipmunks will merrily gambol round his path, the ground-hogs will timidly slink into their holes at his approach, and the gophers (if not otherwise engaged) will hide themselves among the blue-grass of their native prairies. The land itself is all real estate, and the crops that grow upon it are known as produce. Whenever he makes a remark, he will learn that, 'Well now, that beats everything;' and when he asks a question he will have his choice between the emphatic affirmatives, 'That's so,' or 'Bully for you,' and the equally emphatic negative 'Nary,' or 'There you lie, sir.'

In the cities our observer will find ample accommodation for

man and beast, except, perhaps, in the Far West, where the tenderfoot must not go back upon his hash, and must gulp down pumpkin pie as if he liked it. To be sure, there are no chemists, drapers, or ironmongers, but drug stores abound, as do also establishments for the sale of hardware, dry goods, and imported or manufactured articles generally. On the day you are born, you acquire a given name; on the day you die, instead of being put into a coffin, your mortal remains are consigned to a casket. This being a republican country, the philologist will note with surprise that, as a rule, there is no plain Mr.; everybody is a judge, unless, indeed, he happens to be a sheriff or a colonel. Every boy is addressed as 'Hello, sonny!' and every girl as 'Hello, Sis!' Up town, he will find the society real tony; but down town, he will light upon plenty of scallywags, and not a small proportion of no-account people, as well as several mean crowds. Most of the latter will probably be on the bust, having a high old time with the Boys, going for anybody who happens to raise their Ebenezer, and otherwise making things look crimson around them. In the country, if on sport intent, the tourist may arm himself with a two-pipe scatter-gun, and a spike-tailed smell-dog, and there he is, fixed right so for a good time of it. On his return from sport he will find the hospitable table spread with a square meal, the vittles sot out, and the thirsty host prepared in soul to take the oath with him. Taking the oath is not, as might be imagined, a profane performance: it consists merely in the act of swallowing a wine-glassful of old rye, with or without water and sweetening. By a vast effort I have succeeded in keeping profanity fairly well out of this article. The dialect gains thereby in sweetness and light, but decidedly loses in truthfulness to life and picturesqueness of vocabulary. American eloquence, indeed, is 'frequent and free.' In the West, especially, a few stray expletives enliven every verb and qualify every 'durned' substantive. I omit them here, as not necessarily intended for publication, but proffered (as the Lord Chancellor 'dammed himself in confidence') merely as a guarantee of good faith.

Of course the American language varies somewhat from place to place, according to the tastes and climate of the speaker. Like everything else in the modern world, it has learnt to accommodate itself exactly to the environment. In the North-West, it discourses of blizzards and cord-wood; in the South-West it discusses rather the refrigerator, the sombrero, and that peculiar form of

roaring hurricane playfully described as 'the gentle Kansas zephyr.' You cannot expect the same minor peculiarities of idiom in a down-east store-keeper and in the high-spirited cattle-kings who come into town once a month to shoot free on the high lonesome, in a city consisting in fair proportions of ten saloons, three gun-shops, a lumber yard, a dance house, a faro bank, a shooting gallery, a ten-pin alley, a concert hall, and a Chinese laundry. The free-born Westerner thinks the blamed Yankee puts on a yard too much style—the Boys don't approve of style—and suavely proposes to take the starch out of him; the Yankee considers the Westerner, in his hickory shirt, wanting in tone, insinuates gently that he's a low mob, and inclines to put him through a University curriculum, to graduate in the class of 1890. But in whatever section he may happen to have been inaugurated, whether raised civilised or raised 'before the woods was burnt,' the true American talks American still. He may be for hard money or for greenbacks; he may be a Broadway dude and wear store-clothes, or he may be an unsophisticated frontiersman who lives on bar-meat and corn-cake washed down with a generous slosh of whisky; but in one dialect or another, wherever he may be, he now talks pure American. Even the hated and despised Anglo-maniac himself, who drops his R's, and drawls his A's, and imitates the chappies, and otherwise affects the clipped English of Pall Mall and Piccadilly, can always be detected for a born Yankee in certain minor idioms and constructions. I know an American who has lived for twenty years in England, who is more English than the inhabitants of the Ward of Cornhill, and who blushes up to his eyes if you remind him of the fact that, as fate would have it, he was born in Boston. But to this day he consistently says 'all the time' for 'always'; and instead of 'perhaps' he invariably uses 'maybe.'

The western dialect came, indeed, somewhat as a relief to eastern speakers, especially those of the scattered farms; and one must never forget that even to-day America is essentially an agricultural country. On the stereotyped eastern fun—the fun of a sordid farming life, where the boys split the cord-wood and peel the potatoes; where the girls do the ironing and then fix themselves up for their lovers; where the family borrows freely from neighbours; where the young women are propitiated by gifts of pecan-nuts and candy from their admirers—the fresh wild fun of the boisterous West burst as a new and delightful

development. That was the secret of Bret Harte and Mark Twain—relief from the dreary Yankee monotony.

On the other hand, to be strictly just, we must remember that a large part of American slang—the raw material of the American language—is ultimately due to the universal prevalence of the faculty of humour in all parts of America. The English, in the lump, are not a humorous people. Our Philistine classes do not see a joke: and if they see it, they rather resent it, as they would resent a slap on the back, or other unwarrantable interference with their portly persons. The small grocer in England, or the surveyor of taxes, would be incapable of originating a merry jest on his own account; he would be shy of it if originated by his assistant or his shop-boy. But in America the sense of humour is equally distributed through the whole population. Philistinism, to be sure, is just as rampant as with us; nay, even more so; New York and Chicago are true modern Gaths and Askelons: but the American Philistine differs fundamentally from our own variety in possessing, for all that, a spirit of fun, a certain notable quickness of intelligence, and a considerable fund of native geniality. He takes a joke, or, as he himself says, ‘twigs the racket,’ with a responsive twinkle in the motionless corner of his sympathetic eye. He does not smile: to smile were childish; but he takes it in internally, as Mr. Weller senior took his laughter, swallows and digests it, and chews the cud of his appreciation at leisure.

Among such a people, half-educated, wholly uncultured, but very quick-witted, quips and cranks gain currency easily, and fresh slang arises from hour to hour in ten thousand households. The very children cannot say anything without a certain touch of quaintness and originality. Phrases are not all set and crystallised, as in our older and more settled tongue: everybody twists and turns them his own way, throwing into them new point and meaning by some clever allusion to his own special pursuits and familiar occupations. Thus the dialects of America are everywhere rich in local colour; they breathe of the fields, of the shop, of the prairie, or of the forest; they are redolent of the ‘claim,’ of the oil-well, of the Big Bonanza, of the gambling hell. In the common dialect that springs up from the union and intermixture of them all, derricks and elevators jostle picturesquely against remingtons and placers; the cant of the lumberman goes cheek by jowl with the cant of the railroad boss; the eastern monopolist

deals with Eries and Four-Twenties in the wild metaphors of the western land-grabber; the Harvard professor interlards his latinisms with the fresh free hyperboles of the bounding prairies, where buffaloes grow on every tree, and the voice of the derringer is heard in the land at every corner. The humour is a little monotonous, to be sure: extravagant exaggeration, recklessness of life, exuberant profanity, and a certain boisterous Homeric joy in mere bloodshed—these, for the most part, form its component elements. But humour it is, though on a low level, and very laughable it sometimes makes itself. It is this that half-redeems the American language from the nethermost depths of pure vulgarity, and gives it the little pinch of salt that keeps it from falling into the utterly putrid condition.

THE PHANTOM PIQUET.

THE story I am about to relate is an old regimental legend in the —th regiment of foot. It was narrated to me by an officer of that distinguished corps one evening after dining at their hospitable mess. I tell it, much as it was told to me, and leave the explanation of the somewhat singular coincidences to my readers.

Of all the British regiments which fought under John Churchill, Duke of Marlborough, during the long and bloody wars in France, Germany, and Flanders, none was more dreaded by its foes than the 150th. It was, indeed, scarcely less dreaded by its friends, for it was composed of men regarded as the most reckless and abandoned of the soldiers fighting under the British colours, at a time when *all* soldiers were considered the most desperate and brutalised of human beings. Utterly fearless in the field in time of war, they cared little for authority in time of peace.

Terrible as was the military penal code of those days, with its merciless flogging, strappado, and other barbarous punishments, the powers of the officers of the 150th were severely taxed to keep their men in anything like order during the winter months of military inaction. In fact, though no regiment could be found more trustworthy when it was a question of a bayonet charge, the military authorities could not but feel relieved when, after the campaign in 1712 had closed, they were enabled to draft the 150th to India.

They had not long arrived, when they were employed in the field once more. But Indian warfare was child's play to men who had crashed through columns of France's bravest soldiers in a score of fierce struggles, and the swarthy warriors of Hindustan shrank appalled at the reckless courage and devilish ferocity of the 'Jál wallahs' (sash-bearers), a name given them owing to a thin red sash worn alike by officers and men of the 150th, a distinction earned at Ramillies.

Time, however, mellows all things, and when the country became more peaceable the men, tired of bloodshed, began to settle down into comparative quiet. Brawls, of course, were frequent, nor were they always bloodless, but on the whole things were mending, and the 150th bade fair to become as orderly a

regiment as any other. One man, however, seemed to regret the change.

Drummer McGrath was a short ill-favoured Irishman of prodigious bodily strength and the most daring courage. His promotion might have been secured over and over again but for some drunken orgie or riotous act which showed him unworthy in spite of his intrepidity. He was indeed a curious and unsightly object. He had lost an eye at Blenheim, a ghastly slash (a reminiscence of Ramillies) crossed his face from brow to chin, while a large projecting tooth made up a *tout ensemble* so hideous as to inspire a superstitious awe into the natives. The villagers would fly in terror to the jungle when it was noised abroad that the Lál Jál Bhút (red-sash devil) was drunk and roaming at large. One gift he had. He could blow a bugle, said the men of the 150th admiringly, as could no other bugler in the army. Often in the canteen, when half-drunk and excited with talking over old fights, he would leap suddenly to his feet and blow the weird shrill call of the regiment with a blast that rang through the hearts of men who had heard it on many a bloody field. Countless frays had been commenced by McGrath's bugle, and the natives learned to tremble when they heard it ring out at unusual hours on pay night.

The regiment was quartered in 1720 at Azimpore, when it was suddenly attacked by cholera. Officers and men died like flies. For the first time something like a panic seized the corps. The men rushed to drink as a refuge, disorder began to spread, and at last, when orders to move came, only a wreck of the regiment marched away to Indraghar, forty miles distant, leaving 150 comrades buried together in a small patch of ground surrounded by a mud wall, about half a mile from the cantonment. The last man who fell a victim was Drummer McGrath.

On the night before the regiment left he had been in high spirits, blowing his bugle and uttering wild yells. At midnight the fell disease struck him, and he was borne, writhing with agony, to the hospital shed. He was lying moaning and muttering, sinking fast, when at dawn the bugles sounded the 'fall in' for the regiment prior to its marching away. He started as the sound struck his ear.

'Sure they'll never be lavin' Larry McGrath behind!' he murmured. 'What'll the ould rígement do widout me?'

He started up as the word of command to march rang out

through the dark dawn, and clutched the rug on his pallet with his left hand convulsively as he heard the tramping feet dying away in the distance.

‘Ye’ll mebbe want me yet,’ he whispered hoarsely, ‘tho’ ye lave me now so aisy!’

He had had his beloved bugle in his hand at the moment of his seizure, and they had not been able to disengage it from his stiffening fingers. As the sound of tramping grew faint, he put the bugle to his lips and struggled to blow it, but failed. At last, with an imprecation so hideous that the old priest, who alone remained with him, shuddered as he crossed himself, McGrath yelled, ‘By ——! I’ll blow a rally for the boys once more if I come from the pit to do it!’

Then, with a gasp, fell back dead!

It was 9 o’clock on the evening of June 19, 1857, and the little garrison of Azimpore lay momentarily expecting an attack from a large force of mutineers under one of their most able and vindictive leaders, Mír Khán. Early that morning the small cavalry detachment from the garrison, while reconnoitring, had discovered the enemy close at hand, marching with the evident intention of attacking Azimpore. Everything pointed to a struggle that night or early next morning. The state of affairs was very critical. Colonel Prendergast, the commandant of the station, had but 800 troops, of whom 200 only were Europeans, to meet a force of overwhelming superiority in numbers. The nearest help lay fully 40 miles off, where the 150th, after more than 100 years of campaigning or garrison duty in every quarter of the globe, were stationed once more at Indraghar. Colonel Prendergast had sent for aid, but there could be but scant hope of assistance arriving before twenty-four hours at the earliest. The cantonment, moreover, was one which did not readily lend itself to a defence by small numbers; what could be done, however, was done. Outlying bungalows had been levelled, trees cut down, entrenchments and barricades prepared in suitable places, while the garrison chapel had been put in a state of defence as a *réduit*.

In a small room in the Commandant’s bungalow four officers sat discussing the state of affairs. Seated on a camp-bed, smoking a cheroot, was Captain Enderby, the chief staff officer of the station. On the table, swinging his legs, sat Major Ponsonby, of the —— Dragoons. At the same table, and studying a small

map, was seated Captain Hawkins, of Danby's Sikhs, a stout well-built man of thirty. The most striking of the four, Lieutenant Paul Adderly, was leaning against the door-post, smoking a cigarette. He was an extremely handsome young fellow of about five-and-twenty, with dark brown hair and soft grey eyes, which might have belonged to a day-dreaming student rather than a soldier. Paul Adderly, however, was no day-dreamer when roused by necessity for action. Short though his career had been, on several occasions he had so borne himself under fire as to win golden opinions from his superiors. He was dressed in uniform, and round his left shoulder hung the time-honoured red sash of the peculiar shape that distinguished the officers and men of the 150th. Hawkins was speaking.

'I tell you, Enderby, the Colonel was quite right to bring in my piquet. It is half a mile away from the cantonment, that graveyard, and the Pandys have got guns. Besides, the men were demoralised with their stupid superstitious funk. They were a precious sight more frightened of the dead soldiers inside than they were of the mutineers outside.'

'That graveyard has always had a bad name with the natives about here, I believe,' said Major Ponsonby. 'My bearer told me none of them would go near it after nightfall for any money.'

'By the bye, Adderly,' said Hawkins, turning to Adderly, 'I don't know if you are aware that the graves in that place are all those of men of your regiment, which appears to have been quartered here ever so long ago. I amused myself by trying to read some of the names on the tombstones; there is one very peculiar-looking stone almost facing the entrance gate, with a bugle and a death's head splendidly carved on it. The name, however, is almost effaced; I could only make out a big M, and the number of the regiment.'

Adderly looked interested.

'I assure you,' pursued Hawkins, 'the way my fellows went on very nearly gave me the jumps myself. I asked my subadar, old Kan Singh, what it was all about, and the old chap, who is as plucky a fellow as I ever saw in a row, said, looking green with funk himself, that the men could hear the "gora Sipahis" whispering to each other under the ground, and moving about! I tell you, if the orderly hadn't come up when he did, with orders for us to retire, I don't believe anything would have got them to stop.'

'Ah!' said Enderby slowly, 'I would give a good deal if we

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had a hundred and fifty of your men there, Adderly ; I expect we shall want every man we have to get out of this mess !'

The words had scarcely left his lips when a distant shot rang out in the still night. The four men started to their feet as if electrified, and began hurriedly adjusting their belts and weapons.

'Now for it !' muttered Ponsonby grimly to Hawkins as they passed out hastily into the compound.

All round could be heard the hurry of feet and the clang of arms as the little garrison fell in to take their part. Enderby was mounting his charger when a horseman dashed up and a deep voice called through the gloom, 'Is that you, Enderby ?'

'Yes, sir,' answered the staff-officer as the tall soldierly figure of the Commandant approached.

'You heard that shot, I suppose,' said the Colonel, 'it seemed to come from the direction of the graveyard. Stay, Ponsonby,' he added, turning to him, 'I may want you. You are Adderly of the 150th ?' continued he, as his eye caught sight of the red sash.

Adderly saluted as he replied in the affirmative.

'I heard,' pursued the Colonel, 'that you had been sent from Indraghar with those despatches. I am very hopeful of your regiment arriving in time to pull us through. I have received word that they started early this morning, and, though the road is long, such a regiment as yours is will spare no effort, I well know. If we can hold out four or five hours, I feel confident we shall be all right.'

The brave old soldier spoke so cheerily that his hearers felt inspirited, though Adderly could hear Enderby mutter, as he shook his head, 'forty miles in sixteen hours—and such a road !'

The men had now mustered at their posts, and a profound stillness reigned ; every ear was being strained to hear what next might happen. 'I shall appoint you to my staff, Adderly,' said the Colonel with a kind smile, 'as you are unattached.' Adderly saluted and thanked him. No braver young fellow wore Her Majesty's uniform than Paul Adderly, but he could feel his heart thumping with excitement. It was a hot murky night ; the day had been very sultry. Occasional flashes of lightning flickering in the sky in the direction of the graveyard betokened the approach of one of those storms common at that time of year. The stillness was oppressive, men could hear one another breathing as every nerve was strained by suspense. They had not long to wait.

Through the still hot air there rang out a musket-shot, followed by two others at a close interval, from the direction of the enemy. Hardly had the third shot reached the ears of the garrison when a blinding flash of lightning almost immediately above the graveyard made its white walls plainly visible from the cantonment. An appalling crash of thunder followed, when Adderly with a loud shout cried, 'The regiment has come up! the regiment has come up!'

As the Colonel turned to him in amazement, Adderly continued excitedly, 'I heard our bugle-call. I would know it in a thousand! There it is again! Don't you hear it?'

The Colonel with wild hopes listened intently.

'I hear nothing!' said he after a pause, with disappointment in his tones. 'Did you hear anything, Enderby?'

'I heard something certainly, sir!' answered Enderby, but it sounded more like a Pandy horn to *my* ear!'

'Nonsense!' cried Adderly impatiently, his excitement causing him to overlook etiquette. 'Do you imagine I could be mistaken as to the bugle-call of my own regiment? There! There! I hear it again!'

His eager confidence impressed the Colonel, who almost dared, against his judgment, to hope it might be true.

'God grant it may be so!' he murmured fervently. The scattered shots had now developed into volleys of musketry, mingled with sounds of shouts and yells.

'One would think they were attacking the graveyard,' said the Colonel under his breath to Enderby.

Enderby sighed as he answered, 'They will soon, I fear, find out their mistake!'

'Well! d—— it, man!' said his chief, somewhat impatiently. 'You don't mean to say I ought to have kept that picquet out there to be cut up! It would take 150 of the best British soldiers that ever fired a musket to hold such a place for one hour against such a host. How could I spare them from here?'

Enderby made no reply. A marked diminution in the firing caused other thoughts to occupy him.

'They are coming on here, sir, depend upon it,' said he. 'They have found out the graveyard is unoccupied, and we shall have them here directly.'

'I don't believe it!' said Adderly. 'I feel sure the regiment has come up. There!' he added sharply, as a shot was heard, 'is that nearer?'

‘That certainly was farther off,’ remarked the Colonel, ‘and seemed to be more to the right.’

Two or three more shots followed, which, even to the still sceptical Enderby, were obviously more and more distant.

‘Ponsonby!’ called out the Colonel, ‘take your troop and reconnoitre cautiously towards the graveyard. If you come across the 150th, put yourself under the Colonel’s orders, but send back an orderly with the intelligence to me.’

‘Very good, sir,’ replied Ponsonby, and in a few minutes the rattling sabres and clattering hoofs of the cavalry were heard as they left the cantonment.

A long silence ensued, full of excitement. The storm had passed off, the musketry had ceased, and no sound broke the stillness of the night save now and then low whispers from the men, who were standing motionless in the ranks. Suddenly, after a silence that seemed an age to the young man, Adderly caught the sounds of galloping hoofs. ‘Here is an orderly back, sir!’ he whispered to Colonel Prendergast, and in a few moments a dragoon dashed up and saluted the Commandant. ‘Major Ponsonby sent me to say, sir, that he hadn’t come across none of our troops, but that the enemy had retired—panic, I think he said, sir; they’ve chucked away their muskets and weapons, the ground’s reg’lar strewed with ’em just beyond the graveyard.’ Colonel Prendergast and Enderby looked at one another in amazement.

‘Where is Major Ponsonby?’ asked the Commandant.

‘Major Ponsonby, sir, told me to say he was going on a mile or so further to reconnoitre, but that he would be back soon.’

‘But do you mean to say that there were no signs of any European troops—of the 150th?’ asked Colonel Prendergast, completely puzzled.

‘No, sir! None whatever!’ answered the trooper.

The Colonel dismissed him, and, turning to his staff, said, ‘Very extraordinary. What do you make of it, Enderby?’ That officer, however, could only shrug his shoulders.

The tension had been very great. The general relief was such that, when a second orderly dashed up with the news that the enemy had, from some unexplained cause, been panic-stricken, were retiring, and consequently unlikely to make a further attack that night, the long pent-up excitement of the men found vent in a ringing cheer. A little later Colonel Prendergast and his two

staff officers sat smoking in the chief's bungalow. Rest was felt to be impossible, at least until Ponsonby should return.

'It is really incomprehensible,' remarked the Colonel slowly. 'I can't imagine what kept them off!'

'I have an idea, Colonel,' said Enderby, who, from his staff training, was never at a loss for a why and a wherefore. 'I fancy I see how it occurred. I think the fellows made sure that we should have an outpost in the graveyard. They probably crept up to it close and then fired. The walls would echo the shot, and the sound may have led them to think they were really engaged with us. Once grant that, and then you can imagine that the sort of panic which attacks the best troops occasionally (especially in night fighting) seized them, and the mystery is solved!'

'An ingenious explanation, Enderby!' commented the Colonel. 'A little far-fetched perhaps, but I really can't think of any other; unless,' he added, half laughing, 'one goes to the supernatural!'

Enderby smiled, perhaps a little contemptuously. He had served under Colonel Prendergast for some time, and, while he could not help admiring the chivalrous character of his brave old chief, he had often come across a vein of romance in his nature which, to Enderby's matter-of-fact mind, seemed a deplorable weakness.

'Natives seem easily frightened,' observed Adderly. 'Hawkins, who was on piquet in the graveyard to-day, was telling us how nervous his men were.'

'Nervous! how nervous?' asked the Colonel with curiosity.

'Well,' answered Adderly, 'Hawkins seemed to think some superstitious fear on account of being near the white soldiers' graves got hold of them. He said they even petitioned to be stationed outside, because they heard queer noises and all sorts of things. He seemed to think they were quite demoralised with funk!'

The Colonel looked thoughtful as he puffed at his cheroot.

Enderby smiled again.

'Good heavens!' said he to himself, 'how can the man be so childish! I verily believe he thinks there *was* something supernatural about it all!'

At this moment there was a bustle outside.

'There is Ponsonby at last!' cried the Colonel eagerly, and in a few moments the tall cavalry officer entered.

'I have brought in a prisoner, Colonel!' said he, 'and also the

dead body of a mutineer, which we believe to be that of Mír Khán himself, their leader.'

After hearing all Ponsonby had to report, the Colonel desired him to send for the prisoner.

Ponsonby could throw no light on the cause of the panic, nor had he come across any signs of the 150th.

'Enderby here thinks he can account for it,' observed Adderly, and he repeated the staff officer's explanation.

Ponsonby laughed as he heard it.

'By Jove!' he exclaimed, 'there certainly is an echo there. I can bear witness to the fact. As we were riding back, just as we were passing the graveyard, on the road between the gate and that Fakir's tomb on the other side, we heard you fellows cheering in the cantonment, so my men, to keep you company, I suppose, also set up a cheer. By George! a cheer echoed back from the graveyard that quite startled us! It was exactly as if a lot of men were in there, cheering us as we passed!'

'I'm sure that's how it was,' said Enderby quietly.

At this moment a tall grey-haired officer appeared at the door.

'Come in, doctor!' cried the Colonel.

The surgeon entered.

'I have just been examining the body of the mutineer Ponsonby brought in,' said he. 'What is singular is that there is no wound on his body, or any mark or sign to show what caused his death.'

'Lightning,' suggested Enderby, as he lay back in his chair and blew a cloud of smoke from his lips.

'Most singular!' said the Colonel, ignoring Enderby's remark; 'where did you find him, Ponsonby?'

'In the gateway of the graveyard,' replied Ponsonby. 'He was lying on his face with his hands stretched out in front of him.'

'He seems to have died in great pain,' observed the doctor. 'His face is distorted with the most ghastly expression of pain or fear. A horrid sight! Of course, I suppose, if it were thought necessary, I could find out the cause of death, but I can only say that, from the examination I *have* made, I could find nothing.'

'Here is the prisoner, Colonel!' exclaimed Ponsonby as the tramp of feet was heard in the compound.

The mutineer was brought in.

He was a fine lad, dressed in rich clothing, and seemed to have held some position of rank.

He glanced quickly round the room, and gave a perceptible start as his eye fell on Adderly. He salaamed abjectly to all the officers.

Colonel Prendergast was not only a proficient Hindustani scholar, but was also well versed in most of the Oude dialects. Finding the prisoner little conversant with the former language, he inquired where he came from, and at once commenced a fluent examination in the man's own patois. After some time, in the midst of a voluble speech (unintelligible to all the officers except the Colonel), the man paused abruptly, and pointed to Adderly's sash.

The Colonel continued the examination at some length, and finally dismissed the prisoner, under escort, to the guard-room.

The Colonel did not speak for some minutes after the man had been removed, but sat looking grave and thoughtful.

'I don't know what to think!' he broke out at length. 'The man must be mad or drunk. He swears positively that the graveyard was full of white soldiers dressed in red coats with sashes just like Adderly's there! He was most circumstantial—swore he saw them firing over the walls!'

'Wonderful thing, funk on the top of bhang!' remarked Enderby sententiously.

'He declares,' pursued the Colonel, 'that he was close behind Mir Khán when they attacked the graveyard, and that he saw him struck down by a small Feringhi with one eye and a gash across his face! He says that the Feringhi had the face of a Shaitán, and that he fled from fear of him.'

'Good Lord!' cried Ponsonby, 'he must have been very drunk!'

'They *do* give their men "bháng" before they go into action, I know,' observed Enderby.

'Well, gentlemen!' said the Colonel, rising as he spoke, 'thank God, the place is saved! As it is nearly day now, I think we had better get some rest.'

The officers rose, and all were about to leave when a European sergeant, appearing at the door, saluted and said, 'The 150th are just coming in, sir!'

'Hurrah!' cried Adderly, dashing out into the compound. 'Impossible!' said Enderby. All the officers went into the verandah and began eagerly to scan the road towards the graveyard.

There sure enough, in the grey dawn, could be seen a column of British troops approaching the station, and shortly after the red sashes of the old regiment were swinging into the cantonment, welcomed by the little garrison with cheer upon cheer.

Some weeks after these events Colonel Prendergast and Captain Enderby were riding out in the afternoon of a sultry day round the cantonment. Their road led past the old graveyard. The Colonel suddenly pulled up as he passed the gate.

‘I have a fancy,’ said he, ‘to try this wonderful echo. It was here, I think, Ponsonby said he had noticed it?’

‘Yes, sir,’ replied Enderby, ‘here is the gate on the left and the Fakir’s tomb on the right.’

The Colonel gave a loud shout. ‘I hear no echo,’ said he.

He tried a louder shout without effect, and Enderby too raised his voice in vain. They moved to other spots, but no echo answered their repeated efforts. ‘Strange!’ said the Colonel thoughtfully.

‘Perhaps the wind to-day (such as there is) is in a different quarter,’ suggested Enderby with his usual ready explanation.

‘Very likely!’ said the Colonel shortly, and they turned their horses’ heads homewards.

They glanced at the open gate of the [graveyard, where the dusty graves were scorching in the sultry August sun, which cast the shadow of one tall fantastic tombstone standing in front of the gate almost to their horses’ feet.

As they passed, the Colonel turned his face towards the cemetery and saluted.

And Enderby, like a good staff officer, saluted too!

A NIGHT THOUGHT.

PLANETS perpetuate the Gods of Greece,
 And in the dark serene of midnight glide,
 Like ghosts of the dead powers, o'er pathways wide ;
 Such spell is there in names ! which shall not cease,
 But rather, as the ages roll, increase.

What mysteries to poesy allied
 Still in the old mythology abide—
 And stars secure their memory's lasting lease !
 While that each planet bears its pagan name
 The gods are unforgot. And glowing bright
 The constellations' clust'ring jewels claim
 To write, in letters of unchanging light,
 The history of heroes. Other fame
 Is dull'd beside the blazonry of night !

A COACH DRIVE AT THE LAKES.

PART II.

FROM RYDAL TO THIRLMERE.

WE are speeding on now with the Nab Scar glorious above us on our right, marred though it is somewhat by the Manchester Waterwork's engineer.

Soon we pass a milestone, seventh from Windermere. That gate on our left has a history. The late Professor Bonamy Price once asked Wordsworth what he meant, in his 'Ode on Intimations of Immortality,' by—

Those obstinate questionings
Of sense and outward things,
Fallings from us—vanishings.

They were passing along this road. Wordsworth stopped, went up to this gate, and, taking hold of it with both his hands, and leaning against it, said, 'When in thought I have often had to clutch at a gate like this to be assured that I was living in this world of reality; that is what I meant to express.'

We are nearing White Moss. Our eyes may haply now fall on a jutting point of land that runs with its clump of willows into Rydal Water; it is held by some to be Point Rash Judgment. Here, on a September morning in the year 1800, Coleridge and Dorothy, who had sauntered with Wordsworth through the thickets that descend to the Rotha, saw an old man fishing. Wordsworth exclaimed at the idleness of the fisher, who had far better have been with the harvesters; but a nearer view showed that,

Too weak to labour in the harvest field,
The man was using his best skill to gain
A pittance from the dead, unfeeling lake;

and the poet commemorated his feelings of shame for hasty judgment in the poem, 'A narrow girdle of rough stones and crags.'

The little house close by the White Moss quarry on the right was built by Wordsworth, it is said, in two tenements, that he might obtain two votes for Parliament. It is a happy coincidence that now a granddaughter of the poet resides here. For this White Moss is consecrated by the many poems suggested by the locality to the poet.

Close by, three roads start for Grasmere: two over the hill beside whose lonely foot the leech-gatherer was seen, 'the oldest man he seemed that ever wore gray hairs.' These were called, by Dr. Arnold, Old Corruption and Bit-by-bit Reform. By the side of this last, though out of sight from the main road, stands 'The Wishing Gate' Wordsworth made famous. The tarn by the side of the former was the poet's favourite skating resort before Rydal Water was frozen.

But we are driving by the new road, the making of which Wordsworth so deplored, as having marred the beautiful eastern shore of Grasmere, which till then was 'safe in its own privacy.' Dr. Arnold used to call this latest road Radical Reform. Suddenly we hear 'a mountain echo, solitary, clear, profound'; but this 'unsolicited reply' is no answer sent us as of old from Nab Scar to the cuckoo in the vale, but is the quarry thunder, flapped from left to right, of those who are tunnelling for Manchester the Scar above our heads.

As we gaze up whence the sound and smoke issue, we remember that this majestic mountain slope gave us the 'Oak and the Broom,' the 'Waterfall,' and the 'Eglantine.'

The scenery on our right was oftentimes sought to by Wordsworth, and the frozen fall of water over the rocks stirred his imagination, as we see in the eleventh poem, entitled 'Inscriptions,' and in his reference to Tadpole Slope, as he called the rock where he had observed—

With flash incessant,
The bubbles gliding under ice.

But we remember this junction of the three roads to Grasmere best for its association with the old Cumberland beggar, 'seated by the highway-side on a low structure of rude masonry, built at the foot of a huge hill.'

Many a man has learned of that poem to be 'kind to such as needed kindness, for this single cause, that we have all of us one human heart.' We cannot forget that this roadway end and its aged beggar-man inspired the writer of that poem.

Twenty or thirty yards up the hill, on the Middle or 'Bit-by-bit Reform' road, we hail that other rock—to-day purple-tufted with the first heath—whereon, in Wordsworth's time, the glow-worms glittered and the primroses grew; where 'the Waggoner' went on his immortal way up this ascent towards Keswick, with the 'Dove and Olive Bough' before his eyes. But the coach

dashes over White Moss, and we get a last look back at that long 'blue ridge, soft as a cloud' of Wansfell, which, somewhat featureless against the sky-line from here, viewed from Rydal Mount, was such a constant glory in the landscape that Wordsworth felt 'his household had a favoured lot,' living at liberty to gaze, at morn or eventide, upon its quiet breast. How the shadows and the sun-gleams sweep along it now! 'Bountiful son of Earth,' we, too, may exclaim, 'thy "visionary majesties of light," "thy pensive glooms," shall not be forgotten as long as we forget not White Moss and "that fair sister of the sky," blue Rydal Water.' But our eyes are forward and upward. Immediately above us, dimly seen through the tangled copse, are the two heath-covered crags to which Wordsworth so often wandered with his wife and sister-in-law, Sarah Hutchinson, and which he called Sarah and Mary Crags.

What an accurate painter the poet was! These two heath-clad rocks ascend in fellowship, the loftiest of the pair rising to no ambitious height, just as Wordsworth described them in his poem on the 'Naming of Places':—

Forth from a jutting ridge about whose base
Winds one deep vale.

The blooming heath that was the couch of those two adventurous sisters is still the feature of their double height, and through the woodland screen in late June or earliest July their purple heads shine gloriously.

What a wondrous beauty of rough woodland is this we are passing thus, sweet with the first scent of the honey-suckle, fragrant with the constant fragrance of the birch! You saw that wooden bridge just now over the Rotha on our left: that guides the rambler to one of the most beautiful of terrace roads in the Lake District. It was one of the poet's favourite walks, that terrace walk on Loughrigg Breast overlooking Grasmere Lake.

Suddenly we turn a corner, just where the road has been hewn out of the rock. Penny's Corner it is called. A rock that once, perhaps, had carved upon it the name of Joanna Hutchinson—memorial of the day when she laughed aloud at Wordsworth's ravishment of joy, and when—

The rock, like something starting from a sleep,
Took up the lady's voice and laughed again.

What a peal of rich laughter it must have been! Green

‘Hammar Scar,’ which rises where Silver How melts into Loughrigg—

And the tall steep of Silver How sent forth
A noise of laughter : southern Loughrigg heard,
And Fairfield answered with a mountain tone.

But what a surprise view this first prospect of Grasmere and the Easedale hollow, and the gap of Dunmail Raise, flanked by Steel Fell and Seat Sandal, surely is! There is the white old church, Allan Bank among its trees behind ; and here in front, the glittering lake, and—

Its isle at anchor with its dusky crew—

crew of Scotch firs, as faithful as they are beautiful! What wondrous beauty has that western shore! How serenely slope the meadows to the water’s edge! How snugly beneath the hills from White Dale Head to Silver How Cottage stand the happy houses of comfortable men!

That curious circular abutment from the road into the lake was the favourite view of Hartley Coleridge. Hither, sometimes twice in a day, would he ramble from the Nab. Now shouldering his stick and hustling along as if he were in hot pursuit; now standing as one dazed in silent reverie. How the old folk loved him ; how the little ones feared him! ‘Flayte to death o’most were the barns of our làal Hartley.’

Above us on our right, and opposite Hartley’s favourite view, can be descried in the direction of the Wishing Gate the remains of the stately fir-grove in which John Wordsworth, the sailor brother home from the sea, used to walk backwards and forwards as if he were on watch, and many a time would the poet walk here too and fancy, in the sound of the going in the tree-tops, he heard the rattle of the shrouds, and the singing of the storm which wrecked his brother in 1805. The family at Rydal spoke of this wood as Brother John’s Grove. We pull up at the ‘Prince of Wales.’ We do not forget his Royal Highness once was here as a boy. The legend that tells how the old dame came and rated him well for chasing her sheep upon the island is still green. Told to hold her tongue because he was the Queen’s son, ‘Bad cess to him for that,’ replied old Betty, ‘the more the shame! his mother the Queen would not let him run a poor body’s sheep, I’ll warrant her. The bad boy, he sud know better than this, he sud.’

We are now close to Townend Cottage, and we get two glimpses of it between the houses on our right. So glorious are the

roses on the wall at our left, we had almost missed to peep at that other lovely cottage, its four windows peeping from its yellow lime-washed front out from beneath its dark yew-trees; almost had overlooked—

The lovely cottage in its garden nook,
 roof, window, door,
 The very flowers are sacred to the poor—

to which Wordsworth came with his sister Dorothy in December 1799.

Hither he brought his bride in October 1802. Though his cottage, once a public-house, stood at the side of the main road—

At the bottom of the brow,
 Where once the Dove and Olive Bough
 Offered a greeting of good ale
 To all who entered Grasmere Vale,

the poet came for rest, and made this ‘the calmest, fairest spot on earth, with all its unappropriated good his own.’

‘We have,’ says his sister, writing in September 1800, ‘a boat upon the lake, and a small orchard and smaller garden, which, as it is the work of our own hands, we regard with pride and partiality.’ And well they might; memories of their mountain rambles in shape of chosen plants and blossoms blown away on distant mountains—flower and weed—grew there.

Driven forth by the smallness of the study to that plot of orchard ground, the poet wrote there his description of ‘Stone Arthur,’ ‘The Linnet and the Falling Leaves,’ and such exquisite verses as those upon the ‘Green Linnet.’ Once to that garden plot he took Thomson’s ‘Castle of Indolence,’ and wrote upon its fly-leaf a memorable portrait of himself. In that orchard plot he toiled with John Fisher and cut the steps out of the living rock to lead to a higher terrace. In that cottage were born to him John, Dora, Thomas, and Catherine, and it was not till after her birth in 1808 that the poet migrated to the larger Allan Bank on yonder hill.

But others have sat and listened ‘to the flapping of the flame by the half-kitchen and half-parlour fire’ in Dove Cottage.

In November 1809 De Quincey writes: ‘At last I, the long-expected, made my appearance. Some little sensation did really attend my coming, for the draperies belonging to beds, curtains, &c. had been sewed by the young women of the adjoining vales,

and this had caused me to be talked of.' And so he entered upon the tenancy of the Dove Cottage, 'hallowed,' as he says, 'to my mind by the seven years' occupation of that illustrious tenant, Wordsworth, during the happiest period of his life.'

'Cottage immortal in my remembrance,' he continues, 'as well it might be, for this cottage I retained through just seven and thirty years. This was the scene of struggles the most tempestuous and bitter within my own mind, this the scene of my despondency and unhappiness, this the scene of my happiness.' We cannot pass away without images rising in our mind of De Quincey running forth to greet the little children from Allan Bank—Tom and Johnny and Sissy; or of that stately-browed man Coleridge departing from the door laden with some of the 500 books he borrowed, when he was at work upon the 'Friend,' from Mr. De Quincey's library.

But the coach hurries on. Not up the road that leads straight on by the house of Little Barbara Lewthwaite toward the famous 'Swan,' but round to the left towards the church and village; and we can only take a last long look at the Townend cottage and cry farewell.

Farewell, thou little nook of mountain ground,
 Thou rocky corner in the lowest stair
 Of that magnificent temple which doth bound
 One side of our whole vale with grandeur rare;
 Sweet garden-orchard, eminently fair,
 The loveliest spot that man hath ever found—
 Farewell, we leave thee to heaven's peaceful care,
 Thee, and the cottage which thou dost surround.

The coach pulls up for the mail-bag close to the bridge over the Rotha, by the churchyard. We jump off for a moment. On our left beyond the bridge is the humble vicarage, the laburnum hard by only just shedding its last drops of golden fire. There is a shadow on that vicarage, for from it was borne to her rest the little Catherine, of whom her father the poet wrote that exquisite sonnet—

Surprised by joy, impatient as the wind—

she died in 1812; and, shortly after, her brother Thomas, 'a child whom every eye that looked on loved,' as the epitaph tells us, was also carried thence to the sad tolling of the church-bell. Poor De Quincey, how he hovered round those graves; how often in dream he saw those happy children! But Wordsworth was inconsolable. He had migrated to Allan Bank in 1808, and after the

birth of William, his youngest son, he had left Allan Bank for this parsonage house in 1811. Now, so near is the house to the churchyard, he cannot face the constant reminder of his loss, and he writes to Lord Lonsdale in January 1813 that 'he has found it absolutely necessary to quit a place which retards progress towards that tranquillity of mind which he and his wife feel it their duty to aim at.' Thus, in the spring of 1813, he went to Rydal Mount. We cross the road, and enter the church so minutely described in the 'Excursion,' vol. vi. Now, as then—

The portals of the sacred pile
Stand open.

Now, as then, the roof is upheld by 'the naked rafters intricately crossed.' We gaze at the beautiful Fletcher face in marble on the wall; read carefully the epitaph beneath the poet's profile; thence pass to the churchyard corner, where, with the simple name, 'W. Wordsworth, 1850,' upon the slab,

A grey slate headstone tells us where he lies,
Carved from the native hills he loved the best.

There, too, lies the daughter who wore the white flower of a blameless life. The wild rose petals wreath her headstone. The lamb lies carven beside the cross. From Dora's grave we pass to Dorothy's; from Dorothy's to the poet's wife's tomb and the little children's graves. The grave of Green, the painter, with its beautiful Wordsworthian epitaph, bids us pause; but we return to that tomb of Hartley Coleridge's. Above his dust the oak-leaves wreathed upon the cross, the crown of thorns, and the legend 'By Thy Cross and Passion,' are eloquent of a life of constant effort and sorrow that awe us as we gaze.

There are figures that haunt this holy spot. A sexton stands, rule and spade in hand. It is January 7, 1849, and with him are Wordsworth and Hartley Coleridge's brothers. Wordsworth tells the sexton to measure out the ground for his own and for his wife's grave, and then a third plot for the dead Hartley. And Wordsworth is much in thought of Dora and William's funeral two years ago in 1847; 'when I lifted up my eyes from my daughter's grave, he, Hartley, was standing there.' Then, turning to the sexton, he said, 'Keep the ground for us; we are old people, it cannot be for long!'

It was not for long; a year and a few months passed, and in April 1850 the ground, that day measured out, opened its grassy

door to receive the aged bard. We note the yew trees, eight in number, brought by Wordsworth's direction from Loughrigg Tarn and planted with his own hand here. We listen to the murmur of the bees in the sycamores; we hear the undersong of the river Rotha close beneath the low church wall. Our eyes fall on the name of Clough, for to him there is a monument in this place that knew him well, and in a moment there rises before us the forcible form of one who sang of that first Arthur, of one who oftentimes meditated here; his memorable music comes to mind; we leave the poet's corner, saying:—

Keep green the grass upon his grave,
Oh Rotha, with thy living wave;
Sing him thy best, for few or none
Can hear thee right now he is gone.

Thence to the graves we go, ten paces to the north-west, and there, beside Arthur Clough's monument, we realise that we are standing over the remains of a family whose head was honoured by being taken as the pattern parson of the dale in the seventh book of the 'Excursion.' These grassy heaps that lie amicably close are the graves of the family of Sympson, and on the low stone we read: 'Here lie the remains of the Reverend Jos. Sympson, Minister of Wytheburn for more than 50 years.' We leave the churchyard, almost expecting to find by the south-west wall the very seat of stone whereon that old vicar and his friends are represented in the sixth book of the 'Excursion' as holding their high discourse.

We lean a moment on the bridge. What mossy, agate-looking stones the Rotha flows above! With what surprise the river comes from the quiet meadows and swirls up unseen to kiss the old church wall!

'Time's up, sir,' cries the coachman, and round by old Mrs. Nelson's—the champion baker of cakes in the North Country; away by the house Lord Cadogan built—the Rothay Hotel of to-day; round to the left through the 'Red Lion' yard, and then swiftly to the right we speed.

Allan Bank is sighted—Allan Bank, where between 1808 and 1811 Wordsworth found shelter, where the 'Excursion' was for the most part written, where Coleridge wrote the 'Friend,' where Hartley Coleridge learned his classics, where De Quincey, popping into Coleridge's study for a book, was first introduced to a tall, lithe-looking young man in a sailor's dress with the words, 'Mr.

Wilson, of Elleray.' Nearer is seen the old post-office where Arthur Clough and Matthew Arnold spent such happy long-vacation times.

'Silver How, sir, up there. That's where the guides race; wrestlers meet in the field yonder,' says the coachman. We look back, and away we spin. 'Butterlyp How, sir, that close by.' What an old-world ring there is about the name! The high place of Sölvar the Dane there, and here the high place of Buthar the Leaper. Verily, that nimble Norseman had an eye to the beautiful: he chose the Grasmere vale for one home; for another, Buttermere.

We cross the Rotha where it swirls by the Leaper's Hill. We see far up Easedale—an avalanche of foam—beyond the Lancrigg Woods. That Sour Milk Ghyll sounded in his ears who paced the Lancrigg terraces and penned the lines:—

Loud is the vale, the voice is up
With which she speaks when storms are gone.

But to-day, though the far-off torrent is white, Rotha runs quietly enough over the pebbles.

The white house at the end of the road is a halting-place. We pull up short at the 'Swan' and look for the sign that the old landlord painted, in vain. 'Who does not know the famous Swan?' Waggoner or tourist—what man does not stop here who 'e'er essays the long ascent of Dunmail Raise?'

Sir Walter Scott, Southey, and Wordsworth, mounted on their grey ponies, essayed from hence the height of Helvellyn years ago, and hither, so tradition has it, Sir Walter repaired daily to find the extra comforts which the humble board of his host at Townend could at that time ill afford. Wordsworth drank cold water of the spring. Scott liked to mix his with the mountain dew. And doubtless the shepherd Michael often sauntered hither from his cottage that in the last century was standing there where the Hollies lifts its tower of grey beneath Thunacar Knott. Michael's cottage, which, whether from its windows glaring in the sun, or from its 'constant light so regular' of fire or homely lamp, was called 'the evening star,' is gone. But as one's eyes wander up towards the great hollow in the Fairfield Hill one's mind may picture that 'old man, stout of heart and strong of limb' climbing up that mountain cleft to build in his sorrow the fold whose unfinished 'remains may still be seen beside the boisterous brook of Greenhead Ghyll.'

Other shepherds have haunted this spot since Michael's time. Edward Thring, the great headmaster, came for thirteen consecutive years to build up thoughts that should build up men beside this self-same ghyll. A poet, every inch of him, as the verse he wrote at Ben Place testifies; of him, as of Michael, it could be said :—

Those fields, those hills—what could they less—had laid
Strong hold on his affections, were to him
A pleasurable feeling of blind love—
The pleasure which there is in life itself.

The coachman cracks his whip; away we go; we have yet twelve miles to Keswick. The hawthorns have shed their bloom that gave such glory last month to this part of our drive, but the purple shales of Helm Crag have won such verdure from the fresh fern bunches as atone for any loss of blossom.

Stone Arthur towers on our right hand; to that eminence—

The last that parleys with the setting sun—

how often Wordsworth looked as he sat upon his orchard seat in the Townend Cottage! To that height the companion at his side gave her poet husband's name.

What a picturesque grouping of Scotch firs is that yonder at the foot of the ascent to Grisedale; what a picturesque mill-wheel is that yonder to our left as, crossing Tongue Ghyll Beck, we begin to ascend the Raise! There is no more beautiful waterfall hereabouts than the Tongue Ghyll up in the meadow to the right; but the coach stops for none.

Now on our right is seen a substantial cottage farmhouse, known as High Broad-Rayne. There lived, till he was ninety-two, that old curate of Wytheburn chapel whose grave we stood by in Grasmere churchyard.

So 'lithe' was old Sympson at eighty-five, he could walk to Ambleside and back in the day, and on June 27, 1807, 'while reclined he lay for noontide solace on the summer grass, in one blest moment, like a shadow thrown softly and lightly from a passing cloud, death fell on him;' there is the garden, just across the road. Readers of the 'Excursion' will not fail to note the accurate portraiture of this old house of High Broad-Rayne.

Now we begin the ascent in earnest. The coach stops, and we dismount to lighten the load, and it is well. For so we can do as Gray the poet did when he passed this way in the autumn of 1769 on a memorable Sunday, October 8. He had come over the

Raise, and he halted somewhere hereabouts and wrote thus the recollections of the scene in his diary. 'Not a single red tile,' says he, 'no gentleman's glaring house or garden walls, break in upon the repose of this little unsuspected paradise, but all is peace, rusticity, and happy poverty in its neatest and most becoming attire.' The picture is true at this distance still, as we look backward; but a hideous engine-horse snorts ahead of us, and out of the tunnel come the trollies with their ruddy burdens of earth and débris; from the caverned way they are boring for Thirlmere's water-flood.

What a picturesque, old-fashioned farm is that in the hollow to the left! Its chimney-stacks, half-square, half-round, were surely after Wordsworth's heart. How whitely shine the lime-washed gables; in what trim attire of milk-whiteness the chimney-stacks stand! It is called Under Helm; and, as we gaze up at the 'Lion and the Lamb' crowned hill, we remember how, in the 'Waggoner's' days, those rocks on Helm Crag, which every coach-driver points out under the names of the Lion and the Lamb, and the Lady playing her Organ, were thought of rather as—

The ancient woman
Cowering beside her rifted cell
As if intent on magic spell,
And the astrologer—Sage Sidrophel—
Where at his desk and book he sits
Puzzling aloft his ancient wits.

It is a coincidence, but in that pretty house, upon its larch-covered sward below Helm Crag, lived one who has caused most English public-school boys to puzzle their wits at desk and book. There, at the entrance of beautiful 'Greenburn' dale, dwelt Kirchever Arnold, whose Latin exercises have become a proverb.

We remount the coach, and along over the moraine-covered plateau that gave its name to the Raise, 'Dun Meols' or Dunmail Raise, we go at a brisk trot. We cross a tiny bridge. We are in Cumberland. Another moment, and we pass the great heap of stones, the cairn in the gate of the hills, that marks, perhaps, the triumph of a tribal victory—that is, by report:—

That pile of stones
Heaped over brave King Dunmail's bones,
He who had once supreme command—
Last king of rocky Cumberland.

Whether the Saxon monarch Edmund, who, so the Saxon chronicle tells us, 'harried all Cumberland,' as some say, with the help of Leoline of Wales, here defeated, in the year of our Lord 945, the brave Cymric king Dunmail, and, after putting out his two sons' eyes, wasted Cumberland and gave it to Malcolm, King of the Scots, we know not; but it is certain that the early British kingdom of Strathclyde long felt that the principal gate of its southern border-line lay here between Steel Fell and Seat Sandal.

The Rotha takes its rise on yonder hillside, and, whether named from its rushing force, or from its ruddy colour when the rains have washed the red-hued earth from the moraine heaps it passes through, be sure that not once or twice that little border-stream has run down into yonder peaceful lake red with the blood of the slain. This gap in the hills has often echoed to the clashing of sword and spear, and seen the sorrow of a battle-eve. 'Nowt good iver cam over t' Raise Gap' is the grim proverb still.

As we gaze out northward into the long valley, with solemn Helvellyn on our right and the broken, bossy, wood-skirted Armboth fells upon our left, the far distance shut in by that spur of Skiddaw, Lonscale Fell, with lonely Calva 'twixt it and blue Blencathra, and with the white water of Thorold's Mere or Thirrylsmere—Thirlmere of to-day—shining in the distant hollow at our feet, one realises that one is gazing upon a valley that has seen two very distinct races of men.

It was the Briton who, from the tawny look of Helvellyn's mighty length, and from the gloomy chasms of phantasmal shadow dances on Blencathra's side, called this the Hill of Devils and that the Yellow Moor; but it was a Viking gave the name to the water-flood below, and they were Norse shepherds who clomb up the grassy ladder of the Stee or Steel Fell to tend their flocks.

You saw that dark-eyed man who met the coach at Grasmere; he was Carodus. The Caroduses of old days are with us rarely still, but, as you go on your way to Keswick, you will hear the Norwegian 'sen' or 'son' as the most familiar name-termination, and you will find the long limbs and the blue eyes and regular features of those early sea pirates in the majority. Down the long hill we go into Little Britain. For this was the home of the fierce Brigantes, and from the time Agricola's men made their Roman road to Pavement End till the day when, in 1157, Malcolm IV. of Scotland abandoned his royal claim, and Cumberland and West-

moreland were annexed to the English Crown, the men of these dales never forgot that they were the inheritors of a tradition of independency—never forgot, whether their land was called Brigantia, Strathclyde, Cambria, or Cumberland, that they had held together against the Picts on the north, the Welsh on the south, the Angle and Saxon on the east, and had had a race of kings and bishops with royal and episcopal seats at Dumbarton and Glasgow, and were a separate people with a separate nation's life—always ready, as King Dunmail was, to meet their enemies in the gate.

Yet, when we passed that frontier line just now, we had hardly realised that Glasgow and this long Thirlmere vale had anything in common; but the parish boundary tells an old-world tale. When we crossed the Rotha we entered the ancient parish of Crosthwaite. The parish church, beneath whose tower Southey lies buried, is called the church of St. Kentigern. To him is owed the early Christianity of these vales. He it was who, an exile from the north, and flying for his life in A.D. 553 to Wales, heard at Carleolum that many among these mountains had given themselves up to the worship of idols; and he it was who turned aside by way of Mungo's dale, Mungrisdale of our day, and by the Derwentwater shore set up his preacher's cross in a wooded, or perhaps populous, place ('in loco condense' the old chronicle of Jocelyn has it), and there, in the clearing of the wood or thwaite ('in loco, nomine, crucis novale,' Crosfield of to-day), delivered the gospel message to the wild children of these dales. St. Kentigern or St. Mungo became, after the great battle of Arthuret-upon-Esk, beyond Carlisle, which broke the Pagan and set a Christian king, Roderick the Liberal, upon the throne, the first Bishop of Glasgow. Of his diocese this valley was part. The southern boundary of his diocese lay there, at the limit of the ancient parish of Crosthwaite which we have just entered. There, at the Dunmail Raise gap, we are at the southernmost border line of Little Britain of old.

We may be pardoned for making much of such old boundary marks, for it was but a year or two since that the border line of the Carlisle Archdeaconry, conterminous with that ancient and much diminished kingdom of Strathclyde, was ruthlessly altered in the face of history. And, though the tribal feeling is still strong enough to re-echo the grim proverb 'Nowt good iver cam over t' Raise,' this coach-load of ours and the like tends to obliterate the border feeling.

Down the pass we spin ; on our left the hummocky moraine heaps speak of the painful passage upward of the ice in glacial ages long gone by. On our right the light-footed water of Birkside Ghyll leaps towards the road. 'A good horse, sir, died there,' says the driver, 'and Mr. Ball put the tablet up to him—

In harness here he died,
His only fault was dying.

That's what his master said of him. I wish there was more like him. I daresay I shall, but that leader of mine won't ; come up, get along with you !' And, breaking into a canter, we shoot by the lowly parsonage house and pull up between that little church of Wytheburn, 'as lowly as the lowliest dwelling,' and the 'Nag's Head' inn.

Wherever God erects an house of prayer,
The Devil always builds a chapel there.

So runs the old doggrel ; but in days when the Wytheburn reader had 'sark,' 'whittlegate,' and 'goosegate,' sermons were few, and it was a far cry to church. Yes, and there was a deal to be done in matter of shepherds' reckonings and market talk after the sermon ; so an alehouse was indispensable. Horses must be stabled, and the men who came to church must dine together afterwards.

It is a queer little belfry and a tiny bell, and 'the priest,' as they call him, does the ringing of it himself ; but happy, holy thoughts have heavenward risen, as Hartley Coleridge in his poem suggests, 'beneath this little portion of the skies.' Of the building, though its appointments are decently and well-ordered enough,

Humble it is, and meek, and very low,
And speaks its purpose with a single bell ;
But God Himself, and He alone doth know,
If spiry temples please Him half as well.

Other poets have pondered here. It was here that Gray watched the congregation stream from the humble roadside chapel on one October Sunday in 1769.

And here also, a century later, on their memorable mountain walk, paused with his statesman friend the poet, who wrote in 1869—

We left just ten years since, you say,
That wayside inn we left to-day.
Our jovial host, as forth we fare
Shouts greeting from his easy-chair.

They were bound for Armboth and Watendlath.

High on a bank our leader stands,
Reviews and ranks his motley bands,
Makes clear our goal to every eye :
The valley's western boundary.

The sedentary landlord of forty years ago sleeps in the little burial-ground close by ; other landlords of the ' Nag's Head ' have gone down to the grave since then. But the bank on which W. E. Forster reviewed his motley band of mountaineers is green as ever by the roadside close to the beck, and the memories of Matthew Arnold, lately gone home, are as fresh here as by the graves of Wordsworth and the monument of Clough in the Grasmere churchyard.

SKETCHES OF INDIAN LIFE.

I.

THE WOMEN.

ONE cannot live long in India, or at least in the Bengal Presidency, without being struck by the fact that one never sees any native women above the rank of the labouring class. It emphasises in a curious way the difference between eastern and western customs. You see handsome carriages driving in the parks, and you instinctively expect to see ladies in them; but the occupants are invariably men—almost invariably fat men—sleek rotundity being looked on favourably as a visible sign of wealth and dignity. You are invited to a magnificent *fête* at the house of a native gentleman, where you are received by your host and his sons and his uncles and his male kinsmen of all degrees; but there is absolutely no sign of the existence of any women. Nor must you commit so grave a breach of decorum as to allude to a man's wife or daughters. He ignores them, and expects you to have the courtesy to do the same.

In course of time the custom loses its strangeness, and you practically forget that among the upper classes in India men are not the only sex. Many Englishwomen on first going to India think, as I did, that this shall not be so with them, and that they will bridge over the gulf between themselves and the women of the country. In their kindly enthusiasm they blame their own countrywomen for not having done so in times past. But they will not have been many months in the country before the impalpable network of custom will have drawn its meshes round them. The abstract wish will still remain, but their enthusiasm will have toned down into a tacit recognition of the manifold difficulties surrounding any attempt to alter the existing state of things—difficulties of no superficial or transient character, but having their root in deep-lying principles which colour the whole life and mode of thought of oriental nations.

Some few native ladies, it is true, would willingly receive a visit from an English lady, though they could never return it on account of the absence of all sufficient arrangements for securing privacy in an English house. It would not be possible for a high-

born lady to come among people who have so little sense of common decency as not even to set aside any part of their house for the exclusive use of women. She might expose herself to the untold horror and degradation of being seen by some man; and it is difficult to convey to an English mind all that such a catastrophe would be to her. The acquaintance would have therefore to be cultivated entirely on one side; and the love of the lopsided does not flourish in many natures, nor is it of robust or enduring growth. A further and very practical barrier—though in this case only indirectly of oriental origin—exists in the fact that an Englishwoman can rarely speak Hindustani except within narrow limitations. Very few men, even, who every day of their life are speaking Hindustani, can talk fluently or well on any subject outside their profession. A man's business is either to preach or to doctor, or to superintend railway coolies, or to drill soldiers. A woman's business, as a rule, is to give orders to her servants and discuss household matters. Each learns the vocabulary—often a curiously limited one—necessary for his or her requirements, but as to any general conversation on abstract subjects few indeed would be equal to it. Not only would they need a widely extended vocabulary, but if they were speaking to anyone of rank or position they would have to address him in the third person singular instead of the second person plural, to which alone they had hitherto been accustomed. Not to do so would be as great a solecism in good manners as in French it would be to *tu-toyer* a French dignitary on your first introduction to him.

Even between native and English gentlemen social intercourse in the western acceptation of the words hardly exists. It is almost entirely confined to official visits of a ceremonious nature. When a native gives a dinner to his English friends he does not sit at table with them; they dine by themselves, and only see their host later when they sit together while watching a nautch or some fireworks. General conversation or discussion is therefore never heard; nor is there any literature save for advanced scholars who have mastered the Persian character, and who read for the purposes of study. All these circumstances make it far more difficult to acquire a good knowledge of Hindustani than it is to learn any European language.

I had not been long in India when a native lady who owned large estates sent to beg my husband to pay her a visit, as she was anxious that he should take charge of her property, which was

much embarrassed, and wished to discuss the matter with him. We dismounted from our elephants in the courtyard of her house, and were conducted by a magnificent major-domo and a crowd of smaller satellites to a carpetted verandah where chairs were placed ready for us. The steward then approached, holding in the palms of his joined hands some gold coins, which we touched instead of royally taking, as was the generous custom in less prudish days. But no lady was to be seen, and I was amazed and even startled to hear my husband, still looking straight before him, begin speaking as if he saw some one.

It gave me quite a shock, but as he showed no other sign of sudden insanity, I looked around for some explanation, and then discovered that our chairs were placed near a kind of screen called a *chik*, made of thin strips of bamboo, which completely prevents any one from outside seeing in, although a person within the room can see out; and behind this sheltering mantle of invisibility sat the lady and her women. The conversation was long, and almost wholly unintelligible to me, but I gathered that my husband, having reason to be displeased with the lady's conduct, declined to accept her hospitality in any way, which, judging from certain eloquent sounds that issued from behind the screen, drew from her tears and lamentation.

The only time I ever penetrated into the *zenána* apartments of any native house was once in Lucknow, when the ex-king of Oudh's brother begged me to go and see his wives. The Nawábs of Oudh are, however, anything but typical specimens of Hindustani gentlemen. They are terribly lax in their opinions, and are very properly looked upon shyly in consequence by their stricter co-religionists. They will even sit at table and break bread with the infidels, stipulating only that no flesh of the unclean animal shall under any guise be offered to them.

The Nawáb took me himself into the *zenána*, and there left me with the chief Begum and several other women, whether attendants or younger wives I could not tell. They were much interested in my garments, the cut of which no doubt seemed to them as ridiculous then as it will seem to me myself twenty years later. They themselves were clothed in all the variety of colour and of draped folds permitted in Eastern dress, the fashion alone of which is as unchangeable as are the fashions of Nature, who, though she abhorreth uniformity, yet departeth not from her ancient patterns.

The women touched me and stroked me with childish curiosity,

asking endless naïve questions about everything. The conversation was conducted but lamely on my part, owing to my deficient knowledge of the language, which often compelled me to say rather what I was able to say than what I should have wished to say. Knowing how often from this cause I have had to forego my most telling arguments, and change or entirely suppress some apropos remark I should have wished to make, I have been struck with astonishment when reading books of travel to see how well, and even eloquently, the writers have been able to express themselves in conversation with the natives of divers strange and foreign countries in which they had only passed a few months. So painfully, indeed, have I at times suffered from this paralysing inability to express my thoughts that I have often felt personal sympathy with a dog, whose eyes seemed to show his intense desire to express his feelings and his grief at being dumb. 'Poor fellow!' I have said; 'yes, I know it is hard. I have felt it.'

After we had been talking some time the Begum said,

'Ah, you English ladies are very happy. Your husband has but one wife.'

I replied, with more thought at the moment of politeness than of sincerity, I fear, that I supposed immemorial custom would reconcile a woman to being but one of many wives.

With a pathetic gesture she said sadly, 'But custom cannot alter our hearts! and they are like yours—they can love and they can suffer. Could you be happy if you saw your husband give his love to another wife?'

I own it surprised me that she should feel it in this way, and should at heart rebel against the universal lot of Mahomedan women. We are apt to forget the truth of the dictum that 'there's a deal of human nature in us all,' and that it makes the whole world kin. We think too often that those who do not complain do not suffer or wish for any change. It seems so natural for a cockatoo to have a chain on his foot, and sit all his life on a brass stand that we forget how his instinct must stir within him and make him long to spread his wings and swoop through space with a merry chattering flock of other cockatoos, and take a mate and rear a brood of noisy youngsters. Oh, no! he is quite happy, and wants none of these things. Has he not plenty of sugar? and is not his mistress devoted to him? Happy Poll! Why should we talk of rebellious nature and thwarted instincts? Thy lot is a common one; does that not content thee?

II.

EDUCATION.

SOME years ago I was at a station in Oudh when the Inspector-General of Schools came on his annual tour of inspection, and his wife invited me to accompany them to the Zenana School. She always went with her husband on such occasions, as owing to the way the examination has to be conducted he would otherwise be liable to be grievously imposed upon.

The school was situated in the heart of the native town, and the drive through the bazaar and crowded streets was full of interest. Till you are in the East you cannot realise the necessity of a 'forerunner' to clear the way for a great man. There is no pavement or side-path for foot people to walk on, and they scatter all over the road, thronging it thickly, so that it would be impossible to move quickly unless the way were cleared. Your syces therefore, or a mounted Sepoy orderly, speed ahead in front of your carriage shouting without ceasing—'O wayfarer! O merchant! escape from the road! O seller of cloth, escape! Make the road clear, O people! The great Sahib is coming! Make his way clear!'—thus clearing a passage through the crowd, which closes again the moment you have passed.

Children are often lifted bodily out of the way, while absent-minded persons who have their thoughts in the clouds and their heads in a blanket are apt to find themselves of a sudden sitting by the roadside and wondering how they came there.

The moving panorama of the native streets is full of colour and variety: you see men of all types—the gaunt ascetic, with scanty loin-cloth, and head fantastically crowned with snaky coils of sunburnt faded hair; the well-to-do merchant in stately white robes and resplendent head-covering, sauntering along under the shade of an umbrella, while his laden coolies stagger under the weight of goodly bales, and are clothed with their own glistening black skins as with a garment. You see monkeys and goats, and buffaloes with their shapeless carcasses looking like distended black bags, with boot-betraying knobs sticking out here and there; and now and then an elephant striding solemnly through the crowd, and a string of contemptuous-eyed camels laden with forage; and bullock carts, moving slowly along on their clumsy wheels—one of which is always nearly off, and goes wobbling

round with a great groaning noise ; and little bamboo carts with a bright scarlet awning and tasselled fringe, drawn by one miserable little pony decked with red and yellow trappings, holding four sleek natives, all packed on a space about a yard square.

The carriage stopped at a dilapidated arched gateway in a high blank wall, which after some slight delay was opened cautiously just wide enough for us to pass through on foot. We had to wind through narrow mysterious passages shut in by white walls on either side, over which palm trees, and plantains, and oranges nodded their sunny heads. Then through a garden of cypress and orange trees, till we came in sight of an old native building having a courtyard in front of it. Here in the courtyard, under the shadow of an ancient tamarind, were chairs placed, for the foot of man might penetrate no further. So the inspector and the native schoolmaster sat meekly down, with an implied apology for being men visible in their manner, while an old toothless woman came and silently drew aside a heavy curtain to admit the inspector's wife and myself to the inner precincts.

We entered a large and lofty room where the light was subdued by a thick quilted curtain hung across the graceful Moorish archways opening on to the court. Here were assembled about forty women and girls and babies, all well dressed, and in rainbow hues, with great gold rings in their noses and all round their ears, and with jingling strings of silver coins and bells round ankles and arms and necks.

As we entered they all rose from the ground with a rustle like a flock of pigeons, and greeted us silently with the beautiful and dignified Eastern salaam, which we duly returned with Western stiffness and awkwardness, though with the best of intentions, after which we took our seats in silence on the only two chairs in the room. Then with a soft tinkling rustle all subsided once more on to the floor, some of the girls sitting at our feet as devoutly as though we were Gamaliels, where they stared at us reverently and unflinchingly for an hour.

The schoolmistress was a handsome woman, and handsomely dressed, having white stockings on her feet, though of course no shoes. She seemed to be about thirty, and had a daughter there, a girl of fifteen or sixteen, who in her own person epitomised (as we presently discovered) the knowledge of the whole school.

As soon as the rustle had subsided the inspector began the

examination, which was conducted at the top of his voice from the courtyard beyond the curtain. The effect was droll in the extreme. The first class was summoned, and consisted of ten women, some old, grey, and toothless, the only quite young one being the mistress's daughter. The inspector then told them all to take a copy of a certain book and open it in such and such a place. This involved much delay, most of them muttering audibly that they could not read in that place. However, at last all had found it, and the inspector called on 'Fatima Begum' to begin reading. Fatima was a very old creature, with great gold spectacles on the tip of her nose, and with her head and face swathed up in her chudder. She mumbled out a few lines, going evidently by the sound without a thought of the sense, and corrected often by the inspector—as often, probably, as he could catch what she said. Still she might be said to read—in a fashion.

Then 'Hosaini Begum' was told to read, but Hosaini pleaded that she could not read, and stoutly maintained it in spite of the mistress's enraged looks. Had we not been present there would have been no difficulty, the mistress or her daughter would have read in Hosaini's stead, and it would have been impossible for the inspector to detect the imposition.

Some others were called, but besides the girl there were only Fatima and one other who could pretend to read at all, and I do not think they understood what they read. Then they were all told to take their slates and write, but the girl alone could write at all. Two others could form a single letter, but were not quite sure what letter it was, and a third copied it very fairly over their shoulders; but we detected her, and putting her apart she had to confess that 'writing did not come to her.' After this summing was ordered, but no one but the girl even attempted those mysteries. And then the examination was over, for none but the first class were even supposed to be able to do anything.

How the inspector can keep up any heart is more than I can understand. He says it was exactly the same last year. The mistress says it is because no pupil stays more than six weeks, or at longest a few months; she then gets tired, and says that 'learning will not come to her;' or she gets married; or if married, as most of them are at twelve years old, family cares keep her at home—and so, for one reason or another, they will not stay. All this makes a schoolmistress's work a veritable toil of Sisyphus.

The real clue to the difficulty lies, I think, in the native character, in the utter absence of any desire or longing for a higher or fuller life, in the utter absence of any activity of mind. I was expatiating to one of our servants on the blessings of active occupation. 'It would kill one of us,' I said, 'to sit idle all day, with nothing to do but to chew pân.'

'No, that is what we like. If a man amasses 300 rupees, look you, he takes a servant, and then he can sit all day and chew pân.'

'But a monkey could do that equally well,' I urged. 'How is your life better, then, than the monkeys?'

'Oh, God knows! They eat different things to what we do.'

You cannot rouse these people out of their apathetic content, and content may be as fatal an evil as opium-eating, so thoroughly does it drug the mind. Ignorance is a comparatively easy enemy to conquer, but content is well-nigh invincible. It made the Laodiceans of old believe themselves to be rich and in need of nothing, not knowing that they were wretched and miserable, and poor and blind and naked.

Content with things *as they are* is a hopeless bar towards any attempt to make things *what they might be*, and the first step necessary towards rousing the natives of India from their mental apathy must be to excite in them a feeling of discontent with their present condition. It would be a huge lever to set in motion, and would be somewhat like setting fire to a train of gunpowder without knowing exactly where the mine was situated. One of the first results of its successful action might quite possibly be to blow us out of India.

Education is doubtless a powerful agent, though I fancy we can little foresee how the giant will use his strength when he is full-grown and has cast away leading-strings.

Education among men is even now spreading in India rapidly, but at present not in a direction favourable, as it was confidently hoped it would be, to the Christian religion. Most of the young native gentlemen who have received a good education either in England or India are now Freethinkers of a very advanced type, equally abhorrent to their parents and to our missionaries.

Freethinking and a tendency to drive high-wheeled dogcarts seem in India to have some occult connection. If you see a native gentleman driving a dashing tandem you may safely put down his religious convictions as being neither of the Fish, Flesh, Fowl, nor Good Red Herring persuasion, and you will rarely be

wrong. If on the other hand you see him scrumped up on a little bamboo tray on two wheels, and drawn by a pair of bullocks, you may be sure he is a good Hindu or a faithful Mussalmán, with a mind as yet untroubled by the twin brethren Education and Discontent.

III.

INDIAN SERVANTS.

FROM the days of Zimri, the king's servant, even unto the present day, servants have always been important factors in the sum of human happiness. There are few persons who are not practically aware of this, though they seldom go further and feel that they owe any gratitude to the servants on whom so much of their comfort and pleasure depends.

Most Anglo-Indians, if asked whether they had found their native servants to be more of a comfort or a vexation or a source of amusement, would be puzzled as to which to answer, and their answers would be mainly dependent on their individual temperament. Some people have the happy property of attracting to themselves good servants, as oyster-shells attract lime; others possess a kind of centrifugal force, which in course of time peoples their surrounding neighbourhood with quondam servants as if with meteorites; while few have the power of deriving amusement from incidents in which the element of absurdity is nicely counterpoised by the more perceptible element of annoyance.

Indian servants are in many respects like children in their helplessness, their *naïveté*, their timidity, their readiness to be pleased, their foolishness, their proneness to falsehood, their strong personal attachment. Even in their total lack of any sense of humour they resemble children. No Englishman could hear English spoken in the comically barbarous way in which Hindustani is commonly spoken by the British soldier without betraying amusement. But the Indian face remains darkly impassive. Not the faintest twitch betokens any lurking laughter.

Their love, too, of giving and receiving high-sounding titles is childish in its prodigality. Humble-minded as they are, and with deep-rooted respect for all differences of rank, it arises from no vulgar wish to appear other than what they are, and in its exaggerated indulgence savours even of sarcasm. A tailor and a

cook both enjoy the privilege of being addressed by the exalted title of 'Kalipha' or Emperor. The water-carrier is always 'Jemadár,' or Captain, and the bearer is 'Sirdar,' signifying chief among men, while, as a crowning irony, the sweeper, who ranks but little higher than the dogs he looks after, is invariably called 'Mehter,' or Prince.

The necessity of keeping a great number of servants, often wondered at by dwellers at home, is caused chiefly by the waste of time involved by caste prejudices. Instead of having one dinner-hour for all, and one man to cook for all, there are few who are not obliged to cook for themselves. The table-servants cannot eat with the grooms, nor they with the coachman, nor he with the sweeper. So each man has twice a day to light his own little fire, draw water from the well, and cook his own bowl of rice—a proceeding which wastes no small amount of time. One servant we had was of the caste of oil-sellers, and he told us there was not one of our twenty-four other servants with whom he could eat bread, *i.e.* if the other cooked the food, and only one who could eat with him if he cooked. We asked him if this distinction had not its drawbacks? He merely replied that it was custom—what could he do?

He himself was the humble recipient of four thin rupees a month, shared doubtless by a wife and many dusky youngsters, and yet he would cheerfully have submitted to be whipped to death rather than eat anything that had been placed on our table. It is strange how uncomplainingly men wear the iron fetters forged by the great goddess Custom. They may ridicule her with their lips, but they obey her in their lives, in curious contrast to the many zealots who worship with their lips a God whose precepts they persistently ignore.

The table-servants are men of infinite resources. Nothing daunts them. If you do not like the way a vegetable marrow is cooked your man will say, 'Your Majesty has but to give the order and to-morrow it shall be made into French beans!' If they tell you there is beefsteak for dinner, you ask quite as a matter of course, '*What it is made of,*' when the answer will frequently be 'Of mutton, as no beef was to be procured.' The want of beef was a misfortune, but it could not be allowed to affect the menu.

We were sometimes entertained at dinner by native gentlemen, on which occasions the table was spread with our own linen,

plate, and china, and we were waited on by our own servants, who also had cooked the dinner. The host provided the materials, no doubt consulting our men as to what would be required, who gave a list which must, I fear, have conveyed an appalling idea of our carnivorous powers. We were told that for one of these entertainments our host had killed a sheep, a goose, a duck, and six fowls for our behoof, besides sending a lavish amount of tinned salmon, oysters, and vegetables.

The dinner being a ceremonious one, although only my husband and myself sat down to it, the traditional number of courses was religiously adhered to, quite regardless of the distressful consequences to ourselves. When the game course was placed with much ceremony on the table we were struck by something unusual in the look of the partridges, seeing which our head servant told us in a solemn whisper that they were chickens 'but dressed as partridges.'

The exigencies of a state dinner necessitated a game course—there was no precedent to the contrary—and no game being procurable these innocents had been offered up as victims on the altar of the great goddess Custom.

The lengths to which her worship leads some of her more witless votaries was amusingly illustrated on one occasion when we were out in camp. Our head man had gone on a few days' holiday—probably to bury his grandmother, a relative whose habit it seems to be to die a thousand deaths, so often was attendance at her funeral obsequies advanced as the reason for asking leave—and we were left to the tender mercies of an underling whose intelligence was equal to that of most owls. At dinner the first night we inquired what there was for the second course. 'A crow,' he replied, with bland alacrity, but, seeing our horror-struck faces, added hastily, 'At least, not a crow, but a long-tailed bird your honour shot.' We then discovered that he had proposed serving up a large hornbill for the game course. Frank Buckland would have delighted in that man.

While he was in our service I had a large packet of fresh lavender sent out to me from home, together with a famous recipe for making pot-pourri. I diligently collected rose-leaves gathered at dewy dawn and sent to Lucknow for orris root and all the necessary spices, which had then to be pounded up with half a pound of salt. All being ready I gave my precious spices to him of hornbill fame—alack the day!—and told him to do the

pounding. He asked what salt he was to use—Lahore salt or black salt or hill salt. I did not think it could matter which, as the recipe said Bay salt, and that was not to be had. The ill-starred wight suggested black salt. So be it, I replied.

When he brought back the mixture I stirred it in with my home-suggestive lavender and fragrant rose-leaves, and, joyfully anticipant, covered up the jar. When evening came I planned a pleasing surprise for my husband, and, suddenly uncovering the jar, held it triumphantly to his nose. His face was strongly expressive—but not of joy. I had seen that expression on the face of a boy who was blowing a swan's egg that had failed to hatch. Then it had seemed appropriate and descriptive. Now it seemed out of all harmony with lavender and spices, till a passing whiff from the jar reached me and I recognised the truthful eloquence of my husband's face. If the roses had been changed to rotten eggs and the spices to sulphur, no more exquisitely abominable stench could have been the result.

The khidmatgar on being questioned showed no surprise. He recognised the perfume of the black salt at once, and volunteered the information that nothing could do away with it; 'this salt's fragrance is such that an ounce of it would scent fifty pounds of anything.' I could have slain him and buried him in the pot-pourri.

The servants are, on the whole, honest, according to their lights. Their lights, it is true, allow them some latitude—in the direction of calico for tailors—in other professional directions for others. But in this matter who shall first throw a stone? India is not the only country where dishonesty, clad decently in liberally interpreted perquisites, is allowed to walk abroad unchallenged and assume the virtuous mien of fair-faced honesty.

Actual theft is very rare; and when it is borne in mind how easy of entrance the house is on all sides, how difficult it would be to fix a theft on any one of the numerous servants, and how many unconsidered trifles of great value to these people lie scattered in every room, this says much for the natural honesty of the servants.

I remember once missing a favourite brooch, the loss of which annoyed me much. Pay day was drawing near and we announced that no pay whatsoever would be forthcoming until the brooch was found. So potent was this threat that it had only worked a few hours when the scales fell from the eyes of all, and I was

called to come and see my brooch lying in a most conspicuous spot which had several times been swept. No one winked, as far as I know.

That same brooch disappeared once again, this time the day before the departure of an ayah I had dismissed. Nothing was said to show that we suspected her till she was on the point of starting, when a search was made among her things. No brooch was found, which made us look rather blank, and her air of injured innocence swelled to tragic proportions. Just then one of the servants observed that she carried in her hand some chupatties, about which she seemed curiously solicitous. These he took from her amid tears and protests, and, concealed in the clammy folds of a conniving chupattie, we found my missing brooch. The servants' delight was boundless; they flocked round us with beaming faces, saying they had not eaten bread all day by reason of the suspicion which rested on the household. In that they are like children; any grief or anxiety makes them refuse to eat.

It is difficult to introduce any new thing among a people so conservative as the Hindustanis. We had a wheelbarrow made, thinking to save labour, but it was not an encouraging success. We never allow sufficiently for the ingenuity of the natives. An Englishman, after loading his barrow, would never have thought of putting it on his head, but they thought of it at once. An Englishman would not have thought of getting another man to help wheel the barrow, one taking one handle and one the other. But the idea struck them immediately. It did not answer well, resulting in frantic wobbings and a convulsive overthrow. Still *the idea* was theirs; we never should have hit on it.

Their best points are brought out in times of emergency or specially hard work, when their willingness and forgetfulness of self are very striking. When there is any hard marching to be done in the camp season the servants are often on the march for many nights together, starting off with tents and baggage just as their masters are turning into bed. But you never hear a word of complaint. Your khidmatgar will perhaps tell you at breakfast with a smile that having been a pitch-dark night the carts had followed what they supposed to be the track until they found themselves on the bank of a river with no discoverable ford; how that they had to light a candle and explore the bank till they found a bridge, and thus they had only arrived at the camping ground two hours before your honours. All this in a cheerful tone

of somewhat amused narration that would lead no one to suppose that he had himself been one of the explorers by candlelight.

Or your cowman will tell you that in the grey dawn, while passing through the last jungle, a wolf came out and seized the youngest calf, nearly making off with it before he could come to the rescue.

They have undoubtedly many fine and amiable qualities, combined with a gentleness and quiet dignity of manner curiously lacking very often in their English masters. Many Englishmen, more especially men in the army, invariably speak to their native servants in a bullying brutal manner, and on the smallest provocation abuse them with all the violence of an ill-governed temper. They think that to hold a low opinion of 'niggers,' as they comprehensively term all coloured races, and to treat them like dogs, is a mark of their own superiority. They little guess how contrary an effect is produced in the minds of those who are more susceptible to the broad principles of good breeding.

There were many of our servants. I felt genuine regret at leaving. When the day came for us to bid farewell to India there was a crowd gathered at the railway station to see us off, and it took some time to make our way through them and wish them all good-bye. At length we had worked our way to our carriage, and I was thinking with some relief that this rather trying scene was over, when suddenly one of our servants burst through the crowd and to my consternation threw himself at my feet with tears and sobs.

The guard considerably blew his whistle at this juncture, and in another moment we steamed slowly out of the station on our way back to Western civilisation and all its doubtful advantages.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE COMPLETION OF MISCHANCE.

UPON Emily had fallen silence. The tongue which for three months had incessantly sounded in her ears, with its notes of wailing, of upbraiding, of physical pain, of meaningless misery, was at rest for ever. As she stood beside the grave—the grave whose earth had not had time to harden since it received her father—she seemed still to hear that feeble, querulous voice, with its perpetual iteration of her own name; the casting of clay upon the coffin made a sound not half so real. Returning home, she went up to the bedroom with the same hurried step with which she had been wont to enter after her brief absences. The bed was vacant; the blind made the air dim; she saw her breath rise before her.

There remained but a little servant-girl, who, coming to the sitting-room to ask about meals, stood crying with her apron held to her eyes. Emily spoke to her almost with tender kindness. Her own eyes had shed but few tears; she only wept on hearing those passages read which, by their promise of immortal life, were to her as mockery of her grief. She did not venture to look into the grave's mouth; she dreaded lest there might be visible some portion of her father's coffin.

Mrs. Baxendale, the Cartwrights, and one or two other friends had attended the funeral. At Emily's request no one accompanied her home. Mrs. Baxendale drove her to the door, and went on to Dunfield.

The last link with the past was severed—almost, it seemed, the last link with the world. A sense of loneliness grew about her heart; she lived in a vast solitude, whither came faintest echoes of lamentation, the dying resonance of things that had been. It could hardly be called grief, this drawing off of the affections, this desiccation of the familiar kindnesses which for the time seemed all her being. She forced herself to remember that the

sap of life would flow again, that love would come back to her when the hand of death released her from its cruel grip ; as yet she could only be sensible of her isolation, her forlorn oneness. It needs a long time before the heart can companion only with memories. About its own centre it wraps such warm folds of kindred life. Tear these away, how the poor heart shivers in its nakedness.

She was alone. It no longer mattered where she lived, for her alliances henceforth were only of the spirit. She must find some sphere in which she could create for herself a new activity, for to sit in idleness was to invite dread assaults. The task of her life was an inward one, but her nature was not adapted to quiescence, and something must replace the task which had come to an end by her mother's death. Already she had shaped plans, and she dared not allow needless time to intervene before practically pursuing them.

In the evening of that day Mrs. Baxendale again came to Banbrigg. She found Emily with writing materials before her. Her object in coming was to urge Emily to quit this lonely house.

'Come and stay with me,' she entreated. 'You shall be as unmolested as here ; no one but myself shall ever come near you. Emily, I cannot go home and sleep with the thought of you here alone.'

'You forget,' Emily replied, 'that I have in reality lived alone for a long time ; I do not feel it as you imagine. No, I must stay here, but not for long. I shall at once find a teacher's place again.'

'That is your intention ?'

'Yes. I shall sell the furniture, and ask the landlord to find another tenant as soon as possible. But till I go away I wish to live in this house.'

Mrs. Baxendale knew that Emily's projects were not to be combatted like a girl's idle fancies. She did not persevere, but let sad silence be her answer.

'Would you in no case stay in Dunfield ?'

'No ; I must leave Dunfield. I don't think I shall find it difficult to get employment.'

Mrs. Baxendale had never ventured to ask for the girl's confidence, nor even to show that she desired it. Emily was more perplexing to her now than even at the time of Wilfrid Athel's

rejection. She consoled herself with the thought that a period of active occupation was no doubt the best means of restoring this complex nature to healthy views of life; that at all events it was likely to bring about an unravelling of the mysteries in which her existence seemed to have become involved. You could not deal with her as with other girls; the sources of her strength and her weakness lay too deep; counsel to her would be a useless, an impertinent, interference with her grave self-guiding. Mrs. Baxendale could but speak words of extreme tenderness, and return whence she had come. On going away, she felt that the darkest spot of night was over that house.

Emily lived at Banbrigg for more than three weeks. After the first few days she appeared to grow lighter in mind; she talked more freely with those who came to see her, and gladly accepted friendly aid in little practical matters which had to be seen to. Half-way between Banbrigg and Dunfield lay the cemetery; there she passed a part of every morning, sometimes in grief which opened all the old wounds, more often in concentration of thought such as made her unaware of the passage of time. The winter weather was not severe; not seldom a thin gleam of sunshine would pass from grave to grave, and give promise of spring in the said reign of the year's first month. Emily was almost the only visitor at the hour she chose. She had given directions for the raising of a stone at the grave-head; as yet there was only the newly-sodded hillock. Close at hand was a grave on which friends placed hot-house flowers, sheltering them beneath glass. Emily had no desire to express her mourning in that way; the flower of her love was planted where it would not die.

But she longed to bring her time of waiting to an end. The steps she had as yet taken had led to nothing. She had not requested Mrs. Baxendale to make inquiries for her, and her friend, thinking she understood the reason, did not volunteer assistance, nor did she hear any particulars of the correspondence that went on. Ultimately, Emily communicated with her acquaintances in Liverpool, who were at once anxious to serve her. She told them that she would by preference find a place in a school. And at length they drew her attention to an advertisement which seemed promising; it was for a teacher in a girls' school near Liverpool. A brief correspondence led to her being engaged.

She was in perfect readiness to depart. For a day or two she had not seen Mrs. Baxendale, and, on the afternoon before the day of her leaving Banbrigg, she went to take leave of her friends. It was her intention to visit Mrs. Baxendale first, then to go on to the Cartwrights'. As it rained, she walked to Pental and took train for Dunfield.

At Dunfield station she was delayed for some moments in leaving the carriage by travellers who got out before her with complexities of baggage. To reach the exit of the station she had to cross the line by a bridge, and at the foot of this bridge stood the porter who collected tickets. As she drew near to him her eyes fell upon a figure moving before her, that of a young man, wearing thick travelling apparel and carrying a bag. She did not need to see his face, yet, as he stopped to give up his ticket, she caught a glimpse of it. The train by which she had travelled had also brought Wilfrid to Dunfield.

She turned and walked to a little distance away from the foot of the stairs. There was no room that she could enter on this platform. She dropped her black veil, and seated herself on a bench. In truth she had a difficulty in standing, her body trembled so.

For five minutes she remained seated, calming herself and determining what course to take. She held it for certain that Wilfrid had come at Mrs. Baxendale's bidding. But would he go to that house first, or straight to her own? With the latter purpose he would probably have left the train at Pental. She would have time to get home before he could come. At this moment a train was entering the station on the other side. She hurried over the bridge, and, without stopping to obtain a ticket, entered a carriage.

It was not without dread lest Wilfrid might have already arrived, and be waiting within for her return, that she approached the house door. Her fears were groundless. The servant told her that no one had called.

'If anyone should call this evening,' she said, 'I cannot see them. You will say that I shall not be able to see anyone—anyone, whoever it is—till to-morrow morning.' . . .

At this same hour, Mrs. Baxendale, entering a shop in Dunfield, found Dagworthy making purchases.

'I shall not see you again for a long time,' he said, as he was leaving. 'I start to-morrow on a long journey.'

‘Out of England?’

He did not specify his route, merely said that he was going far from England. They shook hands, and Mrs. Baxendale was left with a musing expression on her face. She turned her eyes to the counter; the purchase for which Dagworthy had just paid was a box of ladies' gloves. The shopman put them aside, to be made into a parcel and sent away.

When, half an hour later, she reached home, she was at once informed that Mr. Athel was in the drawing-room. The intelligence caused her to bite her lower lip, a way she had of expressing the milder form of vexation. She went first to remove her walking apparel, and did not hasten the process. When she at length entered the drawing-room, Wilfrid was pacing about in his accustomed fashion.

‘You here?’ she exclaimed, with a dubious shake of the head. ‘Why so soon?’

‘So soon! The time has gone more quickly with you than with me, Mrs. Baxendale.’

Clearly he had not spent the last three months in ease of mind. His appearance was too like that with which he had come from Oxford on the occasion of his break-down.

‘I could bear it no longer,’ he continued. ‘I cannot let her go away without seeing her.’

‘You will go this evening?’

‘Yes, I must. You have nothing hopeful to say to me?’

Mrs. Baxendale dropped her eyes, and answered ‘Nothing.’ Then she regarded him as if in preface to some utterance of moment, but after all kept silence.

‘Has she heard of anything yet?’

‘I believe not. I have not seen her since Tuesday, and then she told me of nothing. But I don't ask her.’

‘I know—you explained. I think you have done wisely. How is she?’

‘Well, seemingly.’

He let his feeling get the upper hand.

‘I can't leave her again without an explanation. She *must* tell me everything. Have I not a right to ask it of her? I can't live on like this. I do nothing; the days pass in misery of idleness. If only in pity she will tell me all.’

‘Don't you think it possible,’ Mrs. Baxendale asked, ‘that she has already done so?’

He gazed at her blankly, despairingly.

‘You have come to believe that? Her words—her manner—seem to prove that?’

‘I cannot say certainly. I only mean that you should be prepared to believe, if she repeated it.’

‘Yes, if she repeats it. I shall have no choice.—Well, I wished to see you first; I will go to Banbrigg at once.’

Mrs. Baxendale seemed reluctant to let him go, yet at length she did. He was absent an hour and a half. At his return, Mrs. Baxendale had friends with her in the drawing-room. Wilfrid ascertained it from the servant, and said that he would go to the sitting-room he had formerly occupied, and wait there till the lady was alone.

She came to him before very long, and learnt that he had not been able to see Emily; the servant had told him that she could see no one till the next morning.

Mrs. Baxendale sighed.

‘Then you must wait.’

‘Yes, I must wait.’

He passed the night at the house. Mr. Baxendale was in London, parliamentarily occupied. At eleven next morning he went again to Banbrigg. Again he was but a short time absent, and in his face, as he entered the drawing-room, Mrs. Baxendale read catastrophe.

‘She has gone!’ he said. ‘She left very early this morning. The girl has no idea where she has gone to, but says she won’t return—that she has left for good. What does this mean?’

‘What does it mean?’ the lady repeated, musingly. ‘I wonder, I wonder.’

‘She knew I called yesterday; I left my name. She has gone to avoid me.’

‘That may be. But all her preparations were evidently made.’

‘But it may not be true. The girl of course would say whatever she was bidden to. I don’t believe that she has really gone.’

‘I do,’ said Mrs. Baxendale, with quiet significance.

‘On what grounds? You know more than you will tell me. Is there no one with common humanity? Why do you plot against me? Why won’t you tell me what you know?’

‘I will, if you sit down there and endeavour to command yourself. That is, I will tell you certain things that I have heard, and something that I have seen. Then, we will reason about them.’

Wilfrid's brow darkened. He prepared to listen.

'About six weeks ago,' the lady began, 'I went to see a friend of mine, a lady who was recovering from an illness, someone who knows Emily, though not intimately. In her illness she was nursed by the same woman who helped poor Mrs. Hood when Emily was in her fever. This woman, it appears, was induced to talk about Emily, and gave it as a secret that Emily's illness had something to do with an attachment between her and Mr. Dagworthy, her father's employer. Her grounds for believing this were, first of all, the fact of Emily frequently uttering his name in her delirium, with words which seemed to refer to some mystery between them; then, the circumstance of Mr. Dagworthy's having, shortly after, left a note at the house, with special injunctions to the servant that it should be given into Emily's own hands. This story, you may imagine, surprised me not a little. A few days later, Mr. Dagworthy dined with us, and I took an opportunity of talking with him; it seemed to me certain that Emily had some special place in his thoughts. I know, too, that he was particularly anxious throughout the time of her illness, and that of her mother.'

The listener was paralysed.

'Why have you kept this from me?' he asked, indignation blending with his misery.

'Because it was no better than gossip and speculation. I had no right to report such things—at all events, so it seemed to me. Now I am going to add something which may be the wildest error, but which cannot trouble you much if you imagine that the story is true. Yesterday, just before I came home to find you here, I met Mr. Dagworthy by chance in a draper's shop, and he told me that he was going away to-day, leaving England.'

'To-day?'

'Yes. And I saw that he had been buying a box of ladies' gloves.'

'What do you mean?' Wilfrid stammered out.

'I know that he has no female relatives—except his wife's, who live in another part of England, and are on bad terms with him.'

'His *wife*—you said?'

'His late wife; he is a widower. Now we may be imagining in the silliest way, but——'

'But why——' Wilfrid checked himself. 'Do I understand

you? You think Emily has gone with him? Has gone to be married to him?’

‘It is almost impossible seriously to think it.’

‘And you think she would shrink from being married here?’

‘For one or two reasons—at all events, so soon.’

‘But is it possible to believe that she deliberately deceived you—made a pretence of seeking employment?’

‘I can’t say. She never gave me any details of what she was doing. Another thing; she would not come to stay with me after her mother’s funeral. Mr. Dagworthy lives on the heath, only just beyond Banbrigg. You see to what things we can be led, if we begin interpreting shadows; but Emily is a mystery to me, and, as I have begun, I must gossip to you all I know.’

Mrs. Baxendale was certainly doing more in the way of gossiping conjecture than perhaps she had ever done before; the occasion excited her, and that coincidence of Dagworthy’s purchase, together with his departure this very day, struck her with a force which unsettled her usual balance of thought. Wilfrid was as ready to believe; to him there was a certain strange relief in feeling that he had at length reached the climax of his sufferings. He had only to give credence to Emily’s own words. She had said that a change had come in her heart, in her life, and that she no longer loved him. Understand it, he of course could not, nor ever would, unless he lost all faith in woman’s honour.

‘But this can be either confirmed or refuted speedily,’ he exclaimed. ‘Can you not make inquiries of this Mr. Dagworthy’s friends? If they know nothing yet, they will soon hear from him.’

‘Yes, I can make such inquiries. But he has a peculiar reputation in Dunfield; I think he scarcely has an intimate friend.’

‘Well, there is, at all events, Emily herself. If this story is baseless, she will be writing to you.’

‘I think so. Again we must wait.—Poor Wilfrid! From my heart I feel for you!’

It was decided that Wilfrid should remain in Dunfield for a day or two, till news might be obtained. News came, however, sooner than was anticipated. In the afternoon, a letter was delivered, posted by Emily at Pandal in the morning. She wrote to Mrs. Baxendale to say that she had left to take a place in a school; then continued:

‘I have a reason for leaving suddenly, a reason you will

understand. I should have come to say good-bye to you yesterday, but something happened to prevent me. The same reason has decided me to keep secret even from you, my dear and honoured friend, the place to which I am going; in time you shall hear from me, for I know I cannot have forfeited your love, though I fear I have given you pain. Think of me with forbearance. I do what I *must* do.'

That was all. No word for Wilfrid.

'This proves it,' Wilfrid said, with bitter coldness. 'All she says is false. She does what she is ashamed of, and lies to conceal it for a few days or weeks.'

'Do not let us even yet be sure,' said Mrs. Baxendale, who was recovering her calmer judgment.

'I *am* sure! Why should she keep the place secret? She fears that I should follow her? Could she not anywhere keep me off by her mere bidding? Have I been brutally importunate? What secret can exist that she might not disclose to me—that she was not bound to disclose? I thought her incapable of a breath of falsehood, and she must have deceived me from the first, from the very first!'

'Wilfrid, that is impossible. I cannot abandon my faith in Emily. Now you speak in this way, it convinces me that we are wrong, utterly and foolishly mistaken. I believe what she says here; she has *not* gone with him!'

Wilfrid laughed scornfully.

'It is too late; I can't twist my belief so quickly. I do not need that kind of comfort; far easier to make up my mind that I have always been fooled—as I have!'

He was beyond the stage at which reasoning is possible; reaction, in full flood, beat down the nobler features of his mind and swamped him with the raging waters of resentment.

So here was a myth well on its way to establishment. For no one could afford Mrs. Baxendale satisfactory news of Dagworthy. She would not take the only step which remained, that of openly avowing to his partner the information she desired to obtain, and getting him to make inquiries; his partner appeared to be the only person in direct communication with Dagworthy. It had to be remembered that Emily's own statement might be true; she must not be spoken of lightly. It was said that Mr. Legge, the partner, pooh-poohed the idea that Dagworthy was

secretly married. But Mr. Legge might know as little as other people.

There were circles in Dunfield in which another and quite a different myth grew up around the name of Emily Hood. The Cartwrights originated it. They too had received a mysterious note of farewell, and their interpretation was this: Emily, they held, had gone to London, there to be happily married to a certain Mr. Athel, a gentleman of aristocratic appearance and enormously wealthy. Mrs. Baxendale heard this story now and again; she neither affirmed nor contradicted. Jessie Cartwright reflected much on Emily's slyness in keeping her affairs so secret. She was not as envious as she would have been but for a certain compact which she was determined should not—if it lay in her power to prevent it—be some day laughed away as a mere joke. And had she not received, on the very eve of Dagworthy's departure, a box of gloves, which could only come from one person?

The second myth holds its ground, I believe, to the present day. The more mischievous fable was refuted before very long, but only when it had borne results for Wilfrid practically the same as if it had been a truth.

CHAPTER XX.

WILFRID THE LEGISLATOR.

LET time and change do their work for six years and six months, their building and their destroying, their ripening for love, their ripening for death. Then we take our way to the Capital, for, behold, it is mid-season; the sun of late June is warm upon the many-charioted streets, upon the parks where fashion's progress circles to the 'Io Triumpe' of regardant throngs, even upon the quarters where life knows but one perennial season, that of toil. The air is voiceful; every house which boasts a drawing-room gathers its five o'clock choir; every theatre, every concert-room resounds beneath the summer night; in the halls of Westminster is the culmination of sustained utterance. There, last night, the young member for a Surrey borough made his maiden speech; his name, Mr. Wilfrid Athel.

The speech was better reported than such are wont to be, for it contained clever things, and quite surprisingly resembled in its tone of easy confidence and its mastery of relevant facts the de-

liverances of men of weight in politics. It had elicited a compliment from a leader of the opposing party; it had occasioned raisings of the eyebrows in capable judges, and had led to remarks that a young man so singularly self-possessed, so agreeably oracular, so remarkably long-headed, might be expected, in the course of some five-and-twenty years, to go far. He was, to be sure, a child—not yet thirty—but there were older children in the House decidedly of less promise. Mr. Wilfrid Athel might go home, and, if he could, go to sleep, in the assurance that his career had opened.

The next day, a Saturday, this finished little piece of talk was the starting-point of a vast amount of less coherent speech in a drawing-room within sight of Kensington's verdure. Here Mrs. Ashley Birks did her friends the honour of receiving them; a lady well regarded in certain discriminating circles. A widow formerly, she had now been two years married to a barrister new in silk. We have the pleasure of knowing her, for she once bore the name of Mrs. Rossall.

At half-past five Mrs. Ashley Birks' drawing-room contained some two dozen people, mostly ladies. Two of the gentlemen present are not without interest for us. He whom you observe standing, so to speak, the focus of a concave mirror of three gracious dames, with his back somewhat difficultly bent, as if under ordinary circumstances he would be as upright as any Briton who owes not a penny, with very wholesome cheeks and lips which move in and out as he forms his well-rounded periods, is, of course, Mr. Athel the elder; he plays with his watch-guard, and is clearly in hearty mood, not at all disliking the things that are being said about a certain member of the legislature. The other is as emphatically an Englishman, but of a different type; his clothes are good, but he does not wear them with grace; he is tall and solidly built, but he walks awkwardly, and is not quite at home among these gracious ladies of the silver tongue, having much difficulty in expressing himself on subjects which he perfectly understands, and absolutely without faculty for speech on subjects unfamiliar to him. When we saw him last he was in the heat of a contested election; there has been another election since then, but Mr. Baxendale still represents Dunfield.

You see his wife at a little distance, still the same smooth-skinned, well-preserved lady, with goodness declaring itself upon her large and homely features. For three years now she has

been in the habit of spending her three months in town, finding it lonely in Dunfield, and even nourishing a late ambition, which has not been altogether futile; for there are people who have a peculiar liking for the little room in which she holds her modest gatherings. She is talking at present with a lady who, by her costume, is of the house, a lady of some seven-and-twenty years or a little more, and strikingly beautiful. Beatrice Redwing has not yet changed her name, though often enough solicited to do so; when her mother died, now rather more than a year ago, she willingly accepted the shelter of Mrs. Ashley Birks' roof, as she would else have had to live alone. In one respect she has not changed, her dress is exquisite; but to judge from her expression as she talks, she has become somewhat graver. Visitors have a special reason for regarding her with glances of curiosity and admiration. Though known to be extremely wealthy, it was rumoured that she was about to appear before the public as a vocalist, having prepared herself by a long course of the most rigid study. Her first appearance was looked forward to as an event of note in the musical world, for her native gifts were unusual, and the results of her training proportionately significant.

'It must be very gratifying to you,' Mrs. Baxendale had said, as she came to a chair by her niece and began to talk of Wilfrid's success.

'Yes, I am glad of it,' was the quiet reply.

'Will he be here this afternoon?'

'I'm not sure; I think so. Ah, there he is!'

For at that moment had come the announcement of the name they had on their lips. Beatrice's exclamation was made in a very subdued voice, but she moved slightly in her chair, and it was not within her resources to subdue the glister of her dark eyes and the warmth softly expanding upon her cheek. Mrs. Birks floated towards her nephew with airs of rightly-tuned welcome; she could not, of course, make much of him, but her very familiarity made graceful claim to a share in his glory. Wilfrid was sensibly changed during the years we have allowed to pass silently by. To begin with, he had grown a beard. His health seemed finally to have established itself on a sound basis; his cheeks were growing sunny, and he showed the proportions of a very complete man. At the present moment, his consciousness of regards fixed upon him heightened his colour; his fine eyes danced in light; he checked a smile, and spoke sparingly here and

there. One part of his nature revelled in the joy of this foretaste of distinction ; he had looked forward to it, had laboured for it, its sweetness was beyond all telling. Triumph had been his aim as a schoolboy ; he held it fitting that as a man he should become prominent amongst his fellows. This of politics was the easiest way. To be sure, he told himself that it was a way he would once have sneered at, that it was to rub shoulders with men altogether his inferiors in culture, that, had he held to the ideals of his youth, a longer, a wearier course would have been his, and the chance of a simpler, nobler crown. But he had the gift of speech, and by an effort could absorb himself as completely in blue-books as in the pages of historian or poet. An hour such as this was the first of his rewards.

Two there were in this assembly who turned their eyes upon him with adoration which could scarcely have fallen short of Wilfrid's utmost demands. They were his cousins, Minnie and Patty Rossall. The twins were 'out,' very sweet girls, still too delicate in health, shadows of each other. Had they regarded Wilfrid as a mere mortal, both would have been dying for love of him ; as it was, they drooped before him the veiled eyes of worshippers ; a word from him made their pulses tingle blissfully throughout the day. Such was their mutual love, that each schemed to win his kindness for the other, his brotherly kindness, for they never thought, had never dared to think, of anything else. Wilfrid was very gracious to them both.

He shook hands with Beatrice, but neither spoke. After a few words with Mrs. Baxendale, he passed on to other ladies. Wilfrid's manner was now all that could be desired in a young man who, destined to succeed in politics, would naturally make a figure in society. He was pliant, he struck the note of good-breeding, he was unsurpassed in phrasing ; with ladies who chose to be 'superior,' he could find exactly the right tone, keeping clear of pedantry, yet paying her with whom he spoke the compliment of uttering serious opinions. With the more numerous class of ladies, who neither were nor affected to be anything but delightful chatterboxes, he could frolic on the lightest airs of society gossip. He was fast making of himself an artist in talk ; woe to him, if he began to discover that exertion of his brain was waste of time, since his more obvious ends could be gained equally well without it. As yet, though hints of such a mood had come to him, he did not give way to the temptations of loquacious

idleness; he still worked, and purposed to work still harder. Just of late he had spent a good deal of time in rooms not exactly arranged for purposes of study—but for this there was a special reason.

An hour later, when most of the visitors were departed, he went to Beatrice's corner of the room.

'When shall I call for you?' he asked, standing before her.

'Oh, but you will dine here?'

She leaned forward, looking up into his face. The gaze would have intoxicated most men; Wilfrid kept his calm smile.

'No, I'm sorry to say I can't,' was his reply. 'I have things to see to at home. Will 8.15 do?'

'Quite well; I need not be at the hall before a quarter to nine.'

His father came up.

'Walking my way, Wilf?'

'Yes, and in a hurry. I think we must have a hansom.'

Father and son still lived together, in the same house as formerly. After a brief stretch of pavement, they hailed a conveyance.

'Going to St. James's Hall, I suppose?' Mr. Athel asked, as they drove on.

Wilfrid gave an affirmative.

'Is it the last time?'

The other laughed.

'I can't say. I fear it troubles you.'

Mr. Athel had, we know, long passed the time when the ardours of youth put him above the prejudices of the solid Englishman. When it was first announced to him that Beatrice was going to sing on a public platform, he screwed up his lips as if something acid had fallen upon them; he scarcely credited the story till his own eyes saw the girl's name in print. 'What the deuce!' was his exclamation. 'It would be all very well if she had to do it for her living, but she certainly owes it to her friends to preserve the decencies as long as there is no need to violate them.' The reasons advanced he utterly refused to weigh. Since then events had come to pass which gave him even a nearer interest in Miss Redwing, and his protests had grown serious.

'Why yes,' he answered now, 'it does trouble me, and not a little. I very strongly advise you to put an end to it. Let her sing in her friends' houses; there's no objection to that. But to

have her name on—great heavens!—on placards! No, no; it must stop, Wilf. Every day it becomes more imperative. Your position demands that she should become a private lady.'

Wilfrid knew well that the question could not be argued, and, in his secret mind, there was just a little tendency to take his father's view. He would never have allowed this shade of thought to appear in his speech; but was he not an Englishman and a member of Parliament?

This which had come about was inevitable. After his departure from Dunfield on that winter day, when his life seemed crushed, he had for a long time not even sought to hear of Emily. He did not write to Mrs. Baxendale, and from her had no letters. Correspondence between them only recommenced some ten months later, when Wilfrid had finally left Oxford, and then there was no mention on either side of the old troubles. Wilfrid began by writing that he had thoughts of taking up politics; his father advised him to the step, and other friends seconded the recommendation. 'I really believe I can talk,' he said, and Mrs. Baxendale smiled at the confession. Three months more went by; then Wilfrid at length asked plainly whether Emily had sent any news of herself, or whether the suspicions had proved grounded. The reply was this:

'As I knew perfectly well, as soon as I came to my senses, Emily had told us the truth. I heard from her for the first time nearly half a year ago, but, as she appealed to my honour not to disclose the place of her abode, I thought it needless to speak to you on the subject before you yourself seemed desirous of hearing. She is teaching in a school, and I am convinced that the story we together concocted was based on some utter mistake; I don't think she was ever related to that man in the way we thought. But it is more than probable that there was some mystery about her father's death, in which Mr. D. was concerned. I cannot imagine what it could be. Something it was which, to Emily's mind, imposed upon her a necessity of breaking her engagement. I have spoken to her of you, have asked her directly if she still thinks her decision final; she assures me most solemnly that it is. I therefore advise you once for all to accept this; I am convinced she will never waver. Try to forget her; there is no choice. I don't think I am likely to see her again for a very long time, if ever, and our correspondence will be very slight, for I know she wishes it so. Let this, then, close a sad, sad story.'

There was indeed no choice, as far as outward relations went, but so profound a passion was not to be easily outgrown. The view which makes first love alone eternally valid derives from a conception of the nature of love which, out of the realm of poetry, we may not entertain; but it sometimes happens that the first love is that which would at any period of life have been the supreme one, and then it doubtless attains a special intensity of hold from the fact of its being allied with the earliest outburst of physical passion. Above all it is thus if the attachment has been brought about by other charms than those of mere personal beauty. Emily could not be called beautiful, in the ordinary acceptation of the word; for all that, her face grew to possess for Wilfrid a perfection of loveliness beyond anything that he would ever again see in the countenance of fairest woman. Had he been markedly susceptible to female beauty, it is certain that he would have fallen in love with Beatrice Redwing long before he ever saw Emily, for Beatrice was fair to look upon as few girls are. He had not done so; he had scarcely—a strange thing—been tempted to think of doing so. That is to say, it needed something more to fire his instincts. The first five minutes that he spent in Emily's presence made him more conscious of womanhood than years of constant association with Beatrice. This love, riveting itself among the intricacies of his being, could not be torn out, and threatened to resist all piecemeal extraction. Wilfrid regained the command of his mind, and outwardly seemed recovered beyond all danger of relapse; but he did not deceive himself into believing that Emily was henceforth indifferent to him. He knew that to stand again before her would be to declare again his utter bondage, body and soul. He loved her still, loved her as his life; he desired her as passionately as ever. She was not often in his thoughts; no more is the consciousness of the processes whereby our being supports itself. But he had only to let his mind turn to her, and he scoffed at the hope that any other could ever be to him what Emily had been, and was, and would be.

He saw very little of Beatrice, but it came to his ears that her life had undergone a change in several respects, that she spent hours daily in strenuous study of music, and was less seen in the frivolous world. No hint of the purpose Beatrice secretly entertained ever reached him till, long after, the purpose became action. He felt that she shunned him, and by degrees he thought

he understood her behaviour. Wilfrid had none of the vulgarest vanity; another man would long ago have suspected that this beautiful girl was in love with him; Wilfrid had remained absolutely without a suspicion of the kind. He had always taken in good faith her declared aversion for his views; he had believed that her nature and his own were definitely irreconcilable. This was attributable, first of all to his actual inexperience in life, then to the seriousness with which he held those views which Beatrice vowed detestable. He, too, was an idealist, and, in many respects, destined to remain so throughout his life; for he would never become, on the one hand, the coldly critical man who dissects motives—his own and those of others—to the last fibre, nor yet the superficial cynic who professes, and half-believes, that he can explain the universe by means of a few maxims of cheap pessimism. So he took, and continued to take, Beatrice's utterances without any grain of scepticism, and consequently held it for certain that she grew less friendly to him as she grew older.

Was it Mrs. Baxendale or Mrs. Birks who at length gave him the hint which set his mind at work in another direction? Possibly both about the same time, seeing that it was the occasion of Mrs. Baxendale's first making acquaintance with his aunt that dated the beginning of new reflections in Wilfrid. One or other of these ladies—of course it was managed so delicately that he really could not have determined to which of them he owed the impulse—succeeded in suggesting to him that he had missed certain obvious meanings in Beatrice's behaviour whilst he resided with her at Dunfield. Certainly, when he looked back at those days from his present standpoint, Beatrice did appear to have conducted herself singularly, the mode of her departure and leave-taking being above all curious. Was it possible that——? The question formed itself at last, and was the beginning of conviction. He sought Beatrice's society, at first merely for the sake of resolving his doubts, and behold, she no longer shrank from him as formerly. Of course he might take it for granted that she knew the details of his story, seeing that her closest intimates, Mrs. Baxendale and Mrs. Birks, were ignorant of none of them. Had she, then, waited for signs of his freedom? Did his revival of the old tone in their conversations strike her as something meant to be significant, meant to convey to her certain suggestions? It was so in point of fact, and Wilfrid could not be long, his eyes now open, without convincing himself that the girl loved

him ardently, that it cost her struggles with herself to avoid a revelation of her feeling. How did it affect him?

Naturally, he was flattered. It afforded another instance of his lordship among men; a woman whom others longed for desperately and in vain was his when he chose to extend his hand to her. He saw, too, an appropriateness in the chance which offered him such a wife; Beatrice was in harmony with the future to which he aspired. Her property joined to his would make him so wealthy that he might aim almost at anything; political and social progress would aid each other, both rapid. Beatrice was in many respects brilliant; there was no station that she would not become; she had the tastes and habits of society. He compared her with his career; she represented worldly success, the things which glitter on the outside—action, voice; even her magnificent powers of song he used as parallel—the gods forgive him!—to his own forensic abilities. Supposing he must marry early, and not rather expect the day when he might bid for a partner from a rank considerably above his own, Beatrice was clearly the one wife for him. She would devote herself with ardour to his worldly interests—for he began to understand that the divergence of her expressed views meant little in comparison with her heart's worship—and would enable him immediately to exchange the social inferiority of bachelor life for the standing of a man with his own very substantial roof-tree; she would have her drawing-room, which might be made a *salon*, where politics and art might rule alternately.

This was doing injustice to Beatrice, and Wilfrid felt it; but it was thus he regarded her as in distinction from the woman who should have been his wife. She typified his chosen career; that other path which had lain open to him, the path of intellectual endeavour, of idealism incompatible with loud talk, of a worship which knew no taint of time-serving, that for ever was represented by the image of the woman he had lost. Her memory was encompassed with holiness. He never heard the name she bore without a thrill of high emotion, the touch of exalted enthusiasm; 'Emily' was written in starlight. Those aspects of her face which had answered to the purest moments of his rapturous youth were as present as if she had been his daily companion. He needed no picture to recall her countenance; often he had longed for the skill of an artist, that he might portray that grave sweetness, that impassioned faith, to be his soul's altar-piece. Lost, lost! and,

with her, lost the uncompromising zeal of his earliest manhood. Only too consciously he had descended to a lower level; politics tempted him because they offered a field in which he could exercise his most questionable faculty, and earn with it a speedy return of the praise to which he was so susceptible. It marks his position to state that, when politics began seriously to hold his thoughts, he was with difficulty able to decide to which party he should attach himself. To be sure, if names could be taken as sufficient, he was a Liberal, a Radical; but how different his interpretation of such titles from that they bore to men of affairs! Respect for the masses he had none; interest in their affairs he had none either. On the other hand the tone of uninstructed Conservatism—that is to say, of the party so stamped—he altogether despised. The motive which ultimately decided him to declare himself a Liberal was purely of sentiment; he remembered what Mrs. Baxendale had said about the hardships of poor Hood, and consequently allied himself with those who profess to be the special friends of the toiling multitude.

From the first he talked freely with Beatrice of his projects; he even exaggerated to her the cynicism with which he framed and pursued them. He could never have talked in this way to Emily. With Beatrice the tone did not injure him in the least, partly because she did not take it altogether seriously, yet more owing to the habit of mind whereby women in general subordinate principle to the practical welfare of the individual. If Wilfrid found a sphere for the display of his talents, Beatrice cared nothing to dwell upon abstract points. Politics were a recognised profession for gentlemen, and offered brilliant prizes; that was enough. She was pleased, on the whole, that his line should be one of moderation; it was socially advantageous; it made things pleasant with friends of the most various opinions. That Wilfrid took her into his confidence was to her a great happiness. In secret she felt it would be the beginning of closer intimacy, of things which women—heaven be praised!—esteem of vastly more importance than intellectual convictions or the interest of party.

But it was long, very long, before Wilfrid could bring himself to pass the line which separates friendship from love-making. Of passion his nature had no lack, but it seemed to be absorbed in memory; he shrank from the thought of using to another those words he had spoken to Emily. One of the points of intense secret sympathy between Emily and himself was this chastity

of temperament. Constitutionally incapable of vice, he held in repugnance even that degree of materialism in the view of sexual relations which is common to men who have grown their beards. Not only had a coarse word never passed his lips; he intensely disliked the frivolous way of discussing subjects which to him were more sacred than any other. When he had decided with himself that it was his destiny to wed Beatrice, he had a positive fear of taking this step from which there would be no return. Before he could do so, he must have utterly broken with the past, and how could that ever be? He had not even moments of coldness in his thought of Emily; it was beyond his power to foresee the day when she would have become to him a mere symbol of something that was. Suppose that some day, when married, he again met her? In spite of everything, he did not believe that she had ceased to love him; somewhere she still kept her faith, martyred by the incomprehensible fate which had torn her from his arms. To meet her again would be to forget every tie save that holiest which made one of his spirit and of hers.

One day—it was during the second season which Mrs. Baxendale passed in London—he went to his friend and asked her where Emily was. Mrs. Baxendale was too quick for him; Wilfrid thought he had put his question unexpectedly, but the lady was ready for such a question at any moment, and she replied, with appearance of absolute sincerity, that she had no knowledge of Emily's place of abode.

'Where was she last—when you last heard from her?' Wilfrid asked, in surprise at an answer so unanticipated.

Mrs. Baxendale named a town in Yorkshire. She had begun with a calculated falsehood, and had no scruple in backing it up by others.

'What can it concern you, Wilfrid?' she continued. 'Shall I confess my weakness? I mentioned your name in a letter to her; the result was this complete ending of our correspondence. Now, will not even that satisfy you?'

He did not doubt what he was told; Mrs. Baxendale's character for veracity stood high. It was solely out of regard for Wilfrid that she allowed herself to mislead him, for by this time it seemed obvious that Beatrice was drawing near to her reward, and Mrs. Baxendale, with pardonable error, took this last inquiry about Emily for a piece of conscientiousness, which, once satisfied, Wilfrid would hold on his course to a happy haven. 'She has given

him up,' was her self-justification. 'Beatrice now would suffer no less than she has done.'

'Then tell me one thing more,' Wilfrid pursued. 'What has become of that man Dagworthy?'

'That I can easily do. Long ago he married a young lady of Dunfield.'

'Then what did it mean? what *did* it mean?'

Mrs. Baxendale merely shook her head.

A few months later, Beatrice astonished everyone by her first appearance as a public singer. Wilfrid had as little anticipated such a step as any other of Beatrice's friends. What was about to happen only became known a day or two in advance. Mrs. Ashley Birks was paralysed with horror; she implored, she reasoned, she put on her face of cold anger. Mr. Athel cried 'What the deuce!' and forthwith held a serious colloquy with his son. Wilfrid experienced a certain joy, only tempered with anxiety as to the result of the experiment. If it proved a success, he felt that the effect upon himself would be to draw him nearer to Beatrice; but it must be a great success. He calculated on imaginative influences as other men do on practical issues. Beatrice, acknowledged as more than an amateur, perchance publicly recognised as really a great singer, would impress him in a new way; he might overcome his impartial way of regarding her. The result, outwardly, answered his fullest hopes. Beatrice had not idly risked what would have been a deplorable fiasco; she had the encouragement of those who did not speak in vain, and her ambition had fired itself as she perceived the results of her conscientious labour. Her nervousness throughout the day of the concert was terrible, but little less than her life depended on the result, and at the hour of trial she was strong to conquer. Very far behind her, as she stepped out to that large audience, were the dilettante successes of drawing-room and charitable concerts; she smiled at all that now; since then she had unlearnt so much and wrought with such humility. But what she strove for was won; she knew it in the grasp of Wilfrid's hand when he led her to her carriage. Her veil was down; behind it she was sobbing.

'Am I nothing more than a frivolous woman now?' she said, leaning to him from the carriage.

Wilfrid could make no answer, and she was whirled away from him.

He went to her the next day, and asked her to be his wife.

Beatrice looked him in the face long and steadily. Then she asked :

‘Do you love me, Wilfrid?’

‘I love you.’

Another word trembled on her tongue, but the temptation of her bliss was too great; the contained ardour of long years had its way, sweeping doubt and memory before it.

‘For your sake I have done it all. What do I care for a whole world’s praise, compared with one word of recognition from you! You remember the morning when you told me of my faults, when we all but seemed to quarrel? Ah! I have faults in abundance still, but have I not done one thing worth doing, done it thoroughly, as not every one could? I am not only a woman of the world, of society and fashion? Do I not know how contemptible that is? But only you could raise me above it.’

He left her, in a bewildered state; she had excited, impassioned him; but how strange it all was after those other scenes of love! It seemed so of the earth; the words he had spoken rang over again in his ears, and stirred his blood to shame. He could not say whether in truth he loved her or not; was it enough to feel that he could cherish her with much tenderness, and intoxicate himself in gazing on her perfect face? Women are so different! Emily had scarcely spoken when he made known to her his love; could he ever forget that awe-struck face, dimly seen in the moonlight? Her words to the end had been few; it was her eyes that spoke. Beatrice was noble, and had a heart of gold; was there not heaven in that ardour of hers, if only it had been his soul’s desire? Henceforth it must be; she loved him, and he must not wrong her. Alas! the old name, the old name alone, was still star-written. . . .

He passed with her the afternoon of each Sunday. Mrs. Birks’ house was a large one, and Beatrice had abundance of room to herself. Thither Wilfrid took his way on the Sunday which we have reached, the day following his drawing-room triumph. Already he was a little ashamed of himself; he was experiencing again the feeling which had come over him after his first speech to a political meeting. As he went home that night, a demon in his head kept crying ‘Clap-trap! clap-trap!’ and there was no silencing the voice. He had talked to the intelligence of the mob. Now his talk had been addressed to—the representatives of

the mob ; if the demon did not cry so loudly, it was only because he was weary of his thankless task.

Beatrice was a superb coquette—but only for the man she loved. For these Sunday afternoons she attired herself divinely ; Wilfrid had learnt to expect a new marvel at each of his comings. To-day she wore her favourite colour, a dark-blue. Her rising to meet him was that of a queen who hath an honoured guest. The jewels beneath her long dark lashes were as radiant as when first she heard him say, ‘ I love you.’ All the impulses of her impetuous character had centred on this one end of her life. Her eccentricities had tamed themselves in the long discipline of frustrated desire. The breath of her body was love. About her stole a barely perceptible perfume, which invaded the senses, which wrapped the heart in luxury.

Wilfrid dropped on one knee before her and kissed her hand.

‘ You are in a happy mood,’ Beatrice said. ‘ Who has been telling you the last flattery?’

‘ I have seen no one to-day. If I look happy—should I not?’

She drew her finger along the line of his eyebrow.

‘ How does your picture get on?’

‘ I have to give two sittings next week. Thank goodness they are the last.’

‘ Oh ! why wasn’t it in time for the Academy ! But it must go next year.’

Wilfrid laughed as he seated himself opposite to her.

‘ I am not sure, after all, that you are happy,’ she said, leaning her head a little aside as she gazed at him. ‘ Now you are thoughtful. I suppose you will be more and more thoughtful.’

‘ Deep on his front engraven
Deliberation sat, and public care——’

quoted Wilfrid, with a little wrying of the lips. ‘ This, you know, is one of the penalties of greatness.’

She seemed about to rise, but it was only to slip forward and sink upon her knees by his side, her arms embracing him. It was like the fall of fair waters, so gracefully impulsive, so self-abandoning.

‘ Not one kiss to-day?’ she murmured, her voice like the dying of a flute.

And she raised to him a face lit from the inmost sanctuary of love.

'You are as beautiful,' he said, 'as any woman of whom fable ever told. Your beauty frightens me. It is sometimes more than human—as though the loveliest Greek goddess suddenly found breath and colour and the light of eyes.'

Beatrice threw her head far back, laughing silently; he saw the laughter dance upon her throat.

'My love! my own!' she whispered. 'Say you love me!'

'Dearest, I love you!'

'Ah! the words make my heart flutter so! I am glad, glad that I have beauty; but for that you would never have loved me. Let me hide my face as I tell you. I used to ask myself whether I was not really fairer than other women—I thought—I hoped! But you were so indifferent. Wilfrid, how long, how long I have loved you! I was quite a young girl when I loved you first. That, I said, shall be my husband, or I will never have one. And I knew so little how to win your thought. How ashamed it makes me to think of things I said and did in those days!'

She was silent, leaning her head against his shoulder.

'Do you ever think of me as I was at Dunfield?' she asked presently, with timid utterance, hardly above her breath, risking what she had never yet dared.

'No,' he answered, 'I think of the present.'

His voice was a little hard, from the necessity of commanding it.

'You did not know that I loved you then? Think of me! Pity me!'

He made no answer. Beatrice spoke again, her face veiled against him, her arms pressing closer.

'You love me with perfect love? I have your whole heart?'

'I love you only, Beatrice.'

'And with love as great as you ever knew? Say that to me—Wilfrid, say that!' She clung to him with passion which was almost terrible. 'Forgive me! Only remember that you are my life, my soul! I cannot have less than that.'

He would have been cased in triple brass if music such as this had not melted into his being. He gave her the assurance she yearned for, and, in giving it, all but persuaded himself that he spoke the very truth. The need of affirming his belief drew from him such words as he had the secret of; Beatrice sighed in an anguish of bliss.

'Oh, let me die now! It is only for this that I have lived.'

Wilfrid had foreseen and dreaded this questioning. From any woman it was sooner or later to be expected, and Beatrice was as exacting as she was passionate. She knew herself, and strove hard to subdue those characteristics which might be displeasing to Wilfrid; her years of hopelessness, of perpetual self-restraint, were of aid to her now; three months had passed without a word from her which directly revived the old sorrows. Her own fear of trenching on indiscretion found an ally in Wilfrid's habitual gravity; her remark, at their meeting, on his mood was in allusion to a standing pleasantry between them; she had complained that he seldom looked really happy in her presence. It was true; his bearing as a rule was more than sober. Beatrice tormented herself to explain this. He was not in ordinary intercourse so persistently serious, though far more so than he had been in earlier years, the change dating, as Beatrice too well had marked, from the time of his supreme misery. With the natural and becoming gravity of mature age, there mingled a very perceptible strain of melancholy. You felt it in his laugh, which was seldom hearty; it made his sprightliness in social hours more self-conscious than it might have been. Beatrice had always felt towards him a very real humility, even when the goading of her unrequited love drove her into a show of scornful opposition. Herself conscious of but average intelligence, and without studious inclinations, she endowed him with acquisitions as vast as they were vague to her discernment; she knew that it would always lie beyond her power to be his intellectual companion: Therefore she desired to be before everything womanly in his eyes, to make the note of pure sentiment predominate in their private relations to each other. She had but won him by her artistic faculty; she could not depend upon that to retain and deepen his affection. Her constant apprehension was lest familiarity should diminish her charm in his eyes. Wilfrid was no less critical than he had ever been; she suspected that he required much of her. Did he seek more than she would eventually be able to give? Was she exhausting the resources of her personal charm? Such thoughts as these made curious alternations in her manner towards him; one day she would endeavour to support a reserve which should surpass his own, another she lost herself in bursts of emotion. The very care which she bestowed upon her personal appearance was a result of her anxiety on this point; in the last resort, she knew herself to be beautiful, and to her beauty

he was anything but insensible. Yet such an influence was wretchedly insufficient; she must have his uttermost love, and never yet had she attained full assurance of possessing it.

Little did Wilfrid suspect the extent to which her thoughts were occupied with that faint, far-off figure of Emily Hood. It was her despair that she had known Emily so slightly; she would have desired to study to the depths the woman who had possessed such a secret of power. In personal charm Emily could not compare with her; and yet—the distinction struck her hard—that was perhaps only true if personal charm merely meant charm of person, for she herself had experienced something of the strange impressiveness which men—men of imagination—submitted to in Emily's presence. Where did it lie, this magic? It was indefinite, indefinable; perhaps a tone of the voice represented it, perhaps a smile—which meant, of course, that it was inseparable from her being, from her womanhood. Could one attribute to Emily, even after the briefest acquaintance, a thought, an instinct, which conflicted with the ideal of womanly purity? Was not her loveliness of the soul? Moreover, she was intellectual beyond ordinary women; for Wilfrid that must have been a rich source of attraction. Scarcely less than the image of Wilfrid himself was that of Emily a haunting presence in Beatrice's life. Recently she had spoken of her both with Mrs. Birks and Mrs. Baxendale; it cost her something to do so, but both of these had known Emily with intimacy and might perhaps tell her more than she herself remembered or could divine. Mrs. Birks was disposed to treat Emily with little seriousness.

'You make the strangest mistake,' she said, 'if you think that was anything but a boy's folly. To be sure the folly got very near the point of madness—that was because opposition came in its way. Wilfrid has for years thought as little of her as of the man in the moon's wife—if he has one. You are surely not troubling yourself—what?'

Beatrice had thereupon retired into herself.

'You misunderstand me,' she said, rather coldly. 'It was only a recollection of something that had seemed strange to me at the time.'

Mrs. Baxendale held another tone, but even she was not altogether sincere—naturally it was impossible to be so. To begin with, she gave Beatrice to understand, even as she had Wilfrid, that she had now for some time lost sight of Emily,

and, consequently, that the latter was less actually interesting to her than was in fact the case. With her aunt, Beatrice could be more unreserved; she began by plainly asking whether Mrs. Baxendale thought Wilfrid's regret had been of long endurance—a woman in Beatrice's position clearly could not, in talking to another, even suppose the case that the regret still endured. Her aunt honestly replied that she believed he had suffered long and severely.

'But,' she added, with characteristic tact, 'I did not need this instance, my dear, to prove to me that a first love may be only a preparation for that which is to last through life. I could tell you stories—but I haven't my grandmother's cap on at present.'

(Mrs. Baxendale was, in truth, a grandmother by this time, and professed to appreciate the authority she derived from the circumstance.)

That had drawn Beatrice out.

'She was strong-minded?'

'Or very weak, I really don't know which.'

'Yes,' mused Beatrice, 'she was a problem to you. You never troubled yourself to puzzle over my character, aunt.'

'When a stream is of lovely clearness, Beatrice, we do not find it hard to determine the kind of ground it flows over.'

'I will owe you a kiss for that,' said the girl, blushing hot with very joy. 'But you are a flatterer, dear aunt, and just now I am very humble in spirit. I think great happiness should make us humble, don't you? I find it hard to make out my claim to it.'

'Be humble still, dear, and the happiness will not be withdrawn.'

'I do like to talk with you,' Beatrice replied. 'I never go away without something worth thinking of.'

Humility she strove to nourish. It was a prime virtue of woman, and would sweeten her being. Unlike Emily, she was not inspired with an ardent idealism independently of her affections; with love had begun her conscious self-study, and love alone exalted her. Her many frivolous tendencies she had only overcome by dint of long endeavour to approach Wilfrid's standard. If in one way this was an item of strength, in another it indicated a very real and always menacing weakness. Having gained that to which her every instinct had directed itself, she made the possession of her bliss an indispensable factor of life; to lose it

would be to fall into nether darkness, into despair of good. So widowed, there would be no support in herself; she knew it, and the knowledge at moments terrified her. Even her religious convictions, once very real and strong, had become subordinate; her creed—though she durst not confess it—was that of earthly love. Formerly she had been thrown back on religious emotion as a solace, an anodyne; for that reason the tendencies inherited from her mother had at one time reached a climax of fanaticism. Of late years, music had been her resource, the more efficient in that it ministered to hope. By degrees even her charitable activity had diminished; since her mother's death she had abandoned the habit of 'district visiting.' As confidence of the one supreme attainment grew in her, the mere accessories of her moral life were allowed to fall away. She professed no change of opinion, indeed underwent none, but opinion became, as with most women, distinct from practice. She still pretended to rejoice as often as she persuaded Wilfrid to go to church, but it was noticeable that she willingly allowed his preference for the better choral services, and seemed to take it for granted that the service was only of full efficacy when performed together with her. . . .

'Let me die now! It is only for this that I have lived!'

The cry came from her very heart. For once Wilfrid had been overcome, had thrown off his rather sad-coloured wooing, had uttered such words as her soul yearned for. Yet she had scarcely time to savour her rapture before that jealousy of the past mingled itself with the sensation. Even such words as these he must have used to *her*, and had they not perchance come more readily to his lips? Was he by nature so reserved? Or, the more probable thing, was it that she failed at other times to inspire him? How had *she* been used to behave, to speak?

In her incessant brooding upon the details of Wilfrid's first affection, Beatrice had found one point which never lost its power to distract her; it was the thought of all the correspondence that must have passed between him and Emily. What had become of those letters? Had they been mutually returned? It was impossible to discover. Not even to her aunt could she put such a question as that; and it might very well be that Mrs. Baxendale knew nothing certainly. If the story as she, Beatrice, had heard it was quite accurate, it seemed natural to suppose that Emily had requested to have her letters returned to her when she declared that the engagement must be at an end; but Wilfrid

had refused to accept that declaration, and would he not also have refused to let the writing which was so precious to him leave his hands? In that case he probably had the letters still; perhaps, he still read them at times. Would it be possible, even after marriage, to speak of such a subject with Wilfrid? She had constantly tried to assure herself that, even if he had kept the pledges through all these years, a sense of honour would lead Wilfrid to destroy them when he gave and received a new love. In moments when it was her conscious effort to rise to noble heights, to be as pure a woman as that other—for Beatrice never sought the base comfort of refusing to her rival that just homage—she would half-persuade herself that no doubt lingered in her mind; it was right to destroy the letters, and whatever was right Wilfrid must have done. But she could not live at all hours in that thin air; the defects of her blood were too enduring. Jealousy came back from its brief exile, and was more insinuating than ever, its suggestions more maddening. By a sort of reaction, these thoughts assailed her strongly in the moments which followed her outburst of passion and Wilfrid's response. Yet she could not—durst not—frame words to tell him of her suffering. It was to risk too much; it might strike a fatal blow at his respect for her. Even those last words she had breathed with dread, involuntarily; already, perhaps, she had failed in the delicacy he looked for, and had given him matter for disagreeable thought as soon as he left her. She rose at length from her kneeling attitude, and leaned back in her chair with a look of trouble scarcely veiled.

Wilfrid did not notice it; he had already begun to think of other matters.

'Beatrice,' he began, 'there's a subject I have avoided speaking of, thinking you might perhaps be the first to mention it. Do you wish to continue your singing?'

She smiled, and did not seem to attach great importance to the question.

'It is for you to decide,' she answered. 'You know why I began it; I am ready to say my farewell whenever you bid me.'

'But what is your own feeling? I suppose you would in any case cease at our marriage?'

'You are not ashamed of it?'

'It is true,' he replied, humorously, 'that I am a member of the British House of Commons, but I beg you won't think too

meanly of me. I protest that I have still something of my old self.'

'That means you are rather proud than ashamed. How long,' she went on to ask, lowering her eyes, 'is the British House of Commons likely to sit?'

'Probably the talk will hold out for some seven or eight weeks longer.'

'May I sing the two remaining engagements, if I take no more after those?'

'To be sure, you must. Let it stand so, then.'

She fell back into her brooding.

'Now I, too, have something to ask,' she said, after a short silence.

'Whatever you ask is already granted.'

'Don't be too hasty. It's more than you think.'

'Well?'

'I want you to give me some work to do for you—to let me come and sit with you in your study some mornings and write things for you.'

Wilfrid laughed cheerily.

'If I had a regard for my dignity,' he said, 'I certainly shouldn't let you. What will become of my pretence of work when you are let into the secrets? But come, by all means. You shall digest a blue-book for me.'

'When? To-morrow morning?'

'If you will.'

Beatrice was satisfied.

(To be continued.)

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CHAPTER VII.

THE WELCOME HOME.

BRAEHEAD arrived with his charge alive at the port of Leith, thanks to young Windygates's excellent constitution, though it was by little less than one of the miracles which the philosopher was accustomed to scout. Nay, the sick man, while extremely spent and in a state of great physical weakness and mental depression, was restored to his senses, and was able to walk about a little and hold intercourse with his fellows. There was only one 'daft like' thing he did on the road, of which Braehead could justly complain. Young Allan called a halt of a day or two on Edinburgh, and of that Robbie Wedderburn did not complain. The travellers had been pushing on at a rate far beyond the enfeebled powers of the younger man, and the short stay gave him an opportunity of resting and recruiting them a little before he presented himself at Windygates. Besides, the elder man was not sorry to have some strolls and gossips in the Parliament House, and to visit sundry book-stalls in the Lucker's booths, and a printer's office in the Cowgate. But, as for young Windygates, in place of taking a turn by the help of a friend's arm or the use of a sedan chair up the High Street or down the Canongate, or attempting to look in at any of the rendezvous of youths of his condition, he sat moping in his private sitting-room in his inn, in a manner most unlike his old self. The sole visitor he received was a tailor who, according to the instructions given him by the young gentleman, made in post-haste and sent in to his customer a suit of deep mourning, which Allan imme-

diately put on, and in this lugubrious garb prepared to resume the homeward journey.

It was but a lad's foolish grief-sick freak, which Braehead—always wary—did not see himself called on to interfere with; all the same, it was a stupid blunder of Allan's, were it only that it would keep his thoughts dwelling on a dismal subject, from which it would be well for him if they could be diverted. And it might provoke questions which it would be both awkward and painful to answer.

Braehead himself was a man who heard no haunting voices and cast no woeful looks behind him. He had shaken off the sombre recollections of the disaster except as they reacted on Allan. Robbie Wedderburn would have forgotten it in more pressing and agreeable business if young Windygates would have let him. It was too bad of the lad to propose to appear like a death's head at a feast. He ought to have been beginning to hold up his head again and trying to look his best, whereas the emaciation and pallor produced by his illness were rendered doubly conspicuous by his mourning suit.

It was on the afternoon of an August day, with the air less warm and the season less advanced in those northern regions, that Braehead and young Windygates in their post-chaise drove up the Deerwater, along which lay three-fourths of the country-houses in the district. For the Deer river ran a good many miles through its own dale—half heathery, half wooded—as the hills which bounded it on either side descended to the stream that their rills fed, or fell back from it. As a rule the more modern houses accepted the shelter of the hills and lay among the plantations at their feet, while nearly all the old half-ruinous towers, which pointed to an earlier occupation and a more unsettled state of the country, played their part as watch-towers by standing out boldly on the hill-sides. Windygates and Braehead, as their names implied, followed the exploded fashion, though they were slated white houses built within the century, having merely a corner turret or two thrown in where Windygates was concerned to indicate that the house had replaced a castle by courtesy. Windygates had the advantage in more respects than in size. Braehead stood on the bleak bare front of the hill. But the Laird of Windygates for the time, or the builder employed, had availed himself of a slight dip of the ground, which held a few alders and birches, among which the house was set down. A visitor had only to climb the adjacent crags to appreciate

the forethought of the precaution, and to realise the force of the name Windygates. For it was not only one wind or two, but gales from every point of the compass, that blew round the exposed spot and lashed every torn and twisted bough which had the pretence to call itself a tree, and changed the complexion of a man from red to blue, and was fain to take a woman's head off—hood and all. The little dip in the land and the handful of hardy trees and bushes were needed to afford shelter from the blasts, which worked enough mischief in spite of them—many a bush was blown over, many a slate was sent rattling from the housetop. The broom crows and the gowans and the song of the lark were the gayest features in the landscape, except when the harebells or the heather were in bloom.

‘I think I see the reek from my own burn head,’ said Braehead with considerable animation, craning his neck as the pair drew near to their destination; ‘I hope Mistress Tennant,’ naming his housekeeper, ‘was not wasteful in my absence, and is but having my book-room aired ready for me. I trust she is not rushing into a great unnecessary cooking of victuals, since I’m to have the pleasure of taking pot-luck with your worthy father and mother to-night by both their orders. Do you think you’ll be able to come to the table? I would make an effort, were I you, not to damp their spirits. Cheer up, man, they’ll be looking out for you by this time. I don’t mean to liken you to the prodigal, and to say that they’ve killed the fatted calf for your reception; still it is a sorry way to acknowledge what they’ll be doing and thinking, if you do not let sleeping dogs lie; shake yourself up, and look your best for the occasion.’

Thus adjured, young Windygates raised himself languidly on his elbow, and looked out to catch the first glimpse of the familiar scene. The post-chaise had been slowly toiling up the steep and by no means smooth road which, in a winding way, ascended the hill, and in another minute would round a corner and pass into the sweep before the house. The sweep terminated in an old, weather-stained, lichen-covered gateway which had belonged to an earlier house of Windygates, and had been of sufficiently strong masonry to survive and afford an entrance to the front court and the homely flower-garden of the modern mansion. The sun was setting with just such a red sunset as the travellers had left at Paris. Why had the sunsets grown so lurid of late? They were wont to be rose-pink and purple and

yellow when they were not hidden in clouds, but the last two which had challenged the men's attention had presented the same fiery-red hue, like the reflection of a conflagration. The blue mist from the Deerwater hardly rose so high as Windygates. It was Lady Windygates's boast that the house was as high and dry (and well nigh as piercingly cold, she might have added) as the rocky crest of Craig Learmont, which towered over all the hills in the neighbourhood; but leaden clouds scudding before the wind and, piling themselves as a dark background to the farewell glare of the sun, pointed to a week or two's 'wund and weet' in prospect. The sky had taken that mixture of shadowy gloom and dusky flush which country people in the south of Scotland call to this day, whether with an unconscious reminiscence of Vulcan, the Blacksmith's Face, fresh from the forge, bending down on them from the heavens.

As the chaise approached the entry young Windygates involuntarily glanced up. At that instant he gave a great cry of anguish and dismay: 'Good Lord, there she is!'

The startled Braehead, the man without an imagination, following the direction of his companion's eyes, seemed to see, set in the shifting, sombre framework of clouds, the head and shoulders of a dark-haired woman with a crimson tide spreading over her breast, flowing down to the arch, ready to drop on their devoted heads as they drove under it.

'Eh, what is it?' exclaimed Braehead, not knowing what he said, as they passed under the gateway. He put up his hand surreptitiously with a gruesome sensation, bringing it down dry and clean as was the neck of his coat which he had instinctively touched. He looked at the driver, and the man's face was a blank. Robbie Wedderburn turned and stared up at the arch from the opposite side, and saw nothing, as, indeed, what should he see except the rolling red and black clouds? But he had not another thought to waste on the extraordinary delusion, which he had for a moment shared, since, with a convulsive sigh and shiver, young Windygates sank back in the same dead faint into which he had fallen when he first knew that Madame St. Barbe was killed.

There was one gain got from Allan's attack and subsequent insensibility, that it diverted attention from everything save his illness. And it was not very remarkable, though it was to be regretted as a jarring note in what ought to have been the family rejoicing, that a sick man not long recovered from a bad fever, and exposed to

the fatigue of a journey of several weeks' duration, should, at the end of the last day, on the threshold he was hurrying to cross, swoon away inopportunately, from sheer weakness and weariness.

Allan recovered quickly enough on the application of the usual remedies of which Lady Windygates had a store at her elbow, though he was clearly too spent for anything else than retiring to his room and being waited upon by his mother. She had sufficient medical experience, from having 'doctored' man and woman among the retainers at Windygates since her advent there three-and-twenty years before, not to see for herself that there was no cause for present alarm in the condition of young Windygates. After she had laid him up for the night with a peremptory order that he should be quiet after he had swallowed the posset she had prepared for him, she was quite ready to join Windygates and Braehead at the supper-table and hear all the news. She could take her place at the head of the table in the oak-panelled, oak-furnished dining-room, lit up by a warm glow from the red fire of peats cut from Windygates's moss and the yellow light of the tallow candles of which Lady Windygates had superintended the making. She was ready to receive not only Braehead's account of the expedition, but a report of what was going on in the French capital.

Lady Windygates was not unduly depressed—she had confined her depression to the day when she had received the first tidings of her son's illness—young Windygates, who had hardly ever had an illness in his robust young life, to be attacked so far from home as Paris, with no company and care save those of an elderly, bookish, headstrong man like Braehead! It made all the difference in the world to have young Windygates at home again in his own bed, under her thumb. It almost seemed as if his mother would have resented the young man's taking the liberty to recover completely without her aid; she was better pleased to have the assurance of bringing him round altogether by the orthodox methods carried out in her prescriptions.

Lady Windygates came down and joined the gentlemen in fair spirits. She was able to find fault with the shortness of Windygates's grace and his manner of carving the capon. She declined to be relieved of her duty in slicing down the home-cured ham. She cut jokes with her guest on the puddock fare he had been indulging in, and whether he had at last left his tough, well-seasoned heart behind him?

It was Windygates who was put about and cut up by his son's state, especially after he had visited him in his room. The master of the house said nothing while the servants were present and till Braehead's bodily wants were amply satisfied; but when the gentlemen were left with their magnums of claret and the punch-bowl in reserve, and only Lady Windygates to keep them in countenance, then Windygates felt free to express his anxiety and dissatisfaction.

'I understood you were to make a change, and, according to you and his mother, a vast improvement on Allan by this visit to Paris, Robbie. Well, there is a change with a vengeance, but whether it is an improvement remains to be seen. I do not call in question the lad's illness, for the issues of health and sickness, like those of life and death, are in higher hands—at least, *I* have not ceased to believe so. But a single fever, however bad, will not take the light out of a fellow's eye and the spirit out of his carriage. Allan hangs his head as if he were heart-broken, and glowers around him as if he had spied a warlock. Robbie, do you not mind when I was flung by Kelpie and had two of my ribs and my collar-bone broken, and a clout on my head that would have felled most men—that was worse than a dozen fevers, and how long was I of being on my feet again? When did I droop and pine and turn my face to the wall? What have you done to my laddie? You may have meant no harm—I do not say you have—but you've done something. He's no more the lad he was when he left, than you are—say, the Moderator of the General Assembly—and I would like to know what ails him.'

Then Lady Windygates, consenting to be prompted by her husband, had her crow to pluck with the unfortunate Braehead. 'I make little of young Windygates still being sick and sorry,' she said. 'Everybody has not your head and nerves, Windygates, and a fever is just a most insidious disorder; besides, I make no doubt that he was ill-tret. I would not trust a dog, if I had my choice, with a mountebank of a French apothecary. But we'll rectify all that in a little time. I'll have him put on one of my strengthening plaisters, and he can have valerian the first thing after he wakes in the morning, and herb-ale to his porridge, and burnt brandy if there is any threatening of sickness. But I want to learn the meaning of his coming back in mournings as deep as if they were for one of his near kindred—superfine black cloth and good cambric, for I examined them before I left his room.'

They cannot be cast aside without great waste, and I hope they will not be worn here for any justifiable cause this many a day. I'm not a nervous woman, but I must say the sight of young Windygates's black suit brought my heart into my mouth. It is very odd and not very wiselike, Braehead. It will set folk speaking, and with reason, and when clashing begins there is no saying where it will end.'

Braehead thought he would not have had any objection to enter into a circumstantial explanation, if fathers and mothers were not so unreasonable. Lady Windygates and his cousin might say that he had been more taken up with his calls on the encyclopædists than with looking after young Windygates. They might disapprove of the extent to which he had permitted that miserable Madame St. Barbe to share in the nursing of Allan, as if he, Braehead, had not been at his wits' end what to do for their son. Thiek-skinned as Braehead was, and destitute of those fast-coming fancies which, next to quick heart-throbs, give a man fellow-feeling and enable him to sympathise with his neighbour, nevertheless he did shrink a little from putting into words to third persons—though they were young Windygates's father and mother, who had a right to hear—the horrible catastrophe in which he and Allan had been mixed up that had so overcome the young man. As to making a long story of what had occurred this very afternoon, why, his listeners might think him, no less than Allan, demented. Braehead could no more do it than he could bring himself to deny all his own elaborate logical arguments against the supernatural. It was cruel to ask a man to cast a slur on the very consistency—on which he, Robbie Wedderburn, prided himself more than on any other attribute—of what he considered his penetrating, clear-sighted intellect.

Lady Windygates unwittingly furnished him with a plea for his defence. 'Has there been any death in the Chalons family lately?' she inquired. 'Allan did not mention it in his letters, but he has not been writing more than a scrap at a time since his illness, of which, foolish lad, he wished to keep us in ignorance—so that his not saying anything may have been an overlook.'

'Yes,' said Braehead hastily, 'there was a relation—a cousin of the family—who stayed with them, that perished by a deplorable accident.'

'Had young Allan anything to do with it?' asked Windygates sharply.

‘He and I had the ill-luck to witness it,’ said Braehead gravely and succinctly; ‘we could do nothing to prevent it.’

‘Was the victim a man or a woman?’ Windygates asked again, bending his grizzled brows.

‘A woman,’ said Braehead, involuntarily dropping his voice.

‘Was she a young lass?’ demanded Lady Windygates suspiciously.

‘Not that young—I do not know what you call young,’ said Braehead restively, feeling as if everything was going to be dragged from him bit by bit. ‘She was, may be, three or four years older than young Windygates; she had been married, she was a widow.’

‘Oh, a widow woman!’ exclaimed Lady Windygates indifferently, as if that settled the matter. With all her wit she was ignorant of much cunning craft and many a worldly wile, or else the Scotch widows of her acquaintance on the Deerwater must have been the most innocent and ingenuous of their kind. Lady Windygates referred to a widow as if she must be a person subdued by misfortune, and incapable of making mischief.

Braehead was not slow to perceive and improve on his advantage.

‘Madame the Duchess deputed her cousin, Madame St. Barbe, as she had been married—of which they think a great deal in France—to see after young Windygates when he was stricken down and—between you and me, madam, now that he is restored to you—not far from death’s door. She did what she could for him, I’ll say that, and would come and sit by him when I was compelled to go abroad.’

Lady Windygates took the information very much as a matter of course. ‘She would have picked up some knowledge and skill, waiting on her dead man, no doubt,’ she leapt to the conclusion. ‘I’m greatly indebted to her.’

The words gave Braehead a curious thrill.

‘For all that,’ Lady Windygates continued, with her small pointed chin in the air, ‘I think Madame the Duchess might have bestirred herself, and seen for herself what was befalling a young gentleman who had come to her with a letter of introduction from her friend Lady Lathones.’

‘Customs differ, and the Duke de Chalons’s family were out of Paris before we left,’ said Braehead evasively.

‘And this poor Madame St. Barbe, as you call her, who took

pity on our Allan, how did she meet her end?' inquired Windygates sympathetically.

'She was run over and trampled down in the crowd and traffic of the narrow streets—at one of the city gates, in fact,' said Braehead, trying to make the disaster plain to the listeners; 'she was run over and killed on the spot.'

'Pity me, that was heart-rending!' said Lady Windygates, putting her handkerchief to her eyes. 'Poor thing! Oh, poor thing!'

'It was her own fault,' said Braehead sternly. 'She did a mad deed. She was a high-headed, wilful young woman; she wanted to stop a coach and speak to the occupants in the middle of the throng. She pushed into the thick of it, and put her foot on the axle of the wheel, so that when the coach moved, as it was bound to move, she fell before the wheel; it and other wheels passed over her body before they could be stopped, and she was dragged out lifeless, as might have been expected.'

'Poor, rash, witless woman, she might have had more sense—a widow of four or five and twenty,' reflected Lady Windygates a little severely, though she continued to wipe the drops from her eyes. 'She must have been dead-set on the coach company. She could not have had a family, or she would have thought more of them than of her friends and acquaintances. I would not have given much for her discretion as a nurse, but men folk are easily pleased. However, it is well that the poor doomed woman did young Windygates no harm; and, if it is as a piece of respect to her memory, and a compliment to the Duchess and the family, that he has put on black, I make no objection, and the incident can be easily accounted for.'

She broke off, for a distant cry—a muffled shriek of pain and agony—interrupted the conversation.

'He's dreaming. He's bound to be dreaming,' cried Braehead, hastily rising to take his leave, while his colour paled a shade or two, and there was an undeniable fluster in his usual philosophic calm.

'I must give him a couple of drams of valerian to settle his nerves the first thing in the morning,' said Lady Windygates, preparing to quit the room.

'So much for French air and French diet,' said Windygates sarcastically. 'Can you give me back the bonnie brisk laddie you took away with you, Braehead? That is the question.'

CHAPTER VIII.

A HAUNTED MAN.

No formal intimation of Madame St. Barbe's violent death crossed the sea either to Windygates or to Lathones. The Chalons made no sign. Perhaps, after all, they were more resigned to be rid of an encumbrance than to revenge any supposed wrong done to their kinswoman.

Braehead got hold of a scurrilous Paris print of the day, which he kept from young Windygates and showed to nobody else, in which there was a distorted version of the melancholy accident, and some gratuitous abuse of the perfidious, heartless foreigners whom the unfortunate lady had been seeking to intercept and detain. But there was no more notice taken of the disaster. Probably Paris had already too much to do with its own inner throes and pangs to concern itself further about the miserable fate of a single hanger-on of one of the great families.

Young Windygates was not very long in recovering from his bodily prostration. Lady Windygates's nursing was successful, or else his native air did wonders for him. It did not in August, at his age, curdle his blood, freeze his marrow, and shrink all the flesh which remained on his bones. There were no more dead faints, no more cries of horror and despair. Young as he was, and untried as he had been previously, he was behaving with manliness and fortitude.

But there could be no doubt that a striking change had come over Allan Wedderburn. He had not only received 'a great shake,' as his country people were wont to say of their neighbours on their first walking abroad after a severe illness; he was altered in a way which no illness that had not undermined his constitution and left him a dying man or a confirmed invalid could explain. He was regaining his natural health and strength, but that did not affect the change. He had quitted the country a light-hearted lad, free from care, bestowing his confidence on whoever liked to listen to him. He came back grave as a judge, comporting himself as if the heaviest burden that could rest on any man's shoulders was laid on his, and he was as silent as the grave on the nature of the burden.

There was plenty of speculation roused at once by young Windygates's bearing, but he was resolutely reticent on how the

load came to be imposed on him, and why he could not presently shake it off. This reserve and the inability to get rid of his gloom were not the consequence of Allan's failing to resume his old habits and mingle among his old associates. On the contrary, he seemed to catch at every occupation and comrade he had ever cared for, as a drowning man catches at a straw to stay his sure progress to destruction; but he could only link himself to them laboriously and fitfully, as if he found himself in reality severed from them by an insurmountable barrier. There was an unscaleable mountain range between, granted that it was unsubstantial and intangible.

So, whether the engagement were coursing, or hunting, or racing; making a stampede on the rats in the great barn, which Windygates had deferred till young Windygates and his terrier Pincher could have the pleasure and glory of leading the fray; celebrating kirns or harvest-homes, with all their rites and ceremonies; attending the autumn assembly at Pitblair—Allan did it all in a half-hearted and perfunctory fashion. It was as if his were a comely body without a soul, in place of his being the life and spirit of each social gathering, as he was wont to be before he took his ill-starred journey. He positively damped the zeal and mirth of all who joined with him in the commendable convivialities.

Neither was young Windygates more cheerful, by way of contradiction, when he sat with a book in the chimney corner of his mother's parlour after a long spell of Sabbath-day preaching. He listened to the Rev. Andrew Brydon's most comforting discourse as if he—Allan Wedderburn the younger—were a condemned criminal, and the minister had been appointed to deliver the last sermon on the lad's sins and their coming judgment, in presence of the coffin and the hangman.

Among those who watched young Windygates with interest at this crisis of his history was Braehead, who studied the poor fellow both as a kinsman for whom he had a genuine regard, and as a natural phenomenon which in his search after truth the philosopher was called on to master.

Sometimes Allan appeared drawn by an irresistible attraction to Braehead as to the only person in the world who had the slightest knowledge of his—Allan's secret; who had not, so far as he was aware, betrayed what Robbie Wedderburn knew of the secret. More frequently the lad was repelled by the companion of his travels, and shrank from all private intercourse with the

man who was also acquainted with Allan's folly and its punishment.

The former feeling was swaying young Windygates one morning when he came into his mother's parlour and found Braehead there before him. The philosopher had been absent in Edinburgh, and had as usual been entrusted with various commissions by his lady friends and neighbours.

The morning was not a good time for seeing Lady Windygates. She had engrossing engagements in her dairy, her poultry yard, her housekeeper's room, and her still-room. Braehead ought to have known better than consult his own convenience by walking over to Windygates before the early dinner. He had to kick his heels and await the lady's leisure in her scrupulously clean, cold, bare sanctuary. Windygates was always out at that hour; it was a wonder that even Allan came in, seeking something which his mother could get for him, and afforded Braehead some diversion from staring at the mistress of the house's tea-caddy and work-table, spinnet and wheel, Bible and cookery book.

There could not have been a greater contrast than what existed between the little Spartan parlour—even with its spinnet, satin-wood chairs, china bowls and caudle-cups, silver candlesticks and snuffer-trays—and Madame the Duchess's great room, heavy with essences, crowded with bouquets, real and artificial, swarming with little lap-dogs and pet birds, its most conspicuous feature the huge magnificent bed in its alcove, and the toilet-table with its superb service of ivory and gold.

Yet somehow, it might have been national prejudice, Braehead could not help thinking that the air of the one, a little thin and chill as it was, felt more wholesome than the oppressive, enervating breath of the other. Robbie Wedderburn was anything save a ladies' man; though he suffered himself to be made the squire of the dames of his kindred and country side, the limits to his nature—the cutting coldness and latent cynicism under his tolerance and good-nature—entered into this as into every other relation of his life. Still he was conscious that he preferred the 'notable,' careful house-dame to the brilliant *dame de salon*. He felt that Lady Windygates's parlour existed for her to sit upright and do her duty in, while the Duchess de Chalons's *chambre* was the chosen scene of self-indulgence in every idle appetite and every fantastic whim, even when it was not a field of conquest—a parade-ground for her captives.

After a brief greeting and a cautious inquiry after young Windygates's health, carelessly answered, the two men confronted each other in an awkward silence.

Then young Windygates took a desperate resolution, crossed to the near neighbourhood of the settee from which Braehead had just risen, made a sign to him to resume his seat, and swung himself, even more recklessly than Windygates had done when he provoked his wife's rebuke, not on one of the satin-wood chairs, but on the light tea-table adjoining the settee. He sat there swaying his long legs for a moment before he lifted up his haggard face beneath the fair hair that seemed to have darkened with his trouble and fallen into heavy waves which threw his forehead into shadow. He appealed with sudden solemnity to his companion.

'Braehead, you remember what happened when we arrived here from our travels?'

'You swooned away for the second time on the journey,' said Braehead warily.

'I'm not referring to that,' said Allan impatiently; 'what did that signify?' he added almost fiercely. 'I mean, who was waiting for us, looking down from above the gateway we had to pass under to get home?'

'Who should there be? Who could there be?' demanded Braehead uneasily. 'You are dealing with impossibilities, Allan; my man, call your wits together, and do not let yourself become a prey to the dreams and delusions of fever.'

'It was no dream or delusion,' said Allan doggedly. 'Am I a bairn frightened at its shadow, or a madman? The delirium of the fever was spent by that time. It was what I saw and you saw, Braehead, as plain as I see you at this instant; you need not deny it.'

'I will not deny what there is no reasonable ground for asserting,' said Braehead with determination, sticking to his creed. 'I will own this much, it was a wild sunset, and in its drifting black and red a distempered brain might find a fantastic likeness to a woman in black, with loose flowing hair, and the breast of her gown dyed the hue of blood—that is all. What more could there be? I put it to you, sir, as neither a bairn nor a madman, according to your own definition. We saw Madame St. Barbe, poor ill-fated woman, slain in the street before we left—there could be no mistake there. According to your own belief—and I've bound myself not to tamper with your faith—well, by your Christian

creed, when a mortal dies the bodily part is fit only to crumble again to the dust, of which your Bible tells you it was originally made, and to rest in the earth till the Resurrection; while what you hold to be the soul—a subtle essence like to the breath—returns to the God who gave it. Now, if this be so, and this is your belief, in which you have been bred, from which you have never departed, I ask you again, how could Madame St. Barbe, who must by that time have been lying stiff and stark in her coffin in the Chalons's vault or in some other, have been waiting for us and meeting us in the air over the gateway at Windygates? The thing is incredible, preposterous, even on your own showing,' said Robbie Wedderburn in something like accents of triumph.

'I do not heed,' said young Windygates, not so much sullenly as hopelessly. 'Seeing is believing. You know what you saw, you as well as I. I thought you abode by the witness of your senses, Braehead—that you trusted to them when you would listen to no other testimony.'

'Not if my senses were to tell me what reason proclaimed was false.' Robbie Wedderburn rose to the occasion, and refused to be moved a hair's breadth from his position.

'Oh, if you do not credit your senses any more than revelation, I would not give much for your reason—a poor, stranded, starved jade without stay or nourishment; you may keep your grinning skeleton 'reason' and play what cantrips you like with her for me; but you saw her that had more wit in her little finger than you have in your whole sonsy body.'

'Keep a civil tongue in your head,' Braehead recommended the wrathful young man, without the slightest acrimony in his own tones. 'However, your fling does me no harm, and, on the whole, I'm glad you're up to a word of flytin.'

The magnanimous permission perhaps robbed the act of its charm; certainly young Windygates was not guilty of any more 'flytin' and scoffing. His head sank on his breast, and he said, with a half sigh, half groan, and also with a sort of ghastly matter-of-factness, as he nodded his head in confirmation of his statement—

'I have seen Jeannette St. Barbe again and again since yon day.'

'What?' cried Braehead. He sprang half off the settee, and then sat down again with undignified haste for a man of his age and stoutness, in order to conceal the first movement; 'and is she always in the same guise——'

‘Always as when she was slain?’ Allan finished the sentence. ‘Not she!’ he declared with a dash of recklessness; ‘she is just as she was wont to be in all her pearlins—in her hat with its cockade and its feathers, or in her hood. Whiles she sits opposite to my mother there,’ pointing to Lady Windygates’s wheel, ‘and twirls the bobbins on the cushion on her knee as my mother pulls the lint from the rock. Sometimes she comes walking in from the garden as if it belonged to her, or she is standing in the gallery that runs round the greater part of the house as if she were making a tour of it. Once I saw her looking out of the window of the turret where my grandfather died, and another time she was at the window of the room which used to be my nursery.’

‘And I tell you, Allan Wedderburn, there could be nothing of the kind. It just—could—not be. It is a physical impossibility, and there is an end of it,’ said the man of physics, and physics alone, with all the impressiveness due to a contracted mental vision, a dogged logic, and a mulish temper.

‘I’m not asking your permission or anybody else’s—not even Madame St. Barbe’s—for it to be,’ said young Windygates with his tinge of youthful scorn; ‘neither does she ask anybody’s permission, it appears. The thing I wish you to help me to find out is, what she wants by haunting me.’

‘Well, you’ve a fine opinion of my understanding,’ answered Braehead sarcastically, for, in spite of his constitutional good-nature, he was nettled by Allan’s tone. Robbie Wedderburn was accustomed to consider, on the one hand, the admiring, deferential attitude of his followers. When he was forced, on the other, to see and hear the condemnation of his detractors, he viewed it only on the respectful side of its wrath and alarm. He did not mind being laughed at by women of Lady Windygates’s calibre, but he did not relish any form of derision from men. He did not care to find young Windygates, who used to stand silent before him, ranked among the prophets, accusing him—the great Scotch philosopher, of all men—of slavish subserviency to the quality which distinguishes men from beasts, or arrogant assumption where he had no right to assume, or wilful blindness to the light of nature. He objected to being asked questions which no man could answer.

‘Philosophy will not stand you in good stead here, sir,’ Braehead said again after a moment’s pause. ‘If it be hard to tell at any time what a woman in the body wants, it may surely baffle the

wisest of men, which I have no pretension to be,' broke off Robbie Wedderburn, 'to say what a woman out of the body, if you can conceive such a monstrosity, may or may not desire.'

Young Windygates was not listening to Braehead's jeers and hair-splitting definitions; he was pursuing the familiar line of his perplexed and gloomy thoughts, which did not stretch out straight before him, but ran in a circle without any break, always repeating its painful round.

'Why should she come to me any more than to you, for instance, to whom she has only appeared once so far as I can tell—to you, who have the audacity to call the terrible sight "a mere sham," or was it only a "silly fancy?"'

'It was a *lusus naturæ*, if it had any existence except in our wearied eyes and disturbed brains,' said Braehead sturdily.

'Very well, let it be a *lusus naturæ*—it was an awful reminder, you'll not deny that? But why should she come again and again to me and leave you alone? It was you and not I who were urging on the coach that went over her and crushed the life out of her. Not that you meant to do her any harm. If I had thought that, I might have murdered you on the spot and had your ghost as well as hers at my heels.'

'Unless there had been two at a bargain-making,' said Braehead drily. Then he went on more briskly, and more like a man answering the question of one of the disciples who flocked to him for knowledge and guidance. 'I'll tell you why, if there were such trash as ghosts, Madame would not come to me. It was not I who let her dally with me, neither did I give her an invitation to Scotland and Windygates.'

'I cannot tell what you mean by dalliance,' said young Allan, languidly, declining to take up the ball thrown down to him, in his lamentable dejection. 'I know I was glad enough to leave her, though I believed I should never see her face again, and she must have thought me an ungrateful, heartless brute.'

'Whether that, or a hero of romance, your image and not mine was the last stamped on her frivolous brain.'

Braehead bore down all opposition, and proceeded with his argument. He had recovered his temper as he caught a glimpse of an ingenious theory, which he could construct and track through all its windings.

'If there were anything in such a *lusus naturæ*—mind I don't see how it can be, and I've never yet given in my adherence to

any problem of which that could be said—it would be that the force which imprinted the last image on the brain was so great, it drew the dead man or woman to the person or the place where he or she fain would have been with the parting breath. Now, though a moral or mental power could not be thought to raise a dead carcase and carry it over land and sea, when all the time it was known to be seeing corruption elsewhere, the strength of the will might rear up a kind of effigy like the semblance of men and women or houses and trees seen in dreams. It might project such a semblance on the consciousness of the other person concerned in the transaction—the living creature, who made the impression on his neighbour that has survived the dissolution of what is commonly called the body. But, supposing it were so, I should say the survival could only be for a short space. You may have that comfort. At the best or the worst, it could only be for a short space. I am afraid that is a very far-fetched explanation, but it is the only one I have to offer you. But you had better, in my opinion, give in to grant the probability that you cannot have shaken off the entire effects of that abominable fever, and must be a man still subject to day dreams—fair hallucinations, as others are to night visions. Depend upon it, that is the real hypothesis.’

‘I do not dream in the day,’ persisted young Windygates, ‘though I dream many a time in the night—ugly enough dreams; but I wake up and know what they have been, and can tell the difference. It is a fell odds, sir, if you will believe me. At the same time I do not know if I would be much better off than I am now, supposing I could not make out a dream from an actual event, and could dream of her in broad daylight, when I was on horseback no less than on foot, and as often in company as alone, at seasons when I was least thinking of what has undone me. Sometimes she looks scornful as if she disdained us all,’ continued Allan, reverting to the details which held the principal fascination for him; ‘sometimes sorrowful, as if she were lamenting a chance she had lost. But do you know, Braehead, she never looks at me as if she cared that I should meet and return her glance—in the way she would look in Paris.’

‘No,’ said Braehead sardonically. ‘I daresay that inclination was but skin-deep and of the flesh, if ever inclination was. Depend upon it, whatever *penchant* she had for you was mainly a sop to her own vanity and self-interest. You need not contradict me; I was going to say I’ve heard it is so with most women. There

are others, no doubt, who say love is stronger than death, and it may be so in some rare cases; but it is not many loves that assert themselves when men and women are in the dead-thraw.'

'Then why does she come, or why is she sent?' demanded young Windygates, still impelled to cross-examine Braehead almost indignantly, because the lad had no one else to cross-examine, while he was yet, in his sick and fretful mind, disrespectfully styling the philosopher 'a tedious pedantic body, a conceited stick.'

'If she does come—which is a very big *if*,' said Braehead dogmatically, 'she may be allowed the liberty as a small compensation for the hideous catastrophe which cut short her young life in so summary a fashion, or she may be sent as a punishment and a cure at once. Between you and me, Allan, there was not much good to be got in yon grand Hôtel de Chalons which you were so fond of frequenting. I thought you were too young to get much ill, and your mother had procured Lady Lathones's letter of introduction, which it would have been a thousand pities to have had wasted. There are those who hold fine manners, at whatever cost, a most desirable acquisition, though I confess I'm not of the number. For learning a man may sacrifice his very skin and make it pay; but for manners, pshaw! However, that is neither here nor there. This unchancy Madame St. Barbe—that I should speak uncivil words of the dead—was older than you in years, as I always told you, and a whole lifetime older in knowledge of this wicked world. But she had, may be, scant opportunity of acquiring better knowledge. Your mother is a virtuous woman, sir, with surroundings that tend rather to righteousness over much, than to the reverse. Yet I'm not prepared to say what it would profit Madame St. Barbe in a separate existence—if there be a separate existence—to become acquainted with Lady Windygates and her works in this world, and that as a mere spectatress, at this time of the day.'

A silence fell between the speakers. Young Windygates found his confidant a poor counsellor for all his professed wisdom—one of Job's miserable comforters, too tedious and too little to the point—at once too human and too inhuman not to retaliate on Allan for his rudeness by causing the young fellow to smart on the side of his boyish *amour propre*—if the shocks and afflictions of the last two or three months had left any trace of boyhood, any vestige of *amour propre*, to be wounded. It did not look as if they had, for

his next protest was not that of mortified self-esteem, but of a spirit groaning in the depths of despair.

‘She will bring me down to the grave where she is lying. She will drive me mad. How can matter consort with spirit, and endure it? How can a wretched man be doomed to the presence, at any moment, of a dead woman in his walks and rides and at meal-times, and stand it? Why, even when my father was putting up a prayer in family worship, I’ve seen her—not kneeling with the rest, but standing apart, leaning against the chimney-piece, looking as if she counted on him sticking, and would be hugely diverted if he fell through the exercise.’

‘It was very ill-mannered of one who had been a fine lady like her,’ said Braehead, giving a cough to conceal the sly amusement which the recollection of Windygates’s well-meant but halting priestly performances called up. Indeed, Lady Windygates would have held forth at the domestic altar with much greater and less dubious effect than that produced by her husband, had not the apostle’s verdict, together with custom and womanly modesty, forbidden this usurpation of the functions of the head of the house. ‘She might have left such irreverence to a heathen like me,’ continued Robbie Wedderburn. ‘But what could you expect from a blinded Papist, as your mother would say, and not a very sound Papist either, unless her words belied her? I’ve just bethought me of a resource that has dispelled many a ghost, even when it has not brought them to book. I’m surprised that you have not tried it already. Speak to her, man, give her the challenge; ask her plainly what the deil she wants, and I’ll bet you a crown, she’ll vanish like the morning mist or a snow woman.’

‘It is not a subject for betting,’ said young Windygates angrily, forgetting that Braehead, with all his decent decorum, was the last person in the world to expect reverence from.

CHAPTER IX.

BRAEHEAD ENTERS THE BREACH AND MAKES A CLEAN BREAST OF IT.

THEN Allan owned, ‘I have had the idea, but I could not speak to her before folk. I could not entertain that intention for an instant; it might affront her, and woe’s me, we’ve done her enough harm without putting her to shame before strangers—the

living with whom she can no longer keep company, from whose society she has been driven out. I might address her when we're alone together ; only, I cannot tell why, the words stick in my throat, they will not come out. I thought that may-be you, Braehead, who have dabbled in so much learning and wisdom,' proceeded the speaker in all simplicity, from the fulness of his heart, without intending to be either complimentary or ironical ; ' you, who are in a measure behind the scenes, and were an old acquaintance of hers when she was on earth—that is when she dwelt on earth on the same terms as ourselves—would speak up to her, to seek to learn her will.'

' Me ! ' -exclaimed Robbie Wedderburn in a voice which expressed anything rather than alacrity to undertake the task ; ' I was never thrown with her. She and I barely tolerated each other, and, as I am like the old Sadducees in that I believe neither in spirit nor angel, I would say I was a very unfit person to do your errand.' Still the man, who piqued himself on being equal to every emergency, and hated to think he was disqualified for any service, took himself back and accepted the commission. ' I'm your man—neither you nor any other body shall ever be able to say that I denied such a petition and would not do what I could in a case of the kind. I'm afraid it is very little I can do for you, though, my friend Allan, if you refuse to go with me to Edinburgh and consult the physicians all round, since I'm persuaded this is a study for a physician and not for a philosopher. No ? Well, I'm with you, Cousin Windygates,' ended Robbie Wedderburn, with a certain heavy obliging grace and staunch dignity of kinmanship. ' But how am I to tell the season of your visitations and when I may be wanted ? You had better come with me to Braehead and see if the lady will follow you there.'

' There is no need,' said Allan in a low tone, turning his head as if drawn by an invisible attraction. ' There she is, looking over the music books on the stand by the spinnet.' He must have grown so far accustomed to the extraordinary experience he had lately been subjected to, for no tremor or sweat of terror shook or bathed him. His complexion, which had been wan since his illness, scarcely altered ; only an indescribable awe and trouble seemed to take hold of him.

Braehead, stout unbeliever as he was, could not restrain a violent start, the outward sign of the thumping of his heart. He could control himself sufficiently to rub his eyes and stare towards

the spinnet, but the voice in which he replied to his companion's assertion was well nigh as subdued as Allan's. 'I see nothing—nothing save the light from the window falling on the stand.'

'She is here all the same, between you and the light,' vowed young Windygates solemnly.

Then Braehead girded up his loins for the encounter. 'Madame,' he said, continuing to stare with a gallant goggle-eyed stare at vacancy, 'if you will forgive my interference, since I'm not the master of Windygates, I've been enjoined to ask, by one who has this title to your attention, that he used to have the pleasure of your acquaintance, I may say the honour of your friendship, and who is ready to acknowledge that he profited greatly by your goodwill—what are you seeking here?' No answer.

'I'll put it in French,' said Braehead, emboldened by his non-success, and he translated his speech.

Still no answer—not an article stirring—not a sough of air in the room in which the two men were holding their breath, till Allan struck the table a blow which caused it to rattle in all its little drawers and brass rings and knobs, and sprang on his feet at the same moment. 'It is no use, Braehead,' he said; 'she's gone. She never even looked at you. She never liked you.'

'I do not know that there was any great love lost,' said Robbie Wedderburn with a snort, and an approach to a swagger which was suspiciously like the expression of a sense of relief; 'I told you so, sir, that if it were aught but a figment of your own brain, the lingering result of your illness, it was a *lusus naturæ*, which, as it is a breach of the ordinary course of nature, has no law by which it can be judged and controlled. In my opinion it had better be left to itself, when it will die out speedily, like any other *ignis fatuus*.

Whether the visitations to which young Windygates had become subject were a *lusus naturæ* or not, it was clear enough to Braehead that something must be done to stop them or to hinder their effect on their victim, otherwise he would soon go melancholy mad, if he was not so already. Or another heir must be sought for Windygates, since the strapping young laird, with whose manly acquirements his father had been so well satisfied, for whose accomplishments his mother had coveted the last touch of the finest French polish, would be gone where judging cattle and leaping gates, carving partridges, singing a song, or enlivening a room full of company with a new game, would be of little account. The omens pointed unmistakably to one of two choices. By next

summer, or the summer after it at furthest, Allan Wedderburn, the only child of his parents, the hope of his house, even of the religious renegade Braehead, would be the inmate of a madhouse, or—more merciful fate—he would have fallen into a decline, as the first step to sleeping with his fathers in the family vault below Deerholm Kirk.

With the advance of autumn, which with its abundance of sport and slackening of work had formerly been the cheeriest of all the seasons at Windygates, young Windygates relinquished the attempt to maintain an unequal conflict, and disperse his assailant either by single-handed valour or by the aid of faithful allies. For he found that he could not by the most violent exertion shake off his incubus, and that he was not exempt from the attendance of an uninvited companion by any amount of fellowship, whether of comrades who were on the same level in rank and education as he was, lairds' sons like himself, or of humble friends and associates in the game-keepers, grooms, and farm servants, with whom, before the days of tutorship, and of the Rev. Andrew Brydon, Allan had sat on the same benches in the parish school, to whom he was a popular young liege lord and chief. He resigned the natural supremacy of which he had formerly been proud, avoided intercourse with his neighbours, and gave himself up to solitary—or what appeared solitary—walks and rides; to moody musings in his own room, or where he sat silent and sad in the family circle. There could not have been a greater revolution in a young man's habits and looks. Not only were his father and mother puzzled, aggrieved, and distressed by it; all down the Deerwater, all round the country side, people were talking of what had come to young Windygates, of what he must have on his mind. Had he been up to pretty pranks in France, the consequences of which he dared not face in Scotland? Had he slain his man in a duel, and was he pursued by remorse for the casualty? Was he love-sick and pining away like a silly girl, because, for some good reason, doubtless, his mistress was denied to him?

Braehead could not keep silence any longer. However little good he might do by speaking, however indelicate it might be for him to speak—after all, he was not particularly famed for his delicacy—however bitterly young Windygates might resent the betrayal of his secret, whatever reflections Braehead's revelations might cast on his own common sense and sober judgment—and if he was anything he was the apostle of common sense and matter-of-fact

conclusions—he must tell to those chiefly concerned what he knew of the unhappy business, and escape the responsibility of being the joint possessor of the story.

Accordingly, Robbie Wedderburn swallowed his plateful of porridge and cream early one morning, and walked over to Windygates in time to catch the laird before he had finished his black puddings and white trout, and the lady while she was still bearing him company, sitting behind her little silver teapot and her dainty dish of tea at the breakfast table. But, as the visitor had surmised, young Windygates had not tarried till his elders were finished with their meal; he had swallowed his share, and was gone, on some pretext, to give himself up to the possession which had so fast a grip of him.

Braehead made a clean breast of it—as to the attention Madame St. Barbe had shown his charge on his sick-bed, and the desperate shock Allan had received from having had to do with her sudden and violent death. For it was their coach she was seeking to overtake, and it was on one of their wheels she had been so ill-advised as to set her foot. Young Windygates had a relapse after the catastrophe, and another on his arrival at Windygates; when, as true as Braehead was a man with a soul to be saved—he forgot again in his excitement that in his creed there was no such thing as a soul, and of course no salvation for what did not exist—the lurid clouds of a fiery sunset seen above the old gateway took for an instant a singular resemblance to a black-browed woman, with loosened flowing hair, and blood streaming over her breast and shoulders. It was just as he had seen Madame St. Barbe when she was dragged lifeless from under the wheels and the horses' feet, just as he had described her to young Windygates on the impulse of the moment, in order to certify that she was killed beyond remedy.

From that date the young man had laboured under the impression that he had seen the apparition many times, that she came to him in all places, at all seasons, without letting him know what was her will; simply haunting him, and causing him to spend as much of his time with the dead as with the living, which was an unnatural condition of things, that flesh and blood could not stand long.

In proof of the truth of his story Braehead cited the dazed, far-away look which was becoming more and more conspicuous in young Allan. He was increasingly indifferent to what was passing around him. He would stop in what he was saying, or fail to hear

what somebody else said, while he stared fixedly over people's heads or round their backs—at nothing so far as the company could see. He would start forward to prevent somebody taking a seat which, to ordinary spectators, was empty and awaiting an occupant.

Windygates and Lady Windygates listened, it is unnecessary to say, with deep interest and conflicting feelings. They were both of them of casts of character which threatened utter incredulity to so strange a trial befalling any member of their race. On the other hand, they were not unbelievers; neither 'crouse,' like Braehead himself, nor mortally abashed, like those unfortunate Christian brethren and sisters who were always lashing themselves with their sinful incapacity to believe, and piteously crying on holier and happier Christians to aid them in their desperate plight. It was part of the Windygates' creed, which they had no difficulty in accepting in an abstract form, that there were not only God Almighty and His adversary the Devil, but spirits manifold—a vast agency both for good and for evil. Was there not a formula for detecting and condemning witches still extant in the national Kirk? Did not the laird and the lady believe more or less in Hallowe'en, when the powers of the air were allowed on the eve of All Saints, between nightfall and sunrise, to intermeddle in the affairs of men? Human beings were even suffered to appeal to the dubious powers by various tests, in order to get those glimpses of futurity which were universally coveted.

It was still within the memories of living men that, during the persecutions of the Kirk, when the Covenanters were driven to skulk on lonely hill-sides or hide in the dripping gloom of vaults and caves, freezing with cold, at the last gasp with hunger and thirst, they saw and heard things not visible or audible to ordinary men, and not to be discussed in common converse.

But it was one thing to believe in the supernatural in the abstract, especially when it hedged in saints and martyrs; and another to have it brought to your own door, infesting your offspring, whom you have naturally been in the practice of regarding as so much more simple-minded and liable to err than your sagacious, discreet selves.

Windygates pushed his wig back till it hung suspended on the back of his head and exposed his bald crown.

Lady Windygates's imposing morning-cap, which replaced her lace 'head,' was an extensive 'mutch' of clear-starched muslin,

with broad full frills, broad bands of lace insertion, and broad strings tied in a huge bow beneath the small pointed chin, which it nearly extinguished. That cap's snowy stiffness in those bolted borders, which stood out like rays round the sharp fine face, has ceased to exist, save in old Dutch pictures. It positively bristled at this moment.

'What have we or he done that he should be tormented by a demon?' cried the lady, rather defiantly for so good a woman.

Windygates still clung to practicalities. 'Were there any love passages between young Allan and this dead woman?' he asked.

'Not, I think, on his side,' answered Braehead with his judicial caution.

'Did he give her a promise of marriage?' went on the inquisitor.

'Certainly not.' Braehead believed he could be definite on this point.

'What are you thinking of, Windygates,' interrupted his wife petulantly, 'when you know my son is destined for my cousin Maisie? I hope no ill-disposed person will carry this painful story to her ears. I can rely on Maisie's spirit and friendship. Still, a ghost-ridden man is not every girl's bargain, and Maisie Hunter will have her wale of good offers. I have been regretting her absence in the north ever since young Windygates's return, but I see things are all for the best, as the minister, honest man, often tells us. It would be well, Braehead, if you were there to hear; some word in season might reach you in time and break down your stoutest defences,' his kinswoman did not fail to put in her word for him, returning instantly to the subject in hand. 'I could find it in my heart to wish that Maisie would stay away now till this blast of misfortune blow by, and it is all smooth sailing once more.'

'But I must have a word with you, Robbie Wedderburn,' said the little woman, blazing up again; 'you said this woman or lady followed on the track of you and Allan, tried to get speech with you, and laid down her life sooner than be silenced and left behind. It was the act of no modest woman. Did you take my son among courtesans? Did you permit one of them to tend him on his sick-bed?'

'Madame,' said Braehead, a good deal put out, 'she was no common courtesan. She was the cousin of Madame the Duchess de Chalons. It was at the Hôtel de Chalons that young Windy-

gates foregathered with her, among the cream of Parisian society. She abode in close intimacy with the august heads of the house and their young daughters. As to acts which are modest or otherwise, you must remember that fashions differ, and what is lawful in the west is forbidden in the east.'

'There are some things which are nowhere lawful, and for a woman, whether in the body or out of the body, to run after men is one of them. It is a very glaikek-like trick,' said Lady Windygates with strong disapproval.

'You should be better versed in spirits than I,' said Robbie Wedderburn in his canniest manner. 'I know not whether—always granting that there are spirits—they preserve the distinctions of sex, or whether little niceties of behaviour which prevail between ladies and gentlemen are retained when ghosts come into play. I have not many lady visitors at Braehead, they hesitate to invade a bachelor's establishment, but I am not sure that lady ghosts would be likely to entertain the same scruple.'

Lady Windygates set herself to win her son's confidence. She believed, like many a fond mother, that, if he would tell her all, half the battle would be gained—that between them they would be able to devise some means of routing the intangible foe.

But young Windygates resisted all his mother's efforts, which, to do her intelligence and affection justice, were conducted with both tact and tenderness—to no purpose.

Allan was sufficiently touched not to answer her roughly, but he put her off with a determination which not even she could set aside, for the days of her unquestioned sway over him were over.

'There are some things that a man cannot speak upon, not even to his mother,' he told her. 'If any other woman spoke to me on this subject I should not answer her; if a man spoke to me I should know how to answer him. You had better let me be, mother. I know you would help me if you could, but you cannot; neither you nor any other mortal can. I must fight my own battle, and if it is not with flesh and blood it is the worse for me. Pray for me? Yes, pray if you will. Prayers can never do harm, can they? And God bless you for being willing to ware your prayers upon me.' But, though he made this concession, he absolutely prohibited the intervention, so far as he was concerned, either of the Rev. Andrew or his elders, and declined to avail himself of their ghostly counsel.

The consequences of the disclosure made by Braehead were especially to be deprecated in the effect they had on the relations between father and son. The story alienated Windygates from Allan for a time. Windygates was a man who hated notoriety in any form, and had only desired for his heir the fair place among his fellows which he had held before his unlucky journey to France. Unlike the lad's mother, Windygates had never desired any particular distinction for Allan; that he should pass through life just such another honest, honourable, prosperous country laird as his predecessors would have well contented the head of the house. To have his son a genius, a scholar like Braehead, a statesman, even a great soldier, would have been no supreme gratification to Windygates. He was not of the stuff to regard otherwise than ruefully the prospect of numbering a prodigy in his line. That was more in Lady Windygates's way. Thus he felt as if his son had served him a sorry trick in getting into such a strange trouble, and making himself so conspicuous. The tale was certain to leak out; without doubt, young Windygates would be pointed at in no time as the man who had a familiar spirit—anyhow, who kept company with spirits; and he would be put out of the pale of other company—that is, of mingling with it on equal terms. Who would care to ride a mile or drink a bottle of claret with a man who, without warning, might drop the thread of conversation and sit transfixed, as if he were on the verge of being taken with the falling sickness or some other kind of fit?

If young Windygates had been so unfortunate as suddenly to become liable to fits, his father would have swallowed down the mortification of the infirmity, and felt only pity for his unhappy son. But this kind of infirmity was of Allan's own creating, for surely he must have done something monstrous to be one of a thousand, picked out of the common ranks, and vexed with the importunate ghost of a foreign madam, who, as Braehead had let out, was not much better than she should have been.

Windygates began for the first time to distrust his son, to look on him with a jealous, suspicious eye. The good character with which young Windygates had started in life, of which his father had been as assured as he was of his own integrity, must have been a specious sham, or no better than the morning cloud and the early dew that had given way before the first hot breath of temptation.

Even if it were so, Windygates reflected indignantly, could not

the fellow have kept his disgraceful secret to himself, and died rather than betray it and bring shame on his innocent family? Why should he go about and make a spectacle of himself with his changed hang-dog look and forlorn air? Better that he had stayed away altogether in foreign parts than have come home with such a stigma attached to him as the ghost of a slain—or was she a murdered—woman dogging his steps, supping with him, sitting on his pillow.

In all probability a little time would do its work in softening Windygates's bitter disappointment and high sense of offence. The renewed intercourse of a few months would doubtless revive his old affection for his son, and awaken sympathy with the hardship of his lot—hardship only intensified by the fact that it was unique and exceptional, since the lad was too manly and single-hearted in his misery to grow vain of its rare and mysterious character. Like his father in the light in which he viewed the circumstances, Allan was as deeply affronted as he was tortured by them.

Still, in the meanwhile, the father and son, so much one in nature, were sharply divided. Windygates was harshly unjust to Allan, and it was but an additional proof of how wretchedly pre-occupied and how lost to his old self the young man was that he scarcely missed the fatherly regard on which he had formerly set store; nay, on the whole, he was glad that Windygates drew away from him, and did not address him on the private matter which Braehead had in cold blood revealed.

(To be continued.)

'NOT UNDERSTANDED OF THE PEOPLE.'

THE Church Congress has been discussing, and not without reason, the accommodation of the Prayer-book services to the needs of the people. The truth is that, up to the present time, the great majority of Churchmen have not grasped the fact that the Book of Common Prayer is largely written in a language 'not understood of the people.' Its phraseology is so familiar to them that they never stop to ask what it is all about.

The extent to which the ordinary services of the Church are understood by the poor is not easy to determine without special inquiry, and yet sometimes the clergy come upon alarming proofs that things are not quite so clear as they suppose them to be. It is not so long ago since a Yorkshire incumbent, dwelling in a valley where the people are supposed to be particularly long-headed, told me of a mournful experience which befell him when visiting a sick parishioner. The Yorkshireman was ill, very ill, but doggedly opposed to spending a penny upon the doctor. He had found, he thought, a more excellent way, and was accordingly conducting, with very alarming result, some experiments upon his constitution. Excessive devotion to a cheap, but far from innocuous quack medicine was fast bringing him to a state in which medical aid and the infallible pill would be alike superfluous.

'My dear Mrs. ——,' said the Vicar to his obstinate parishioner's wife, 'your husband is really killing himself with those pills. It's a case of suicide—a downright sin.'

'Yes, sir,' replied the tearful partner, 'I know it, and many's the time I've prayed against it in the Church service.'

'In the Church service?' said the Vicar, a little doubtfully; 'you mean when we pray for the sick?'

'Oh no, sir,' was the reply; 'I mean where we always say in the Litany—isn't it?—"From all false doctoring, good Lord deliver us."'

Here, surely, is a fact that, in determining the degree in which the Church services are understood by the poor, must be worth a bushel of theory.

Mistakes of this kind are not perpetrated in Yorkshire alone. The London poor have erred, and do still err, with equally strange results. During a sojourn of some three years in East London I had, for example, excellent opportunities of observing the way in

which the marriage service is misunderstood by the unlearned. Our parish was not lacking in intelligence of a kind. Its pick-pockets were notorious for their skill, its dog-stealers for their taste and discernment, its burglars for their adroitness and success. Our prize-fighters were men of renown in the P.R., our interest in horse-racing was all the more pronounced because many of its devotees had never seen any nobler specimen of the horse than the humble steed of the cabman and the coster. We were not unintelligent. Any strange parson who went into the common lodging-houses and discoursed as he would to an unlearned and incurious peasantry found out his mistake at once. But the language of the Prayer-book was above us. Some allowance must, of course, be made for the difficulty of understanding the written language after talking all one's days in a *patois* barely recognisable as owning any kinship with the English of the Prayer-book. Nervousness, too, may account for much, but the residuum is still important. Take the case of Timothy Duggan. Too much stress must not be laid upon it, since the simple man can hardly be expected to know the rubrics; but I submit that his blunder is general evidence upon the indifference or the ignorance which marks the attitude of the poor towards the Prayer-book.

Timothy Duggan was a stevedore, perhaps six feet two in height and proportionately broad. He appeared as a bridegroom; the bride was a charming young person of tender years. All went well until the moment came for Timothy and his bride to give their troth to each other in the prescribed manner.

'Say after me,' said I to Timothy, "'I, Timothy——'"

There was no response.

'Say after me,' repeated the parson, "'I, Timothy——'"

Timothy was still silent, a puzzled look creeping over his broad face.

'Say after me,' said I for the third time with, perhaps, a shade of annoyance.

'After you, sir,' responded Timothy, with the politest possible duck of his bullet head.

But this indifference to the rubrics is so great that upon the injunction, 'Place the ring on the third finger,' I have more than once seen the bridegroom clap it upon the third finger of his own hand with all the complacency in the world. Once I detected a bridegroom endeavouring to force the ring on to the bride's thumb; but there was just a suspicion that he had been making merry before coming to church that morning. The same excuse

could not be offered for a bridegroom from whom I could get no word of response, not even a sulky 'I will.' The situation was becoming most embarrassing, when the solitary bridesmaid—his sister—casually observed, 'E's a little 'ard of 'earing, sir.' The man was stone deaf; yet they had not thought it necessary to tell the parson. If the bridegroom understood not a word of the service, what did it matter?

But the marriage service from first to last is full of pitfalls for the unlearned man. In some cases it becomes painfully clear that the contracting parties recognise but few of the words they are bidden to say, and merely imitate the sound with such accuracy as their imperfect knowledge will permit. The words 'to have and to hold' ought to be simple enough, but, as a matter of fact, they are the subjects of some astounding blunders. I remember one bridegroom who had brought a very charming young bride to church, and perhaps regarded her as a thing of beauty to be in his home a joy for ever, rendering 'to have and to hold' as 'to have and behold.' Another, who possibly had some cause to dread the fate of Mr. Caudle, struck out an entirely new version, and faithfully promised 'to have and be told.' 'To love and to cherish' is another frightful stumbling-block. 'To love and be cherries' was the nearest to the original of many variations popular amongst the males of that parish. The brides were happy with the familiar rendering 'to love cherries and to bay.' 'God's holy ordinance' tripped up many. 'Holy orders' was convenient, and perhaps conveyed the most meaning. 'Plight thee my troth' and 'give thee my troth' were, I imagine, words of foreign sound, and I well remember one young person, who was wedding a most villainous-looking fellow, changing her statement into 'thereto I give thee my throat.' There was, perhaps, an unconscious prophecy wrapped up in that promise.

The words accompanying the delivery of the ring are, as everybody knows, the subject of some characteristic blunders. I never heard some of the more elaborate distortions credited to countrymen, but our people nobly distinguished themselves over the clause 'with all my worldly goods I thee endow.' They never blundered so aptly as the fortune-hunter, who, in wedding an heiress, unwittingly said, 'with all my goodly words I thee endow'; they were content to produce a similar sound with a sublime indifference to sense. 'I thee and thou,' 'I thee do bow,' 'I thee allow,' were the most popular of these versions. To the prayers they may or may not have listened. If they did, I often

wondered what they made out of the reference to Isaac and Rebecca living faithfully together. Their knowledge of the Old Testament characters was certain to be most limited; but, as many thousands of Jews lived in the parish, a good many Isaacs and Rebeccas were probably amongst their acquaintance. In that case they may have wondered what Isaac and Rebecca had done to be thus honoured in church.

But nothing more clearly indicates the utter lack of intelligence with which some of the poor regard the services of the Church than the fact that once upon a time I came upon a youthful curate solemnly and devoutly marrying the father of a bridegroom to the mother of his bride in the presence of their own proper partners. The discovery was brought about in this way. It was Christmas morning, a great time for weddings, since Boxing-day then remained for the honeymoon. Seven or eight couples had given notice, and the congregation was large. Whilst one curate registered the couples in the vestry another married them in succession with such expedition as a slight stutter would permit. The old parish clerk, with his list of names, called up the high-contracting parties as the turn of each came. I superintended the whole proceedings. In the vestry were two young people being registered whose names were, let us say, Jones and Smith. Coming around to the chancel again, one was a little surprised to find the old clerk inquiring amongst the congregation for a Mr. Smith and a Mrs. or Miss Jones. When I next looked in his direction he had brought up to the chancel steps a gentleman well stricken in years and dressed in a sleeved waistcoat. The bride was a broad, comely woman whose turned-up sleeves left bare two monstrous crimson arms. Oppressed by an uncomfortable suspicion I hurried to the vestry, and there found the young people, Jones and Smith, just paying the fees.

'Is your father here?' said I to the bridegroom.

'Yes, sir.'

'Is your mother here?'—to the bride.

'Yes, sir.'

'Now,' said I to Jones the younger, 'look through this door and tell me if that is your father being married there.'

'Well, sir,' returned Jones, after a leisurely inspection, 'he's having it read over to him.'

'Is your mother alive?'

'She's in church.'

It was the work of an instant to rush around and stop the

service. But when the couple were dragged asunder, Jones the elder, in reply to an indignant inquiry as to what he meant by it, coolly replied, 'Well, he' (indicating the penitent clerk with a jerk of his grimy thumb) 'told us to come this way.' That couple had been charged by mention of 'the dreadful day of judgment, when the secrets of all hearts shall be disclosed,' to say whether they knew any impediment why they might not lawfully be joined together in matrimony; and they heard it in silence. So did the wife of the one and the husband of the other. I have often wondered how far they would have gone without remonstrance. Perhaps the demand for a ring would have precipitated the crisis.

Here, of course, it is easy to condemn the officiating curate. No doubt he was to blame (the blame or praise of bishops concerns him nothing now), but then he blundered naturally. He it was who, making his first public appearance in church on St. Stephen's Day, was unexpectedly called upon to read the Epistle. Now the Epistle for that day is not culled from an Epistle; the appointed portion comes from the Acts. But M—— was unprepared for such a contingency. When the moment came there was a dreadful pause, an appealing look, and then in hesitating tones the words: 'The Epistle is written in the—the—the seventh chapter of—the Gospel according to Acts.' This was most painful, but not more trying than the hasty declaration one evening of, 'The one hundred and nineteenth day of the month, part of the twenty-sixth psalm,' or the proposal to return thanks at a prayer meeting because 'our brother, Mr. B——' (who had been away for a holiday) 'has safely returned "from going to and fro in the earth, and from walking up and down in it."' But, after making all possible allowance for the vagaries of one of the best-tempered curates who ever lived, this incident is most eloquent as to the attitude of some at least amongst the poor towards Church services. It inclines one very much to believe the stories current as to the wrong person stepping into the bride's place. There is a legend told in a great Yorkshire town to the effect that, after several couples had been simultaneously married at the parish church, one bride found her bridegroom walking away with another lady on his arm. The curate, summoned to her aid, remonstrated with the defaulter, and besought him to take his proper partner. 'Nay,' said he, 'aw was married to this 'un, and I loike her t' best.' There is no reason why this should not be sober truth.

Of course it might be contended that, although the poor mer-

cilessly distort the language of the Prayer-book, they nevertheless attach the right meaning, that is to say, the Prayer-book meaning to the words they use. If 'give thee my throat' falls from the lips of a nervous bride, she is not thinking of throat, but of troth, and transfers the meaning of troth (so far as it is present to her mind) to the more familiar word. This would make it a mere matter of pronunciation, and a good many errors may be referred to this class. For example, when an old lady in our parish, full of enthusiastic regard for two curates just added to the staff, protested to the rector that she did 'so like those two new Cupids,' it is absurd to suppose that her mind was upon anything save the two new curates. But it is not always a matter of mispronunciation. Nor is it satisfactory to explain these blunders as coming from a mere misapprehension of the word in the original, although mistakes of this kind are frequent enough. An acquaintance of mine, examining a country day-school, asked for the meaning of the word 'charity.' A little girl in the front row instantly replied: 'Please, sir, part of the in'ards of a pig.' She was thinking of chitterlings, between which and charity there does not seem much that is common in sound. Allowing for a slight margin of blunders due to these two causes, there still remain enough to establish the fact that much of the Prayer-book is in a language 'not understood of the people.'

The Baptismal service has, indeed, one advantage; it does not 'show up' defaulters quite so freely. But how much is understood by the poorer folk, from the time when they hear words of prayer touching 'the everlasting benediction of Thy heavenly washing' to the final reminder that we should all be 'continually mortifying all our evil and corrupt affections and daily proceeding in all virtue and godliness of living'? Candidates for Holy Orders are often asked to explain the statements found in this service, and show a wonderful variety of opinion about them. They may not all be quite so fruitful as a candidate from the North, who confidently assured the examiners at Fulham that there were thirty-nine explanations of one passage, but that time would only permit him to give thirteen. If the instructed are thus in doubt, what shall be said of the plain man? It is well that the feeling of Churchmen towards the Book of Common Prayer should be one of devout and thankful conservatism, but if there are to be changes, let them rather be in the direction of simple alternative services than the provision of new ones framed on the lines of and following the language of the old.

A COACH DRIVE AT THE LAKES.

PART III.

FROM THIRLMERE TO KESWICK.

WHAT a spot for a village school is yonder by the back! The bairns that grow to boyhood there must in their dreams climb many a Helvellyn, for from their school-door runs the mountain-path to the top. You saw that laughing child that issued from the class-room—surely ‘a beauty born of murmuring sound has passed into her face.’

We are in a vale of sounding waters, a valley with a swift watershed. Manchester chose well; yonder on the left is Harrop Ghyll, white upon the Armboth Fell; Harrop Tarn it may have been that decided the earliest settlers in this dale to make their sitting under the hill hard by. Those few houses by the dark firs are still called Wytheburn City.

What simple lines of beauty the walls that frame the mountain enclosures or intakes seem to have run in upon the shoulder of the fell above the city! You note that ‘outgang’? Thither, as to a funnel, converge the outermost walls of the intakes for the better management of the driving in or out to the vale or upland pasture the black-faced Herdwick sheep that, tradition says, the Armada gave us 300 years ago. You note, too, that circular green pasture on the hillside, ringed round with wall? It is probably the oldest bit of enclosure in the valley. They are found in most of the dales. They were once the common enclosures for the herding of the cows at milking time.

‘Eight miles from Keswick, sir; if you want the best walk in these parts you will turn it the gate there, back by where them waterworks gentlemen is making all that smother with the engine, and get along on foot toward the city, and keep on the old pack-horse road to Armboth House, and so along west of the mere, and join the main road at Bridge End, beyond Great How. Finest walk in those parts; and the best of it is, them Manchester folk is going to leave it alone, they say. You see that bit of a house end covered with ivy; that’s the Cherry Tree. Wordsworth wrote a bit

of po'try about that.' I remembered that the Waggoner had stopped there, and had a good two hours of easy fun, for the villagers had met for dance and frolic. It was 'the village merry night.' Ah, days of Merrie England—days when for such merry nights every clown in these Cumbrian valleys had been put through his paces, and could, so one is told, dance a three-cornered reel fit for a king to look upon—when will ye return? The fiddlers are gone. 'Jack, my laddie,' the favourite tune, is heard no more, and the dancing master has been put to flight by H.M. Inspector and payment by results.

We pass Birkett's picturesque little post-office, smothered in cotoniaster; go beneath the hideous wooden bridge erection that carries the trollies of the waterwork excavators to the tip at the great embankment of refuse close by the sluice that will one day open its mouth and set the Thirlmere waters streaming deeply underground, and along far heights and through distant meadows, to far-off, thirsty Manchester; and our eyes are straining now to catch sight of—

An upright mural block of stone,
Moist with pure water trickling down.

For beside the road, where it runs parallel with and close above the shore of the lake, stands the 'Rock of Names'—

That once seemed only to express
Love that was love in idleness,

but to-day expresses with 'monumental power' the reality of life, that in its loveliness death could not divide, the simplicity of heart and hand, that our time would hardly make allowance for. At this rock, in the beginning of this century, met in happy tryst the Keswick and the Rydal poets—not once or twice. At this rock six poets—

Meek women, men as true and brave
As ever went to a hopeful grave—

worked to engrave their initials in full trust that—

The loved rock would keep
The charge when they were laid asleep.

Their names were William Wordsworth, Mary Hutchinson (afterwards Mrs. Wordsworth), Dorothy Wordsworth, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Wordsworth, and Sarah Hutchinson. Mercifully for the engravers, the moss, fed by the water trickling down, obscured their handiwork. If local gossip is to be believed, a

stalwart dalesman added his own initials, W. W., in pure ignorance of the company he was in, and has only lately discovered that he had joined the sacred choir.

A few paces forward, and we are rumbling by Clark's Loup or Leap. 'You know the story, sir,' a gentleman said, who had got up on the coach at Wytheburn, and who was evidently a native; 'a man named Clark got so jealous of his wife, he told her he had resolved to put an end to his life. She dissuaded him from hanging himself, saying it was painful; from shooting himself, urging that he might possibly not kill himself outright. He proposed death by drowning; this seemed to please her, and they came together to Thirlmere side. He said he would wade in. She told him to remember that the water was cold, and he would give himself needless pain. Walking on, they reached this rock. This would suit him, the wife said, for the water was deep enough for the purpose. Clark was about to throw himself in when Madam bade him remember that, unless he took a run and a leap, he might injure himself seriously upon the rocks below. He took her advice, put off his coat, solemnly ran, solemnly leapt, solemnly sank. She solemnly waited till he disappeared, and then walked solemnly home, feeling that she had done no more nor less than any good wife should do—had given the best advice she could under the circumstances. You may smile, but the writer of the "Survey of the Lakes in 1789," who tells us the story, conversed with the woman and heard it verified from her own lips.'

'It's a valley full of old-world interest,' continued the narrator. 'Yonder, across the lake just opposite, under Bull Crags, is Justice Stone, where, in the olden time, the inhabitants met to arrange quarrels and administer law. There is a Web Stone high on the Fell, too, where the Thirlmere folk left their homespun or their yarns for the poor, plague-stricken dwellers in the Keswick Valley. Not far from that most beautiful of Thirlmere waterfalls, Launcy Ghyll—called, doubtless, after some Launcelot of former fame—is the Rocking Stone; and there, among the larches, is the garth of the deer—Deer guards. Newlands has its Hindscarth, Thirlmere its Deergarth.' The coachman smiled and said, 'We call a door hereabout a deer; it was just garden-door happen—but these gentlemen are always finding out something fresh, you know, sir. Will you mind walking up the hill, it's rather a stiff one? Sorry to trouble you; when the new road is made we shall be able to let you keep your seats!'

Up the hill we walked, and were rewarded by the view of that ebon-coloured lake below us, and away to its tiny bridges opposite the solid, genial-looking Armboth Hall, that shone whitely on its garden lawn.

One does not much wonder that with the waterfalls that rush down into clefts from behind it, with the slant lights of eventide upon those dark waters, with the noise of winds in the larches on Fisher Crag, and the cry of the raven from the Raven Crag—even at this distance ‘black as a storm,’ though as yet it can hardly be said to be ‘glimmering thro’ the twilight pale,’ as the Waggoner saw it—one does not much wonder that old Armboth Hall is haunted. There seem to be sounds enough about its loneliness to conjure up a thousand ghosts. And there on a certain night in the year strange lights are seen to flash from the windows, the bells ring, a large black dog swims across the lake, and a table is seen to be prepared by ghostly hands, for the murdered bride has come to sit at her spectral banquet. But we cannot gaze at Armboth Hall and the crag behind the house without feeling that other ghosts climb up the Fells and pass beyond the verge.

Readers of Matthew Arnold’s exquisite poem, ‘Resignation,’ will know how happily he describes that merry mountain walk from Armboth to Watendlath which he and Fausta (W. E. Forster) took long years ago; how, ten years after, again they trod the self-same road, but now—

Alone we tread it, you and I,
Ghosts of that boisterous company.

The whole is a delightful description—as accurate as it is easy of diction; and up that long ascent by Armboth Hall, and over the Fell to the little ‘barn in the hollow’—Watendlath of our day—the ghosts of two great men, statesman and critic, who helped their time, must still be felt to climb heavenward as we gaze.

Well at the top of the hill, a new surprise is opened to us—Skiddaw’s double cone far away to the left, Great How in middle distance, and the Naddle Fell making another gateway in the dale, through which, into far distance, runs the lovely Vale of St. John; blue Blencathra filling all the distance to the north, and the eye coming back along the brown heights of Helvellyn, by Castle Rock, and the long white Thirlspot or Thrispot Inn, to the magnificent Brown Cove Crags above our heads to the right.

It is from here that we get an idea of the way in which the winds and streams and snows have modelled Helvellyn's mountain-side.

Great Dodd, Watson's Dodd, Stybarrow Dodd, and Whiteside seem separated by individual summits and individual torrents. That little outstanding crag, somewhat like a wart upon the skyline, away beyond the Castle Rock, has an interest. It is still called 'Watch' Crag, and tells a tale of border war and beacon fires. On our left, as we gallop down the hill towards the inn, is the gate that leads to the ancient home of the Leathes, who seem to have dispossessed the Viking Thorold of his name for the mere, and to have called the Brack or Braikmere of their day Leatheswater. Their beautiful old house with its great dark oaken stair and its wondrous kitchen fireplace is in the hands now of the Manchester Corporation, and is still hospitable as of old. But the days are gone when the quiet afternoons upon the garden lawn of Dalehead Hall were full of the fun of Robert Southey and the serious talk of the Rydal poet, and the simple common-sense and benevolent projects of William Calvert.

We pull up at the 'King's Head.' The coachman wants his meal, and the horses want their meal and water. What a bit of old Cumberland the half-farm, half-inn, truly is! The yew-tree and the sycamore shadow it from behind, the stream runs bravely for the stable-boy's bucket beside us, and there, in one long line of radiant hospitality and use, under one long roof-tree and with one unbroken front, stand stable, coachhouse, post-office, bar, best parlour, livery-house, lodging-house, and barn.

But, as at the famous 'Swan,' so here at the 'King's Head,' modern landlords have not been wise. The quaintest sign that was ever hung has been discarded, and we can no longer read, as we used to read, the simple truth and simple invitation—

John Standley lives here and sells good ale,
Come in and drink before it goes stale;
John succeeded his uncle Peter,
In t' old man's time it was never better.

Away we go—the St. John's Vale, with its blue Blencathra background, a veritable Lauterbrunnen Pass in miniature before us.

On our left the Dalehead meadows, in which of old stood 'Willie How,' the famous inn-of-call for packhorse men from Whitehaven to Lancaster. We have forgotten Thirlmere, but Thirlmere is with us all the way, quietly sleeping in the shadow

of Raven Crag, just over the brow of Dalehead Park. On our right, beneath its fir-trees, stands a pink-stuccoed lodging-house, four-square. That is the Dalehead post-office, and behind it thunders down the Brotto Ghyll.

Fisher Place the coachman calls it, but he does not seem to know that Rossetti the poet spent some weeks of the last autumn of his life there, and that a letter in the poet's hand hangs framed upon the walls of the little front room. Poor Rossetti, stricken unto death, the landlady there still calls to mind your deep, melodious voice as you paced the little room, reading aloud the last proof of your sonnets! And we who read your letter see what deep impression on other minds than the mind of the Wizard of the North this part of the Thirlspot Valley made.

'The scenery is the most romantic and beautiful that can be conceived, and the retirement more absolute than I ever met with before'—so wrote Rossetti from Fisher Place.

That thin zigzag line upon the hill'twixt Fisher Place and the next ghyll, 'Stanah,' where the old-fashioned farmhouse, Brimmer Head, stands, is the miners' path that leads to the Styx Pass—there is nothing Stygian about the upland path to-day—and so over Helvellyn to Patterdale and Ullswater, Glenridding Screes, and far Glencoign. It is worth while noting here that Stanah Ghyll has insisted upon the dalesmen paying attention to its swollen tide here in the meadows. The banks are built up either side with tons of cobble stones, but it is not only rushing streams in time of heavy rain or melting of the snow that the good people of Legburthwaite have to fear. On August 22, 1749, a waterspout broke on Helvellyn, which denuded the whole of the mountain-side, from here as far as eye can see up St. John's Vale, of its grass, filled the narrow meadow bottoms with rocks and rubbish, swept Fornsidge clear of trees, and totally destroyed the Legburthwaite Mill, which used to stand in the mill ghyll just beyond Castle Crag. The very millstones were washed away, and one was never recovered.

But we forget all that wreck, for the green herb has clomb the heights, and the fields are filled with ox-eye daisies and purple cranesbill, and the little How Beck at our side is crystal-clear. Now, on our right, the Castle Rock shines out as bald as the day the waterspout swept it there. It used to be called Green Crag, but it will never bear that name again. Thither the affrighted people from the ruined cottages near took refuge from the appall-

ing water-flood. They hardly knew that in prehistoric days their fore-elders had taken refuge there before them from the torrents of war. Yet there are signs that armed men have held their camp there in time of trouble.

As we neared Thirlspot just now, Castle Rock stood out like a lion pawing to get free from the mountain-side; now it has sunk back into the hillside, and it requires all Sir Walter Scott's magic to bring back

The mound with airy turrets crowned,
Buttress and rampires' circling bound,
And mighty keep and tower,

where the bridal of Triermain was celebrated, and where Gwendolen and Arthur held proud festival. But at times, when the level light strikes up the narrow valley of St. John, the rock is fired with gold, and it needs but little imagination to give us back the glory of an enchanted hold.

On our left is rising the tree-covered, fern-swathed height which Wordsworth's

Three rosy-cheeked schoolboys, the highest not more
Than the height of a councillor's bag,

chose to climb—and there, dark against the sky, is a facsimile of the 'Maen,' or 'Man,' as the cairns are called in this old corner of Little Britain, that without mortar or lime they built at the top of the crag.

Up the brow of the Smithy Hill we go at a sharp canter, and down and over the queer crooked bridge that spans the shining Bure.

Away flits the ring-ousel, or dipper, above the lily leaves that lie upon the quiet, amber-coloured pool, and, thanking heaven that we sat fast, as the coachman bade us, we breathe a little more freely—for the passage of that bridge was a doubtful pleasure—and can look behind us upon one of the sweetest pastoral scenes we have yet set eyes on.

The Bure shines and winks at the pretty, single-arched Cumberland bridge. The Bure shines and sings at the stepping-stones.

A picturesque farmhouse, with its white porch almost laughing a welcome at us, gleams whitely against the green background of the wooded Great How.

The confusion of gables of the outhouses would detain any

artist. The history of the queer Norwegian-looking barn end nearest the road would enchant an archæologist. For that is the spinning-shed. There, in the last century and at the beginning of this, the farm folk gathered when the twilight fell; and there, by light of simple rush and sputtering home-made candles, the wool they had piled up in the one end of the barn was spun into web and woven into 'harden sark.'

Gazing back, we—as the Waggoner—did

Ken the awful form
Of Raven Crag
And Ghimmer Crag, his tall twin-brother.

Fisher Crag it is better known as to-day—and, though the eve has not paled the hills, yet one can realise that mysterious darkness which Wordsworth often noted about the Raven Crag. Very early in the day would its bastion height be in shadow, as very early in the day the waters at its feet would take on the twilight shade and wait in darkness for the morrow. A track is clearly seen upon the Raven Crag's side. It is believed by some that that track was the work of sentinels who kept watch and ward opposite the camp behind Castle Rock. This much is certain: that there are, not far from the top of that path, remains of buildings on the Fell, and one of the earliest fortified places on the hills in this neighbourhood is situate close by, on an adjoining crag which we shall catch a glimpse of presently.

Into the hummocky, picturesquely broken ground upon our left a rough road strikes; that is the old packhorse road that used to lead the jangling mules either to the ford, and so to Willie How, near Dalehead, or on under Raven Crag along the west side of Thirlmere.

The spring the mules and packmen drank from still fills the roadside trough a little further on, and the place of the rude cross—at which, who knows, they muttered prayer for safety on their lonely way—may be recognised.

At any rate, there, by the roadside, is deeply cut a cross on a boulder-stone, which said boulder-stone was, when Clarke made his survey of the Lakes a hundred years ago, standing on the right hand of the then road upon a mound, and was known as Adam's Cross, though even at that time its origin and use had been forgotten.

We shall not, perhaps, be wrong in surmising that this was a

preaching station, in days when the monks of Fountains Abbey would journey hither from their home in the Monks Hall meads by the River Greta, to preach the Gospel that St. Kentigern of Crosthwaite and St. Herebert of Derwentwater had given and kept alive in the far morning of Christian history here in the dales.

Now we have won 'the smooth, unpathwayed plain' of Shoulthwaite Moss—

Where no disturbance comes to intrude
Upon the pensive solitude.

Nay, this is not strictly true either, for here, just opposite the Bend, as the hill on our left hand is called, purple with shales, and green with streamers of larch that struggle up the height—here, if but the coachman be persuaded to blow his horn, we shall have such mountain music betwixt High Rigg and the 'Ern' or Eagle Craggs of Bleaberry Fell as will astonish any pensive one, and people any solitude.

Round to the left we go, with the echo dying, dying, dying. Backwards we look; it is hence that, over the moss, fragrant with the young birch and the breath of the 'sweet gale,' Great How shows to best purpose, and the eye, ranging upwards, catches sight of the highest point of huge Helvellyn. The 'comb of the wild cat's ladder,' as some assert 'Catchedecam' to mean, shows darkly aloft for a moment, and in another moment we have whisked round the corner to the right to catch our first fair sight of Skiddaw's hornèd hill, with Latrigg lying like a cub at its mother's side.

On now, till a sharp turn to the left gives us ample view of the Naddle Vale, so boulder-strewn, so treeless, that it looks almost as if a waterspout had been at work, and it is not till we have turned once more to the right over Rougha Bridge that we find the stone walls have given place to hedges of such rich wild roses and wild-service bush and bird-cherry trees as to recall the dream of paradise and banish the thought of desolation.

Just before reaching Rougha or Rough How Bridge, had we been here on a certain day nigh fifty years ago, we should have seen the Whitehaven mail come round the corner, crash into a pony-chaise with two middle-aged men in it, have seen the pony-chaise, occupants and all, fly over—or rather through—the wall, and have heard one of the gentleman pick himself up and say, in a solemn way, 'I shall have this matter thoroughly investigated.'

We should have heard David Johnson, the driver—pale as death, and pulling up sharp and looking over his shoulder—say, ‘Good God! its Muster Wadswuth.’

And, had we been in the Keswick market-place that night, and asked whether Mr. Wordsworth was much hurt, we should have heard David say, ‘No, sir, thank Heaven for that, sir! But I never heard a body’s tongue swear gladlier though, for I thowt we’d kilt the poit.’

We are now opposite ‘Scoat’ How, and if we will but turn our heads we shall see far up the Shoulthwaite Ghyll, an outstanding crag. That is the Fort. Whether it be the Buck Castle of old time, by name, matters little; that crag was certainly once held by the men who used stone arrows and smote with the celt. It was a prehistoric fortress, admirably planned and impregnable.

Now there are evidences of the hand that strewed Naddle Vale with those huge boulders. On our right the rocks are planed into smoothness by the glaciers that once ground their way towards the south. On our left is seen against the sky one of the rock perchés, which, from its likeness to a huge bishop’s head-dress, has been called St. Kentigern’s Mitre.

Nothing now but roses, roses, all the way, till, facing one of the oldest, mossiest dry walls in the country, the humble little parsonage of St. John’s Vale greets us, standing close to the turn that takes us across the valley to Naddle Fell. The next farmhouse upon our left has historic significance in its name. It is Causeway Foot. Hither ran the Roman road from Penrith, or from the Roman camp beyond Bassenthwaite. Hence by Miregate, close by, the Roman soldiers passed to and from their camp on Castrigg of to-day. That Miregate road, deep-trodden into the hillside, has seen centuries of travellers passing up to the camp for protection. And up and down that old packhorse road have plied the horses laden with wood or black plumbago from Borrowdale, the mules laden with salt for Furness Abbey, from Grange; the horses laden with copper ore from Goldscope.

And up and down that packhorse road have gone Roman, Saxon, and Dane on travellers’ errands. Yes, and in later times, when all ’twixt this and Keswick was wild common, that track was sought too, for the great Earls of Darran or Derwentwater probably—for all that Speede makes no mention of it—held watch and ward from castle walls upon the ridge hard by.

‘Up Castrigg’s naked steep’ we, with Wordsworth’s waggoner, now make our way. But the commons enclosure has robbed it of much of its nakedness. Upon our left is seen one of the ancient milking-rings—a circular fence of holly-trees. We pass along slowly; the horses feel the hill. It is a grand view that we now have of Helvellyn, if we will but look backwards. It is hence that his majestic tawny height is best seen. It is hence that, for three parts of the year, can best be understood the meaning of his name—the Yellow Moor.

On Wanthwaite Crag, away to the right, one of the earliest of the prehistoric pit village remains are found.

Yonder little road, on Naddle Fell, slopes upward to the most picturesquely placed church in the Lake District. Close beside that church, a century ago, stood the public-house, and thither, on the Sunday before Easter, it was the custom of the inhabitants of the parish, old and young, to repair after prayer in the afternoon. They then collected a penny from each person, male and female, and spent in liquor all the money so collected. At one of the ‘Penny Fairs’ on Sunday, Clarke tells us that as much as 3*l.* was so spent, which proved that the congregation was a goodly one—in number not less than 720.

Times have altered; the parishioners of the daughter parish of St. John’s Vale do not meet on Sunday for a service and a drinking bout a bit more than the parishioners of the ancient parish of Crosthwaite meet, as they used to do five centuries ago, on festival days, to sell flesh and fish at the parish church, or, to the detriment of the market of Cockermonth, came in a great concourse to Crosthwaite Church every Sunday to buy and sell corn, flour, beans, peas, linen and cloth, fish and flesh, as set forth in a Parliamentary petition in the year of Our Lord 1306.

The alehouse has disappeared, and by the churchyard stands the school in its place. There Richardson, the Cumberland dialect poet, taught his boys till a few years since, and there he lies buried—a man whose poems show him to have been a man of racy shrewdness and deep feeling for the realities of life; a man that Cumbrian literature will never forget; a natural product of the scene we are passing through—a genius St. John’s Vale may be proud of.

But still our mind is full of the greatest of Cumbria’s sons of song. Blencathra, looking for all the world like great Gilboa, seen from the Plains of Jezreel, is growing magnificently large as we

climb the hill, and just as we pass 'Pyats' Nest of last century—the High Nest of our day—we note, far to the east, a cluster of houses in the plain—

And see beyond that hamlet small
The ruined towers of Threlkeld Hall.

There, at Blencathra's rugged feet,
Sir Lancelot gave a safe retreat
To noble Clifford.

The whole poem of Brougham Castle rings up in our ears.

For in that Threlkeld vale, after the crushing of the Red Rose at Towton, and the death by a rude wound on the throat of his father, the bloody, black-faced Clifford, there was hidden a high-born shepherd-boy—Henry, the tenth lord. There he found love

In the huts where poor men lie;
His daily teachers were the woods and rills.

There he 'watched the constellations rise and set.' And, when he came to his own again by the will of Henry VII.—

Glad were the vales, and every cottage hearth,
The shepherd lord was honoured more and more,
And ages after he was laid in earth
The 'good Lord Clifford' was the name he bore.

As one looks upon Blencathra with its triple breast and strange saddle buttress—alternate gloom and glory to-day from the swift chase of sun and shade—one feels something of the weight of mystery laid upon one's spirit that dictated the choice of site to the Druid worshippers of old time. We are at Castle Lonning end.

To the left runs the old Penrith road to the camp or castle, to the right runs the lane to the Druid circle, unique with its thirty-eight stones in outer circle and its eastern inner sanctuary. It is a thousand pities our coach-road just misses sight of this circle.

For there on midsummer morn, in early sun-worship days, must in all probability the people have gathered. At eve, when the blazing wheels of straw ran down the mountain slopes—there, too, perhaps the sacrifice was slain. It was not long since that a stone club or bludgeon was discovered in the field hard by. But what had Blencathra to do with the choice of the site? Only this, that it is certain that from early times upon the eastern shoulder of Blencathra, now called Souter Fell, by some atmospheric condition

favourable to optical illusion, ghostly troops of men and horses have appeared to march and countermarch about the hill.

By coincidence this phenomenon—being none other than a reflection of horses and men at exercise beyond the Solway—has been observed on the successive midsummer eves of 1735, 1737, and 1745. On that last appearance, so clearly were seen the magic horsemen that men went out to look for the marks of the horse-hoofs on the steep Fellside. Is it stretching a point too far to conjecture that the builders of that Druid circle had like experiences, and here, in view of the Hill of Demons or the Mountain of the Ghosts, raised their altar, worshipped their god, met for council, and buried their dead?

‘The Moor, sir,’ said the driver, and he pulled up to put the skid on.

I was right glad—the past quarter of a mile had seemed so uninteresting; it was a good preparative for a surprise.

Suddenly such a scene opened at our feet as you will not describe. Skiddaw fairly seemed to leap into the air, so suddenly did its height grow upward from the depth, that was as suddenly revealed.

Broadwater or Bassenthwaite looked as if the sea had put forth an arm of silver brightness, and was feeling its way up into the land.

Wythop and Barf and Grisedale shone mottled with wood and upland green and purple-shaded shale.

The plain was prinked and patterned out in squares of green and gold, and, like a serpent, the Derwent coiled through the fields towards the far-off lake.

There, beyond the clump of trees where nestles the vicarage of Crosthwaite, was seen the ancient parish church of good St. Kentigern. Southey’s resting-place was, I knew, there; and nearer, hid by the veil of trees upon its mound by Gretaside, was dimly seen Greta Hall, to which at Coleridge’s invitation came Robert Southey with his wife nigh heartbroken for her little ones’ loss in September 1803, and from which on a dark and stormy morning, March 21, 1843, there was borne to his rest, by the side of his wife and his children three, beneath yonder white church-tower in the plain, the mortal remains of the most learned, the most unselfish, and high-minded Laureate England has known. Nearer the tower is seen, beneath its veil of opal smoke, St. John’s Church spire, and ‘Derwentwater lies a queen confessed.’ What a view!

just such a scene as Southey painted in the opening stanzas of his 'Vision of Judgment'—

Mountains and lakes and vales, the valley in glorious verdure ;
Derwent, motionless, grey, retaining every reflection,
Where its expanded breast, now still and smooth as a mirror,
Under the woods reposed ; the hills that, calm and majestic,
Lifted their heads in the silent sky from far Glaramara,
Blea Crag, and Maiden Mawr, to Grizedale and westernmost Wythop.

'Here in Cumberland,' once wrote Southey, 'I miss the nightingale and the violet' . . . 'but these lakes and mountains give me a deep joy, for which I suspect nothing else can compensate.'

And certainly, as one gazes down upon the plain with its welcome of hospitalities—for the farms gleam among happy fields and cared-for plots, and there, pink and warm, gleams the Derwentwater Hotel at Portinscale, here, grey and solidly comfortable, stands up the Keswick Hotel, while all the little quiet town-chimneys are breathing up the assurance of 'home firesides and household mirth'—one feels that one is gazing upon a scene such as may well cause a traveller to say, with Gray the poet (in his 'Journal,' dated Oct. 8, 1769), 'Mounted an eminence called Castle Rigg, and, the sun breaking out, discovered the most enchanting view I have yet seen of the whole valley . . . the two lakes, the river, the mountains in all their glory : so that I had a mind to have gone back again.' No wonder Gray was so near recalled as he set forth for Ambleside.

To-day, though there are fewer 'goings on' in earth or heaven, as Southey would have called them, under the June-tide light, than Gray would in an autumn tide have witnessed, even to-day one could not but repeat to oneself those lines in 'Ruth'—

It was a fresh and glorious world,
A banner bright that was unfurled
 Before me suddenly.
I looked upon those hills and plains,
And seemed as if let loose from chains
 To live at liberty.

Down the long hill we went, our skid smoking at the wheel.

And suddenly, on our left hand, Walla's Crag, Southey's favourite walk, and Falcon Crag and the Great Wood, were seen to tower up from and overhang the beautiful Lady of the Lakes, Darran or Derwentwater. There lay the burnished shield on which the wild Britons who kept their hold on Bleaberry Fell had gazed ; there the calm water across which the bosom friend of great St. Cuth-

bert, Herebert the hermit, had poured out his soul in prayer as he faced the shore of yonder woody isle, and heard

Lodore

Peal to his orisons.

The glory of wonderland was ours to 'westernmost Wythop.' Now straight down the hill we go towards the little white toll-bar. The green Latrigg, on which the rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep—for forty barrows are said to have been found there in the last century—Ridge of Lathar the Dane—lies serene beneath Mount Skiddaw. Skiddaw or Skiddr—the cleft one—that English model of the hornèd Parnassus, wears no cap to-day, and we rejoice, for we want fine weather; and though, when 'he shrouds his double front among Atlantic clouds, he pours forth streams more sweet than Castaly,' he at the same time hides much of the hills and sends us wet to bed.

Two ways are ours now. If the coachman takes us to the left, we shall have a magnificent peep at Borrowdale and all the reach of hills to Scafell huge, above the Derwentwater Lake. We shall picture to ourselves the delight of the landscape as seen from Castlett or Castle Head, we shall think of the days when Frederic Myers laboured among and loved the people of his pastoral charge in the parish of St. John's, Keswick.

But the coachman drives straight forward, and in a trice we are passing the quaint little, irregular-backed house, beneath its ash, its sycamore, its elm, and cherrytree, known as Chesnut Hill. When Shelley brought his young schoolgirl bride here in 1811, he, it is certain, did not find much more accommodation than the northern end of the roof-tree gable indicates as possible. But the garden is much as it was in the front of the house when he chased his young wife like a kitten round the flower-beds; and still, close by, is living the widow of the son of that old gentleman, Shelley's landlord, who was dissatisfied with the poet, thought him a dangerous occupant, found him making hydrogen sulphide gas in a retort, and bade him suit himself elsewhere.

To the right was seen just now a gate that opened to Field-side. One cannot pass that gate without remembering that there still lives there one who helped to put the laurel crown upon the poet Southey's head when he came back from London as the Laureate; one who remembers Wordsworth and Shelley, whose name is associated with the name of the short-lived youth, dear to all lovers of Wordsworth, to whom the poet, then a poor and un-

known man, 'owed many years of early liberty.' We have reached the bottom of the long Chesnut Hill, and round to the left we swing. The Greta—no weeper, as some have said its name implies, to-day—is singing merrily over the pebbles hard by 'with liveliest peals of birthday harmony,' and, as one gazes back up the woody cleft wherefrom it issues, one feels that even 'to a grieved heart' such a river's 'notes' must needs be 'benisons.' Scarce seen for the woodland veil, stands Greta Bank on the cliff opposite; when that hall was but a homely farm, there, dwelt one who, some have thought, was described by Wordsworth in the stanzas written in the pocket copy of Thomson's 'Castle of Indolence':

Many did to him repair,
And certes not in vain; he had inventions rare.

But, whether Calvert was 'the noticeable man with large grey eyes' thus described, or not, it is certain that there at Windy Brow lived one who loved the poets, and had more than half persuaded both Coleridge and Wordsworth to come and study chemistry with him 'within his happy castle' above the Greta banks.

'Yes, sir,' said the coachman, 'they tell that Mister Calvert, him as tried to grow corn on Latrigg, time of the famine, and as made the path to the top, lived there—fine view at Latrigg Top, sir, finest hereabouts, and it's free now for everyone, as long as you keep the path, and don't do no damage, you know, sir. That's Calvert's Bridge, sir, there was such talk about, time of the trial.' Saying this, he cracked his whip, and on we went at a fine scamper past one of the most picturesque bits of solid bridge-building this side the Raise. The miners of Queen Elizabeth's time who smelted the ore from Goldscope and Newlands in their forges close by had only a poor wooden one here, where to-day the people go high on this solid arch of stone across to Brundholme Woods or Applethwaite. Brigham scholars are returning to their school—we are going to ours. For Keswick is here, and we have much to learn in this enchanted valley. The Fitz Park grounds are full of folks enjoying lawn-tennis and bowls. Happy little town to have such a public playground! And happy England to have such a national recreation ground as the hills and vales we have driven through to-day!

CHALONER'S BEST MAN.

PART I.

From Edward Chaloner to Colonel Hythe.

Lutcombe, Devon, Dec. 10.

DEAR OLD GERRY,—Don't roar! I am going to be married; and that to the nicest girl under the sun, and the prettiest into the bargain. Of course you are groaning over me, and swearing at me, and calling me a fool and a victim, and all the rest of it. I can see you at it from here, old fellow. But for all your rooted ideas on the subject, you may believe me when I tell you that I am the luckiest man alive, and would not change places with any one in the world.

And now, if you have not already guessed who the young lady is, you are not as sharp as I take you to be, for though you never met Miss Prade, it is not my fault if her name is not pretty familiar to you by this time. You know I have loved her for years, ever since I first saw her. You know she is the only girl I ever really cared for.

Congratulate me, old boy; I can scarcely believe my own good fortune. I daresay you will laugh at me, but I must tell you we have been engaged nearly three months already, and I never dared write to anyone about it before, lest something should happen to prevent the marriage. *Now*, however, it is fixed for the 21st, so there can be no mistake about it, thank goodness! though it seems too good to be true. We are to be married from here, her brother-in-law's house; Marie lives with them, you know, being an orphan. He is the best fellow in the world, and has splendid shooting.

And now I am coming to the point of my letter. Will you be my best man? There is not another fellow in England, or anywhere else, for the matter of that, I'd sooner have than you, old chappie. You have always been the dearest chum I ever had.

Ever yours, most sincerely,

EDWARD DUFFUS CHALONER.

P.S.—Holmes, her brother-in-law, you know, will put you up. Come as soon as you can.

From Colonel Hythe to Edward Chaloner.

Guards' Club, 15th.

Dear old Duffer,—I accept invitation to accompany you to execution, and feel a painful pleasure in being able to render you the last service in my power. I am rejoiced everything appears to you in so superlative a light. Hope it will last-out the honeymoon. Glad, anyhow, the young lady is an orphan; glad also of brother-in-law's good shooting. I shall turn up on the 19th to assist in tying up the noose. Shall I bring my gun? Best wishes to you, and pray give my congratulations to the young lady on having succeeded in potting the 'best fellow in the world.' Ta-ta!

Yours,

GERALD.

P.S.—Wasn't Miss Prade's mother a Russian, and isn't there a proverb about Russians and Tartars? This is merely a suggestion.

'Confound the fellow,' said Colonel Hythe to himself, as the train sped along through the raw evening air. 'Couldn't he be married at another time of year; couldn't he have got another fellow to play the fool behind him in church; couldn't he remain a bachelor? I do hate a man who doesn't know when he is well off. I really am the most good-natured creature—to think of my taking this infernal journey in such weather all to satisfy a sentimental feeling about that old ass, Ned. Poor Ned!—the Duffer as we used to call him—I believe I have a soft corner in my heart for him after all. He was always the same—always the greatest noodle—from the time he could walk alone, perpetually in some scrape or other. I suppose I have helped to pull him out of a dozen at least. Ah, well! he's been and gone and done it this time. Can't pull him out of this, and more's the pity. Another good man gone wrong. She has nabbed him of course. Those girls have the talent of scenting the tin, and running it down, too—15,000*l.* a year and the finest place in Hampshire are not to be picked up every day. She has played her cards well, too, by Jove! The poor devil thinks she has done him the greatest favour in life by consenting to spend his money for him. Poor Ned! Poor old Duffer! He was always a good creature at heart

—better than any of us—but that is the way of the world ; it's the best that go first.'

Colonel Hythe was growing vague ; his cigar slipped from his fingers, his eyelids drooped over his handsome eyes, his head began to bob with placid non-resistance to the jerking and jolting of the carriage. Presently a gentle snort escaped at intervals from his well-shaped nose, and Colonel Hythe slept.

With a despairing yell the train slackened speed ; a hideous grating of brakes ensued, lights flashed into the window, houses leaped up on each side like a legion of Jack-in-the-boxes, the engine halted with a great spouting-out of steam before a little red-brick station, and an aged porter emitted several totally unintelligible shouts. Yet Colonel Hythe slept on.

A dark, agitated countenance appeared at the window of his carriage, the door was opened with frenzied haste, a voice called on him in tones of anguish—

'Monsieur, monsieur ! Our station, monsieur ! For the love of God, awake !'

And Gerald Hythe, thus abjured, opened two wrathful eyes in time to see his French valet, nearly black in the face—an already sufficiently dusky one—with the combined efforts of shrieking at him and struggling to pull the portmanteau over the barrier of his outstretched legs, in time to feel its sharpest corner land on his favourite toe, and to become aware beneath him of the first faint outward movement of the again departing train.

With one energetic sweep of his arm he sent Leclerc spinning on to the platform, in another instant the portmanteau followed suit, and the third saw the gallant Colonel emerge with more haste than dignity from the carriage ; escaping, at the imminent peril of life and limb, the fate of being carried away into the heart of Cornwall.

'Confound your fussiness,' exclaimed he, with great indignation and a sublime disregard of justice, scowling at his discomfited attendant ; 'I've lost my best stick now. Really, Leclerc, you get worse and worse every day.'

With which outburst he felt sufficiently relieved to be able to make inquiries of the station-master as to the possibilities of a conveyance with a tolerable amount of civility. His long-suffering valet meanwhile murmured abject apologies, readjusted his disordered attire, and the instant his master's broad back was turned, sent a murderous look and an inward malediction of the

most sulphurous description after him, thereby deriving much moral satisfaction at having re-established the equilibrium of things.

Then a loud cheery voice rang out from the unsavoury little waiting-room.

'Gerry, old man, this *is* jolly!' and a shortish, stoutish, pinkish young man of the retreating-chin, prominent-eye type, who came running forward with great impetuosity, two tightly yellow-gloved hands outstretched, and a beaming smile broadly distending his ingenuous countenance.

Colonel Hythe smiled in return, but spasmodically. He was not up to 'gush' just then.

'Ah! Chaloner!' he remarked, with a distinct absence of enthusiasm, and delivered one limp hand to the other's rapturous grasp.

'I've got the dogcart for you, old chappie; your fellow can go behind, and I'll bowl you over the ground in double quick time. I hope you're well wrapt up; it's the bitterest night we have had yet.'

The Colonel groaned.

Anyone with a grain of sense would have a brougham for him—a covered fly even—in such weather and at such an hour. But what could one expect? It was the 'Duffer' all over.

He got into the vehicle provided for him in Spartan silence, Leclerc scrambled up behind, their luggage was hauled in, and off they went, the mare scrambling and sprawling on the slippery road.

'The fastest goer,' said Ned, 'in all the country.'

The Colonel grunted. The wind was blowing up his sleeves and down his neck, and finding out every weak corner of his anatomy. At any rate it should not have the chance of penetrating to his lungs.

Ned, nothing abashed, babbled on garrulously of his happiness, his bride, his prospects.

Lights appeared in the far distance.

'The village,' said Ned, interrupting his discourse and pointing at their glimmering with his whip.

'Hang the village!' thought Colonel Hythe.

They turned a corner so sharply as seriously to imperil their equilibrium. The mare was undoubtedly fast, but she had likewise an unpleasant tendency to take every corner at a rush, and

graze it if possible. The Colonel could hear Leclerc's teeth chattering with cold, and feel him squirming in unconscious and futile efforts to ease the swaying cart.

Two great gates suddenly broke the monotony of the high bleak wall they were skirting. Ned pulled up before them and hulloaed wildly, at the same time elaborately explaining, 'The Lodge!'

Of course the mare went for it with a bounce, and did her best to catch the off-wheel on the curbstone. A broken prayer escaped Leclerc's lips. They whirled past close-growing trees, silhouettes of cattle, and hanging mists that wreathed over dim hollows; there was a homely, pleasant sound of crunching of gravel after the ring of the hard road; a great square building, studded with lights, loomed all at once before them, as if risen out of the night.

'The house,' said Ned. And, 'Thank God!' said Colonel Hythe.

'I say, Gerry,' here observed Mr. Chaloner rather nervously, and moderating the pace of the mare to allow him time to say his say before arriving, a procedure which infinitely disgusted the half-frozen Colonel; 'I say, Gerry, you mustn't mind if Marie' (he pronounced it Mawry) 'seems to you just a little odd in her manner at first. She is apt to strike strangers so, sometimes, you know, so—ah—I thought I'd just tell you, don't you know, lest you shouldn't understand it. I like her all the better for it myself,' Ned went on hurriedly. ('Nothing when you are used to it, I suppose,' murmured Gerald in a none too amiable *sotto voce*.)

'But just in the beginning, when you don't know her, you might get a wrong impression of her. She is really the best tempered girl in the world.'

'Really,' said Colonel Hythe. Now there was something in his tone which Ned did not relish. For he coloured very much in the darkness, and relapsing suddenly into silence, gathered up the reins so sharply that the mare landed them with a rush and a scuttle before the hall-door.

It opened on the instant as if by magic. A solemn butler appeared on the threshold; a brisk young footman precipitated himself on the travellers. A pale, brown-bearded man received the Colonel, as Ned ushered him noisily into the hall, with a solemn handshake.

Then a great laughing and chattering in a high feminine key was heard rapidly approaching from a little distance, and a short, plump, fair woman waddled out to them—a ceaseless stream of voluble inquiries and ecstatic giggles flowing from her lips—and seized the Colonel's hand with fervour in her own two fat white ones.

'How do you do, Colonel Hythe? So glad to see you. Was it very *cold*? Are you *dreadfully* tired? *Isn't* it an awful night? Won't you come into the *library* and have a cup of *tea*?'

This was Mrs. Holmes; the tall, silent man was Mr. Holmes; the small flat-faced boy peeping at him from between the latter's legs was Master Holmes.

Colonel Hythe took a violent dislike to the whole family on the spot. He hated people who hadn't a word to throw to a fellow; he hated people who rushed at one and talked nineteen to the dozen and italicised their words; he hated small boys with round staring eyes.

He felt his nose was flaming after the cold drive, he knew he was grimy, unkempt, not fit for ladies' society, and he was glad the unknown Miss Prade was not there to see him in such plight.

Mrs. Holmes's offers of refreshment he declined with elaborate courtesy, wondering in his own mind if 'Mawry' were like her, and at his request was ushered to his room by the devoted and ever ready Ned. The latter was bubbling all over with such superfluous affection and rapture, and was altogether so irrepressible and trying to the Colonel in his then condition of irritation, that he was forced to expel him from his presence with a severity which would have been calculated to cast a damper over anyone but the 'Duffer.'

A hot bath, a luxurious shave under Leclerc's skilled fingers (who, as he was wont to say himself, had the true instinct of the art), the consciousness that the colour had retreated from the tip of his fine straight nose, and that there could not be two opinions about the cut of his clothes, that, altogether, he was not looking his worst, went a fair way to restore the Colonel's equanimity. Leclerc had also imparted to him his impression that the cook would prove passable, and Leclerc's impressions on such matters were apt to turn out correct. This was a more cheering prospect than he had allowed himself to indulge in. Gerald Hythe was

thirty-four, an age when a man's dinner assumes a considerable amount of importance in everyday life.

The gong clamoured through the house just as the dapper little Frenchman withdrew his hands with a flourish from under his master's chin, and contemplated the irreproachable bow of cambric he had just completed with a glow of triumph irradiating his countenance. He had surpassed himself to-night.

The hungry Colonel ran downstairs, nothing loth, to obey the welcome summons. Pulling up his collar and pulling down his cuffs, after the approved style, he entered the library to which the sedate butler motioned him with a majestic wave of his arm. Here were assembled, awaiting him, his host gloomy and gentlemanly, his hostess as plump as a quail in her tight grey satin gown, and Ned red and uneasy, though obviously struggling to be cheerful and conceal the anxious glances he kept throwing from side to side in the vain search for someone who was nowhere to be seen.

'We shall not wait for my sister-in-law,' said Mr. Holmes severely. 'Colonel Hythe, will you give your arm to my wife?'

Colonel Hythe obeyed, wondering why so trifling a matter as a young lady's inexactitude should cast such a gloom over the little party. He was beginning to feel curious about the person in question, and unconsciously fell into Ned's way of watching the door the while he partook of excellent soup and answered somewhat at random Mrs. Holmes's incessant babble.

The fish had just been placed before his host, a cod's head and shoulders of gigantic size, reposing on a very stiff white napkin, when the door was opened petulantly, and with a good deal of rustle and bustle, a very small and slender girl came into the room.

Ned grew purple, and sprang up to meet her, Mrs. Holmes poured forth a volume of queries, laments, and reproaches, intermingled with perfectly irrelevant bursts of laughter; Miss Prade did not pay the least attention to either of them.

'Soup, please,' she cried, in a ringing voice to the butler, who was hovering behind Mr. Holmes, plate in hand, awaiting fish, and sat down calmly in the place reserved for her, beside her lover.

On Colonel Hythe she did not bestow even a glance; a treatment, however, he did not regret, as it enabled him to examine her critically, unobserved himself.

What a quaint original little face it was, and how bewitchingly wicked! Nothing of the regular statuesque style of beauty about her, far from it. There was a certain flatness of cheekbone—Calmuck, as he told himself—the eyes were too long and narrow, the nose too short, the lips too full. But what colouring, what hair, how bright the grey-green eyes, how attractive the strange and intense mobility of the whole countenance!

‘That little girl,’ he thought, ‘is just the sort to drive a man mad.’

And the more he watched her the stronger there came upon him an indescribable feeling which seemed to partake both of fascination and repulsion.

‘Marie,’ suddenly interposed Mrs. Holmes, mindful of her duties, ‘let me introduce Colonel Hythe.’

The Colonel bowed low and ceremoniously over his plate. The girl gave him a direct bold look from her narrow eyes, and a little abrupt nod that was full of impudence.

‘No doubt,’ said Gerald, in his most graceful way, ‘you are aware of the responsible duty I have promised to undertake for Ned yonder.’

‘Oh yes, I know,’ answered Miss Marie promptly; ‘you promised to attend his execution, and have the painful pleasure of rendering him the last service in your power.’

Colonel Hythe positively gaped, while to say that Ned blushed would be totally inadequate language to describe the series of hues his countenance assumed; Mr. Holmes stared straight before him with the look of a man who is determined not to be surprised at *anything*; Mrs. Holmes gave one of her extraordinary crows of laughter to hide the confusion she felt.

Gerald was the first to recover from the effects of the shock.

‘It was not fair of Ned,’ he said reproachfully, gazing at the unfortunate young man, now choking in his champagne glass, ‘to show you my poor confidential scrawl; I am quite at your mercy, but I trust you will remember I had not yet *seen* you.’

To his amused chagrin, the subtle and delicate compliment intended to be conveyed by these words was totally lost on Miss Prade, who immediately rejoined carelessly, ‘He did not show it to me, he left it about and I read it. I wanted to see if his friends were like himself.’

To the dullest among them—save, indeed, the bridegroom elect himself—it was most embarrassingly obvious that the young

lady's opinion of the gallant officer would not have been a high one had she discovered the resemblance in question.

'Mary,' said Mr. Holmes in a warning bass, and holding the fish slye aloft in a threatening manner, 'will you have some cod?'

Marie glanced at the boiled denizen of the sea, and for a moment her eyes remained glued to its melancholy jowl as if attracted by some horrible fascination. Then a gleam of wicked amusement lit up the whole piquant little face; she looked swiftly at Chaloner, and from his amiable inane countenance, with goggle eyes just now staring dully before him, and receding chin dropping back from the gaping mouth, once again to the flabby head on the dish.

Colonel Hythe was watching her manœuvres with some curiosity; the meaning of them now flashed across him. Great heavens! yes, he saw it too. There was undoubtedly an absurd, grotesque resemblance between the cod's head and Ned's. He always was deuced ugly, poor old chap.

Marie gave an affected shiver. 'No, thank you,' she said, with emphasis, and curled up her little nose with an irresistibly humorous expression.

Gerald could not repress a smile; he alone had followed her little by-play, involuntarily their eyes met with mutual understanding. Then instantly feeling hideously disloyal, he endeavoured to compose his features into an expression of rigid severity and to look as if he did not understand what she meant.

'What a pity,' said Mrs. Holmes in the pause that ensued on this incident, to cover the delay which as usual preceded the appearance of the first *entrée*, 'that Ned is no longer in the army. It would have been quite charming if he could have worn his uniform on Wednesday and had his men all up the church and all that sort of thing, wouldn't it? I always think it makes a wedding look *so* pretty.'

'Yes,' cried Ned, with good-humoured acquiescence, 'and then Gerry could have sported his V.C. and all the rest of it, and I should have felt so proud of the dear old boy.'

Miss Prade pricked up her ears with sudden sparkling interest and looked hard at the Colonel.

'Has he got the Victoria Cross?' she asked quickly.

'Rather,' cried Chaloner with generous enthusiasm, and forthwith launched into a most gushing account of his friend's

prodigies of valour, not only dwelling on the especial feat which won him that most distinguished of all distinctions, but likewise all his other exploits which deserved quite as much notice but did not get it.

With all an Englishman's horror of such a situation the Colonel pished and pshawed and poohed, and telegraphed frantic signals across the table in the vain endeavour of silencing his indiscreet eulogist.

His confusion was increased by the unwinking stare Mr. Holmes fixed on him during the whole narrative and the imbecile encomiums with which Mrs. Holmes interlarded it, and in which, at its conclusion, she positively wallowed.

Miss Prade listened to her lover in attentive silence, and abstained from making any comment on his eloquent account beyond the sharp query she addressed to him, as he stopped, quite breathless—

‘How is it *you* haven't got any medals?’ To which Ned, somewhat taken aback, answered deprecatingly that he had never been into action. He had come into his property only two years after he had joined, and was thus obliged to resign before having a chance of seeing any service.

‘Oh!’ said Miss Prade, with biting scorn and truly feminine inconsistency. And then she turned her eyes once more on the Colonel and once more their looks met.

Now he was not a vain man, nor an imaginative one, but it was apparent to him that the young lady's *réséda*-coloured orbs betrayed a great deal more warmth than he was entitled to; and, though it was undeniably pleasant he would not allow himself to return the compliment, for, as he remarked internally, if he were Ned he certainly wouldn't like to catch her looking at another fellow like that.

He tried to think it was a relief when she left the dining-room, but for all that, Ned's platitudes seemed more intolerable than ever, and the great oak dining-room to have grown quite dark without the bright mischievous face.

‘What a little devil it is,’ he soliloquised over his wine, ‘and what a fate lies in store for Ned. The girl hates him already, as anyone can see; Heaven only knows how it will turn out. Poor dull fellow, one can't help feeling sorry for him. The idea of his attempting to chain that brilliant butterfly creature to his side! I fear me,’ thought the Colonel in a high moral strain, ‘it is

destined to be one of those unhappy unions—alas, too common—which end so fatally after a few years of conjugal misery. When a girl sells herself for money, how can anyone expect her to keep straight as a wife? It is a criminal state of society.'

The three were not very sociable as they sat sipping their claret round the board. Their host never talked, Colonel Hythe was not inclined for conversation, even Ned could not discourse for ever unencouraged. A deep silence fell on them and no one was sorry when after a due interval a move to the drawing-room was originated.

Now, it was a very strange thing that the instant he entered the room, the Colonel became aware of Miss Prade's absence, and still stranger the feeling of keen disappointment that came over him in consequence. Ned looked round forlornly and then in piteous inquiry at Mrs. Holmes, who shrugged her plump shoulders and rolled her eyes in cheerful deprecation.

'How dare she behave like that to her future husband,' said Gerald to himself in an unreasonable outburst of righteous indignation. 'It's a burning shame; it is more than rude, it's insulting to the poor fellow.'

He stood aimlessly looking at the pictures and inveighing against the girl in his own mind when Ned came up to him and said in a whisper—

'I am awfully sorry I left that letter about; I am afraid she will never forgive you. She is so proud and sensitive, poor little thing. Of course you noticed how strange she was to-night; I believe she is really hurt, and I don't know where to look for her.'

Gerald met his friend's eyes with a pang of pity and an inexplicable feeling of remorse. They might be fishy, but they were honest, true eyes for all that, and were now filled with a timid wistfulness that went to his heart.

He clapped his hand suddenly on Ned's shoulder and said cheerily, 'My dear fellow, it's not your fault, it's mine, for making such a confounded ass of myself when I wrote. Never mind her not liking me. What's the odds, so long as she's fond of the right person! She's a lovely little thing, and I consider you eminently to be congratulated.' It was touching to see how the 'Duffer' revived under these words. Up went his spirits again to exultation point, where they remained stationary for the rest of the evening for all his wilful little mistress's persistent absence.

Mrs. Holmes retired early, to the infinite relief of Gerald, who

could not accustom himself to her extraordinary volubility nor her ceaseless peals of laughter; and after a cigar her lord and master followed her example. It was a primitive household, to which 11 p.m. was the height of dissipation. Ned had evidently fallen into their ways, for despite all his efforts and his genuine pleasure in the Colonel's company, he went from one yawn into another till the latter could stand it no longer and literally drove him from the field. He himself was just beginning to feel lively and declined to move from his comfortable quarters, a decision which greatly disgusted the butler, who having too much idea of the 'convenances' to put out the gas and leave the troublesome guest to his own devices, saw himself debarred from a part of his legitimate slumbers. The Colonel never felt less inclined for his couch. A curious restlessness had taken possession of him, and for nearly an hour he wandered aimlessly about the room, unable to occupy himself with anything.

He lit one of his host's excellent cigars only to throw it away; mixed a stiff bumper of whisky and soda and left the inviting beverage untouched; turned over all the magazines and could not make up his mind which to open. He must go out for a turn, he thought at length, or he would not be able to get a wink of sleep that night.

It was very odd, but that little girl was always before his mind's eye. It showed what slaves we are to our senses, moralised the guardsman, as he threw a cloak of Mr. Holmes's over his stalwart shoulders. If she had been ugly, now, he would not have thought twice of her—she certainly was the last girl in the world for Ned; a creature like that should be married to a man with a firm will, a man who could tame her. It would not be altogether unpleasant either to have the taming of the lovely little shrew.

He caught sight of his own face in the glass as he turned to leave the room. What did that absurdly determined setting of your face mean, Gerald Hythe, and that fiercely elated gleam of your eye?

Pshaw! What a fool a man gets at this time of night!

He laughed angrily to himself as he hurried into the hall, seized a cap and made for a side door which his bump of locality informed him would probably lead out of the house. It was unlocked and yielded noiselessly to the pressure of his hand.

A gush of warm air enveloped him, heavy with the intoxicating perfume of many flowers. He found himself in a vast vista of

towering palms and delicate sprawling ferns, a murmur of flowing waters fell upon his ear, the tessellated pavement under his feet was strewn with gorgeous rugs, with here and there a quaint-shaped, deep-cushioned bamboo lounge; the whole place was lighted in some cunning, invisible way from the great gas lamps in the hall; it was beautified by every rare and exquisite exotic that can be imagined. A paradise of colouring, sweetness, and artistic construction, it seemed to the astonished Colonel like fairyland.

This was the great Lutcombe conservatory, the one interest in life of its taciturn master, and through which he had intended to marshal his guest with due solemnity on the morrow, when the day was brightest.

'There ought to be an enchanted princess somewhere,' thought Gerald, with vague reminiscence of his childish days of fairy tales, and then advancing he looked around involuntarily as if to seek her.

And there she was in very truth, under the blossoming gardenia bush that sent forth such delirious gusts of fragrance into the warm moist air.

The Colonel started and then nearly laughed aloud at himself as he saw the little white figure stretched luxuriously on the settee, the fair tossed head supported on two round white arms that gleamed at him from the green gloom, the full white lids closed in apparent slumber.

On tiptoe he crept over to her and bent down to gaze.

The little humbug! She was foxing.

He could distinctly see the quivering shadow of the dark eyelashes on the glowing cheek, the dawning symptoms of a mischievous dimple, instantly suppressed; nay, he could hear the catch of an irresistible titter breaking the exaggerated regularity of her breathing.

He was not going to stand this. We all know the fate of sleeping princesses in fairyland.

The Colonel did not pause to think about the duties honour and friendship alike imposed on him, did not even hear his conscience warning him against staining his spotless shield by an act of flagrant disloyalty. He forgot Ned altogether in the fascination of Ned's bride, and stooping still lower implanted a very fervent kiss on the roguishly compressed lips so temptingly at his disposal.

But the sin was no sooner committed than swift retribution came upon him. His heart stirred within him as, in all his years

of life, in all his experience of love and adventure, it had never stirred before. Good Heavens! What woman was this? Was she really enchanted and had she cast her spell over him? And *then* he remembered Ned. She was to be married to Ned on the morrow—yes, the morrow, for even at that instant the last strokes of midnight were dying on the air—Ned who had been his friend ever since they were boys together, poor, foolish, trusting, innocent Ned!

The perspiration started to the Colonel's brow, in the space of a minute a tumult of thoughts rushed through his mind.

How was it that the memory of those days at Eton so long ago should have come upon him now so vividly. That time when Ned took a switching for a fault of which he, Gerald, was guilty, and had the heroism not to reveal his devotion, even when the real culprit, with the brutality only one boy can show to another, taunted him with milksoppishness for crying over his punishment.

How distinctly the Colonel remembered the gush of generous feeling which had filled his heart towards the faithful little fellow when the truth was by chance revealed, and the ardent friendship they swore for each other over a bottle of ginger beer.

His face grew very black, his conscience very reproachful, and Miss Prade, peeping at him from under her long eyelashes, thought it was getting about time to wake up.

This she did with an admirably simulated start and look of surprise, with the most bewitching blinking of very wideawake and watchful eyes, and stretching of the pretty bare arms afore-said. Then she looked up at the Colonel, who was standing over her as stiff as a poker, and withal a general appearance as if he were on parade.

'I believe I have been asleep,' she said, with a little rippling laugh.

'I believe you have,' answered the Colonel drily; 'it's lucky I came in, or you might have slept here all night, perhaps.'

'I had such lovely dreams,' said Miss Prade, in a soft, low voice. After which remark there was a pause, and they went out of the dangerous fairy palace into the glaring light of the hall.

'Good night,' murmured the girl, lingeringly, extending her soft little hand, and raising her lovely eyes, filled with caressing expectancy to his.

'Good night,' cried he precipitately, shook her loosely by the hand, and retreated a few steps.

She waited a second, watching him with ever-growing wonder and impatience. Then turned on her heel petulantly, and walked upstairs with a loud tapping of small decided feet.

The discomfited Colonel sought his own chamber so soon as Miss Prade's door, closing with a sound which closely resembled a bang, announced to the world at large that she had retired to her room. He was not at all easy in his own mind, and for a long time could not compose himself to sleep. When at length he succeeded in doing so, matters were not much improved thereby, for it was only to fall into a succession of distressing nightmares, during which he was for ever trying to kiss a beautiful mermaid, who invariably changed into a codfish with tight yellow kid gloves so soon as his lips touched hers.

PART II.

THE sun was high in the heavens next morning, and the inhabitants of Lutcombe Manor had been astir for many hours, before Gerald Hythe awoke to the consciousness of a new day, and the presence of his valet standing motionless beside his bed with the matutinal cup of tea.

'A note for Monsieur,' said Leclerc, in a subdued voice that could not have offended the sensibilities of the lightest sleeper.

'Pull the curtain, then,' growled the Colonel with muffled ferocity from his pillows. 'How can I read a letter in the dark?'

In a trice the shutters were thrown back, and under Leclerc's obedient hand up flew the blinds, and a glorious flood of sunshine streamed into the room. A day to make the sorriest heart glad one would have thought, but decidedly the Colonel was far from amenable to soothing influences this morning.

'There, there, that will do; you are blinding me with that glare!' he cried, irritably, and demanded his tea and his letter in the tone of one who is determined to have no trifling.

He took a gulp; it was very hot and burnt him, and it was with some little effort he restrained the impulse to fling it at the valet's sleek head; then he seized his letter and tore it open.

It was only a sheet of paper clumsily folded; surely he knew that sprawling hand in which the few hurried lines it contained were penned. It was blotted, smudged, crumpled, and the fami-

liar writing bore witness to as intense agitation as the words themselves.

‘For Heaven’s sake, dear old man, let me come and speak to you. I am in terrible trouble, and don’t know who to turn to. NED.’

‘Monsieur Chaloner wished to come in to Monsieur more than an hour ago,’ here interposed Leclerc in his cheerful way, ‘but I informed him that nothing short of an *incendie* or a telegram from the War Office would induce me to allow Monsieur to be disturbed before his usual time.’

‘Dolt! fool! idiot!’ cried Monsieur, in a fury. ‘Bring Mr. Chaloner here instantly.’

Mr. Chaloner was evidently not far off, for before Colonel Hythe had time even to examine the foreboding in his mind, the gentleman in question was pompously ushered into the room, and Leclerc, every nerve alive with curiosity, vanished with a great appearance of discretion, to listen behind the door.

Haggard, wild-eyed, bloodshot, dishevelled, poor Ned was indeed a doleful spectacle, and the Colonel stared at him in amazement as he rushed to the bedside, seized his hand, and cried out in tones of anguish :

‘Oh, Gerry, old man, what shall I do? what shall I do? She says she won’t marry me at all!’

‘Who—what?’ gasped Gerald, while his heart gave a great bound, and then seemed to turn to stone.

‘It is Mawry,’ answered the other, piteously; ‘this morning at seven o’clock she came to me in the smoking room, and told me she was determined to break it all off.’

‘She said,’ Ned went on, too full of his woes to heed his friend’s strange countenance, ‘she said she never cared for me; but she had told me that so often before that I had got not to mind it much. And so I thought it was only a sort of scruple at the last, and tried to reason with her and tell her that I was willing to risk it; seeing I loved her so much, she would have to love me in the end too. But then—then,’ said the unhappy lover, with a break in his voice, ‘she answered quite coolly that that was not the case in point at all, as she was about to explain to me when I interrupted her; but that she had discovered that she was in love with somebody else, and under such circumstances no consideration on earth would induce her to become my wife. And you know, Gerry,’ added he, after a pause, to allow his con-

fidant to grasp the whole horror of the situation, 'you know it *can't* be true, because you are the *only* man—except her relations and myself—she has seen for the last three months, ever since we were engaged in fact, so she couldn't have fallen in love since as she says she has.'

He sat down on the foot of the bed and looked at his friend with a world of anguish in his honest goggle eyes, while for the first time in his life the Colonel felt those very unpleasant symptoms produced by an uneasy conscience.

For the first time, too, he had a difficulty in looking at a fellow straight in the face. He had rather not meet the eyes of the Duffer, somehow.

'I'll not survive it,' cried Ned, with a startling outburst of passion. 'If I can't have her, I'll chuck up the whole thing altogether, I swear I will. I'll cut my throat.'

Poor old Ned! Who ever would have thought he had it in him to feel so deeply!

'Come, come, old boy,' said Gerald, in a strangled, feeble voice, 'it's only a little caprice of your lady-love's, I daresay; you must not take it *au tragique* like that. It's just a last fling before she settles down to love, honour, and obey you. You'll probably find her as mild as milk by this time.'

This very lame suggestion met with the fate it deserved. Ned looked with melancholy reproach at his friend and did not deign to answer.

'Well, perhaps, after all,' remarked Gerald, after a pause, speaking in a very small voice, and uneasily surveying the movements of his own restless toes under the bedclothes, 'perhaps you know, old man, if she *is* that sort of girl, it's better to find it out before marriage than afterwards.'

'Shut up,' said Ned fiercely; 'you don't know what you're saying. She'd have made the best and truest wife man ever had. I know her heart. She's as true as steel and as straight as a die.'

Once more there was an awkward pause, then Ned broke forth again with a fresh explosion of woe—

'Oh, Gerry, Gerry, to think it should come to this! I know I'm not fit to tie her shoestrings; I know I'm ugly and stupid, and all the rest of it. But she would have loved me, she *must* have loved me in the end.'

He brought his hand down on the bedpost with a blow that shook the whole frame. The Colonel sat up with a jerk, and

stared blankly at him, inanely vibrating to the commotion of the springs beneath him.

'Hasn't Mr. Holmes any influence over her?'

'The worst,' returned Ned gloomily; 'she hates him. And at the first word of reproach he said to her this morning she flew at him and told him she knew he wanted to get rid of her, and that she would leave his house that day. And she means it too. I believe she's packing now,' concluded Chaloner with a groan.

'Ned, old boy. I'm heartily sorry for you. I'd give anything in the world to help you.'

The genuine emotion in Gerald's voice went straight to the poor fellow's heart, and swept away his last straw of self-control.

'I know you would, Gerry! Oh, Gerry, don't laugh at me!'

And with that the 'Duffer' gave way altogether and burst into tears.

The Colonel was greatly distressed. Hang it all, why couldn't he forget that day at Eton when Ned got flogged for him? Such a little shrimp of a fellow as he was, too. He flung his long legs out of bed with a desperate resolution, and coming up to Ned slapped him on the shoulder with an energy that nearly startled him out of his weeping.

'There, don't do that, old chap. *I'll* speak to her. She shall marry you, or my name's not Gerald Hythe. You'll trust to me? Come, that is right. And now clear away and let me dress, for there's not a moment to lose.'

Never in all his rich experience had Leclerc seen his master in so very bad a temper as on that memorable morning, and never had the gallant officer's toilet been so agitating a piece of work. Nevertheless it was accomplished with unusual celerity, and in the space of barely three-quarters of an hour Gerald found himself pacing the library from end to end, every fibre on the strain to catch the sound of approaching footsteps, wondering whether the somewhat curt note he had sent Miss Prade would bring her to the rendezvous, hoping, if truth be told, that it might not.

At last there came a patter of high-heeled shoes, a rustle of silken skirts, a tempestuous bursting open of the door. What made the wilful maiden so fatally docile that day of all days in the year? Alack! Gerald knew only too well, and the knowledge did not tend to make him more comfortable.

She stood before him, radiant, smiling, expectant, her bright bold eyes making no effort to conceal the tenderness with which they regarded him; and for sure those crimson lips would have expressed no disapproval of a repetition of his last night's audacity.

Gerald felt mean. How near he was at that moment to finally and altogether betraying his friend, he himself never fully realised. But it was, perhaps, the very fierceness of the temptation which drove him along the path of virtue in so violent and pitiless a manner.

'Miss Prade,' said he, without giving himself time to dally with the tempter, and speaking very drily, in what may be called his orderly-room voice, 'for the sake of our old friendship I have promised Ned to speak to you, to represent to you the folly and cruelty of your proceeding, and beg you to reconsider your extraordinary decision of this morning. I say *extraordinary*,' said the Colonel, growing fiery red all of a sudden, and looking very hard at the young lady, '*extraordinary, inexplicable*.'

Miss Prade grew just a little white as he spoke, the love-light in her eyes changed to an expression quite as warm but not quite so tender, and the smile on her lips became rather too much like a grin to be very pleasant, but otherwise she never 'turned a hair.'

'Let us sit down,' she said very quietly, 'and I will hear anything you have to say.'

Now the Colonel had been bracing himself for a scene, for tears, reproaches—more perilous still, appeals—but this composure he had not calculated on. It took the wind out of his sails; he did not know how to meet it. Miss Prade sat down and motioned him to a chair only separated from hers by a little table. The perspiration was starting to the Colonel's brow; he obeyed her meekly, wishing himself a hundred miles away.

'Well?' asked the girl, leaning her two arms on the table and looking at him fixedly across it.

Gerald ground his teeth. He was not going to turn back at the cannon's mouth and lose his reputation for ever. Not he. He took the lead once more boldly.

'You see, Miss Prade,' he said, 'you are treating poor Ned in a way that is downright dishonourable.'

Here a smile of so peculiar and disagreeable an import crept over her countenance that the Colonel again lost the thread of his

discourse, and after vainly struggling to recover it, relapsed hopelessly into an agony of blushing silence.

‘I think,’ observed Miss Marie, in a delicately modulated voice, ‘the less is said on that point the better. There is some proverb about not throwing stones in glass houses, is there not? I know you are fond of proverbs, Colonel Hythe, and do tell me, are glass houses the same as conservatories?’

The unfortunate Colonel turned an apoplectic purple, got up and walked to the other end of the room. I grieve to say there trembled on the tip of his tongue some very tempestuous language indeed.

Miss Prade followed his movements with an eye of shrewdest observation, then smiled to herself and lay back in her armchair with great placidity.

She had not a doubt of the result of the interview; and perhaps the undisguised expression of triumph, which nevertheless sat so well on the young lady’s slightly defiant style of beauty, piqued her adversary into sterner opposition. However that might be, certain it is, that when he returned to his seat once more, he bore an appearance of pale, rigid determination he had not hitherto shown. Few men, above all those who possess themselves any force of character, are likely to be gained over to her will by the display of a similar quality in a woman.

‘My dear girl,’ said Gerald, with paternal mansuetude, ‘I have no desire to waste my time or yours in unprofitable discussion, so, if you will allow me I shall just say what I have to say as briefly as I can. I cannot really believe that it is your intention to throw over poor Chaloner in the heartless manner you threaten. You are either amusing yourself at his expense, or putting his affection to a very bitter test. If it be only a joke, it is a cruel one, Miss Prade; if it be a trial, in all conscience it has gone far enough, and I appeal to you not to prolong the poor fellow’s misery any more. On the other hand, if it can be *possible* you are in earnest, in the name of common humanity I trust you will reconsider your decision. For God’s sake reflect before it is too late; do not bring yourself to break your plighted troth and wreck a man’s life in cold blood for the gratification of a perfectly foolish and groundless caprice.’

Here the Colonel stopped, feeling that he had spoken very well indeed, and that, whatever the result, he had nobly redeemed his momentary forgetfulness of the claims of friendship.

Miss Prade, who had listened to him the while with the same quiet attention, paused a few seconds before replying. A shade had come over the bright triumph of her face, but it vanished so soon as she began to speak again.

'Bravo, Colonel!' she cried, with a mischievous laugh, while two mocking little demons leapt into her eyes. 'Well, now you have said your say and done your duty nobly, and your conscience is quite clear again, I hope.'

Here she paused and looked at him, enjoying his confusion at having his thoughts thus calmly interpreted to him; and then with one of her abrupt changes of mood—

'That being settled,' she said in a voice so soft it fell on his ear like a caress, 'let us talk of something else.'

She was perilously lovely, perilously sweet.

'Don't fret for Ned,' she went on; 'he *knew* I did not love him. I never deceived him, and for all we were engaged, sir, I never allowed *him* to—to kiss me.'

Her voice sank to a whisper, and then there was a dead silence.

Miss Prade got red, and then Miss Prade got white, and then she tapped her foot, and then she bit her lip. And yet Gerald spoke not. Poor fellow, it was a hard tussle. He was no more than mortal after all, and she was passing fair, and—she loved him. She loved him; the thought set the blood coursing like wildfire in his veins, every chivalrous tendency in his nature stirred by the frankness of her avowal; truly, if he had sinned he was punished, for it was a cruel thing for a man to have to do, and it hurt him through and through.

In a dumb frenzy of impatient longing he looked at her. Oh, if she would only understand how it was he could not speak, *could* not in the face of the world publish his treachery to Ned! How, if she would but wait a little while all might yet come right between them, and that without scandal.

'Well?' said Miss Prade in a hard dry voice, rising stiffly as she spoke.

'I have no more to say,' muttered the wretched man almost inaudibly.

They stood facing each other, both white to the lips; his eyes sought her face timidly, deprecatingly, appealingly, but she met his glance with one of scorching contempt.

'*Coward!*'

She hissed the word from between her little short teeth, hurled

it at him, so to speak, with such concentrated passion he felt as if she had struck him full in the face, and actually staggered as though under a blow.

Then she laughed, a hard, jarring, almost brutal laugh, that seemed hideously incongruous coming from her soft young lips.

'Congratulate yourself,' she said in a deadly calm voice, which gave the Colonel an impression of a white heat of fury which was none too reassuring; 'you have thoroughly succeeded in your mission. Thanks to you I am now able to appreciate Ned, and I shall *cheerfully* marry him to-morrow. You have shown me too clearly the beauty of *honourable* behaviour, Colonel Hythe, for me to hesitate any more. I am sure you must be gratified by the excellent results of your disinterested conduct to me and to your friend.'

Flashing on him another withering look, she sprang to the door and screamed wildly for Ned. He could not have been far off, for he appeared almost instantly at the other end of the hall. The poor fellow had been enduring a perfect agony of suspense, as his ashen face and trembling lips bore painful witness to, and seemed scarcely able to speak with fright for what he might have to hear.

'Ned,' cried Miss Prade, with another ugly laugh, 'be happy. I shall marry you to-morrow after all! Thank Colonel Hythe,' she added, with savage emphasis, 'for he has been a *true* friend to you.'

'Oh, my darling!' gasped Ned, and made a clumsy lurch to seize her in his arms; she, however, deftly eluded his embrace, and fled from him up the broad stairs with the swiftness of some wild hunted thing.

Foiled in his first legitimate outburst, Ned sought a vent for his overcharged feelings in another direction. Staggering into the library he called his friend's name in tones that quavered with grateful emotion—

'Gerry—Gerry—*Gerry!*'

But no Gerry answered. No Gerry was there to receive the well-earned reward of merit. Contrary to all the traditions of the Guards, contrary to all the precedents of his name and race, the thought of another encounter was too much for the gallant officer, and he had fled before the enemy's approach.

Once more the happy party were assembled in the oak dining-room, for the weary day had at length worn away to evening, and

it was dinner-time again at Lutcombe Manor. To-morrow before three o'clock all would be over.

How glad he would be to leave the cursed place—so mused the Colonel as he sat beside his irreproachable hostess. Truth to say it had been a hard day for him, and though he had borne himself well, he was none the less sorely tried. He had done his duty at eminent trouble to himself; he had restored the ill-gotten goods he had unwittingly stolen, but where is it, save in Sunday School books, that such virtue is its own reward? The Colonel was all devoured with jealous pain; under his cold and smooth exterior his heart was tempest-tossed, his pride was bleeding; and opposite to him sat Marie Prade, and through her purple eyelids, all swollen with crying, she looked at him as if she longed to kill him; and the glorious crimson lips into which she now and then thrust the savage little white teeth, as though to punish them for their quivering, uttered no word that night that was not full of covert insult to him.

Poor little girl! It hurt him, but he was not angry with her. Angry? he was yearning over her; *yearning* with a mad desire. To take the little upright form into his close embrace, to kiss the angry eyes and the dear tear-stained lips, to kiss the passionate mouth, and stop the cruel words with kisses, great heavens, what would he not give for this? Would not his whole life be little in the balance? And then, oh heavens! to have to see Ned gloating over her, to know that she was Ned's—that tomorrow she would be his wife—that *he*, fool that he was, had worked and striven for it, was it not enough to drive a man mad? And there he had to sit, and smirk, and talk, and joke with the best of them, to turn away his poor fierce little love's arrows with a well-bred jest or a good-humoured laugh, to respond to Ned's burdensome gratitude, to play the hypocrite, in fine, to them all.

No one could have guessed at the volcano raging under his outward cheerfulness. Never had the Colonel been so brilliant. He was what is popularly called the 'life of the table.' Even Mr. Holmes was cheated by his genial humour into laughter and applause. The poor girl opposite to him felt, as the time advanced, more and more wild in her fury, more black in her despair. Could *nothing*, she said, make an impression on him? There was a perfect frenzy of rage towards him in her heart, and this gaiety and indifference were more than she could endure.

The dessert was laid on the table, the servants had withdrawn. For a few moments the Colonel relapsed into silence, and allowed his weary face to rest from smiles. Nobody noticed how worn and drawn he looked, nor how sadly he responded to the insolent look Miss Prade now fixed on him. He was thinking to himself, with infinite heart-sickness, 'Thank God the farce is nearly over now.'

She, with two flaming spots on each cheek, continued to fix him with her insulting eyes. At last she spoke, and there was such strange emphasis in her clear bell-like voice, that all looked at her amazed.

'Did anyone ever hear of a *coward* getting the Victoria Cross?'

This said Miss Prade, still looking directly at the Colonel as she did so, that no one might mistake the import of her challenge. Ned grew lobsterlike in hue, the Colonel grew very white, Mr. and Mrs. Holmes exchanged glances of utter despair.

'*Did you?*' said Miss Prade, with a laugh of scorn, addressing Gerald in the most personal manner.

'Miss Prade,' answered he, very slowly, 'I can only speak for myself. I know I have not the courage to do a base thing in the face of the world. Thus you may reckon me a coward if you will.'

Under his steady gaze her eyes fell. She tried to laugh, to rally, to retort with burning words, but instead only brought forth a strangled sob, and finally burst into a fit of hysterical weeping.

The spectators of this little drama were lost in bewilderment, but its *dénouement* was such as precluded all attempts at explanation, and the sobbing girl was hustled from the room with all speed by her excitable sister, to reappear no more that night.

The wedding passed off next day with a smoothness and decorum which its stormy preludes had hardly allowed one to expect. Everyone agreed that Marie was a lovely bride, though too self-assertive for the character; that Ned made a very silly-looking bridegroom, and seemed quite too sickeningly in love and too preposterously happy for anything; as for the best man, there could be no two opinions, he was simply perfection. And so the general verdict pronounced it a very jolly wedding, and it all went off splendidly.

As Mr. and Mrs. Chaloner at length drove away, amidst the

showers of rice and general acclamation, no one thought of noting that, alone of all the company, the Colonel uttered no sound to swell the cheering, nor what his countenance had been like when he had to shake hands with the happy pair and wish them 'God speed.'

PART III.

ALL this has been past and gone for five years now. Colonel Hythe has 'seen service' again, has been brevet-major, and now colonel of his battalion; he has a few more medals to hang on his broad expanse of chest, the ribbon of the Bath besides. People talk of him as a distinguished man, and are proud if he condescends to go to their parties. But this he seldom does.

He was wounded in the last campaign, and is terribly changed. His raven hair has grown grey on the temples; that gun-shot in the knee has lamed him for life and marred that stately height of his most sadly. He looks gaunt and old and careworn, and, worse than all, the inner man is even more changed than the external. He has lost that boyish laugh of his, that jovial spirit that made him so popular; he is an embittered, soured old cynic, and not half the fellow he used to be.

One day I came to know what it was had done the mischief with him.

Of course, when he related to me the little episode which I have just had the honour to lay before you, he never pretended it was anything but a mere picturesque experience in his very varied life, nor did I let him see how clearly I could read between the lines. It is always a marvel to me how a man can allow the love for any woman to make him unhappy even for a day, not to speak of his whole life. There are so many women in the world, and all so very much alike.

However, that is neither here nor there, and I will return to my story.

It happened in this wise. Dear old Gerry and I were walking down Bond Street one afternoon—last June, I think it was—he with one hand on my arm, the other on his ebony cane, and limping very much. Some days his poor knee seems worse than others, and this day I knew he was in pain.

We had just reached that dreadfully unwholesome, delicious

French bonbon shop, and were pausing before the window to look and laugh at the new extravagances in 'bonbonnières,' when a very gorgeous carriage, drawn by two very gorgeous bays, drew up with a great clatter beside us, and a very gorgeous footman in powder leaped down to open the door.

Of course we transferred our attention from the 'goodies' to the equipage.

A very little lady, dressed in the most marvellous combination of lace and jet, descended with great alacrity, and a little very ugly boy with goggle eyes and a gaping mouth, looking all the uglier for his splendid blue velvet attire, was carefully lifted out after her.

The little lady looked full at us. She was very pretty, and I was placidly admiring her original countenance, when I felt the Colonel give a most violent start.

He dropped his stick and hobbled forward, two hands outstretched, his face suffused with crimson.

'Marie—Miss Prade—Mrs. Chaloner,' he stammered, 'is it really you?'

I never saw the old boy so moved before. You may be sure I scented a romance, and was all agog to see what would follow.

The splendid little lady cocked her head, and looked at him with a friendly, inquisitive, bird-like glance, totally devoid of any kindred recognition.

'How do you do?' she cried, in a clear ringing voice, which, however, was completely marred in my ears by the horrid way she italicised her words. 'So *stupid* of me, I don't *quite* remember your name, I have *such* a bad memory.'

Poor Gerald drew back, all the glow fading from his face. He looked very weary, and old, and haggard; a striking contrast to the plump, blooming, prosperous little matron before him.

'It is long, of course, since we met,' he said, stiffly, 'and I daresay I am much changed. But perhaps even the name of Gerald Hythe has faded from your memory.'

'Hythe!' cried Mrs. Chaloner, with a little shriek. I saw a keen glance flash for a moment into her eyes; it was not a pleasant one, but it was gone so quickly it could scarcely make an impression. 'Of course, Mr. Hythe, how *stupid* of me,' she went on, with neat blandness, 'we met last year at the Selbornes, *didn't* we? *How* is Mrs. Hythe? Are you in town? (Neddie, darling, don't pull your hat, my pet.) What a *lovely* day—just

going to have a cup of chocolate—good-bye; pray forgive my stupid memory. (Come along, love.)'

And off she flounced into the shop, dragging her hideous little boy, who fondly clung to her, and whom she surveyed with the proudest maternal affection.

The Colonel spoke not a word. He stood staring after her through the glass door until he beheld her installed at a little marble table before an overflowing cup of chocolate and a heaped up plate of cakes, which she attacked with right good-will.

Then he turned away with an expression of humiliation and disgust on his countenance I have never seen equalled, and took my arm again in silence. We went into the nearest club, and I gave him a large bumper of brandy and soda, for he looked quite sick. And it was then he told me the story of Chaloner's Wedding.

NOTES BY A NATURALIST.

AN AUTUMN RAMBLE IN SURREY.

'THE birds are fighting over the moor and in the junipers . . . I have seen some birds about very much like blackbirds and near their size, only some of them have a white ring round the neck and they are very shy. If you can make it convenient to come, get here about three in the afternoon.'

It is not often you can see the ring-ouzel in the south of England, so on receiving my friend's note I set aside everything else for the day, and putting note and sketch-book in my pocket, set off, ten minutes later, my trusty ash stick in hand, for a good eight miles swing through woodland lanes and pastures, and along roads planted with great elm trees, varied here and there by an old oak and an occasional ash. The trees are changing from the green of summer to the more brilliant colouring of autumn. The distant hills, covered with beech and oak, show rich reds and yellows, broken up by warm olive. Nearing the moorlands the paths are broken at the sides, exposing fine fibrous roots. Heather grows in patches, and firs are clumped about; a mountain ash flashes out with its load of crimson clusters—a treat for the birds. They will soon be gone, for the missel thrush, song thrush, and blackbird dearly love these berries. I have eaten them myself often when roaming the woods. In Russia they are put in spirits, as we do cherries, to make a warm winter cordial; jelly, also, to eat with game, is made from them. Rather bitter their flavour is, but decidedly aromatic. Furze in full flower is dotted about. Right in front of me is a giant fir, struck by lightning in a late thunderstorm. Great limbs of it, as large as some of the surrounding trees, are twisted like ropes; a few limbs have escaped and show in weird contrast by their dark green foliage against the others which are scorched to tinder. From the trunk where the bolt struck the bark and ripped it off, long strips hang. A tree such as Gustave Doré's pencil would have reproduced: twisted, tortured limbs like those in Danté's 'Inferno'! Close to is heard the ripple of a trout-stream.

A peculiar feature of this road leading to the moorlands is, that in sheltered nooks and hollows you come on many very old manor

farm-houses, covered with mosses, lichens and house-leeks, standing in fine old-fashioned gardens and orchards, the whole surrounded by great elms. They have many windows, with lead lights; and porches which would seat a whole family; walls shut them in, grown over with every coloured lichen, silver grey, pale green, and orange. Ferns and mosses spring from between the stones. The very look of these homesteads brings a feeling of rest and quiet. Inside are large rooms with beams across the ceilings, and wainscot panelling runs right up to the top. The doors open with a latch, and passages lead to all manner of strange nooks and corners, and cupboards abound. If you are fortunate enough, as I have sometimes been, to be located in one of these old-time farm-houses, you will feel the blessed rest of a land of sleepy hollow, grateful sometimes after beating along the hard highroads.

The hedges are a tangled mass of vegetation; wild clematis, briony, nightshade, ferns, and grasses. Briars display their red berries; hawthorn, sloes, and nut-trees complete the show. In a tree just over my head a scolding chatter makes me look up. It proceeds from a family of young squirrels, this year's brood. They have come from the firs on a nutting expedition. Three of them there are, and very comical little fellows they look with their dormouse-like tails, for they are not yet bushy. They stamp, scold, and chatter at me, and instead of retreating higher up the tree, come lower down to have a look at me. They are young and innocent, but will be wiser before the winter is over. Young squirrels are pets I should not care to keep; they cry so pitifully for their mother.

With the exception of a kestrel hovering over a meadow, and a covey of partridges dusting in the road, I have not seen any bird-life yet. The reason of that is, in the beginning of the fall of the year, birds, with very few exceptions, frequent the open fields, which abound in food of all kinds. Sparrows, even, take a holiday then. Those that come about my door to be fed at breakfast-time leave me at this time for about six or eight weeks. They have just now returned from their holiday, as hungry and as impudent as ever.

We have reached the moor; but it is a Surrey moor, rich in vegetation and green turf, not a bare waste. The blue sky overhead is flecked here and there with fleecy clouds, and a soft breeze, just strong enough to whisper through the firs, comes

from the south. A stretch of thirty miles across the weald shows the South-down hills, with many chalk quarries in their sides and hollows. That flash of soft light between the distant hills is the open sea. The heather and furze are in full bloom, while the bramble and whortleberry shrubs, clothed in every shade of green, russet, and crimson, are brought into relief by the peculiar grey-green of the juniper trees. Here and there are clumps of rank rushes with stems of cotton grass, and a few bushes of black alder, the gunpowder wood of the foresters. This patch of treacherous ground, which is covered with verdure and feels like a floating sponge when you step on it, is where the wild ducks bring their young to feed after they have hatched them among the heather. I have known the cottagers drive them out of the springs, where they have gone to fetch water, without molesting them.

A call-note sounds in the air. I look up; birds are passing over at the top of their speed, so as to make the South downs before the light fades away. The light creeps along the sloping hill-sides where they will rest for the night before crossing the water. I gather from their notes and their manner of flight that they are nearly all finches. They keep passing for about half an hour. Now is the time for looking out for the ring-ouzel. They will soon begin to roost up in the hilly portion of the moor. I am among the juniper trees, most of which are covered with berries. I generally eat a few of these in passing; they are not unpleasant and are considered wholesome. The ring-ouzel is very fond of them. Some years this bird is not seen on the moors; sometimes only a pair or two pay them a visit, and another season they are very common. They do not tarry long, but seem to be resting to regain strength for a long journey.

A note something like that of a blackbird, only harsher, near at hand, makes me conceal myself. The hen shows herself; the cock will not be far away; there he is, sitting twelve yards in front of me, feeding on the berries; I can see him as I peer through the branches. His gorget is a pure white; he is very like the blackbird in many respects, but is a stronger bird, and his actions are wilder. His quick eyes have caught me, and his suspicious nature is aroused. Giving the alarm to his mate, he is off and away. I now turn towards the fir woods at the edge of the moor. On my way there I come across a hollow at the side of the bog, thick with fern, rushes, and tangle. A sound of water trickling catches my ear. This is just the place for black-

cock, if there are any about. Drawing up very quickly I begin to poke about with my stick. There is nothing here. Stay, right from under my feet there is a rush, with a clap! clap! Whirr! gluck! gluck! gluck! and a splendid black cock, in full dress, flies away. Why they will sometimes allow one to come so very near them is a mystery to me. As a rule they are the most wary of game birds, and at the sound of footsteps are up and off. I have actually known them to be captured by hand when the plumage has been saturated with the dew which the bird has brushed off the cover in ranging for his food. As I trudge on, a rabbit now and then dots across the path till I reach the main track through the woods. Here I fall in with one of the woodmen, on his way home.

‘So you’ve come to have a look at us agin, have ye? I was lookin’ at somethin’ from my house the other night that was goin’ on over this way.’

‘What could you see from that distance?’

‘Why, the forest on fire again. I could see the flames traveling high up at racing speed, and knew by the direction where it was burning. It warn’t only here, ’twas on the other hills as well, about the same time too; but bless ye! ’twas only a lick just to clear the tangle off.’

‘Is that long stretch in the valley below where it raged?’

‘Yes, but it ain’t nothin’ of any account. Why, ’tis all tuffety a’ready with fresh feed for the stock. As ’twas, and had been, ’twas nothin’ better than a harbor for them crawlin’ varmint—you knows ’em. Why the young uns was afraid to come up this ’ere stripe for worts; for they was hiss’n and crawlin’ all over the place. It’s cleared ’em off for a time, I reckon.’

‘What was the cause of that fire, do ye think?’

‘An uncommon good un if I could just get them words out what some gentleman said as was paintin’ picturs about here. ’Twas spon somethin’ or other. I know it was a spon.’

‘Was it spontaneous combustion?’

‘Yes, that’s it; don’t it sound gran?’ Turning round and looking me full in the face, he continued: ‘You knows us and we knows you; yes, it was just that ere spontanous combustun; and I reckon there’s more on it comin’ before long. ‘Tain’t a bad name for it. Maybe there’s another, but spon— sounds best. One thing I’m going to tell ye, and most mortal strange ’tis too. ’Twas a dark night, as you knows; well, when the fire was tearin’

full speed we hears a noise overhead what brought all on us to a stand. 'Twas a sort o' cryin' whistle like; on'y there seemed to be no end to it. Sometimes 'twas just overhead, then 'twas high up, and then it come from the firs. It was a row, and no mistake. Some on 'em said it warnt a nateral noise. Whatever it was gets over me. I've bin bothered about it ever since.'

'Well, now, listen! Was the sound anything like this?' I asked, as I imitated the cry of the golden plover.

'That's it; what was the meanin' on it all?'

'Why, some flocks of golden plover going to the coast,' I replied, for I had seen them myself that same night. 'They were bothered by the flames and smoke, and for a time lost their reckoning.'

'Ah, well, I've learnt somethin'. These 'ere lights in the sky o' nights 'll soon stop. Things 'll soon come to a better level, they're bound to. We has our rights o' common, pasterage in cover for cleftfooted stock, and range o' woods in mast and aker (acorn) time for swine, and grazin' for geese. Now, you gets rummagin' about a good bit, an' I want to ask ye if ye knows what these 'ere village greens was kept for, and why they're in the middle o' the villages?'

'They were used as goose-greens. It is a well-known fact that stock do not care to feed where geese have been grazing, for they foul the pasture. In an old-fashioned village you will find first the church, with the stocks just outside its gates, then the alehouse facing the goose-green and pond, round which the houses are, so that each cottager might have an eye to his geese.'

'That's as used to be; but just you let a goose waddle on to the green now and see what a chouter they make. You has to let 'em nib by the road, and if you has a Neddy you must take tickler care as he don't walk about on the roads o' nights croppin' thistles. But bide a bit, peaceable folks we be, an' always have been, we wants nothin' but our rights, such as they be, and we means to have 'em. Like the badgers what hides in yonder hills we never meddles and don't want to be meddled with. They're quiet and means no harm, but if you drives 'em in a corner they fights tooth and nail desprit; and a quiet fighter is the wust un to tackle.'

If one can inspire sufficient confidence in men of our friend's stamp and class to cause them to open out their minds freely, one becomes aware of a fast gathering spirit of discontent

and dissatisfaction which will make itself openly felt some day. These cottagers and labouring men one might call conservative democrats. They are dimly conscious that the world is fast moving on; the old landmarks are being removed, but others are set up. In the old days, though their wages were less, there were privileges and 'pickings' to be got from the old gentry, who had been amongst them from time immemorial, which they miss now. Their homes and the land they till are owned by new men of capital, who do not dress or walk like the traditional country gentleman, and the picturesque spots are haunted by an artist class who get workmen from London to build their 'furrin-looking' bright red villas, and whose provisions come, as their goods and chattels do, from great firms in town. The cottagers hate to see them painting on their commons, and will often surlily refuse to let themselves be put in a picture. 'They does us no good,' they say, 'an' they wants to get our common from us.'

Two graves, one on the hill and one in the valley, I was wishful to revisit. The first was that of my friend George —, a fine fellow who had faded gradually away after taking a severe cold in the forest. I remembered his funeral well.

The churchyard where George was buried is on the top of a high hill. The church and its surroundings are sheltered by grand old trees and upland meadows. Two miles down in the valley, at the foot of the firs, he had his home. Round the door and on the little grass plot the neighbours gathered from far and near to pay the last mark of respect to him. There was no lack of bearers, though the distance was long and the ascent heavy, before they reached his last resting-place. The coffin having been brought out they fell back on either side for his relatives to pass, and then the inhabitants of more than one scattered hamlet fell in to form a long procession, and proceeded on the road through the firs. Others joined them from various forest tracks, and presently the assemblage was complete. Even the children from the moorland school were there, walking two-and-two, hand-in-hand. George was beloved by all; he had lived all his life in their hamlet, and married a wife from it; and his manly, gentle bearing and generous nature had endeared him to all.

No fashionable mourning garb is to be seen here. The lasses have their Sunday dress on, and some of the men are in their working clothes, having thrown down the axe and billhook to join the procession. There is nothing out of place in their mixed garb,

the surroundings are in harmony with it, and the whole forms a most impressive scene.

When the churchyard is reached the followers arrange themselves in a circle round the grave. The lasses have little bunches of flowers—those of them, at least, who have been able to get some; the others have sprigs of fir, juniper, and heather.

And now the clergyman is heard saying, 'I am the resurrection and the life,' there are the mournful sounds of the earth falling on the coffin and the sobs of the mourners.

Slowly, two by two, they file past; the women and the lasses drop their sprigs and flowers in the open grave and depart as they came, to discuss in sober-faced groups the good qualities of him who has gone.

On his tombstone is graven—

I'm a pilgrim and a stranger,
Rough and thorny is the road,
Often in the midst of danger;
But it leads to God!

THE LAST FLIGHT.

‘ STRIKE up with fiddle and fife and guitar !
His Lordship, my Lady, here all of them are !
We’ve drawn them this time with the posters, ’t is plain ;
So dance till they cheer you, and then dance again ! ’

She tripped from the footlights, she ran up the board ;
A bow to my Lady, a smile to my Lord,
A wave to the gallery, shouting in glee ;
And a tear for her darling that no one could see.

‘ Play up with fiddle and fife and guitar,
For the greatest of dancers, the world-renowned Star,
The bravest, the boldest beyond all compare
To flit on the tight rope and fly through the air ! ’

‘ Encore ! ’ cry the boxes, the ‘ gods ’ hurrah gay ;
But why does she tremble, and why does she sway ?
Has her eye, once so nimble, grown dim with that tear ?
Has she heard ’mid the bravos the gasp of her dear ?

Pack away fiddle and fife and guitar ;
She’s made her last flight, and the finest by far ;
For high o’er the gallery, high o’er the dome,
She and her darling have soared to their home !

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXI.

DANGEROUS RELICS.

'BEATRICE is coming to act as my secretary this morning,' Wilfrid said to his father, as they sat at breakfast on Monday.

'Is she?' remarked Mr. Athel, drily. 'It had struck me that you were not very busy just now,' he added, by way of natural comment.

The junior smiled.

'By the way, she has only two more engagements—then it ceases.'

'I am glad to hear it,' said his father, with much satisfaction.

'After all,' observed Wilfrid, 'you must remember that every one knows she doesn't sing for a living. Art, you know, is only contemptible when it supports the artist.'

'Well, well, file your epigrams by all means; but we live in the world, Wilf. Criticise as smartly as you like; the danger only begins when you act upon your convictions.'

At half-past ten Beatrice arrived. She came into the study with a morning colour on her cheeks, threw off her mantle and hat, and let Wilfrid draw off her gloves, which somehow took a long time in the doing. She was full of bright, happy talk, most of it tending to show that she had already given the attention to the morning's 'leaders' which was becoming in a politician's betrothed.

'Do you smoke whilst you are at work?' she asked, descending from those high themes.

'I allow myself a few cigarettes.'

'Cigarettes? Surely that is too frivolous an accompaniment!'

'Oh, it is only when I am musing upon the arguments of the Opposition.'

'I see.' Beatrice took the reply quite seriously. 'But where is the blue-book you want me to digest?'

Wilfrid shook his head, looking at her with a smile.

‘You think me incompetent? But at least try me. I shan’t spoil anything.’

‘An illustration drawn from the art of millinery, I imagine.’

‘Don’t be unkind. I’m afraid you wouldn’t let me write your letters?’

‘By Jove! an excellent idea. Here’s one of the free and independent electors of G—— writes to ask what my views are on the subject of compulsory vaccination. Do pen a reply, and I’ll sign it.’

‘But what am I to say?’

‘The ghost of Jenner alone knows! I offer it as an opportunity to show your fitness for this post. You have applied to me for work, Miss—Miss Redwing, I think your name is?’ He assumed the air of one applied to.

‘It is, sir.’

‘Come, come; that’s far too jaunty. You don’t at all understand the position of the person applying for work. You must be profoundly depressed; there must be half a tear in your eye; you must look hungry.’

‘Oh dear—I had such an excellent breakfast!’

‘Which clearly disqualifies you for the post you seek. However, Miss—Miss Redwing, I think you said?’

‘I did, sir.’

‘Vastly better. The applicant must always be a little ashamed of his name; they learn that, you know, from the way in which they are addressed by employers. Well, I’ll give you a hint. Tell him he’s an ass, or he wouldn’t have needed to ask my opinion.’

‘I am to put that into parliamentary language?’

‘Precisely.’

‘And say nothing more definite?’

‘Really, Miss—Miss Redwing, I begin to doubt the genuineness of your testimonials. You surely have learnt that the first essential of the art of public letter-writing is to say nothing whatever in as convincing a manner as possible.’

‘But, if I tell him he’s a—a donkey?’

‘You fear it will be deviating into truth. There’s something in that. Say, then, that the matter is occupying my gravest attention, and that I hope to be able to reply definitely in the course of a few weeks.’

'Very well. Where may I sit? But I can't use a quill, dear boy.'

'Miss Redwing!'

'O, I forgot myself. Have you a nice, fine point, not too hard?'

'Let me see.'

Wilfrid unlocked one of the drawers in his desk. As he drew it out, Beatrice stole to him, and peeped into the drawer.

'How neat, Wilfrid!' she exclaimed. 'What a pretty pocket-book that is lying there. Do let me look at it.'

It was a morocco case, with an elastic band round it. Beatrice stretched her hand towards it, but he arrested her movement.

'No, no,' he said, playfully, 'we can't have prying. Here are the pens.'

'But do let me look at the case, Wilfrid.'

He began to close the drawer. Beatrice laid her hand on it.

'My aunt gave it me, long ago,' Wilfrid said, as if to dismiss the subject. 'Mind! I shall trap your fingers.'

'I'm sure you won't do that. But I *do* want to see it. The smell of morocco is so delicious. Just one whiff of it.'

'Then you want to smell it, not to see it. If you're good, you shall before you go away.'

'No, but now!—Wilfrid!'

He was pretending to squeeze her fingers in the shutting of the drawer. She would not undo her grasp.

'Why mayn't I, Wilfrid?'

She looked at him. His expression was graver than became the incident; he was trying to smile, but Beatrice saw that his eyes and lips were agitated.

'Why mayn't I?' she repeated.

'Oh, if you insist,' he exclaimed, moving back a step or two, 'of course you may.'

She took up the case, and looked at it on either side.

'There are letters in it?' she said, without raising her eyes.

'Yes, I believe there are letters in it.'

'Important, I suppose?'

'I daresay; I suppose I had some reason for putting them there.'

He spoke with apparent indifference, and turned to light a cigarette. Beatrice put back the case, and closed the drawer.

'Here is note-paper,' Wilfrid said, holding some to her.

She took it in silence, and seated herself. Wilfrid attempted

to pursue the jest, but she could not reply. She sat as if about to write; her eyes were drooped, and her mouth had set itself hard. Wilfrid affected to turn over papers in search for something, still standing before the table.

'You find it difficult to begin,' he said. 'Pray call him "dear sir." Society depends upon that "dear."''

'A word easily used,' remarked Beatrice, in a low voice, as if she were thinking.

He cast a glance at her, then seated himself. He was at the side of the table, she at the end. After a moment of silence, she leaned forward to him.

'Wilfrid,' she said, trying to smile, 'what letters are those, dear?'

'Of what possible moment can that be to you, Beatrice?'

'It seems—I can't help thinking they are—letters which you value particularly. Might I not know?'

He looked away to the window.

'Of course, if you tell me I am rude,' Beatrice continued, pressing her pen's point upon the table, 'I have no answer.'

'Well, yes,' he replied at length, as if having taken a resolve, 'they are letters of—that I have put apart for a special reason. And now, shall we forget them?'

His tone was not altogether suave; about his nostrils there was a suspicion of defiance. He forced himself to meet her gaze steadily; the effort killed a smile.

'We will cease to speak of them,' Beatrice answered, implying a distinction.

A minute later he saw that she laid down her pen and rose. He looked up inquiringly.

'I don't feel able to do anything this morning,' she said.

Wilfrid made no reply. She went to the chair on which her hat and mantle lay.

'You are not going?' he asked, in a tone of surprise.

'I think so; I can't be of use to you,' she added, impulsively; 'I have not your confidence.'

He let her throw the mantle over her shoulders.

'Beatrice, surely this is not the result of such a trifle? Look!' He pulled open the drawer once more and threw the pocket-book on to the table. 'Suppose that had lain there when you came into this room alone. Should you have opened it and examined the contents?'

‘I should not—you know it.’

‘Very well. You would simply have taken it for granted that I was to be trusted to look after my own affairs, until I asked some one else’s aid or advice. Is not that the case at present?’

A man more apt at dissimulation would have treated the matter from the first with joking irony, and might have carried his point, though with difficulty. Wilfrid had not the aptitude, to begin with, and he was gravely disturbed. His pulses were throbbing; scarcely could he steady his voice. He dreaded a disclosure of what might well be regarded as throwing doubt upon his sincerity, the more so that he understood in this moment how justifiable such a doubt would be. After the merriment of a few minutes ago, this sudden shaking of his nerves was the harder to endure. It revived with painful intensity the first great agitations of his life. His way of speaking could not but confirm Beatrice’s suspicions.

‘We are not exactly strangers to each other,’ she said, coldly.

‘No, we are not; yet I think I should have forbore to press you on any matter you thought it needless to speak of.’

She put on her hat. Wilfrid felt his anger rising—our natural emotion when we are disagreeably in the wrong, yet cannot condemn the cause which has made us so. He sat to the table again, as if his part in the discussion were at an end.

Beatrice stood for some moments, then came quickly to his side.

‘Wilfrid, have you secrets from me?’ she asked, the tremor of her voice betraying the anguish that her suspicions cost her. ‘Say I am ill-mannered. It was so, at first; I oughtn’t to have said anything. But now it has become something different. However trifling the matter, I can’t bear that you should refuse to treat me as yourself. There is nothing, nothing I could keep from you. I have not a secret in my life to hide from you. It is not because they are letters—or not only that. You put a distance between us; you say there are affairs of yours in which I have no concern. I cannot bear that! If I leave you, I shall suffer more than you dream. I thought we were one. Is not your love as complete as mine?’

He rose and moved away, saying—

‘Open it! Look at the letters!’

‘No, that I can’t do. What can it be that troubles you so? Are they letters that I *ought* not to see?’

He could bear it no longer.

‘Yes,’ he answered, brusquely, ‘I suppose they are.’

‘You mean that you have preserved letters which, as often as you open that drawer, remind you of someone else?—that you purposely keep them so near your hand?’

‘Beatrice, I had no right to destroy them.’

‘No right!’ Her eyes flashed, and her tongue trembled with its scorn. ‘You mean you had no wish.’

‘If I had no right, I could scarcely have the wish.’

Wilfrid was amazed at his own contemptible quibbling, but in truth he was not equal to the occasion. He could not defend himself in choice phrases; in a sort of desperate carelessness he flung out the first retort that offered itself. He was on the point of throwing over everything, of declaring that all must be at an end between them; yet courage failed for that. Nor courage only; the woman before him was very grand in her indignation, her pale face was surpassingly beautiful. The past faded in comparison with her; in his heart he doubted of its power.

Beatrice was gazing at him in resentful wonder.

‘Why have you done this?’ she asked. ‘Why did you come to me and speak those words? What necessity was there to pretend what you did not feel?’

He met her eyes.

‘I have not spoken falsely to you,’ he said, with calmness which did not strengthen the impression his words were meant to convey.

‘When you said that you loved me? If it were true, you could not have borne to have those letters under your eyes. You say you had no right to destroy them. You knew that it was your duty to do so. *Could* you have kept them?’

Wilfrid had become almost absent-minded. His heart was torn in two ways. He wished to take the letters from their case and destroy them at once; probably it was masculine pride which now kept him from doing it.

‘I think you must believe what I say, Beatrice,’ was his answer. ‘I am not capable of deliberately lying to you.’

‘You are not. But you are capable of deceiving yourself; I accuse you of nothing more. You have deceived yourself, and I have been the cause of it; for I had so little of woman’s pride that I let you see my love; it was as if I begged for your love in return. My own heart should have taught me better; there can be no second love. You pitied me!’

Wilfrid was in no state of mind to weigh phrases; at a later time, when he could look back with calmness, and with the advantage of extended knowledge, he recognised in these words the uttermost confession of love of which a woman is capable. In hearing them, he simply took them as a reproach.

‘If such a thing had been possible,’ he said, ‘it would have been a horrible injustice to you. I asked you to be my wife because I loved you. The existence of these letters is no proof that I misunderstood my own feeling. There are many things we cannot explain to another on the moment. You must judge the facts as you will, but no hasty and obvious judgment will hit the truth.’

She was not listening to him. Her eyes were fixed upon the letters, and over her heart there crept a desire which all but expelled every other feeling, a desire to know what was there written. She would have given her hand to be alone in the room with that pocket-book, now that she knew what it contained; no scruple would have withheld her. The impossibility that her longing could ever be satisfied frenzied her with jealousy.

‘I will leave you with them,’ she exclaimed, speaking her thought. ‘You do not want me; I come between you and her. Read, and forget me; read them once more, and see then if you do not understand yourself. I know now why you have often been so cold, why it cost you an effort to reply to me. You shall never have that trouble again.’

She moved to quit the room. Wilfrid called her.

‘Beatrice! Stay and listen to me. These letters are nothing, and mean nothing. Stay, and see me burn them.’

Irrational as it was, she could not bear to see them destroyed. In her distracted mind there was a sort of crazy hope that he would at last give them to her to burn; she might even perhaps have brought herself to take them away.

‘That is childish,’ she said. ‘You know them by heart; the burning of the paper would alter nothing.’

‘Then I can say and do no more.’

It had been like a rending of his heartstrings to offer to destroy these memories of Emily, though he at the same time persuaded himself that, once done, he would be a stronger and a happier man. In truth, they had made the chief strength of the link between him and the past; every day they had reminded him how much of the old feeling lingered in his being; the sanc-

tity with which these relics were invested testified to the holiness of the worship which had bequeathed them. He had not opened the case since his betrothal to Beatrice, and scarcely a day passed that he did not purpose hiding it somewhere away for ever—not destroying. Beatrice's answer to his offer caused him half to repent that he had made it. He turned away from her.

She, after looking at the pocket-book still for some moments, seemed to force herself away. He heard her open the door, and did not try to stay her.

Half an hour later, Wilfrid restored the letters to their place in the drawer. If they were to be destroyed, it must now be in Beatrice's presence. With something like joy he turned the key upon them, feeling that they were preserved, that the last farewell was once again postponed. Wilfrid was not a very strong man where sacrifice was demanded of him.

He neither saw nor heard from Beatrice till the evening of the following day. Then it happened that they had to dine at the same house. On meeting her in the drawing-room, he gave her his hand as usual; hers returned no pressure. She seemed as cheerful as ever in her talk with others; him she kept apart from. He could not make up his mind to write. She had refused to accept such proof of his sincerity as it was in his power to offer, and Wilfrid made this an excuse—idle as he knew it to be—for maintaining a dignified silence. Dignified, he allowed himself to name it; yet he knew perfectly well that his attitude had one very ignoble aspect, since he all but consciously counted upon Beatrice's love to bring her back to his feet. He said to himself: Let her interpret my silence as she will; if she regard it as evidence of inability to face her—well, I make no objection. The conviction all the while grew in him that he did veritably love her, for he felt that, but for his knowledge of her utter devotedness, he would now be in fear lest he should lose her. Such fear need not occupy a thought; a word, and she flew to him. He enjoyed this sense of power; to draw out the misunderstanding a little would make reconciliation all the pleasanter. Then the letters should flame into ashes, and with them vanish even the regret for the blessedness they had promised.

Wednesday morning, and still no letter from Beatrice. Mr. Athel joked about her speedy resignation of the secretaryship. Wilfrid joined in the joke, and decided that he would wait one more day, knowing not what a day might bring forth.

CHAPTER XXII.

HER PATH IN THE SHADOW.

YIELDING to the urgency of Beatrice, who was supported in her entreaty by Mrs. Birks, Wilfrid had, a little ere this, consented to sit for his portrait to an artist, a friend of the family, who had already made a very successful picture of Beatrice herself. The artist resided at Teddington. Wilfrid was due for a sitting this Wednesday morning, and he went down into the country, intending to be back for lunch and the House of Commons. But the weather was magnificent, and, the sitting over, truant thoughts began to assail the young legislator. Bushey Park was at hand, with its chestnut avenue leading to Hampton Court. A ramble of indefinite duration was, in his present frame of mind, much more attractive than the eloquence of independent members. He determined to take a holiday.

A very leisurely stroll across the park brought him to the King's Arms, and the sight of the hostelry suggested pleasant thoughts of sundry refreshing viands and cooling liquors. He entered and lunched. It was a holiday, and a truant holiday; he allowed himself champagne. When he came forth again, his intention to stroll through the galleries of the Palace had given way before the remembered shadow of the chestnuts; he returned to the park, and, after idly watching the fish in the shallow water of the round lake, strayed away into cool retreats, where the grass irresistibly invited to recumbency. He threw himself down, and let his eyes dream upon the delicate blades and stalks and leafage which one so seldom regards. If he chose to gaze further, there were fair tracts of shadowed sward, with sunny gleamings scattered where the trees were thinner, and above him the heaven of clustering leaves, here of impenetrable dark-green, there translucent-golden. A rustling whisper, in the air and on the ground, was the only voice that came thither.

He had set himself to think of Beatrice. He purposed writing her a long letter to-night, wherein he would do his best to make her understand the light in which the past appeared to him, and how little those memories had to do with the present and its love and its duty. To be sure, he could not use the words of very truth. He would much have preferred to speak with unflinching

honesty, to confess that he *had*, even of late, often dwelt on the thought of Emily with tenderness, with something of heart-ache ; but that the new love had, for all that, triumphed over the old, and would henceforth grow to perfectness. But the character of Beatrice would not allow this ; in her, feeling was too predominant over intellect ; she could not recognise in this very frankness the assurance of an affection which would end by being no less than the utmost she demanded. He had to seek for subtleties of explanation, for ingenuities of argument, which, unsatisfactory as they seemed to himself, might yet, he thought, help her to the reconciliation he knew she desired. He was scarcely less anxious for it. For Beatrice he would never know that limitless passion, that infinite yearning alike of spirit and of sense, which had been his love for Emily ; but she was very dear to him, and with all his heart he desired to make her happiness. He imaged her beauty and her talent with pride which made his veins warmer. Her husband, he would be loyal to his last breath. Community of life would establish that intimate alliance of heart and soul which every year makes more enduring. Were they not young flesh and blood, he and she ? And could a bodiless ghost come between them, a mere voice of long-vanished time, insubstantial, unseizable as the murmur in these chestnut-leaves ?

He grew tired of the attitude which at first had been reposeful, and rose to wander further. Someone else, it seemed, had been tempted to this quiet corner, away from the road ; a woman was walking at a little distance, and reading as she walked. The thought passed through his mind that a woman never looked more graceful than when walking with her head bent over a book. When he looked that way again, he found that she had come much nearer, still very intent upon her reading. She had, in truth, a comely figure, one which suggested a face of the nobler kind. She would look up presently.

Did not that form, that movement as she walked, stir memories ? Yes, he had known someone who might well have paced thus beneath spreading trees, with her eyes upon a book of poetry ; not unlike this stranger, outwardly. In what black, skyless, leafless town was she pursuing her lonely life ?—Lonely ? why should it be so ? Emily could not go on her way without meeting one whom her sweetness and her power would enthral, and the reasons, whatever they were, that had forbidden her marriage six or seven years ago, were not likely to resist time. He

tried to hope that the happier lot had by this solaced her. Do we not change so? His own love—see how it had faded!

Half purposely, he had turned so as to pass near the reader. At the distance of a few yards from her, he stayed his step. A little nearer she came, then something made her aware of his presence. She raised her eyes, the eyes of Emily Hood.

Her hands fell, one still holding the book open. He, who was prepared already, could watch her countenance change from placid, if grave, thought, to the awakening of surprise, to startled recognition; he could see the colour die upon her cheeks, flee from her lips; he could observe the great heart-throbs which shook her and left her bosom quivering. He did not uncover his head; conventional courtesies have their season. It seemed very long before they ceased to look into each other's eyes, but at length hers fell.

'Is it possible that you are living in London?' were Wilfrid's first words. He could affect no distance of manner. To him all at once it was as though they had parted a few days ago.

'Yes,' she answered simply. 'In a far part of London.'

'And we meet here, where I seemed to find myself by the merest chance. I saw a stranger in the distance, and thought of yourself; I knew you long before you looked up from your reading.'

Emily tried to smile.

'How little you are changed,' Wilfrid continued, his voice keeping still its awed quietness, with under-notes of feeling. 'Rather, you are not changed at all.'

It was not true, but in the few minutes that he had gazed at her, past and present had so blended that he could not see what another would have noticed. Emily was appreciably older, and ill-health had set marks upon her face. A stranger looking at her now would have found it hard to imagine her with the light of joy in her eyes; her features had set themselves in sorrow. Her cheeks were very thin; her eyes were dark and sunken. Wilfrid saw only the soul in her gaze at him, and that was as it had ever been.

She was unable to speak; Wilfrid found words.

'Do you often walk here? Is your home near?'

'Not very near. I came by the river,' she answered.

'I am very glad that I have met you.' The words sounded insufficient, but Wilfrid was by this time at battle with himself, and succeeded in saying less than he felt. 'You will let me walk

on a little way with you? We can't shake hands at once and say good-bye, can we, after such a long time?'

He spoke in the tone one uses to jest over bygone sadness. Emily made no verbal answer, but walked along by his side.

'You still have your old habits,' he said, casting an eye at the book. 'Are your tastes still the same, I wonder?'

'It is Dante,' she replied.

The name brought another to Wilfrid's consciousness; he averted his eyes for a moment, but spoke again without much delay.

'Still faithful to the great names. This is a lovely place to make one's study. Were you here when the chestnuts flowered?'

'Yes, once or twice.'

'I did not see them this year. And you have been walking here so often,' he added, wondering again, half to himself. 'I have been to Teddington several times lately, but only to-day came into the park.'

'I have not been here for a month,' Emily said, speaking at length with more ease. The shock had affected her physically more than she had allowed to be seen; it was only now that her voice was perfectly at her command. Her face remained grave, but she spoke in a tone free from suggestion of melancholy. 'I teach in a school, and to-day there is a holiday.'

'Do you live at the school?'

'No. I have my own lodgings.'

He was on the point of asking whether Mrs. Baxendale knew she was in London, but it seemed better to suppress the question.

'Have you been there long?' he asked instead.

'Half a year.'

As he kept silence, Emily continued with a question, the first she had put.

'What have you chosen for your life's work?'

Wilfrid could not overcome the tendency of blood to his cheeks. He was more than half ashamed to tell her the truth.

'You will laugh at me,' he said. 'I am in Parliament.'

'You are? I never see newspapers.'

She added it as if to excuse herself for not being aware of his public activity.

'Oh, I am still far from being a subject of leading-articles,' Wilfrid exclaimed. 'Indeed, I gave you no answer to your question. My life's work is non-existent. All my old plans have come

to nothing, and I have formed no new ones, no serious plans. My life will be a failure, I suppose.'

'But you aim at success in politics?'

'I suppose so. I was thinking of the other things we used to speak of.'

Emily hazarded a glance at him, as if to examine him again in this new light.

'You used to say,' she continued, 'that you felt in many ways suited for a political life.'

'Did I? You mean at home, when I talked in a foolish way. It was not my serious thought. I never said it to you.'

She murmured a 'No.' They walked on in silence.

'You didn't read Italian then,' Wilfrid said. 'You, I feel sure, have not wasted your time. How much you must have read since we talked over our favourite authors.'

'I have tried to keep up the habit of study,' Emily replied, unaffectedly, 'but of course most of my time is occupied in teaching.'

Their walk had brought them from under the trees, and the lake was just before them.

'I will go on to the bridge,' Emily said. 'The boat I return by will leave shortly.'

She spoke as if expecting him to take leave of her. Wilfrid inwardly bade himself do so. He had seen her, had talked with her; what more for either? Yet it was beyond his power to stand here and see her walk away from him. Things were stirring in his heart and mind of which he refused to take cognisance; he would grant nothing more than a sense of pleasure in hearing once again a voice which had so long been buried, and there was no harm in that. Was not his strongest feeling merely surprise at having met her thus? Even yet he found a difficulty in realising that it was she with whom he spoke; had he closed his eyes and then looked round for her in vain it would only have appeared the natural waking from intense reverie. Why not dream on as long as he might?

'May I not walk as far as the bridge with you?' he asked. 'If I were not afraid of being tiresome I should even like to go by the boat; it would be the pleasantest way of getting back to town.'

'Yes, it is pleasant on the river,' Emily said rather absently.

They pursued their walk together, and conversed still much in the same way. Wilfrid learned that her school was in Hammersmith,

a large day-school for girls; he led her to speak of the subjects she taught, and of her pupils.

‘You prefer it,’ he asked, ‘to private teaching?’

‘I think so.’

‘Once on the boat their talk grew less consecutive; the few words they exchanged now and then were suggested by objects or places passed. At length even these remarks ceased, and for the last half-hour they held silence. Other people close by were talking noisily. Emily sat with both hands holding the book upon her lap, her eyes seldom moving from a point directly before her. Wilfrid glanced at her frequently. He was more observant now of the traces of bodily weakness in her; he saw how meagre she had become, how slight her whole frame was. At moments it cost him a serious effort to refrain from leaning to her and whispering words—he knew not what—something kind, something that should change her fixed sadness. Why had he forced his company upon her? Certainly he brought her no joy, and presently he would take leave of her as any slight acquaintance might; how otherwise? It would have been better to part there by the lake where she offered the occasion.

The steamer reached Hammersmith. Only at this last moment he seemed to understand where he was and with whom, that Emily was sitting by him, in very deed here by his side, and directly would be gone—he knew not whither—scarcely to be met again. The silence between them had come of the difficulty they both had in realising that they were together, of the dreaminess so strange an event had cast upon them. Were they to fall apart again without a word, a sign? A sign of what, forsooth?

Wilfrid moved with her to the spot at which she would step from the deck; seeing him follow, Emily threw back one startled glance. The next moment she again turned, holding out her hand. He took it, held it, pressed it; nothing could restrain that pressure; his muscles closed upon her slight fingers involuntarily. Then he watched her walk hurriedly from the landing-stage. . . .

Her we follow. She had a walk of nearly half an hour, which brought her at length to one of the streets of small lodging-houses which abound in this neighbourhood, and to a door which she opened with her latch-key. She went upstairs. Here two rooms were her home. That which looked upon the street was furnished in the poor bare style which the exterior of the dwelling would have led one to expect. A very hideous screen of coloured

paper hid the fireplace, and in front of the small oblong mirror—cracked across one corner—which stood above the mantelpiece were divers ornaments such as one meets with in poor lodging-houses; certain pictures about the walls completed the effect of vulgarity.

Emily let herself sink upon the chintz-covered couch, and lay back, closing her eyes; she had thrown off her hat, but was too weary, too absent in thought, to remove her mantle. Her face was as colourless as if she had fainted; she kept one hand pressed against her heart. Unconsciously she had walked home with a very quick step, and quick movement caused her physical suffering. She sat thus for a quarter of an hour, when there came a tap at the door,

Her landlady entered.

‘Oh, I thought, Miss Hood,’ she began, ‘you’d maybe rung the bell as usual, and I hadn’t heard it. I do sometimes think I’m getting a little hard of hearing; my husband tells me of it. Will you have the tea made?’

‘Thank you, Mrs. Willis,’ Emily replied, rising.

She opened a low cupboard beside the fireplace, took out a tea-pot, and put some tea into it.

‘You’d have a long walk, I suppose,’ continued the woman, ‘and delightful weather for it, too. But you must mind as you don’t over-tire yourself. You don’t look very strong, if I may say it.’

‘Oh, I am very well,’ was the mechanical reply.

After a few more remarks the landlady took away the tea-pot. Emily then drew out a cloth from the cupboard, and other things needful for her evening meal. Presently the tea-pot returned filled with hot water. Emily was glad to pour out a cup and drink it, but she ate nothing. In a short time she rang the bell to have the things removed. This time a little girl appeared.

‘Eh, Miss,’ was the exclamation of the child, on examining the state of the table, ‘you haven’t eaten nothing!’

‘No, I don’t want anything just now, Milly,’ was the quiet reply.

‘Shall I leave the bread and butter out?’

‘No, thank you. I’ll have some later.’

‘Is there anything I could get you, Miss?’

‘Nothing, Milly. Take the things away, there’s a good girl.’

Emily had seated herself on the couch again; when the girl

was gone she lay down, her hands beneath her head. Long, long since she had had so much to think of as to-night.

At first she had found Wilfrid a good deal altered. He looked so much older; his bearded face naturally caused that. But before he had spoken twenty words how well she knew that the change was only of appearance. His voice was a little deeper, but the tone and manner of his speaking carried her back to the days when they had first exchanged words when she was a governess at The Firs in Surrey, and Wilfrid was the interesting young fellow who had overworked himself at college. The circumstances of to-day's meeting had reproduced something of the timidity with which he had approached her when they were strangers. This afternoon she had scarcely looked into his eyes, but she felt their gaze upon her, and felt their power as of old—ah, fifty-fold stronger!

Was he married? It was more than possible. Nothing had escaped him inconsistent with that, and he was not likely to speak of it directly. It would account for the nature of his embarrassment in talking with her; her keen insight distinguished something more than the hesitation which common memories would naturally cause. And that pressure of the hand at parting which had made her heart leap with such agony, might well be his way of intimating to her that this meeting would have no sequel. Was it to be expected that he should remain unmarried? Had she hoped it?

It could not be called hope, but for two or three years something had grown in her which made life a succession of alternating longings and despairs. For Emily was not so constituted that the phase of thought and feeling which had been brought about by the tragedy of her home could perpetuate itself and become her normal consciousness. When she fled from Dunfield she believed that the impulses then so strong would prevail with her to the end of her life, that the motives which were then predominant in her soul would maintain their ruling force for ever. And many months went by before she suspected that her imagination had deceived her; imagination, ever the most potent factor of her being, the source alike of her strength and her weakness. But there came a day when the poignancy of her grief was subdued, and she looked around her upon a world more desolate than that in which she found herself on the day of her mother's burial. She began to know once more that she was young, and that

existence stretched before her a limitless tract of barren endurance.

The rare natures which are in truth ruled by the instinct of renunciation, which find in the mortification of sense a spring of unearthly joy brimming higher with each self-conquest, may experience temptation and relapse, but the former is a new occasion for the arming of the spirit, and the latter speedily leads to a remorse which is the strongest of all incentives to ascetic struggle. Emily had not upon her the seal of sainthood. It was certain that at some point of her life asceticism would make irresistible claim upon the strongholds of her imagination; none the less certain that it would be but for a time, that it would prove but a stage in her development. To her misfortune the occasion presented itself in connection with her strongest native affections, and under circumstances which led her to an irretrievable act. Had she been brought up in a Roman Catholic country she would doubtless have thrown herself into a convent, finding her stern joy in the thought that no future wavering was possible. Attempting to make a convent of her own mind, she soon knew too well that her efforts mocked her, that there was in her an instinct stronger than that of renunciation, and that she had condemned herself to a life of futile misery.

Her state of mind for the year following her father's death was morbid, little differing from madness; and she came at length to understand that. When time had tempered her anguish, she saw with clear eyes that her acts had been guided by hallucinations. Never would sorrow for her parents cease to abide with her, but sorrow cannot be the sustenance of a life through those years when the mind is strongest and the sensations most vivid. Had she by her self-mortification done aught to pleasure those dear ones who slept their last sleep? It had been the predominant feature of her morbid passion to believe that piety demanded such a sacrifice. Grief may reach such a point that to share the uttermost fate of the beloved one seems blessedness; in Emily's mind that moment of supreme agony had been protracted till unreasoning desire took to itself the guise of duty. Duty so represented cannot maintain its sanction when the wounds of nature grow towards healing.

She strove with herself. The reaction she was experiencing seemed to her a shameful weakness. Must she cease to know the self-respect which comes of conscious perseverance in a noble

effort? Must she stand self-condemned, an ignoble nature, incapable of anything good and great—and that, after all her ambitions? Was she a mere waif, at the mercy of the currents of sense? Never before had she felt this condemnation of her own spirit. She had suffered beyond utterance, but ever with a support which kept her from the last despair; of her anguish had come inspiration. Now she felt herself abandoned of all spiritual good. She came to loathe her life as a polluted stream. The image of Wilfrid, the memory of her lost love, these grew to be symbols of her baseness. It was too much to face those with whom daily duty brought her in contact; surely they must read in her face the degradation of which she was conscious. As much as possible she kept apart from all, nursing her bitter self-reproach.

Then it was that she sought relief in the schemes which naturally occur to a woman thus miserable. She would relinquish her life as a teacher, and bury her wretchedness beneath physical hardship. There was anguish enough in the world, and she would go to live in the midst of it, would undertake the hardest and most revolting tasks in some infirmary; thus might she crush out of herself the weakness which was her disgrace. It remained only a vision. That which was terribly real, the waste and woe of her heart, grew ever.

She yielded. Was not the true sin this that she tried to accomplish—the slaying of the love which cried so from her inmost being? Glimpses of the old faith began to be once more vouchsafed her; at moments she knew the joy of beautiful things. This was in spring-time. Living in the great seaport, she could easily come within sight of the blue line where heaven and ocean met, and that symbol of infinity stirred once more the yearnings for boundless joy which in bygone days she had taught herself to accept as her creed. Supposing that her father had still knowledge of the life she led, would it make him happy to know that she had deprived herself of every pleasure, had for his sake ruined a future which might have been so fair? Not thus do we show piety to the dead; rather in binding our brows with every flower our hands may cull, and in drinking sunlight as long as the west keeps for us one gleam.

She had destroyed herself. Joy could arise to her from but one source, and that was stopped for ever. For it never came to Emily as the faintest whisper that other love than Wilfrid's might bless her life. That was constancy which nothing could shake

in this she would never fall from the ideal she had set before herself. She no longer tried to banish thoughts of what she had lost; Wilfrid was a companion at all hours far more real than the people with whom she had to associate. She had, alas, destroyed his letters; she had destroyed the book in which she wrote the secrets of her heart that he might some day read them. The lack of a single thing that had come to her from him made the more terribly real the severance of his life from hers. She anguished without hope.

Then there came to her the knowledge that her bodily strength was threatened by disease. She had fainting fits, and in the comfort administered by those about her she read plainly what was meant to be concealed. At times this was a relief; at least she might hope to be spared long years of weary desolation, and death, come when he might, would be a friend. In other hours the all but certainty of her doom was a thought so terrible that reason well-nigh failed before it. Was there no hope for her for ever, nothing but the grave to rest her tired heart? Why had fate dealt with her so cruelly? She looked round and saw none upon whom had fallen a curse so unrelieved.

At last the desire to go once more to the south of England grew overpowering. If she could live in London, she felt it might console her to feel that she was near Wilfrid; he would not seem, as now, in a world utterly remote. Perchance she might one day even see him. If she had knowledge of the approach of death, Wilfrid would not refuse to come and see her at the last, and with her hand in his how easy it would be to die. She sought for means of supporting herself in London; she still had money saved from that which the sale of her father's house had brought her, but she did not wish to use more of this than she could help, keeping it for a certain cherished purpose. After many months of fruitless endeavour, she found a place in a school in Hammer-smith. . . .

And Wilfrid had sat by her, had looked at her with something of the old tenderness, had pressed her hand as no one else would. Far into the night she lay thinking over every word he had spoken. Sometimes she wept—poor Emily! He had not asked her where she lived; for that doubtless there was good reason. But it was much to have seen him this once. Again she wept, saying to herself that she loved him,—that he was lost to her,—that she must die.

CHAPTER XXIII.

HER PATH IN THE LIGHT.

THAT Wilfrid did not at the last moment leap on shore and follow Emily seemed to him less the result of self-control than obedience to outward restraint; it was as though an actual hand lay on his shoulder and held him back. He went back to his seat, and again fell into dreaminess.

The arrival of the boat at Chelsea pier reminded him that he must land; thence he drove home. On reaching the house he found Mrs. Birks there; she had called to see his father, and was in the hall on the point of leaving as he entered. She stepped up to him, and spoke in a low voice.

‘What is the matter with Beatrice?’

‘The matter? How?’

‘She seems out of sorts. Come round and see her, will you?’

‘I really can’t just now,’ Wilfrid replied. ‘Do you mean that she is not well?’

‘Something seems to be upsetting her. Why can’t you come and see her?’

‘I can’t this evening. I have an engagement.’

‘Very well. But you had better come soon, I think.’

‘I don’t understand you,’ said Wilfrid, with some show of impatience. ‘Is she ill?’

‘Not exactly ill, I suppose. Of course I mustn’t interfere. No doubt you understand.’

‘I will come as soon as I can,’ Wilfrid said. And he added, ‘Has she—spoken to you about anything?’

‘I wish she had. She will speak neither to me nor to anyone else. It is too bad, Wilf, if you let her fret herself into a fever. She is just the girl to do it, you know.’

She nodded, smiled, and went off. Wilfrid, having committed himself to an engagement, loitered about in his dressing-room for a while, then, without seeing his father, betook himself to his club and dined there. After passing the early part of the evening in an uncomfortable way, with the help of newspapers and casual conversation, he went home again and shut himself in his study.

He sat long, without attempting to do anything. About midnight he rose as if to leave the room, but, instead of doing so, paced the floor for a few minutes; then he opened a certain

drawer in his writing-table, and took out the morocco case which contained Emily's letters. He slipped off the band. The letters were still in their envelopes, and lay in the order in which he had received them. He drew forth the first and began to read it. He read them all.

Till the early daybreak he remained in the room, sometimes walking about, sometimes seating himself to re-read this letter and that. Twenty-four hours ago these written words would have touched his heart indeed, but only as does the memory of an irrecoverable joy; he could have read them, and still have gone to meet Beatrice as usual, or with but a little more than his ordinary reserve in her presence. It was otherwise now. The very voice had spoken again, and its tones lingering with him made the written characters vocal; each word uttered itself as it met his eye; Emily spoke still. The paper was old, the ink faded, but the love was of this hour. He grew fevered, and it was the fever of years ago, which had only been in appearance subdued; it had lurked still in his blood, and now asserted itself with the old dire mastery.

He marvelled that he had suffered her to leave him without even learning where she lived. He could not understand what his mood had been, what motives had weighed with him. He had not been conscious of a severe struggle to resist a temptation; the temptation had not, in fact, yet formed itself. What was her own thought? She had answered his questions freely, perhaps would have told him without hesitation the address of her lodgings. Clearly she no longer sought to escape him. But that, he reminded himself, was only the natural response to his own perfectly calm way of speaking; she could not suggest embarrassments when it was his own cue to show that he felt none. She was still free, it seemed, but what was her feeling towards him? Did she still love him? Was the mysterious cause which had parted them still valid?

When already it was daylight, he went upstairs and lay down on the bed; he was weary, but not with the kind of weariness that brings sleep. His mind was occupied with plans for discovering where Emily lived. Mrs. Baxendale had professed to have lost sight of her; Wilfrid saw now that there was a reason for concealing the truth, and felt that in all probability his friend had misled him; in any case, he could not apply to her. Was there a chance of a second meeting in the same place? Emily was sure to be free on Saturday afternoon; but only in one case

would she go to the park again—if she desired to see him, and imagined a corresponding desire on his side. And that was an unlikely thing; granting she loved him, it was not in Emily's character to scheme thus, under the circumstances.

Yet why had she chosen to come and live in London?

Beatrice he had put out of his thoughts. He did not do it deliberately; he made no daring plans; simply he gave himself over to the rising flood of passion, without caring to ask whither it would bear him. Though it fevered him, there was a luxury in the sense of abandonment once more to desire which suffered no questioning. That he had ever really loved Beatrice he saw now to be more than doubtful; that he loved Emily was as certain as that he lived. To compare the images of the two women was to set side by side a life sad and wan with one which bloomed like a royal flower, a face whose lines were wasted by long desolation with one whose loveliness was the fit embodiment of supreme joy. But in the former he found a beauty of which the other offered no suggestion, a beauty which appealed to him with the most subtle allurements, which drew him as with siren song, which, if he still contemplated it, would inspire him with recklessness. He made no effort to expel it from his imagination; every hour it was sweeter to forget the facts of life and dream of what might be.

Through this day and that which followed he kept away from home, only returning late at night. No more news of Beatrice came. He saw that his father regarded him with looks of curiosity, but only conversation of the wonted kind passed between them. When Saturday arrived he was no longer in doubt whether to pursue the one faint hope of finding Emily again in Bushey Park; the difficulty was to pass the time till noon, before which it was useless to start. He was due for the last sitting in the studio at Teddington, but that was an ordeal impossible to go through in his present state of mind. He went to Hampton by train, lunched again at the King's Arms, though but hastily, and at length reached the spot in the park where his eyes had discovered Emily reading.

It was not such a day as Wednesday had been; the sun shone intermittently, but there was threatening of rain. A vehicle now and then drove along the avenue taking holiday-makers to the Palace, and, near the place where Wilfrid walked, a party was picnicking under the trees. But he in vain sought for one who

wandered alone, one who, in the distance, could move him to uncertain hope.

Why had he come? Suppose he did again meet Emily, what had he to say to her? Long and useless waiting naturally suggested such thoughts, and the answer to them was a momentary failing at the heart, a touch of fear. Was he prepared to treat this temporary coldness between Beatrice and himself as a final rupture? Was his present behaviour exactly that of a man who recognises rules of honour? If he had no purpose in wishing to see Emily but the satisfaction of a desire about which he would not reason, was it not unqualified treachery in which he was involving himself, treachery to two women and to one of them utter cruelty? He turned to walk towards the lake, desperate that his hope had failed, and at the same time—strange contradiction—glad in the thought that, having once yielded, he might overcome his madness. He passed the lake, and reached the exit from the park. At the same moment Emily was entering.

Her face expressed an agony of shame; she could not raise her eyes, could not speak. She gave him her hand mechanically, and walked on with her looks averted. Her distress was so unconcealed that it pained him acutely. He could not find words till they had walked a distance of twenty or thirty yards. Then he said:

‘I came purposely to-day, in the hope that you might by chance be here. Do I annoy you?’

She half-turned her face to him, but the effort to speak was vain.

A still longer silence followed. Wilfrid knew at length what he had done. That utterance of his had but one meaning, Emily's mute reply admitted of but one interpretation. His eyes dazzled; his heart beat violently. A gulf sank before him, and there was no longer choice but to plunge into it. He looked at his companion, and—farewell the solid ground.

‘Emily, is it your wish that I should leave you?’

She faced him, moved her lips, motioned ‘no’ with her head. She was like one who is led to death.

‘Then I will not leave you. Let us walk gently on; you shall speak to me when you feel able.’

He cared for no obstacle now. She was come back to him from the dead, and to him it was enough of life to hold her. Let the world go; let all speak of him as they would; this pale, weary-

eyed woman should henceforth represent existence to him. He would know no law but the bidding of his sovereign love.

She spoke.

‘Have I fallen in your eyes?’

‘You have always been to me the highest, and will be whilst I live.’

They had passed into the shadow of the trees; he took her hand and held it. The touch seemed to strengthen her, for she looked at him again and spoke firmly.

‘Neither was my coming without thought of you. I had no hope that you would be here, no least hope, but I came because it was here I had seen you.’

‘Since Wednesday,’ Wilfrid returned, ‘I have read your letters many times. Could you still speak to me as you did then?’

‘If you could believe me.’

You said once that you did not love me.’

‘It was untrue.’

‘May you tell me now what it was that came between us?’

She fixed upon him a gaze of sad entreaty, and said, under her breath, ‘Not now.’

‘Then I will never ask. Let it be what it might; your simple word that you loved me is all I need.’

‘I will tell you,’ Emily replied, ‘but I cannot now. It seemed to me at the time that that secret would have to die with me; I thought so till I met you here. Then I knew that, if you still loved me and had been faithful to me so long, I could say nothing to myself which I might not speak to you. My love for you has conquered every other love and everything that I believed my duty.’

‘Is it so, Emily?’ he asked, with deepest tenderness.

‘When I tell you all, you will perhaps feel that I have proved my own weakness. I will conceal from you nothing I have ever thought; you will see that I tried to do what my purest instincts urged, and that I have been unable to persevere to the end. Wilfrid——’

‘My own soul!’

‘When I tell you all that happened at that time, I shall indeed speak to you as if your soul and mine were one. It may be wrong to tell you—you may despise me for not keeping such things a secret for ever. I cannot tell whether I am right or wrong to do this. Is your love like mine?’

‘I would say it was greater, if you were not so above me in all things.’

‘Wilfrid, I was dying in my loneliness. It would not have been hard to die, for, if I was weak in everything else, at least my love for you would have grown to my last breath. If I speak things which I should only prove in silence, it is that you may not afterwards judge me hardly.’

‘You shall tell me,’ Wilfrid replied, ‘when you are my wife. Till then I will hear nothing but that you are and always have been mine.’

They came to a great tree about the trunk of which had been built a circular seat. The glades on every side showed no disturbing approach.

‘Let us sit here,’ said Wilfrid. ‘We have always talked with each other in the open air, haven’t we?’

He drew her to him and kissed her face passionately. It was the satisfying of a hunger of years. With Beatrice his caresses had seldom been other than playful; from the first moment of re-meeting with Emily, he had longed to hold her to his heart.

‘Can I hope to keep you now? You won’t leave me again, Emily?’

‘If I leave you, Wilfrid, it will be to die.’

Again he folded her in his arms, and kissed her lips, her cheeks, her eyes. She was as weak as a trembling flower.

‘Emily, I shall be in dread through every moment that parts us. Will you consent to whatever I ask of you? Once before I would have taken you and made you my wife, and if you had yielded we should have escaped all this long misery. Will you now do what I wish?’

She looked at him questioningly.

‘Will you marry me as soon as it can possibly be? On Monday I will do what is necessary, and we can be married on Wednesday. This time you will not refuse?’

‘Wednesday?’

‘Yes. One day only need intervene between the notice and the marriage; it shall be at the church nearest to you.’

‘Wilfrid, why do you——’

Fear had taken hold upon her; she could not face the thought. Wilfrid checked her faint words with his lips.

‘I wish it,’ he said, himself shaken with a tempest of passion which whelmed the last protest of his conscience. ‘I shall

scarcely tear myself from you even till then. Emily, Emily, what has my life been without your love? Oh, you will be the angel that raises me out of the ignoble world into which I have fallen! Hold me to you—make me feel and believe that you have saved me! Emily, my beautiful, my goddess! let me worship you, pray to you! Mine now, mine, love, for ever and ever!’

She burst into tears, unable to suffer this new denizen of her heart, the sure and certain hope of bliss. He kissed away the tears as they fell, whispering love that was near to frenzy. There came a sob that shook her whole frame, then Wilfrid felt her cheek grow very cold against his; her eyes were half-closed, from her lips escaped a faint moan. He drew back and, uncertain whether she had lost consciousness, called to her to speak. Her body could not fall, for it rested against a hollow part of the great trunk. The faintness lasted only for a few moments; she once more gazed at him with the eyes of infinite sadness.

‘It is so hard to bear happiness,’ were her first words.

‘My dearest, you are weak and worn with trouble. Oh, we will soon leave that far behind us. Are you better, my lily? Only give me your hands to hold, and I will be very still. Your hands are so light; they weigh no more than leaves. Do you suffer, dear?’

‘A little pain—there;’ she touched her heart.

Wilfrid looked into her face anxiously.

‘Have you often that pain?’

‘No, not often. I don’t feel it now. Wilfrid! Every day I have spoken that name, have spoken it aloud.’

‘So have I often spoken yours, dear.’

They gazed at each other in silence.

‘And it is to be as I wish?’ Wilfrid said gently.

‘So very soon?’

‘So very long! This is only Saturday. If I had known this morning, it could have been on Monday.’

‘Your wife, Wilfrid? Really your wife?’

‘How your voice has changed! Till now you spoke so sadly. Those words are like the happiest of our old happy time. Three long days to be passed, but not one day more. You promise me?’

‘I do your bidding, now and always, always!’

For the moment she had forgotten everything but love and

love's rapture. It was as though life spread before her in limitless glory; she thought nothing of the dark foe with whose ever-watchful, ever-threatening presence she had become so familiar.

They talked long; only the lengthening and deepening shadow of the trees reminded them at length that hours had passed whilst they sat here.

'The boat will have gone,' Emily said.

'Never mind. We will get a conveyance at the hotel. And you must have refreshment of some kind. Shall we see what they can give us to eat at the King's Arms? To be sure we will. It will be our first meal together.'

They rose.

'Emily!'

'Yes, Wilfrid?'

'I can trust you? You will not fail me?'

'Not if I am living, Wilfrid.'

'Oh, but I shall of course see you before Wednesday. Tomorrow is Sunday——'

He checked himself. Sunday was the day he always gave to Beatrice. But he durst not think of that now.

'On Sunday there are so many people about,' he continued. 'Will you come here again on Monday afternoon?'

Emily promised to do so.

'I will write to you to-morrow, and again a letter for Tuesday, giving you the last directions. But I may have to see you on Tuesday. May I call at your lodgings?'

'If you need to. Surely you may? My—my husband?'

'My wife!'

They walked to the hotel, and thence, when dusk was falling, started to drive homewards. They stopped at the end of Emily's street, and Wilfrid walked with her to the door.

'Till Monday afternoon,' he said, grasping her hand as if he clung to it in fear.

Then he found another vehicle. It was dark when he reached home.

(To be concluded.)

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FRENCH JANET.

CHAPTER X.

A HAUNTED HOUSE.

A VISITOR came to Windygates in those unpropitious circumstances, and in the end of autumn. It was a very innocent, ignorant visitor, an orphan girl not yet in her teens, whose dead mother had been Lady Windygates's dearest friend in their youth.

Little Anaple Boyd was, it was feared, going the same road which her mother had travelled before her. She had been an exceedingly delicate child, and there was reason to suspect the seeds of consumption were sown in her constitution. Her usual home was with kindred in the Canongate, Edinburgh, but at Lady Windygates's earnest request Anaple had been brought to Windygates to try what country air—even as cold as that of Windygates towards the close of September—would do for the child. Our ancestors were not less hardy in their medical prescriptions than in everything else. To be sure, the air was to be supplemented with an abundance of sweet milk, newly laid eggs, chicken broth, calves'-foot jelly, and the experienced nursing of her mother's friend.

It may seem that Lady Windygates would not shine in the office which she had assumed, but that would be a great mistake; she watched over Anaple with the utmost care and gentleness, from the hour when she administered the patient's glass of rum and milk in the morning, to the other hour when Lady Windygates tucked Anaple in for the night, with a worsted stocking round her throat, and a basin of bread berry (hot wine, bread, and sugar) for

her supper at bed-time. There was something in the delicate health, and in the peculiarly inoffensive, artless disposition of the little invalid, who had paid more than one visit to Windygates, that called forth the best traits in Lady Windygates's nature, and there was a great deal of sterling stuff in the redoubtable little woman. She was quite fond of Anaple, and was inclined to resent the fact that young Windygates, who had been wont to show a great liking for children, took hardly any notice of the visitor on this occasion.

Anaple was in dress a small edition of her hostess in her long-waisted frock, the ruffles at her elbows, the white neckerchief crossed over her breast, the white muslin apron, the gay pockets which Lady Windygates had patched for her, the little mob cap over the smooth mouse-coloured cropped hair. She used to sit with her two pink-and-white cheeks and her over-large and bright eyes, holding her picture-book, or her doll, or her sampler, and bearing Lady Windygates company in her white-panelled parlour. Very good company the woman, fain to be diverted from her perplexed and anxious thoughts, found the unconscious child, who prattled to her without fear, and with a simple confidence in her patience and good-will which in itself bred the best will.

'Madam,' said Anaple, when the two friends were thus *tête-à-tête* on a stormy day which precluded all exercise except for the young and strong, or the waifs who were forced to meet the storm; 'Madam, I can work in that stitch as well as mark letters. I would like to work a footstool for you to keep in remembrance of me—that you've been so good to.'

'That would be very good of you, my dear,' said Lady Windygates, with a passing pang at the words, 'but there is time enough to think of it, as you are to come back in summer, and next winter, too, if you do not mind the cold. For my part, I like the keen, clear cold of Windygates far better than the smothering reek of a big town.'

'So do I,' said the child eagerly; 'I like everything about Windygates, even the wind that sighs in the chimney at night, and the garden gate that creaks on its hinges.'

'I'm glad of that, Anaple, and you'll ask your friends to send you here whenever they can, so that you see I shall not need a remembrance of you, though that is not to say that I will not be proud and pleased to have a specimen of your handiwork.'

'I do not know of your not needing a remembrance of me,

Lady Windygates,' said the little girl, with a sort of simple solemnity, showing herself very much impressed and yet not at all agitated by what she was going to say; 'Auntie Euphann calls my cough a kirk-yard cough, and they all speak about my mother dying young, though she had not begun to dwine at my age.'

'Never mind what they say,' exclaimed Lady Windygates hastily. 'The ordering of the universe and the calculating the duration of men and women's lives is none of their business.'

'No, Madam,' said Anaple quietly, 'but they mean no ill, and they are very kind to me when I take very bad turns. I do not mind them, I just say my prayers and leave my life or death to our Father in Heaven. It must be very bonnie and lowie¹ up yonder,' added the child wistfully, 'where there are neither rude winds, nor wild beasts, nor colds and coughs, where the Lord is.'

'That's true,' said Lady Windygates emphatically; 'and if we look to Him and do our duty here He'll take us there safe enough in His own good time, whether it be late or early. We can leave our outgoings and incomings in His hands without thinking too much about them; such thoughts are hardly fit for bairns, and He has drawn a veil over the times and seasons, even when they are to do with hoary heads.'

'Yes, Madam.'

There was a little silence while Anaple hemmed her handkerchief with an ardent desire to do her duty and win the approval of Lady Windygates, as an earnest of the 'will done' of the great Lord and Master.

'Madam,' began Anaple again, 'I did not ken that you had another visitor in the house.'

'Another visitor!' exclaimed Lady Windygates, with a start; 'what do you mean, Anaple? There is no other visitor.'

'Oh, yes, Madam, you must have forgotten!' said Anaple confidently; 'or may-be the fine lady only comes for the day, and you think I mean visitors that bide the night.'

'What fine lady?' inquired the mistress of Windygates. She pulled the thread she was spinning so tightly that it snapped in two places, and then, instead of tying the ends together in a weaver's knot, she pushed back her chair and folded her hands in her lap, while the least little shiver ran over her. Then she said a little sternly, 'You are a good bairn, but even good bairns sometimes tell stories; their fancies run away with them, but I will

¹ Sheltered.

not permit it, for your own sake. There has been no fine lady here either by day or by night lately, that I know of, and there could not be without my knowledge.'

'I am not telling a story,' said Anaple, rather in accents of meek reproach than of indignant protest, so that her accuser felt as if she had struck a defenceless lamb a wanton blow. A tear gathered in the child's big lustrous eyes and fell on her needle, ready to rust it if she had not wiped it carefully away; 'I would not tell stories, least of all to you, Lady Windygates. There has been a fine lady here twice lately—whatever she may come for—if it be not to see you, which is very strange. I met her in the gallery yesterday, opposite the garden door, and I saw her this morning passing out of the dining-room as I was going downstairs. I would have asked you about her before, but you ken you were throng last night and to-day, making out the lists of goods to be sent for to Pitblair, and looking over everybody's winter clothing in case it needed renewing.'

Lady Windygates was silent for a moment in troubled thought. Braehead had never spoken to Anaple. Young Windygates, in place of occupying himself with the child, so as to render it at all probable that he should give her any share of the confidence which he had denied to his mother, had neglected Anaple to such an extent that Lady Windygates had been hurt by it.

Lady Windygates had the greatest repugnance to binding herself in any way to the support of the supernatural in her son's history, though as a woman who acknowledged the existence of the supernatural in other regions she could not discredit it utterly. She was most averse to spreading the influence by supposing for an instant, even in her own mind, that his experience could extend to the poor lamb Anaple; if she were to become a ghost-seer, who could be safe from the horrible infliction? Above all things it was necessary to protect a delicate, sensitive child like Anaple, who was under Lady Windygates's special care, from the injurious suspicion that she had seen something 'uncanny.'

'Will you tell me what your fine lady was like, my bairn?' she said at last with forced calmness and cheerfulness; 'I am anxious to hear what is your notion of a fine lady. It is just possible,' she went on with affected carelessness, 'that some one of the Dalrymples or the Charteris's,' mentioning her nearest neighbours, 'may have been over here when I was out of the way, and may have gone away without liking to trouble me.' The

spot of wintry red in her cheek deepened at the subterfuge. She did not deceive herself; she was sensible it was a mere pretence to disarm any previous doubt which might lurk even in the child's mind. But to think she, Lady Windygates, should be guilty of the pretence when she had hardly done warning Anaple not to tell stories!

'No, it was not any of the Dalrymples or the Charteris's,' said Anaple, shaking her head in a decisive manner. 'I have seen them all, and I should ken them if I saw them again. It was not like anybody I have ever seen before.'

'Dear me! Anaple, the lady must have been very kinspeckle!'¹ exclaimed Lady Windygates in an affectation of rallying the teller of the tale.

'She was kinspeckle!' said Anaple simply. 'For one thing, she was black-haired and black-browed, far more than anybody here-about. She wore her hair in a different fashion, and her mantle and hat were of another cut; and oh! Madam, she must have been of the first quality, for you said to me only the other day that a lady's laces were often the costliest things that belonged to her. Now this lady had not only the brawest lace round her neckerchief, she had it trimming everything she wore.'

'That will do, my dear,' said Lady Windygates hastily, with a sigh that sounded like a groan. 'I fail to recognise your description! That is, I cannot tell who she may be—further than that she is not one of my acquaintances; a visitor, as you say, not of mine—of some friend of mine, maybe. But stop, Anaple, did you speak to her?' asked Lady Windygates breathlessly.

'No, Madam,' answered the child in surprise. 'I did not take it upon me. The first time I was too far off, and too much taken by surprise even for curtsying. But this morning I knew what I should do, so I curtsyed as low as the cat would let me. I was carrying Graythrums in my arms, and I suppose he was frightened at the sight of a stranger, for he howled and struggled to get down. I was black affronted at his behaviour, and the lady looked over my head and took no notice. Would she be angry with Graythrums, or would she think it forward of me to curtsy?' asked Anaple anxiously. 'She was very grand and proud-looking.'

'Never mind what she thought,' said Lady Windygates abruptly. 'Go and play with puss again, it is not good for a bairn like you to sit so long over your seam; and when I think of it,

¹ Conspicuous.

Anaple, you need not speak to anybody else of this fine lady and her visits, either now or if you should happen to come across her again. It is not mannerly of her, whoever she is, to come here uninvited and not to wait on me,' said Lady Windygates with a defiant gleam in her blue eyes. 'I do not care that people should know anybody takes such liberties with me and my house. You are but a bairn; still you're a sensible little woman, Anaple, and you know how when a whisper goes round clashes arise; above all, you'll not breathe a word of this to young Windygates. He is not altogether recovered from his bad illness in Paris. He is not fit for company of any kind, or in a condition to be plagued with the fear of their turning up at odd moments—not to say it would vex him to hear of a liberty being taken with me.'

Anaple was considerably mystified, but she answered 'Yes, Madam,' with the unbounded faith of youth, and with the full intention of keeping her promise; 'and oh! Lady Windygates,' she went on to say, 'I'm wae to see Allan looking so white and dowie. He used to want me to play hide-and-seek last year, and carry me on his shoulder when I was tired, but he's tired himself now! Only, as he has no cough,' added the child with the quick instinct of a gentle heart, 'and as his mother, instead of dying young in a decline, is the most active lady on the Deerwater, he'll be better soon. Yes, I'll do your bidding, Madam, but you must remember,' said the child in a puzzled voice, 'that Ritchie or Jenny would see the lady when they let her in. Indeed, I'm almost sure that your son must have met her face to face this morning, for he came round the gallery in the opposite direction not three minutes after she had gone.'

'Never you mind,' repeated Lady Windygates at once peremptorily and soothingly. 'Leave Allan and the servants to manage their own business, and do you hold your tongue.'

'Yes, Madam,' submitted the old-fashioned little maiden obediently, though she opened her large bright eyes wider and wider.

CHAPTER XI.

ANOTHER WITNESS.

THERE was a well-known and much respected visitor in addition to Anaple and her fine lady at Windygates in the course of the following week. Instead of another child or another fine lady, it was a man venerable in years, and not fine in that sense. He was an aged minister of the Gospel, too old to preach or to serve tables. He had a small patrimony, and, having been gently born, like a large proportion of the Scotch ministers of that day, he counted kindred in different degrees of nearness with the most of the lairds' families on the Deerwater. But it was not this fact alone which rendered Mr. Arthur Hyndford an honoured guest when he made his annual peregrination through the district. He was treated with a respect, amounting to reverence, not merely because of his singular nobility of character and holiness of life, but because of the terrible trials he had passed through before William of Orange and 'Carolinal Carstairs' restored religious liberty to Scotland. Mr. Hyndford was a very old man; but the halo with which he was invested in his youth, when he was hunted like a partridge on the mountains—a mark for the fierce persecution of Lauderdale, Claverhouse, and Dalziel, glad to find any foe, above the rank of a peasant, who resisted the King's decree and was worthy of their shot and steel, or of hanging by the neck in the Grass-market—when his home was the wild moors and mosses, rugged watercourses, bleak, sea-bound caves, and thorny inland thickets of a country the climate of which was often as inclement as its government was tyrannical and relentless. Hyndford had survived the long winter of adversity, in which he had known and kept company with Pen the prophet, Cameron, Renwick, Cargill. These were men who, in scourging gales and biting frosts, when they were wrapped round with mountain mists, when they had the thunder roaring and the lightning flashing about their unsheltered heads, while the tramp of the enemy's horse and the rattle of the dragoons' sabres were for ever in the fugitives' ears, believed themselves called upon to hold still more dreadful single combats with the foul fiend himself, the malignant devil and his fallen angels, with the weakness of their own quivering flesh, with sheeted ghosts gibbering at mortal man's misery, with the awful burden of

prophesying the woes which were yet to come on an unrepentant and doomed generation.

In the Indian summer of Arthur Hyndford's extreme old age he was as unworldly, as devoted to the service of God and man, while he was infinitely gentler than he had been in the days of his hard warfare. Little wonder that he was regarded as three-fourths a saint by his relatives and friends, and that it was like a blessing on them and their children, on their basket and their store, for him to consent to abide a week under each of their roofs.

Lady Windygates was particularly pleased to have her share of good Mr. Hyndford's sojourn by the Deerwater, and to be permitted to minister to his comfort by seizing the opportunity, since he was the last of his race, and had outlived his very children's children, to look narrowly over his linen, his woollen socks, mittens and 'comforters,' supplying afresh the articles in which he was deficient from her ample stores.

It was the usual practice, and a well-earned tribute to his eminence in piety and past tribulation, that Arthur Hyndford should conduct family worship instead of the father of the family during the old minister's stay in every house he visited. He was often asked to put up special prayers, and employ what amount of spiritual power and influence with the Most High he was supposed to possess in interceding with fervent urgency for the granting of such petitions as were very near the hearts of his host and hostess.

Lady Windygates had certainly purposed to avail herself of Mr. Hyndford's presence in this light. She had meant to ask him to plead for a blessing on her nursing of Anaple Boyd, that the child might be spared as a reward of her care. And then Lady Windygates would have brought forward the lamentable case of young Windygates, and sought of her old friend that he might do his best to rid her unhappy son of what was blighting his young life, and would, if it were known, cause him to be a speech and a scandal to the whole waterside. But she was foiled in both her purposes.

'I will pray for the dear bairn as much as you like, Nanny,' he had pledged himself, giving Lady Windygates the name she had borne herself when a bairn, which she had not heard for many a long year from any other lips than his. 'I will pray that she may have what is best for her, but we must leave her living and dying

in wiser hands than ours. What! would you, a Christian woman, insist on the bairnie's living, maybe to be wed to a little worth man, or to have her heart broken by godless bairns of her own, prodigals or reprobates, or to be a poor neglected old maid, sorely pinched for her living, rather than be up yonder betimes with her kind mother, a happy lamb, safe-gathered in the Good Shepherd's fold? The last time I was here it was for the opening of the sightless eyes of Braehead's spirit and his conversion that you would have had me pray with all my might. Now I told you that I had put up that petition with my whole strength over and over again, and would put it up every day of my life to my last breath when I pled for heathens and heretics. But, as to pressing God Almighty to grant me a boon which He had shown He saw fit to deny, I would not be so thrawe¹ and disloyal. He could grant Braehead sight and conversion any day. More, by token, how can I tell that Robbie Wedderburn has not put the sightless eyes of his spirit and his unconverted nature to better use than I have done my seeing een and my second birth four score years syne? How shall I dare to say that he may not be a better man—with all his shortcomings and disadvantages, poor fellow—in his Maker's sight than the like of you and me, Nanny, to whom much has been given, and of whom, be certain, much shall be required, God help us? We have all heard of His covenanted mercies, but who may presume to limit His uncovenanted mercies? No me; with not one, but two feet in the grave, in which I would be fain to rest these weary bones of mine, and with my haffets wrinkled and my head grey when you were a restless wifie no bigger than Anaple.'

Mr. Hyndford's arguments would not have prevented Lady Windygates from appealing to him, with all a mother's heart in her mouth, to do something for Allan in his strait, had she not been anticipated by a wholly unconscious impartial statement bearing on the subject.

Mr. Hyndford took this initiatory step unwittingly one morning when Lady Windygates was standing beside the great cushioned armchair in which he usually sat. It was wheeled before one of the parlour windows to enable him to have the benefit of the frosty sunshine, and to command the pretty sight of Anaple in her warm greatcoat feeding with the crumbs from the breakfast table the mother linnets, wrens, and redbreasts within the mouldering grey arch which led to the house-court and the garden.

¹ Perverse.

Mr. Hyndford had never preached a sermon to birds, like St. Francis, or cherished a tame lion, like St. Jerome, or a pig, like St. Anthony! But the man had been very familiar with all nature's children that came within his ken during his wanderings in the wilds in the days of his youth; he had sought to make friends of them when other friends he had none, and he continued faithful to early associations, and tender to every animal, great and small, to the end of his days.

As he sat there, with his silver beard lending a picturesque, venerable touch to what otherwise was the somewhat mummy-like aspect of his advanced age, he recalled a recent incident of which he wished to speak to Lady Windygates. He took a cheerful interest in all which concerned his friends—a peculiarity, opposed to the supercilious interference of would-be saintliness, that served to endear him doubly to all who knew him.

‘I thought I was well acquainted with your and Windygates’s neighbours,’ he began; ‘but there must be new people hereabout. I saw a perfect stranger tarrying for some of you at the hall door as I went out for my after-breakfast saunter. She was a lady of mark and consideration, I should say, by her bearing and dress; not without a foreign cast about her, like the ladies I have seen in my sojourns abroad. Can it be that our countrywomen are picking up the very walk and carriage of the French madams, along with their laces and feathers? I’m old-fashioned, no doubt; for, though she was a distinguished-looking young madam, I must say I set more store on the simple homely dignity that comes naturally to our lairds’ ladies, and the lasses their daughters.’

Lady Windygates let him run on garrulously, while she knit her brows, clenched her hands, and stared into space as if it were she who was the ghost-seer. But there was no occasion for her maintaining with him—the nonagenarian, who had gone through all manner of experience—the cautious reticence which she had preserved where Anaple was concerned. If he was to do her any good, and help her, and above all help Allan, it was incumbent on her to tell him everything. As seeing is believing, it might be of use for his immediate comprehension and credence of her story, and of the difficulties with which it bristled, that he himself should have been subjected to an interview with the disturber of the family peace.

‘But where is it to end,’ Lady Windygates asked herself, with a mixture of fury, resentment, and creeping dread, ‘if good

Mr. Hyndford is to be assailed? I thought it was bad enough when the creature, who is neither in the body nor out of the body, dared to show herself to an innocent lamb like little Anaple; but to waylay and bamboozle a godly minister, an old saint, by my troth, she is not blate!’

‘Oh, sir,’ Lady Windygates said aloud, ‘I greatly misdoubt it was no friendly neighbour foolish enough to ape foreign fashions you saw hanging about the door. It was a mocking will-o’-the-wisp or spunkie, a lying spirit—for what is it save a lie to keep up the pretence of being in the body when it is not so, and to haunt a poor unfortunate lad till she drive him to destruction? I fear it is a punishment on his father and me for trusting young Windygates to an unbeliever like Braehead. Anyhow, my Allan had the great ill-luck to fall in with this woman, when she was still in the flesh, during his stay in Paris, and to be mixed up innocently with her terrible end, which I am tempted to believe was not altogether unprovoked, since she has followed it up by taking this cruel and cowardly revenge. But I’ll tell you all about it from beginning to end, my dear Mr. Hyndford, if you will have the patience and condescension, together with the goodwill, which has never failed me and mine, to abstract some of your precious thoughts from far higher concerns, and bestow your attention for an hour on an erring, half-distraught mother’s troubles, and tell her what is best to be done for her only bairn’s deliverance.’

Mr. Hyndford listened to Lady Windygates’s tale with the greatest attention; nor did he cast, from the depths of his old experience or the new light supplied by his recent adventure, the slightest discredit on her narrative so far as holding it impossible, according to Braehead’s logical measurement. But he amazed the eager speaker by wasting the first words of pity on the tormentor of the Wedderburns.

‘Is it so, my friend? There are many and divers woes in this woeful world, though when it first came from its Maker’s hands He, who knew everything past, present, and to come, pronounced it very good. Oh! poor wandering shade, can she not find rest after her bloody way-going?’

‘But what for should she come here?’ demanded Lady Windygates, pertinently enough; ‘why can she not bide in her own French country? What good will it do her to persecute young Windygates, to take all the light out of his life, and affront him as if he had done some shameful deed?’

‘I spoke to her,’ said Mr. Hyndford, who was, as he would have said, ‘a little dull of hearing,’ and had been pursuing his own reflections, sitting with his withered hands folded on his shrunken knees, instead of listening farther to Lady Windygates.

‘You spoke to her!’ cried his companion, starting from the chair into which she had sunk. ‘They say ghosts always answer when they’re spoken to—they have that civility, at least. Did she tell you what mortal thing we could give to her without sin, she wanted, that we might give it and be rid of her company?’

He went on, still following his own train of thought, without clearly catching her words or her meaning—

‘I said, “Madam, is there anything I can do for you?” as I thought she might have lost her way. I can understand now the wistful dolour of the glance, which was all the answer I got to my question. That look said, as plainly as speech could say—“Nothing in the whole wide universe—nothing either in this world or the next.”’

‘But do not say you can do nothing for us, my old friend,’ cried Lady Windygates, in passionate earnestness, bending over him, and grasping his arm with both her hands; ‘you that are so old and so good, you that have seen so many and such sorrowful sights in your day, you that folk used to hint had power to prevail with both Heaven and Hell, and to control the evil spirits when they came around you in hostile array—that time when you spent months in solitude and hiding.’

‘There are some things which had better not be spoken about, Madam,’ he said a little sternly, drawing back and in on himself, as if he resented the intrusion into his spiritual privacy and the wild warfare of those far-back days. It was all past and gone—he was in the land of Beulah; why should the few sands of his life that had yet to run be rudely shaken by recalling these painful recollections which had sunk beneath his horizon?

But when she cried again, ‘Oh, man, bethink you, do something for Allan,’ all his kindly sympathy returned in full force.

‘My dear Nanny, do you not think I would if I could? But young Allan must bear his own burden, and we must remember who lays on the burden. Yet, well or not, I can do something for him, and if he will take my advice I pledge myself that my words will not fail. Tell him from me to be up and doing; to take courage and do his work in the world as in the face of God, and neither spirit nor devil will be able to harm him. When I was

over the water, Nanny, I once saw a grand print, a noble design, of a noble man's designing. The subject was a gaunt, battered old knight, about as weary as myself—only he was less spared and favoured in his latter days. He was still riding his war-horse, as battered as himself, through a dismal valley of bleached bones, carrion birds, dim, loathly shapes, and grinning, fantastic phantoms. On the one side was the skeleton, Death, taunting him; on the other was the horned devil, Cleotie, plying him with his lies. But still the brave old knight rode on, steadfast, immovable, in the right and might of his Master, on his day's errand. No need to prophesy who would win that battle in the end.'

CHAPTER XII.

AN UNEQUAL CONTEST.

AFTER the appearances to Anaple and Mr. Hyndford similar appearances became much more frequently and widely manifested, until it was no longer possible to keep the secret or to hide the nature of young Windygates's trouble. The whole house, the whole neighbourhood, to Lady Windygates's discomfiture, and Windygates's disgust, were soon in the highest state of excitement at the strange interlude in the ordinary course of human events. Even little Anaple was enlightened before she finished her visit.

'Do you know what folk are saying, Madam?' she confided to Lady Windygates the last afternoon they sat together; 'that the house is haunted, that the ghost of a fine lady has come all the way from France—though I'm not sensible that there is any difficulty in ghosts travelling. I dare say, if they are too thin to ride on broomsticks like witches, they ride on the wind or the moon, because anyway there is one hunting young Windygates up and down, back and fore, turning up in every walk in the garden and room in the house. Could it have been the spirit I saw and curtsied to? Was that the way you looked so put about and bade me not tell?'

'Bairn, bairn, this is not talk for the like of you. The next thing that will happen will be you frightened out of your wits. But I'll have something to say to these silly maids of mine, for telling you such nonsense.'

'No, you must not blame them, Madam, for it was me who speered why they flew through the rooms in the gloaming and

would not stir out as far as the water-barrel or the dust-hole, and what they were whispering about; and, if it is not nonsense, why should I not know the truth? I've heard you say the truth was always the best; and do not mind about me, Lady Windygates, though I own I was very frightened at first. I must beg your pardon for asking Jenny to leave a candle burning in my room till I fell asleep. Even with the light I had to draw the sheet over my face, which was like to choke me and strangle my cough, which you've taken such trouble to still. I thought of that, and that I might soon be a ghost myself.'

'Whisht, Anaple my dear, that is as God wills.'

'Ay, but if He wills it I would little like to send folk into a panic; should I be let come back to see what my old friends were doing, I'm sure I could never wish to do them ill, and if I were so wicked God would hinder me. After I minded that, I just said my prayers, went where I liked, and slept like a top.'

'That's right, Anaple, always do that, and nothing can harm you.'

'Yes, Madam, but I've seen it again twice since I mistook it for a fine lady.'

Still the ghost, if seen by many, appeared with striking reservedness. It was never seen either by Windygates or Lady Windygates, though the last was not without a desperate, half-horrified desire to encounter this being of another world. For Lady Windygates still carried herself in the family misfortune with a high hand, and insisted that she took it very ill of woman or ghost, body or spirit, to omit waiting on the lady of the house in the stranger's coming and going. On close consideration the victims of the intrusion could be largely relegated to two classes. The first consisted of persons—whether children, or old men and women—who were guileless and saintly. Perhaps that very reason, and because they were not far from other mansions in the Heavenly Father's house, they were more *en rapport* with spiritual influences of all kinds, while they were beyond injury from those of dubious shade and uncertain quality.

The second class numbered those whose consciences were ill at ease—like that of Pate, one of the Windygates manservants. He was suspected of having 'lichtied' a lass who had gone demented and drowned herself in the Deerwater. There was also the maidservant Ailie, who was reported to be heartless, close-fisted to her ailing mother and imbecile brother.

Outside those classes was another considerable class, merging into one or other of the first, consisting of persons by nature or nurture emotional, hysterical, and superstitious with a slavish superstition. From the last bondage not even the Kirk, with its strong, great-hearted sway, its proclamation of the right by private judgment and prudence to glorify and enjoy God for ever, could free the votaries.

But, though the ghost in their midst made selections of acquaintances to begin with, the infection of its company, as in the case of many maladies both physical and spiritual, was spreading. The wildest stories were in circulation, until men and women had not peace and leisure in the universal commotion to do their proper work, as good Mr. Hyndford had recommended young Windygates to do his at any cost, leaving the rest to God.

When Braehead heard of the extent to which the evil had gone, and the height it had reached, he talked learnedly and sagaciously of the extraordinary marvels recorded in the Roman Catholic Saints' Calendar, and the strange experiences in mediæval monasteries and convents.

But, as Lady Windygates said with reason, what better were they at Windygates of such explanations—unless he was prepared to put an end to the visitation? Call the thing a ghost, or a *lusus naturæ*, what did it signify if he could not drive it away any more than his neighbours could? 'No, you need not speak, Robbie Wedderburn,' Lady Windygates was rude enough to say, provoked by his unshaken complacency; 'your philosophy is of little avail, or else this would never have happened—not that I mean to be so unreasonable as to put all the blame on you, only that you are no better or cleverer at getting at the bottom of this affair and being done with it than any unlettered gowk among us. No, no, you need not speak, Braehead, for your housekeeper telled me the last time I was over that after you've talked yourself hoarse on your *lusus naturæ* and your natural causes, and the incredibility of every other world than this sorry one, you'll shriek like a bairn for a light when you're left a minute without one, and you'll take two of the dark stairs at a time, though you're well up in years, and of a stout habit of body into the bargain, to gain the refuge of your bedroom. I believe you're sometimes sorry, after all, that you can no longer say your prayers like little Anaple Boyd, and trust to One above you "to be at peace."' "

‘Madam,’ said Braehead, not deigning to lose his temper, ‘women’s tongues are no scandal.’

The disturbance was brought to a climax on Hallowe’en. One might have thought that the inhabitants of Windygates had enough of the supernatural—that they would have little spirit left in them for the practice of the occult rites of the night, and the appeal to those subtle essences and invisible forces which were supposed to have the mastery at that season, the persistent tarrying of one of which among them was at the root of the general disorder. But it seemed as if there was an irresistible obligation on the maids and serving-men, with their cronies of all ages, married as well as unmarried, in the house and at the offices, to carry through the mysterious incantations. Not only were the harmless dooking for apples and the burning of nuts undertaken as of old—what could stay the dipping of the blindfolded lads’ and lasses’ hands into the basins of clear water and foul, and the basin which was void of either, the pulling the kail-stalks at haphazard from the kail-yard, the solitary eating of an apple before a mirror, the drawing of the hemp-seed, the dipping of the sark shern into the stream where four lairds’ lands met? And every ceremony was conducted in the house and outside the house with a repressed interest and excitement that was well-nigh maddening, with rushes and clutches, skirls and sobs, that took the breath away for the instant.

Lady Windygates went up and down, scolding the delinquents in vain. Young Windygates looked up with his lack-lustre eyes and colourless face as if to ask what all the disturbance was about, for till that moment he had seen and heard nothing to explain it. He was not aware what was the day of the month, he did not care when he was told. He try their childish freits again? Never. Were they mocking him? What had he to do with such silly trifling? His fortune was told, his destiny was sealed, if they cared to hear it.

Windygates lost his temper, swore at the infernal din, when, for anything he knew, stray members of the infernal world might be listening to every rash word he said; he vowed solemnly that if the delirious folly were not put a stop to soon he would put on his cocked hat and quit the house and the country, going where he would find quietness and reason—a threat which was like a man’s selfishness, Lady Windygates remarked cuttingly. Even King David would have fain taken the wings of a dove, flown

away and been at rest, leaving his royal household and kingdom to pay the penalty from which he had made his escape. But it was clear that something must be tried to end the incipient frenzy and expectation and state of turmoil, which had become chronic and unendurable.

Lady Windygates, on her own responsibility, summoned the Rev. Andrew Brydon, the minister of the parish, the appointed shepherd of this much agitated corner of his fold, to lay the ghost as he was in a manner bound to do. Windygates, though the step was not of his taking, consented to be present with the rest of the household at the ceremony, out of respect to his minister and his kirk. But young Windygates doggedly declined to countenance the intervention, though it was mainly on his behalf. He would not be induced to regard it other than an unwarrantable intrusion into his personal affairs and troubles, with which no third person had any call to meddle. They had invested him with so much more rapidly matured manliness that he was ready to resist even the wishes of the heads of the house on this matter. He called their interference a liberty which he was entitled to resent. Granted that he, Allan Wedderburn, had been the undoubted instrument of bringing, however reluctantly, all the scathe and scorn on Windygates, Lady Windygates might have said that this attitude of Allan's was another instance of the selfishness of man in the abstract; but she refrained in this case.

The Rev. Andrew Brydon was much more of a lamb than of a lion—he was only the latter in theological controversies, and sometimes in the pulpit, where the sins of the times urgently demanded public castigation. In his private capacity as young Windygates's tutor he had never been able, even when backed by full permission from Lady Windygates, to urge his pupil along the thorny road of scholarship by any save the mildest means; he constantly regarded Braehead—the heretical black sheep of his flock—with sorrow, not anger, nor with sharp pricks of personal remarks, lest every failure of courage and fidelity on his part had led to Robbie Wedderburn's lamentable lapse into unbelief, lest his blood should be on the head of his cowardly and slothful pastor. How could the Rev. Andrew be furious with a man toppling on the brink of the crater which surrounded the penal fires, while the man himself, in his hardened scepticism, could very well afford to laugh and snap his fingers at the minister and the dominie and Mr. Andrew Lamb 'all rolled into one,' as in the

sly face of the ancient riddle, or 'Andrew with the cutty gun,' and the scornful denomination which Braehead applied to his appointed spiritual guide?

The Rev. Andrew, though he was long-suffering in his meekness, could never have survived the protracted ordeal through which Arthur Hyndford had passed. It was well for the weaker man that his lines were cast in other times and places.

It goes without saying that the domestic supremacy of woman, so conspicuous on the Deerwater, was strongly exemplified at the Manse of Deerholms. It was proverbially said that the Rev. Andrew's voice was never heard in his own house, that there he was contented to be a dumb dog. Not that he was unhappily mated: on the contrary, it was in his agreeable security with regard to the high principles and the excellent parts of his spouse, that from the moment he entered his own domains he willingly resigned the reins of the family chariot, heavily freighted with children of all ages and sizes—while the wheels were not too well greased with the money which makes wheels roll smoothly—to the capable driving of Mrs. Brydon. At all times, unless on a question of what he called Christian fundamentals, the minister would have greatly preferred being driven to driving.

To a woman who loved power after the fashion of her neighbours there was a temptation afforded by the supineness in this respect of her partner in life; accordingly, there was a little dissatisfied impression afloat in the parish that Mrs. Brydon did not always confine herself to her proper sphere, that she would fain have written her husband's sermons and mounted the pulpit in his place. The limited education where schools of divinity were concerned, and the laws of the Presbyterian Church, forbade this usurpation, even if the Rev. Andrew had been so left to himself as to give it his sanction. But it was generally held that she took too much upon her, not only in the management of the glebe, but also at prayer meetings and in parochial visitations.

As two of a trade never agree, there was a smouldering feud between the minister's wife and Lady Windygates. The former declared that the latter abused her position as the lady of the chief heritor in the parish to dictate to the minister and positively coerce him on occasions. The latter cited a well-known passage in an Epistle of St. Paul's to the effect that a bishop (or presbyter) should rule his family, especially his wife, and alleged that it was a clerical scandal for him not merely to be henpecked on his own

account, but to suffer his wife to push her encroachments into his sacred calling.

At the same time, the feud was that of two intrepidly conscientious, right-minded, essentially kind-hearted women; in any serious misfortune or grave disaster the one would have flown to the help of the other at whatever personal inconvenience or risk—at least as fast as if they had been kissing and cooing over each other all day long. When measles and whooping-cough (it was called chin-cough then) broke out badly at the Manse, and poor Mrs. Brydon had her hands full, with one of her children in his little coffin and two others lying dangerously ill, Lady Windygates deliberately cut herself off from Windygates and her son, then a child in his nursery, and descended—a host in herself—on the afflicted woman, remaining there till she had lent her powerful aid in nursing back the sick to health, and in routing the last lingering breath of infection.

Notwithstanding these truths, and the solid respect which lay at the bottom of the pair's wrangling, Lady Windygates resented Mrs. Brydon's bearing her husband company when he came up to Windygates to make an onslaught on the irrepressible ghost. It was all very well for Alison Brydon to pretend that he should not enter into mysterious peril without her sharing it—she was his wife, and it was her duty and privilege to be at his back when it was lawful; or that she was so concerned about the family at Windygates in their unheard-of tribulation that she felt bound to come up and show her sympathy. But this was a very delicate matter. Young Windygates's peculiar trouble was not to be exposed to the whole waterside. If Alison Brydon had been a woman of ordinary modesty and discretion she would not have thrust her snub nose and 'rowie' figure in her tartan riding-habit into such a family scene. Lady Windygates even contrived by some ungenerous sophistry to throw the blame of the failure of the enterprise—for it did fail—on Mrs. Brydon's unjustifiable intrusion. It crippled and restrained her husband in the courageous exercise of his office. He ought to have solicited a private interview with the spectre, to have dogged and waylaid it, though he were alone and the time the middle of the night, and the place the most unfrequented part of the house. What was a man or a minister worth if he feared either spirit or devil in the discharge of his duty? if he took refuge in the shadow of his wife? Not that Lady Windygates blamed the Rev. Andrew, it was all Alison Brydon's

forwardness. It might be according to precedent to call all the family that would come to the ministry into the dining-room, to read a chapter in the Old Testament against familiar spirits, and a chapter in the New against the discerning of spirits, and to put up a prayer to be delivered from the wiles of the Devil, in the course of which the Rev. Andrew three separate times proclaimed in his hollowest tones, 'Avant, Satan !'

That might be his version of the precedent supplied by the old Scotch liturgy—no English imposition, but John Knox's liturgy for the laying of ghosts—just as there was a precedent for the exposing and condemning of witches ; but it did not at all come up to Lady Windygates's notions of what was required of a minister of the Gospel in such distressing circumstances, affecting his leading parishioners. More than that, Lady Windygates's attention was diverted and her mind distracted during the entire performance by Alison Brydon's ostentatious sighs and groans. They said, as plainly as sighs and groans could say, that, even as pride and a haughty spirit were condemned in the Scriptures, so this downcome to the credit of the family was a merited chastisement of her, Lady Windygates, for having been so uplifted where her son was concerned. Had she not peremptorily put a stop to an idle rumour which had once or twice during the previous winter coupled young Windygates's name with that of Isabel Brydon, one of the Manse girls ?

Lady Windygates was not astonished, on the whole, however vexed, when, within a week of that service in the dining-room at Windygates, Harry Bill, the cow-boy, ran in from the wood-house as if an army of fiends were at his heels, shouting that the French lady was after him, and that there was a lighted candle burning at the end of each of her ten fingers.

But Lady Windygates might well ask herself again, where was this to end ? Her own nerves, strong as they were, began to give way. She did not know how Windygates felt when he started in the dark morning and came home in the moonlight from a distant expedition. He was a man and made no sign ; young Windygates made none that he could help—none save his wasting flesh and the glitter of an eye kindled by a light not of this world. She would start and 'grue,' and her heart would stand still, when she came along the twilight gallery, which was, in a manner, the headquarters of the ghost ; she seemed to feel a presence which she could not distinguish—she, Lady Windygates, who had not known

what fear meant, who had boldly summoned this very spectre to answer to her for its 'walking' at Windygates, to do its worst to her, and let young Allan go, since he had never with his will done it any unpardonable injury!

'If neither sinner nor saint can do any good,' reflected Lady Windygates, no doubt referring to Braehead and Mr. Hyndford; 'if the minister, even supposing he had the whole Kirk, and not just his pushing madam of a wife, at his back, is not a particle of use, I'm fain to try what a woman's wit will do. I hope I may be pardoned if there is presumption in counting on its efficacy here. I heard last night that Maisie Hunter had returned to the Haughs three days ago from her long stay with her cousins in the North. I'll write to her to come over to help us; she has a dauntless spirit of her own—that bit lassie—and she has an interest, it may be the first interest, in righting what is far wrong here. True, it may set her against my Allan for the rest of her days; but, on the other hand, it may be the very thing to win and rivet her regard—for women like Maisie have a turn for flinging themselves into the breach. Anyway, there is no time to lose. I'll send for Maisie.'

(To be continued.)

CONCERNING SHEEP.

BY A SHEEP-HERDER.

IN spite of the interest I took, and still take, in sheep, I am convinced there is no stupider animal in all creation. One may perhaps make out, by special pleading, that horses and dogs are astonishingly intelligent, but no one can convince a man who has herded sheep, and seen them exhibit their foolishness in a thousand ways, that they are anything but semi-idiotic, although to an outsider without responsibility, their obstinacy and obtuseness may be merely farcical.

Remembering how they served me when I was charged with seeing to their safety and general well-being, I sometimes laugh, but at the time I generally swore. One would think that a ewe who had been the mother of a lamb for several years in succession would at last learn that man was not blood-thirstily desirous of destroying its last acquisition in the shape of offspring, but nevertheless an ancient ewe is as foolish as her grand-daughter, showing the most visible anxiety on one's approach, even when the herder comes to assist her in her trouble. The lambing season is at all times a period of toil and care in a country where the flocks are herded by day and night on account of wild dogs or coyotés; but if the ewes showed the least spark of reason, that would lighten more than half one's burdens. Let me give an illustration, and say that I have a dozen ewes, with offspring from a few hours to a day old, which I must put by themselves. I have made the flock travel during the day, so that their little corral is now no more than half a mile off. Meantime the sun is sinking over the brow of a westward hill, and in less than an hour it will be dark. Surely, a novice would say, it cannot take more than a few minutes to put these in yonder corral, which seems but a step across the plain. Wait, my young friend, and see.

I am on horseback, and have my long stock whip. I go carefully through the flock, slowly drive the mothers out, and gather my twenty-four in one group. I put their heads in the right direction, and move behind them in a quiet walk. But some of them gaze longingly after those who are not yet mothers, and quietly edge off to the right. I intercept them cautiously. Now

that ewe on the left has her head where her tail ought to be, and her lamb totters after her. When I have turned her those on the right have reversed front again, so I go back a little more quickly. With a sudden jump the hindmost ewe goes on, frightens her nearest neighbour, the last lamb is left alone, and the next one has a ewe by its side which is not its mother. Now the result of this manœuvre is very complex, and not to be disposed of in a few words. The deserted lamb bleats loudly and laments, whereon all the ewes turn round hurriedly in great anxiety, except perhaps the real mother, who is content for a moment with her neighbour's offspring. Perhaps two or three run back a little way, and then their lambs cry out for them to return. By-and-by the ewe who has the little stranger by her side turns to smell it, and for a moment looks suspicious. When a second sniff has converted her dread suspicion into certainty she butts the poor staggering little wretch over, and scurries fearfully from one to the other, knocking half of them down when she is sure they are not hers. By this time she is at the head of the band, and the horrible thought strikes her that she must have left her lamb with the main flock. She is off like lightning, and so am I, being lucky if I stop and turn her. When I do get her back the others are carefully retracing their steps; while the deserted lamb, being sure that every sheep it sees is its parent, tries to obtain milk on the strength of the relationship. By the time it has been knocked down half a dozen times the mother comes up at a run, there is a bleat and a baa, and momentary content. I turn them and begin again, being a little heated in temper. I crack my whip softly, and then louder as I move on. Suddenly a lamb, probably the very youngest, is struck with the evident belief that my horse is its mother, and tries to get under his hoofs. I stop until the deserted parent comes and persuades it that a horse after all is not a sheep. When that is settled, and the lamb has taken a little milk to make quite sure, I move on again. Alas! I come a little too close, and a ewe who is smitten with sudden intense hunger, and the apparent desire to eradicate one particular knot of grass, does not see me until I am right over her. In a moment she frightens all the rest, the big sheep are together, and the lambs by themselves. Then what a Babel! I have to stop two or three who break out to go to the main body, now some distance away, and then the lambs come to the conclusion that one ewe in particular is responsible for them all, while she is perversely inclined to believe that I have stolen

her peculiar and natural property. The other agonised mothers hurry up and dash into the bleating band, smell and butt over one after the other in frantic anxiety, and then subside into their customary demeanour as each finds her own. There is peace once more; but by this time the sun has disappeared, the shadows lengthen rapidly over the dusty plain, and the corral is nearly as far off as it was at first.

What next, then? Why, this, that one lamb declines, poor tired little wretch, to go further on any persuasion. So I dismount, and lift it up very slowly, while the wild-eyed mother watches every motion I make. I walk on, but before I have got a yard the ewe runs madly after the rest, looking for the very lamb she saw me lift, and her baaing sorrow would make any one else but a sheep-herder pity her. After some ineffectual sniffs, which the other ewes resent, she too thinks that her lamb has returned to the main flock in some miraculous manner, although she ought to know that it cannot move at all. I have to put it down, mount in hot haste, and do another fiery gallop. Then the same thing occurs again, but I am more cruelly careful this time, and pinch the lamb every few yards to make it bleat. The mother runs up and down wildly, but comes to smell it as I stop and hold it out at arm's length. Then she backs, and after another step or two I have to repeat the holding out and pinching, while on both sides of me the others are trying to return. At last I have to put it down and get them together again, with the inevitable result that they all lose their lambs once more, and unanimously resume their sniffing, butting over, and wild rushes, just as if it was the first time it had ever happened. And it is nearly dark by the time we reach the corral. When we do, all the ewes get in while the lambs stay out. On getting the lambs in, the ewes are out. When I think I am on the point of getting them all in one ewe will stay out with the wrong lamb, whom she knocks sprawling. Then she rushes half a dozen times round the corral without seeing the entrance. Meanwhile the lamb finds its mother with the fence in between, and is making great efforts to get through a hole much too small for it, while the mother eyes it from within in the last stage of fear. If I finally can leave them by the time the light of day has quite faded and supper is finished at the camp or home ranch, I am lucky. And this is repeated often and often, until the lambs know their mothers well and the sheep have become accustomed to be nightly corralled.

It may perhaps throw some light on the obscure causes of the stupidity of sheep to see them fight. To watch two rams engage in a duel, which they do in a most gentlemanly manner, as if it were as much a matter of etiquette as an engagement with swords in the environs of Paris, is better than most farces nowadays. Perhaps there are some ten or twenty rams in a yard or corral, and presently two put their heads together. Probably they are having a conversation, and in it some debatable matter crops up, for one shakes his head impatiently as if doubting the word of his interlocutor. The insulted ram looks up, advances a step or two, and they rattle their horns together. Instantly all the other gentlemen gather round as the two intending combatants march backwards step by step with an admirable slowness and deliberation. They are the two knights at the ends of the lists. There is an instant's pause, and then they hurl themselves violently forward to meet forehead to forehead with a shock that ought to break their skulls. Then the solemn backward march recommences, the pause is made, and the two belligerents leap at each other once more, and the terrible thud is heard again. Sometimes they run ten courses before one turns dizzy and declines the battle, but oftener five or six blows make the thinner-skulled turn away, to be contemptuously hustled in the rear by the conqueror. Occasionally the sight of one set of duellists inspires the unoccupied lookers-on with a noble ardour, and couple after couple join in to march backwards side by side, and rush forward in line to meet the opposing forces. It seems to me that there is more interest in this than the mere farce of the display. However such a habit arose, it can hardly now be advantageous to the species, and must tend to lower them in the scale of intellect; for while the thickest-skulled remain lords, those with the most room for brains often get their craniums cracked with fatal results. This may help to explain the very uncommon idiocy of domesticated sheep, just as the duello among the Australian blackfellows may throw light on the dull thick-headedness of some of the native humans in that country. For their favourite method of duelling—at least it was that of which I heard most—is to take two clubs, and having drawn lots in some manner for the first blow, to strike the loser on the head, as he bends down, with the utmost force possible. If that blow is not decisive—and it is not always so—it is the turn of the other man to do his best, and so on until a skull is cracked or its owner

rendered insensible. It would be hard to find a nearer parallel to the duel of the rams.

It was at Mossgiel in New South Wales, when I was taking some hundred and fifty of these same rams to a paddock, that I was struck by the earliest manifestation of perfect instinct in a dog that I ever saw. It was in a little rough-haired colley pup, whose mother belonged to a man who was travelling. As she littered at our place he was going to destroy the pups, but fortunately there was another colley suckling some at the same time, and I made her undertake the office of foster-mother for three by force. I held her down in spite of her resistance while the little fellows I had selected made a meal, and at the end of some days she did not know the strangers from her own, and brought them up together. I kept the most promising one for myself, and named him Bo'son. He was only two months old when I took him out to the place where I was at work, and until then he had never beheld a sheep at close quarters. For three or four days I kept him tied up close to my tent, but on the fourth he got away and followed me and my big dog Sancho down to the gate of the paddock where I had just driven these rams. On reaching them I found I had left my tools for mending wire-fencing behind me, and as I rode back Sancho came with me, for there was no need to fear they would stray far, being slow and steady in their ways, and also somewhat advanced in age. I had not noticed that Bo'son remained behind. On returning in a few minutes I saw, to my surprise, that the rams had not spread out to feed, but were bunched up together in a close mass, and that the outer ones were following the motions of something which I could not see, but which they evidently feared. I reined in my horse, waved back Sancho, and watched. Presently I saw woolly little Bo'son, who certainly was no bigger than the head of the least of them, paddling round and round the circle in a quiet, determined, and business-like manner. I remained motionless and watched to see whether he was doing it by accident; but no, he made his rounds again and again, and as he did so the huge-horned rams followed him with their eyes. It was with much difficulty that I enticed him home, and from his air I have no doubt he would have gone on circling his self-imposed charge until his legs had failed him from fatigue. By the time I left Mossgiel he was a very promising sheep-dog.

Sancho, of whom I have spoken, was a large smooth-haired

Tasmanian, and the best animal to handle a flock numbering tens of thousands that I ever saw. Yet when I first owned him he had more pleasure in chasing a low-flying crow than in doing his duty, and it cost me some trouble and him some suffering before I broke him of an unworkmanlike habit due to his former training. He had worked for two years near a well, from which water was drawn in the hot season for the sheep, and to the troughs came not only these, but innumerable crows from many miles round. The men engaged in raising water encouraged Sancho to drive them away, and, as one of them, who afterwards worked where I was, told me, he would race up and down for hours at a time while the miserable crows tried in vain to get a drink. Old Veale pretended that he knew what the birds said about it, and he translated their melancholy cawing into 'O-o-h, Sancho-o-o, you wretched dawg,' with a long nasal crow-like twang at the end which made Sancho prick up his ears when he heard him relate it. But when I had finished with him he would actually look the other way if a crow flew by, and pretend to be violently anxious to scare anything else in the world. For he was as frightened of my whip as the sheep were of him, and he had reason while they had none.

But is there anything more timid than a sheep? I suppose not among domesticated animals, and yet I believe the most serious fright I have ever had in all my life was caused by these same inoffensive, innocent quadrupeds. It was not inflicted on me by a ram, which is occasionally bellicose, but by ewes with their lambs, and I distinctly remember being as surprised as if the sky had fallen or something utterly opposed to all causation had confronted me. I want to meet a man, even of approved courage, who would not be shocked into fair fright by having half a dozen ewes suddenly turn and charge him with the fury of a bullock's mad onset. Would he not gasp, be stricken dumb, and look wild-eyed at the customary nature about him, just as if they had broken into awful speech? I imagine he would, for I know that it shook my nerves for an hour afterwards, even though I had by that time recovered sufficient courage to experiment on them in order to see if the same result would again follow. I was sheep-herding then in North-west Texas, and had about five hundred ewes and lambs under my care. The day was warm, though the wind was blowing strongly, and when noon approached the flock travelled but slowly towards the place where I wished them to make their midday

camp. To urge them on I took my long bandanna handkerchief, and flicked the nearest to me with it as I walked behind. As I did so the wind blew it strongly, and it suddenly occurred to me to make a sort of flag of it in order to see if it would frighten them. I took hold of two corners and held it over my head, so that it might blow out to its full extent. Now, whether it was due to the glaring colour, or the strange attitude, or to the snapping of the outer edge of the handkerchief in the wind—and I think it was this last—I cannot say, but the hindmost ewes suddenly stopped, turned round, eyed me wildly, and then half a dozen made a desperate charge, struck me on the legs, threw me over, and fled precipitately as I fell. It was a reversal of experience too unexpected! I lay awhile and looked at things, expecting to see the sun blue at the very least, and then I gathered myself together slowly. In all seriousness I was never so taken aback in all my life, and I was almost prepared for a ewe's biting me. I remembered the Australian story of the rich squatter catching a man killing one of his sheep. 'What are you doing that for?' he inquired, as a preliminary to requesting his company home until the police could be sent for. The questioned one looked up and answered coolly, though not, I imagine, without a twinkle in his eye. 'Kill it? why am I killing it? Look here, my friend, I'll kill any man's sheep as bites *me*.' For my part, I don't think biting would have alarmed me more. After that I made experiments on the ewes, and always found that the flying bandanna simply frightened them into utter desperation when nothing else would. It was a long time before they got used to it. I should like to know if any other sheep-herders ever had the same experience at home or abroad.

I spoke above of the lambs, when they were very young, taking my horse for their mother. This was in California; but in Texas I have often seen them run after a bullock or steer. One day on the prairie a lamb had been born during camping-time, and when it was about two hours old a small band of cattle came down to drink at the spring. Among these was a very big steer, with horns nearly a yard long, who came close to the mother, just then engaged in cleaning her offspring. She ran off, bleating for her lamb to follow. The little chap, however, came to the conclusion that the steer was calling it, and went tottering up to the huge animal, that towered above him like the side of a cañon, apparently much to the latter's embarrassment. The steer eyed it

carefully, and lifted his legs out of the way as the lamb ran against them, even backing a little, as if surprised as I had been when the ewes assaulted me. Then all of a sudden he shook his head as if laughing, put one horn under the lamb, threw it about six feet over his back, and calmly walked on. I took it for granted that the unwary lamb was dead, but on going up I found it only stunned, and, being as yet all gristle, it soon recovered sufficiently to acknowledge its real mother, who had witnessed its sudden elevation stamping with fear and anxiety.

Sheep-herding is supposed by those who have never followed it to be an easy, idle, lazy way of procuring a livelihood; but no man who knows as much of their ways as I do will think that. It is true that there are times when there is little or nothing to be done, when a man can sit under a tree quietly and think of all the world save his own particular charge; but for the most part, if he have a conscience, he will feel a burden of responsibility upon him which of itself, independently of the work he may have to do, will earn him his little monthly wage of twenty dollars and the rough ranch food of 'hog and hominy.' For there is no ceasing of labour for the Texas herder of the plains; Sunday and week-day alike, the dawning sun should see him with his flock, and even at night he is still with them as they are 'bedded out' in the open. Even if he can 'corral' them in a rough sort of yard, some slinking coyoté may come by and scare them into breaking bounds; and when they are not corralled, the bright moon may entice them to feed quietly against the wind, until at last the herder wakes to find his charge has vanished, and must be anxiously sought for. In Australia little or no herding is done, the sheep are left to their own devices for the greater part of the year, unless there should be unusual scarcity of water; but, even there, to have charge of so many thousand animals and so many miles of fencing makes it no enviable task, while the labour, when it does come, is hard and unremitting. In New South Wales I have often been eighteen and twenty hours in the saddle, and have reached home at last so wearied out that I could scarcely dismount. One day I used up three horses and covered over ninety miles, more than fifty of it at a hard canter or gallop—and if that be not work I should like to know what is. This, too, goes on day after day during shearing, just when the days are growing hot and hotter still, the spare herbage browning, and the water becoming scantier and scantier. And for a recompense? There is none in working

with sheep. They are quiet, peaceable, stupid, illogical, incapable of exciting affection, very capable of rousing wrath; far different from the terrible excitement of a bellowing herd of long-horned cattle as they break away in a stampede, among whom is danger and sudden death and the glory of motion and conquest; or with horses thundering over the plain in hundreds, like a riderless squadron shaking the ground, with waving manes, long flowing tails, and flashing eyeballs, whom one can love and delight in, and shout to with a strange vivid joy that sends the blood tingling to the heart and brain. Were I to go back to such a life I would choose the danger, and be discontented to maunder on behind the slow and harmless wool-bearers, cursing a little every now and again at their foolishness, and then plodding on once more, bunched up in an inert mass on a slow-going horse who wearily stretches his neck almost to the ground, as he dreams, perhaps, of the long, exhilarating gallops after his own kind that we once had together, being conscious, I dare say, of the contemptuous pity I (his rider) feel for the slow foredoomed muttens that crawl before us on the long and weary plain.

THE OTHER ENGLISHMAN.

‘You are English, I take it, sir?’

It was clear to me that at any rate the speaker was. I was travelling alone. I had not fallen in with three Englishmen in as many weeks. And I turned to inspect the newcomer with a cordiality his smudged and smutty face could not wholly suppress. ‘I am,’ I answered, ‘and I am very glad to meet a fellow-countryman.’

‘You are a stranger here?’ He did not take his eyes from me, but indicated by a gesture of his thumb the busy wharf below us, piled high with hundreds and thousands of frail crates full of oranges. From the upper deck of the ‘San Miguel’ we looked directly down upon it, and could see all that was coming or going in the trim basin about us. The San Miguel, a steamer of the Segovia Quadra and Company’s line, bound for several places on the coast southward, was waiting to clear out of El Grao, the harbour of Valencia, and I was waiting rather impatiently to clear out with her. ‘You are a stranger here?’ he repeated.

‘Yes; I have been in the town four or five days, but otherwise I am a stranger,’ I answered.

‘You are not in the trade?’ he continued. He meant the orange trade.

‘No, I am not; I am travelling for pleasure,’ I answered readily. ‘You will be able to understand that, though it is more than any Frenchman or Spaniard can.’ I smiled as I spoke, but he was not very responsive.

‘It is a queer place to visit for pleasure,’ he said dryly, looking away from me to the busy throng about the orange crates.

‘Not at all,’ I retorted; ‘it is a lively town and quaint besides, and it is warm and sunny. I cannot say as much as that of Madrid, from which I came two or three weeks back.’

‘Come straight here?’ he asked laconically.

I was growing a trifle tired of his curiosity, but I answered, ‘No; I stayed a short time at Toledo and Aranjuez—oh, and at several other places.’

‘You speak Spanish?’

‘Not much. *Muy poco de Castellano*,’ I laughed, calling to

mind that maddening grimace by which the Spanish peasant indicates that he does not understand, and is not going to understand you. He is a good fellow enough, is Sancho Panza, but having made up his mind that you do not speak Spanish, the purest Castilian is after that not Spanish for him.

‘You are going some way with us—perhaps to Carthagea?’ persisted the inquisitor.

He laid a queer stress upon the last word, and with it shot at me a sly glance—a glance so unexpected and so unpleasantly suggestive that I did not answer him at once. Instead, I looked at him more closely. He was a wiry young fellow, rather below than above the middle height, to all appearance the chief engineer. Everything about him, not excluding the atmosphere, was greasy and oily, as if he had come straight from the engine-room. The whites of his eyes showed with unlovely prominence. Seeing him thus, I took a dislike for him. ‘To Carthagea!’ I answered brusquely. ‘No, I am not going to stay at Carthagea. Why should you suppose so, may I ask? Unless, indeed,’ I added, as another construction of his words occurred to me, ‘you think I want to see a bit of fighting? No, my friend, the fun might grow too furious.’

To explain this I should add that three days before there had been a mutiny among the troops at Carthagea. It was mentioned at the time in the English papers. An outlying fort was captured, and the governor of the city killed before the attempt was suppressed. Of course this was in everyone’s mouth, and I fancied that his question referred to it.

My manner or my words, however, disconcerted him. Without saying more he turned away, not going below at once, but standing on the main deck near the office in the afterpart. There was a good deal of bustle in that quarter. The captain, second officer, and clerk were there, giving and taking receipts and what not. He did not speak to them, but leaned against the rail close at hand. I had an uncomfortable feeling that he was watching me, and this I suppose gave rise to a strange shrinking from the man, which did not stay with me always, but returned from time to time.

Presently the dinner-bell rang, and simultaneously the San Miguel moved out to sea. We were to spend the next day at Alicante, and the following one at Carthagea.

Dinner was not a cheerful meal. The officers of the ship did

not speak English or French, and were not communicative in any language. Besides myself there were only three first-class passengers. They were ladies—relatives of the newly-appointed Governor of Carthage, and about to join him there. I have no doubt that they were charming and fashionable people, but their partiality for the knife in eating was calculated to prejudice them unfairly in English eyes. Consequently, when I came on deck again, and the engineer—Sleigh, he told me his name was—sidled up to me, I received him graciously enough. He proffered the omnipresent cigarette, and I provided him in return with something to drink. He urged me to go down with him and see the engine-room, and after some hesitation I did so. You see, it was after dinner.

‘I have pretty much my own way,’ he said, boastfully. ‘They cannot do without English engineers. They tried once, and lost three boats in six months. In harbour, my time is my own. I have seven stokers under me, all Spaniards. They tried it on with me when I first came aboard, they did! But the first that out with his knife to me, I knocked on the head with a shovel. I have had none of their sauce since!’

‘Was he much hurt?’ I asked, scanning my companion. He was not big, I have said, and he slouched and shambled. But with all this there was an air of swaggering dare-devilry about him that gave colour to his story.

‘I don’t know,’ he answered. ‘They took him to the hospital; he never came aboard again—that is all I know.’

‘I suppose your pay is good?’ I suggested, timidly. To confess the truth, I felt myself at a disadvantage with him down there. The flaring lights and deep shadows, the cranks and pistons whirling at our elbows, the clank and din, and the valves that hissed at unexpected moments, were matters of every hour to him—me they imbued with a mean desire to propitiate. As my after-dinner easiness abated, I regretted that it had induced me to come down.

He laughed—a short harsh laugh. ‘Pretty fair,’ he said, ‘with my opportunities. Do you see that jacket?’

‘Yes.’

‘That is my shore-going jacket, that is,’ with a wink. ‘Here, look at it!’

I complied. It appeared on first sight to be an ordinary sailor’s pea-coat; but, looking more closely, I found that inside

were dozens of tiny pockets. At the mouth of each pocket a small hook was fixed to the lining.

‘They are for watches,’ he explained, when he saw that I did not comprehend; ‘I get five francs over the price for every one I carry ashore to a friend of mine—duty free, you understand.’

I nodded to show that I did understand. ‘And which is your port for that?’ I said, desiring to say something as I turned to ascend.

He touched me on the shoulder, and I found his face close to mine. His eyes were glittering in the light of the lamp that hung by the steam-gauge, with the same expression in them that had so perplexed me before dinner. ‘At Carthage!’ he whispered, bringing his face still closer to mine; ‘at Carthage! Wait a minute, mate, I have told you something,’ he went on, hoarsely. ‘I am not too particular, and, what is more, I am not afraid! Ain’t you going to tell me something?’

‘I have nothing to tell you!’ I stammered, staring at him.

‘Ain’t you going to tell me something, mate?’ he repeated monotonously. His voice was low, but it seemed to me that there was a menace in it.

‘I have not an idea what you mean, my good fellow,’ I said, and, turning away with some abruptness—my eye lit upon a shovel lying ready to his hand—I ran as nimbly as I could up the steep ladder, and gained the deck. Once there I paused and looked down. He was still standing by the lamp, staring up at me, doubt and chagrin plainly written on his face. Even as I watched him he rounded his lips to an oath; and then seemed to hold it over until he should be better assured of its necessity.

I thought no worse of him by reason of his revelations. In a country where the head of a custom house lives as a prince on the salary of a beggar, smuggling is no sin. But I was angry with him, and vexed with myself for the haste with which I had met his advances. I disliked and distrusted him. Whether he were mad, or took me for another smuggler—which seemed the most probable hypothesis—or had conceived some other false idea of me, whatever the key to the enigma of his manner might be, I felt sure I should do well to avoid him.

Like should mate with like, and I am not a violent man. I should not feel at home in a duel, though the part were played with the most domestic of fire shovels, much less with a horrible thing out of a stoke-hole.

About half-past ten, the San Miguel beginning to roll, I took the hint and went below. The small saloon was empty, the lamp turned down. As I passed the steward's pantry I looked in and begged a couple of biscuits. I am a fairly good sailor, but when things are bad my policy is comprised in 'berth and biscuits.' With this provision against misfortune, I retired to my cabin, luxuriating in the knowledge that it was a four-berth one, and that I was its sole occupant.

In truth I came near to chuckling as I looked round it. I did not need a certain experience I had had of a cabin three feet six inches wide by six feet three inches long, shared with a drunken Spaniard, to lead me to view with contentment my present quarters. A lamp in a glass case lighted at once the cabin and the passage outside, and so gave assurance that it would burn all night. On my right hand were an upper and lower berth, and on my left the same, with ample standing room between. A couch occupied the side facing me. The sliding door was supplemented by a curtain. I could hardly believe that this was all my own. What joy to one who had known other things, to arrange this and stow that, and fearlessly to place in the rack sponge and tooth-brush! What wonder if I blessed the firm of Segovia Quadra and Company as I sank back upon my well-hung mattress.

I sleep well at sea. The motion suits me. Even a qualm of sea-sickness does but induce a pleasant drowsiness. I love a snug berth under the porthole, and to hear the swish and wash of the water racing by, and the crisp plash as the vessel dips her forefoot under, and always the complaint of the stout timbers as they creak and groan in the bowels of the ship.

Cosy and warm, with these sounds for a lullaby, I fell asleep, and dreamed that I was again down in the engine-room, and sitting opposite to the other Englishman. 'Haven't you something to tell me? Haven't you something to tell me?' he was droning monotonously, wagging his head from side to side the while, with that same perplexing smile on his face which had so distressed me waking. 'Haven't you something to tell me?'

I strove to say that I had not, because I knew that if I did not satisfy him, he would do some dreadful thing, though what I did not know. But I could not utter the words, and while I was still struggling with this horrible impotency, that surpassed any waking misery, the thing was done. I was bound hand and foot to the crank of the engine, and going up and down with it, up

and down! Oh, it was fiendish cruelty! I wept and prayed to be released, but the villain took no heed of my prayers. He sat on, regarding my struggles with the same impassive smile. In despair I strove to think what it was he wanted—what it was—and——

How the ship was rolling! Thank heaven I was awake, or half awake! In my berth at any rate, and not in that horrible engine-room. But how was this? The other Englishman was here too, standing by the lamp, looking at me. Or—was it the other Englishman? It was someone who was not smiling, yet someone too who had a smudged and smutty face. All the wonder in my mind had to do with this question. I lay for a while in an indolent mood, between sleeping and waking, watching him. Then I saw him reach across my feet to a little shelf above the berth. As he drew back something that was in his hand—the hand that rested on the edge of my berth—glittered, glittered as the light fell upon it, and, wide awake, I sprang to a sitting posture in my berth, and cried out with fear.

He was gone on the instant, and in the same second of time I was out of bed and on the floor. A moment's hesitation, and I drew aside the curtain, which was still shaking. The passage without was still and empty. But opposite my cabin and separated from it only by the width of the passage was the door of another cabin, which was, or rather had been when I went to bed, unoccupied. Now the curtain drawn across the doorway was shaking, and I scarcely doubted but that the intruder was behind it. But behind it also was darkness, and I was unarmed, whereas that upon which the light had fallen in the man's hand was either a knife or a pistol.

No wonder that I hesitated, or that discretion seemed the better part of valour. To be sure I might call the steward and have the cabin searched, but I feared to seem afraid. I stood on tiptoe for a few moments listening. All was still; and presently I shivered. The excitement was passing away, I began to feel ill. With a last fearful glance at the opposite cabin—had I really seen the curtain shake? might it not have been caused by the motion of the ship?—I drew close my sliding door, and climbed hastily into my bunk. Robber or no robber I must lie still. In a very short time, what with my qualms and my drowsiness, I fell asleep.

I slept soundly until the morning light filled the cabin, and I was aroused by the cheery voice of the steward, bidding me

‘Buenos dias.’ The ship was moving on an even keel again. Overhead the deck was being swabbed. I opened my little window and looked out. As I did so the night’s doings rose in my memory. But who could think of dreams or midnight assassins with the fresh sea air in his nostrils, and before his eyes that vignette of blue sea and grey rocks—grey, but sparkling, gemlike, ethereal under the sun of Spain? Not I, for one. I was gay as a lark, hungry as a hunter. Sallying out before I was dressed, I satisfied myself that the opposite cabin was empty and bare, and came back laughing at my folly.

But when I found that something else was empty and bare, I thought it no laughing matter. I wanted a biscuit to stay my appetite, until the steward should bring my ‘café complet,’ and I turned to the little shelf over my berth where I had placed them on going to bed. There were none there now. Curious! I had not eaten them. Then it flashed upon my mind that it was with this shelf my visitor had meddled.

After that I did not lose a moment. I examined my luggage and the pockets of my clothes; the result relieved as much as it astonished me; nothing was missing. My armed apparition had carried off two captain’s biscuits, and nothing else whatever!

I passed the morning on deck puzzling over it. Sleigh did not come near me; was he conscious of guilt, I wondered, or offended at the abruptness of my leave-taking the night before, or was it merely that he was engaged about his work? I could not tell.

About noon we came to our moorings at Alicante. The sky was unclouded. The shabby town and the barren hills that rose behind it—barren to the eye, since the vines were not in leaf—looked baking hot. I had found a tolerably cool corner of the ship, and was amusing myself with a copy of ‘Don Quixote’ and a dictionary, when the engineer made his appearance.

‘Not going ashore?’ he said.

For the twentieth time I wondered what it was in his manner or voice that made everything he said to me seem a gibe. Whatever it was, I hated him for it, and I gave my feelings vent by answering sullenly, ‘No, I am not,’ and forthwith turning to my books again.

‘I thought you travellers for pleasure wanted to see everything,’ he continued. ‘Maybe you know Alicante?’

‘No, I don’t,’ I answered snappishly. ‘And in this heat I do not want to know it!’

‘All right, governor, all right!’ he replied. ‘Think it might be too hot for you perhaps? Ho! ho! ho!’ And with a hoarse laugh that lasted him from stem to stern, and brought the blood to my cheeks, he left me. But I could see that he did not lose sight of me, and I heard him chuckling at intervals at his own wit for fully half an hour afterwards. Though where the joke came in, I could not for the life of me determine.

Towards evening I did go ashore, slipping away at a time when he had gone below for a moment. I found a public walk in an avenue of palm-trees which ran close by the sea. The palms were laden with clusters of yellow dates, that at first sight were more like dried sea-weed than fruit. As darkness fell, and with it coolness, I sat down here; and fell to watching the vessels in the port fade away one by one into the gloom, and little sparks of light take their places. A number of people were still out, enjoying the air, but these were sauntering, one and all, in the indolent southern fashion, so that on hearing the brisk step of a man approaching in haste, I looked up sharply. To my surprise, it was Sleigh, the engineer!

He passed close to me. I could not be mistaken, though he had put off his half-slouching, half-impudent air, and was keenly on the alert, glancing from this side to that, as if he were following or searching for some one. For whom? I was one of half a dozen on a seat in deep shadow. If I were the person he wanted—and I had leapt, at sight of him, to that conclusion, and cowered down in my place—he overlooked me, and went on. I sat some time longer after his step died away in the distance, my thoughts not altogether pleasant ones. But he did not return, and I went up to the Hôtel Bossio prepared to eat an excellent dinner.

The table d’hôte in the big whitewashed room was half finished. I was late. Perhaps this was why the waiters eyed me, as I took my seat, with attention; or it might be that the English were not numerous at Alicante, or not popular; or, again, it might be that some one—Mr. Sleigh, for example—had been there making inquiries for a foreigner—blonde, middle-sized, and speaking very little Spanish. Their notice made me uncomfortable. It seemed as if I could nowhere escape from my old man of the sea.

Nowhere indeed, for I was to have another rencontre that night, with which he may or may not have had to do, but which must be told because of the light afterwards thrown upon it.

Returning to my ship along the dark wharf, I here and there came upon figures loafing in the shadow of bales or barrels; and, passing them, clutched my loaded stick more tightly. I got by all these, however, in safety, and reached the spot where the ship lay. 'San Miguel! Bota!' I shouted in the approved fashion of that coast. 'San Miguel! Bota!'

The words had scarcely left my lips the second time when there was a rustling close to me. A single footstep sounded on the pebbles, and the light of a lantern was flashed in my face. With an exclamation I recoiled. As I did so two or three men sprang forward. Dazzled and taken by surprise, I had only an indistinct view of figures about me, and I was on the point of fighting or running, or making an attempt at both, when by good luck the clink of steel accoutrements fell upon my ear.

By good luck! For they were police who had stopped me, and it is ill work resisting the police in Spain. 'What do you require, gentlemen?' I asked in my best Spanish. 'I am English.'

'Perdone usted, señor,' replied the leader, he who held the light. 'Will you have the goodness to show me your papers?'

'Con mucho gusto!' I answered, delighted to find that things were no worse. I was going to produce my passport on the spot, when the sergeant, with a polite but imperative 'This way!' directed me to follow him. I did so for a short distance, a door was flung open, and I found myself in a well-lighted, barely-furnished office, which I guessed was a custom house post. The officer took his place behind a desk, and by a gesture of his cocked hat signified his readiness to proceed.

I had had to do with the police before, and should have smiled at the matter now, but I was aware of a suppressed excitement in the group around me, of strange glances which they cast at me, of a general drawing round their chief as he bent over my passport—things which seemed to indicate that this was no ordinary case of passport examination. Singular, too, was the disappointment they evinced when they found that my passport bore, besides the ordinary visé, the signatures of the Vice-Consul and Alcalde at Valencia. Of course, as their faces fell my spirits rose. A deep conviction and deeper disappointment took possession of them, and, after I had answered half a dozen questions, the interview ended with the same 'Perdone usted, señor,' with which it had begun. I was bowed out; a boat was instantly procured for me,

and in two minutes more I was climbing the ladder which hung from the San Miguel's quarter.

The first person whom I saw on board was Mr. Sleigh. He was lolling on a bench in the saloon—confound his impudence!—drinking aguardiente and staring moodily at the table. I tried to pass him by, and reach my cabin unnoticed, but on the last step of the companion I slipped. With a muttered oath at the interruption he looked up, and our eyes met.

Never did I see a man more astonished. He gazed at me as if he could not trust his sight; then started to his feet and executed a loud whistle. 'Well, I never!' he cried, slapping his thigh with another oath, and speaking in a coarse jubilant tone. 'Well, I am blest, governor! So you did not go ashore after all! Here is a lark!'

I saw that he had been drinking. 'I have been ashore,' I answered coldly, my dislike for him increased tenfold by his condition.

'Honour bright?' he exclaimed.

'I have told you that I have been ashore,' I replied indignantly.

He whistled again. 'You are a cool hand,' he said, looking me over with his thumbs in his pockets and a new expression in his face. 'I might have known that though, precious mild as you seemed! Dined at the Hôtel Bossio, I'll warrant you did, and took your walk in the Alameda like any other man?'

'Yes, I did.'

'So you did! O Lord! O Lord! So you did!' And again he contemplated me at arm's length. I could construe his new expression now—it was one of admiration. 'So you did, governor! And came aboard in the dark, as bold as brass!'

That thawed me a little. I thought myself that I had done rather a plucky thing in coming on board alone at that time of night. But I told him nothing, in his present state, of the affair with the police. I merely answered, 'I do not understand why I should not, Mr. Sleigh. And as I am rather tired, I will bid you good night.'

'Wait a bit, governor. Not so fast,' he said, in a lower tone, arresting me by a gesture as I was turning away. 'Don't you think you are playing it a bit too high? You are a rare cool one, I swear, and fly—there is nothing you are not fly to, I'll be bound! But two heads are better than one, mate—you take me?'

—letting alone that it is every one for himself in this world. Do you rise to it?’

‘No, I do not rise to it,’ I answered haughtily, as I drew back from his spirituous breath and leering eyes. He was more drunk than I had fancied.’

‘You don’t? Think again, mate,’ he said, almost as if he were pleading with me. ‘Don’t play it too high.’

‘Don’t talk such confounded nonsense!’ I retorted angrily.

He looked at me yet a moment, a scowl dropping gradually over his face and not improving it. Then he answered, ‘All right, governor! All right! Pleasant dreams! and a pleasant waking at Carthagena!’

‘I have no doubt I shall enjoy both,’ I replied, smarting under his mocking tone; and added, as his words brought another matter to my mind, ‘That is, if you will have the goodness not to disturb me as you did last night!’ He should not think he had escaped detection.

‘It is your turn now,’ he replied more soberly. ‘I don’t know what you are up to now. I did not disturb you last night.’

‘Some one did! Some one uncommonly like you too.’

‘What did he do?’ he asked, eyeing me as though he suspected a trap were being laid for him.

‘I startled him,’ I answered irritably, ‘or I do not know what he would not have done. As it was he did not do much. He took some biscuits.’

‘Took some biscuits!’ He pretended that he did not believe me, and he did it so well that I began to doubt his guilt. ‘You must have been dreaming, mate.’

‘I could not dream the biscuits away,’ I retorted.

That stroke went home. He stood in silence drawing patterns on the table with his finger and a puddle of spilled water. Guilty or innocent, he did not seem ashamed of himself, but rather puzzled and perplexed. Once or twice, without speaking, he glanced cunningly at me. But whether he wished to see how I took it, or really suspected me of fooling him, I could not tell.

‘Good night!’ I cried impatiently; and I went to my cabin. I had told him my mind and that was enough. The last I saw of him, he was still standing at the table, drawing patterns on it with his finger.

I turned in at once, satisfied that after what had passed between us there would be no repetition of last night’s disturbance.

In a pleasant state between waking and sleeping I was aware of the tramp of feet overhead as the moorings were let go. The first slow motion of the engines was followed by the old familiar swish and wash of the water sliding by. Then the ship began to heel over a little. We had reached the open sea. After that I slept.

I awoke suddenly: awoke in the full possession of my senses. The cabin was still lit only by the lamp. I guessed that it was little after midnight; and lay a while execrating the disordered health which made such an awakening no new thing. '*Outinam!*' I sighed, 'that I had not taken that cup of coffee after dinner!' My portmanteau too had got loose. I could hear it sliding about the floor, though, as I was lying in the upper berth, I could not see it. That I would soon set to rights.

Accordingly I vaulted out after my usual fashion. But instead of alighting fairly and squarely on the floor, my bare feet struck against something—something soft, a good distance short of it, and I came down smartly on my hands and knees—to form part of the queerest tableau upon which even a cabin-lamp ever shone. There was I, lightly clothed in pyjamas, glaring into the eyes of a dingy-faced man, who was likewise down on his hands and knees on the floor—with more than half the breath knocked out of his body by my descent upon him. I do not know which was the more astonished.

'Hallo! how do you come here?' I exclaimed, after we had stared at one another for some seconds.

He raised his hand fiercely. 'Hush!' he whispered: and obeying his word and gesture I crouched where I was, while he seemed to listen. Then we rose silently to our feet as by one motion. I had not time to feel afraid, though it was far from a pretty countenance that was so close to mine. Rage and terror were written too plainly upon it.

'You are English?' he said sullenly.

I said I was. Although I saw that he had a pistol half-concealed behind him, I somehow felt master of the position. His fear of being overheard seemed so much greater than my fear of his pistol, and it is not easy to do much with a pistol without being overheard. 'You are English too, I can see,' I added, below my breath. 'Perhaps you will kindly tell me what you are doing in my cabin?'

'You will not betray me?' he said irresolutely.

‘Betray you, my man! If you have taken nothing of mine,’ I replied, with a prudent remembrance of his weapon and the late hour of the night, ‘you may go to the deuce for me, so long as you don’t pay me another visit.’

‘Taken anything!’ he cried, forgetting his caution, and raising his voice, ‘do you take me for a thief? I will be bound—’ he went on bitterly, yet with a pride that seemed to me very pitiable when I understood it—‘that you are about the only man in Spain who would not know me at sight. There is a price upon my head! There are two thousand pesetas for whoever takes me dead or alive! There are bills of me in every town in Spain! Ay, of me! in every town from Irun to Malaga!’

The wretched braggart! I knew now who he was. ‘You were at Carthagena,’ I said sternly, thinking of the old grey-headed general who had died at his post.

He nodded. The momentary excitement faded quickly from his face, leaving him to appear again what he was, a man dirty, pallid, half-famished. About my height, he wore also clothes, shabby and soiled indeed, but like mine in make and material. In his desperate desire for sympathy, for communion with some one, he had already laid aside any fear of me. When I asked him how he came to be in my cabin, he told me freely.

‘I intended to ship from Valencia to France, but they watched and searched all the boats. I crept on board this one in the night, thinking that as she was bound for Carthagena she would not be searched. I was right; they did not think anyone would venture back into the lion’s jaws.’

‘But what will you do when we reach Carthagena?’ I asked.

‘Stay on board and, if possible, go with this ship to Cadiz. From there I can easily get over to Tangier,’ he answered.

It sounded feasible. ‘And where have you been since we left Valencia?’ I asked.

‘Behind this sailcloth.’ He pointed to a long roll of spare canvas which was stowed away between the floor and the lower berth. I opened my eyes.

‘Ay!’ he added with a grimace, ‘they are close quarters, but there is just room behind there for a man lying on his face. What is more, except your two biscuits I have had nothing to eat since the day before yesterday.’

‘Then it was you who took the biscuits?’ I said.

He nodded; then he fell back against my berth, all his

strength gone out of him. For from behind us came another—a more emphatic answer. ‘You may take your oath to that, governor!’ it ran; and briskly pushing aside the door and curtain, Sleigh the engineer stood before us. ‘You may bet upon that, I guess!’ he added, an ugly smile playing about his mouth and eyes.

The refugee’s face changed to a sickly white, and his hand toyed feebly with the pistol, but he did not move. I think that we both felt we were in the presence of a stronger mind.

‘You had better put that plaything away,’ said Sleigh. He showed no fear, but I observed that he was watching us narrowly. ‘A shot would bring the ship about your ears, my friend. There is no call for a long explanation. I took the governor here for you, but when he told me that someone was stealing his biscuits, I thought I had got the right pig by the ear, and five minutes outside this door have made it a certainty. Two thousand pesetas! Why, hang me if I should have thought, to look at you, that you were worth half the money!’ he added brutally.

The other plucked up spirit at this insult. ‘Who are you? What do you want?’ he cried, with an attempt at bravado.

‘Precisely. What do I want?’ replied the engineer with a sneer. ‘You are right to come to business. What do I want? A hundred pounds. That is my price, mate. Fork it out and mum is the word. Turn rusty, and——’ He did not finish the sentence, but grasping his neck in both hands, pressed his thumbs upon his windpipe and dropped his jaw. It was a ghastly performance. I had seen a garotte, and I shuddered.

‘You would not give the man up? Your own countryman?’ I cried in horror.

‘Would I not?’ he answered ruthlessly. ‘You will soon see, if he has not got the cash!’

‘A hundred pounds!’ moaned the wretched fellow, whom Sleigh’s performance had completely unmanned. ‘I have not a hundred pesetas with me.’

As it happened—alas, it has often happened so with me!—I had but some three hundred pesetas, some twelve pounds odd, about me, nor any hope of a remittance nearer than Malaga, whither I was on my way. Still I did what I could. ‘Look here, I said to Sleigh, ‘I can hardly believe that you are in earnest, but I will do this. I will give you ten pounds to be silent and let this man take his chance. It is no good to haggle with me,’ I added, ‘because I have no more.’

‘Ten pounds!’ he replied derisively, ‘when the police will give me eighty! I am not such a fool.’

‘Better ten pounds as a gift than eighty pounds of blood money,’ I retorted.

‘Look here, Mister,’ he answered sternly; ‘do you mind your own business and let us settle ours. I am sorry for you, mate, that is a fact, but I cannot let the chance pass. If I do not get this money, someone else will. I’ll tell you what I will do, though.’ As he paused I breathed again, while the miserable man whose life was in the balance glanced up with renewed hope. ‘I will lower my terms,’ he went on. ‘I would rather get the money honestly myself, I am free to confess that. If you will out with two thousand pesetas, I will keep my mouth shut, and give you a helping hand besides.’

‘If not?’ I said.

‘If not,’ he answered, shrugging his shoulders—and I noticed that he laid his hand on his knife—‘if you do not accept my terms before we are in port at Carthagena, I go to the first policeman and tell him who is aboard. Those are my terms, and you have until then to think about them.’

With that he left the cabin, warily, and with his face to us to the last. Hateful and treacherous as he was—I loathed him so that I could scarcely meet his eyes—I could not help admiring his perfect coolness and courage, and his quick grasp of the men he had to do with.

For I felt when he was gone that we were a sorry pair. I suppose that my companion, bad as his case had seemed before, had yet cherished strong hopes of escape. Now he was utterly unmanned. He sat on the couch, his elbows on his knees, his head resting on his hands, the picture of despair. The pistol had disappeared into some pocket, and although capture meant death, I judged that he would let himself be taken without striking a blow.

My own reflections were far from being of a comfortable nature. The man grovelling there before me might deserve death; knowing the stakes, he had gambled and lost. Moreover, he was a complete stranger to me. But he was an Englishman. He had trusted me. He had spent—well, an hour, but it seemed many—in my company, and I shrank from the horror of seeing him dragged away to a violent death. My nature so revolted against it that I forgot what the consequences to myself of interference might be.

‘Look here,’ I said, after a long interval of silence, ‘I will do what I can to help you. We shall not reach Carthagena until eight o’clock at earliest. Something may turn up before that time. At the worst I have a scheme, though I set little store by it, and advise you to do the same. Put on these clothes in place of those you wear.’ I handed to him a suit taken from my portmanteau. ‘Wash and shave. Take my passport and papers. It is just possible that if you play your part well they may not identify you, and may arrest me, despite our friend upstairs. For myself, once on shore I shall have no difficulty in proving my innocence.’

Not that I was without my misgivings. The Spanish civil guards have the name of giving but short shrift at times, and even at the best I might be punished for connivance at an escape. But to some extent I trusted to my nationality; and for the rest, the avidity with which the hunted wretch at my side clutched at the slender hope my offer held out to him, drove any last hesitation from my mind.

As long as I live I shall remember the scene which ensued. The grey light was beginning to steal through the port-hole, giving a sicklier hue to my companion’s features, and making my own trembling fingers as I helped him to dress seem to myself strangely wan and thin. A heavy odour from the expiring lamp hung upon the air. The tumbled bed-clothes, the ransacked luggage, the coats swaying against the bulkheads to the music of the creaking timbers, formed an entourage deeply imprinted on the memory.

About seven o’clock I procured some coffee and biscuits and a little fruit, and fed him. Then I gave him my passport and papers, and charged him to employ himself naturally about the cabin. My own plan was to be out of the way, ashore or elsewhere, when Sleigh should spring his mine, and to trust my companion to return my luggage and papers to my hotel at Malaga, until I reached which place I must take my chance. I may seem to have been playing a fine and magnanimous part, but, looking back now, I do not think that I believed for a moment that the police would be deceived.

A little after eight o’clock I went on deck, to find that the ship was steaming slowly in between the fortified hills that frown upon the harbour of Carthagena; a harbour so grand and spacious that in its amphitheatre of waters I fancy all the navies of the world might lie. For a time the engineer was not visible on deck. The steward had pointed out to me some of the lions—the deeply embayed arsenal, the distant fort, high-perched on a hill,

which the mutineers had seized, and the governor's house over the gateway where the wounded general had died—and we were within a couple of hundred yards of the wharf, crowded with idlers and flecked with sentinels, when Sleigh came up from below.

Although the morning was fine and warm, he was wearing the heavy pea-jacket which I had seen in the engine-room. He cast a spiteful glance at me, and then, turning away, affected to busy himself with other matters. I think that he was ashamed of the work he had in hand. Bad as he was, I think so.

‘Do we stay here all day?’ I asked the steward.

‘No, señor, no. Hasta las diez solo,’ I understood him to say. Only until ten o'clock, and it was close upon nine already. He explained that the town was yet so much disturbed that business was at a standstill. The San Miguel would merely land her passengers by boat and go on at once to Almeria, where much cargo awaited her. ‘Here is the police-boat coming,’ he added.

Then the time had come too. I was quivering with excitement—and with something else—a new idea! Darting from the steward's side, I flew down the stairs, through the saloon and to my cabin, the door of which I dragged aside impatiently. ‘Give me my passport—my papers!’ I cried, breathless with haste, ‘the police are here!’

The man—he was pretending to pack with his back to the door, but at my entrance rose with an assumption of ease—drew back. ‘Why? will you desert me too?’ he muttered, his face working piteously. ‘Will you betray me? Then, my God! I am lost!’ and he flung himself upon the sofa in a paroxysm of terror.

Every moment was of priceless value. This a conspirator, indeed! I had no patience with him. ‘Give them to me!’ I cried imperatively, desperately. ‘I have another plan. Do you hear?’

He heard, but he did not believe me. He was sure that my courage had failed me at the last moment. But—and let this be written on his side of the account—he gave me the papers; it may be in pure generosity, it may be because he had not the spirit to resist.

Armed with them I ran on deck almost as quickly as I had descended. I found the position of things but slightly changed. The police-boat was now alongside. The officer in command, attended by two or three subordinates, was coming up the ladder.

Close to the gangway Sleigh was standing, evidently waiting for this group. But he had his eye on the saloon door also, for I had scarcely emerged from the latter when he stepped up to me.

‘Have you changed your mind, governor? Are you going to buy him off?’ he muttered, looking askance at me as I still moved forward with him by my side.

My answer took him by surprise. ‘No, señor, no!’ I exclaimed loudly and repeatedly—so loudly that the attention of the group at the gangway was drawn towards us. When I saw that this was effected, I stepped hastily in front of Sleigh, and before he had any clear notion of what I was doing, I was at the officer’s side. ‘Sir,’ I said, raising my hat, ‘do you speak French?’

‘Parfaitement, monsieur,’ he answered, politely returning my salute.

‘I am an Englishman, and I wish to lay an information,’ I said, speaking in French, and pausing there that I might look at Sleigh. As I had expected, he did not understand French. His baffled and perplexed face assured me of that. He tried to interrupt me, but the courteous official waved him aside.

‘This man here who is trying to shut my mouth is a smuggler of foreign watches,’ I resumed rapidly. ‘He has them about him now, and is going to take them ashore. They are in a number of pockets made for the purpose in the lining of his coat. I am connected with the watch trade, and my firm will give ten pounds reward to anyone who will capture and prosecute him.’

‘I understand,’ replied the officer. And, turning to Sleigh, who, shut out from the knowledge of what was going forward, was fretting and fuming in a fever of distrust, he addressed some words to him. He spoke in Spanish and quickly, and I could not understand what he said. That it was to the point, however, the engineer’s face betrayed. It fell amazingly on the instant, and he cast a vengeful glance at me.

That which followed was ludicrous enough. My heart was beating fast, but I could not suppress a smile as Sleigh, clasping the threatened coat about him, backed from the police. He poured out a torrent of fluent Spanish, and emphatically denied, it was clear, the charge; but, alas! he cherished the coat—at which the police were making tentative dives—overmuch for an innocent man with no secret pockets about him.

His ‘No, señor, no!’ his ‘Por dios!’ and ‘Madre de Dios!’

and the rest, were breath wasted. At a sign from the now grim-looking officer, two of the policemen deftly seized him, and in a twinkling, notwithstanding his resistance, had the thick coat off him, and were probing its recesses. It was the turn of the bystanders to cry, 'Madre de Dios!' as from pocket upon pocket came watch after watch, until five dozen lay in sparkling rows upon the deck. I could see that there were those among the ship's company besides the culprit who gazed at me with little favour; but the eyes of the police officer twinkled with gratification as each second added to the rich prize. And that was enough for me.

Still I knew that all was not done yet, and I watched keenly what was passing. Sleigh, taken into custody, had desisted from his disjointed prayers and oaths. I perceived, however, that he was telling a long story, of which I could make out little more than the word 'Inglese' repeated more than once. It was his turn now. If he had not understood my French, neither could I understand his Spanish. And I noticed that the officer, as the story rolled on, looked at me doubtfully. I judged that the crisis had come, and I interfered. 'May I beg to know, sir, what he says?' I asked courteously.

'He tells me a strange story, Mr. Englishman,' was the answer; and the speaker eyed me with curiosity but not unfavourably. 'He says that Morrissey, the villainous Englishman—your pardon—who was at the bottom of the affair of last Sunday, has had the temerity to return to the scene of his crime, and is on this vessel.'

I shrugged my shoulders. 'A strange story, indeed!' I answered. 'But it is for Monsieur to do his duty. I am the only Englishman on board, as the steward will inform you; and for me, permit me to hand you my papers. Your prisoner wishes, no doubt, to be even with me!'

He nodded brusquely as he took the papers. That upon which I had counted happened. The engineer in his rage and excitement had not made his story plain. No one dreamt of his charge being aimed against another Englishman. No one knew of another Englishman. The steward sullenly corroborated me when I said I was the only one on board, and so all who heard Sleigh—slightly befogged, perhaps, by his Spanish, which, good enough for ordinary occasions, may have failed him here—did not doubt that his was a pure counter-accusation preferred *en revanche*.

No doubt the improbability of Morrissey's return had some weight with them. Then my credentials were ample and in order. Among them, too, a note for 250 pesetas had somehow slipped, which had disappeared when they were handed back to me. Need I say after this how it ended? Or that while the police officer bowed his courteous 'Adios' to me, and his men gathered up the watches, and the crew scowled, the prisoner was removed by force to the boat fairly foaming at the mouth, and screaming out to the last horrible threats which my ears were long in forgetting. I walked up and down the deck, brazening it out, but very sick at heart.

However, the San Miguel, despite her engineer's mishap, duly left in half an hour—a nervous half-hour to me. With a thankful heart I watched the fort-crowned hills about Carthagena change from brown to blue, and blue to purple, behind us, until at length they sank down in the distance.

But officers and men looked coldly on me; and that evening, at Almeria, I took up bag and baggage and left the San Miguel. I had had enough of the thanks, and more than enough of the company, of my cabin-fellow, whom I left where I had found him—or nearly so—behind the sailcloth. I believe that he succeeded in making his escape: not that I have since seen him or heard from him. But fully a month later a friend of mine staying at the Hôtel de la Paz, at Madrid, was placed under arrest for some hours on suspicion of being Morrissey; so that the latter must at that time have been at liberty.

NOT SEER, BUT SINGER.

POET thou art, not Prophet! Darkly great,
 Portentous, looms the age that is to be,
 With tottering thrones, decrepit tyranny,
 Clash open of the grim Past's prison-gate
 Whence march the people to their ultimate
 Dim land of promise. Ah! 'tis not for thee
 To stem the omnipotent course of liberty,
 Or bless or curse this swift advancing fate.
 Not in the din, the fever of the fray,
 With misplaced energy and ill-spent skill,
 Canst thou the mission of thy life fulfil ;
 'Mid the hoarse tumult dies thy song away.
 Never could tongue, however mighty, will
 The sun of human progress to stand still.

Interpreter not teacher! A dumb world—
 The secret inarticulate soul of each
 Awaits the unfolding miracle of speech ;
 With ancient longings have the leaves uncurled,
 The fleecy mantle of the ferns unfurled ;
 Spring is a subtle text from which to preach
 Sweet sermons of delight that all may reach ;
 For thee the purple hills with mists are pearly
 Calm amidst clamorous change doth Nature hold
 Eternal verities. May skies are blue,
 Still falls on April blossoms April dew—
 Seed-time and harvest fail not as of old,
 Though empires tremble. Earth is ever new
 With immemorial wisdom to a few !

COUNTRY DANCES.

CLISTHENES, tyrant of Sicyon, says Herodotus, had a beautiful daughter whom he resolved to marry to the most accomplished of the Greeks. Accordingly all the eligible young men of Greece resorted to the court of Sicyon to offer for the hand of the lovely Agarista. Among these, the most distinguished was Hippoclidés, and the king decided to take him as his son-in-law.

Clisthenes had already invited the guests to the nuptial feast, and had slaughtered one hundred oxen to the gods to obtain a blessing on the union, when Hippoclidés offered to exhibit the crown and climax of his many accomplishments.

He ordered a flute-player to play a dance tune, and when the musician obeyed, he (Hippoclidés) began to dance before the king and court and guests, and danced to his own supreme satisfaction.

After the first bout, and he had rested awhile and recovered breath, he ordered a table to be introduced, and he danced figures on it, and finally set his head on the table and gesticulated with his legs.

When the applause had ceased, Clisthenes said—as the young man had reverted to his feet and stood expectantly before him—‘You have danced very well, but I don’t want a dancing son-in-law.’

How we should like to know what Herodotus does not tell us, whether the tyrant of Sicyon was of a sour and puritanical mind, objecting to dancing on principle, or whether he objected to the peculiar kind of dance performed by Hippoclidés, notably that with his head on the table and his legs kicking in the air.

I do not think that such a thing existed at that period as puritanical objection to dancing, but that it was the sort of dance which offended Clisthenes. Lucian in one of his Dialogues introduces a philosopher who reproaches a friend for being addicted to dancing, whereupon the other replies that dancing was of divine invention, for the goddess Rhæa first composed set dances about the infant Jupiter to hide him from the eyes of his father Saturn, who wanted to eat him. Moreover, Homer speaks with high respect of dancing, and declares that the grace and nimbleness of Merion in the dance distinguished him above the

rest of the heroes in the contending hosts of Greeks and Trojans. He adds that in Greece statues were erected to the honour of the best dancers, so highly was the art held in repute, and that Hesiod places on one footing valour and dancing, when he says that 'The gods have bestowed fortitude on some men, and on others a disposition for dancing!' Lastly, he puts the philosopher in mind that Socrates not only admired the saltatory exercise in others, but learned it himself when he was an old man.

On hearing this defence of dancing, the morose philosopher in Lucian's Dialogue professes himself a convert, and requests his friend to take him to the next subscription ball.

Steele, in the 'Spectator,' declared that 'no one ever was a good dancer that had not a good understanding,' and that it is an art whereby mechanically, so to speak, 'a sense of good-breeding and virtue are insensibly implanted in minds not capable of receiving it so well in any other rules.'

I cannot help thinking that the dancing commended by the 'Spectator,' learned in old age by Socrates, and that in which the Greeks won the honour of statues, was something far removed from that which incurred the displeasure of Clisthenes, and lost Hippoclidés the hand of his beautiful mistress.

Here is a letter in the 'Spectator,' given in Steele's article. It purports to be from a father, Philipater: 'I am a widower with one daughter; she was by nature much inclined to be a romp, and I had no way of educating her, but commanding a young woman, whom I entertained to take care of her, to be very watchful in her care and attendance about her. I am a man of business and obliged to be much abroad. The neighbours have told me, that in my absence our maid has let in the spruce servants in the neighbourhood to junketings, while my girl play'd and romped even in the street. To tell you the plain truth, I caught her once, at eleven years old, at chuck-farthing, among the boys. This put me upon new thoughts about my child, and I determined to place her at a boarding-school. I took little notice of my girl from time to time, but saw her now and then in good health, out of harm's way, and was satisfied. But by much importunity, I was lately prevailed with to go to one of their balls. I cannot express to you the anxiety my silly heart was in, when I saw my romp, now fifteen, taken out. I could not have suffered more, had my whole fortune been at stake. My girl came on with the most becoming modesty I had ever seen, and casting a respectful

eye, as if she feared me more than all the audience, I gave a nod, which, I think, gave her all the spirit she assumed upon it, but she rose properly to that dignity of aspect. My romp, now the most graceful person of her sex, assumed a majesty which commanded the highest respect. You, Mr. Spectator, will, better than I can tell you, imagine all the different beauties and changes of aspect in an accomplished young woman, setting forth all her beauties with a design to please no one so much as her father. My girl's lover can never know half the satisfaction that I did in her that day. I could not possibly have imagined that so great improvement could have been wrought by an art that I always held in itself ridiculous and contemptible. There is, I am convinced, no method like this, to give young women a sense of their own value and dignity; and I am sure there can be none so expeditious to communicate that value to others. For my part, my child has danced herself into my esteem, and I have as great an honour of her as ever I had for her mother, from whom she derived those latent good qualities which appeared in her countenance when she was dancing; for my girl showed in one quarter of an hour the innate principles of a modest virgin, a tender wife, and generous friend, a kind mother, and an indulgent mistress.' It is a curious fact that the beautiful and graceful dance, the dance as a fine art, is extinct among us. It has been expelled by the intrusive waltz. And if in the waltz any of that charm of modesty, grace of action, and dignity of posture can be found, which delighted our forefathers and made them esteem dancing, then let it be shown. It was not waltzing which made Merion to be esteemed among the heroes of the Trojan war, it was not waltzing certainly that Socrates acquired in his old age, and it most assuredly was not whilst waltzing that the correspondent of the 'Spectator' admired in his daughter the modest virgin. It is possible that it was a sort of waltz which Hippocleides performed and which lost him the daughter of Clisthenes.

The dance is not properly the spinning around of two persons of opposite sex, hugging each other, and imitating the motion of a teetotum. The dance is an assemblage of graceful movements and figures performed by a set number of persons. There is singular beauty in the dance proper. The eye is pleased by a display of graceful and changing outline, by bringing into play the muscles of well-moulded limbs. But where many performers take part the enchantment is increased, just as part-singing is

more lovely than solo-singing, for to the satisfaction derived from the graceful attitude of one performer is added that of beautiful grouping. A single well-proportioned figure is a goodly sight; several well-proportioned figures in shifting groups, now in clusters, now swinging loose in wreaths, now falling into line, or circles, whilst an individual, or a pair, focus the interest, is very beautiful. It is the change in a concert from chorus to solo; and when, whilst the single dance, projected into prominence, attracts the delighted eye, the rest of the dancers keep rhythmic motion, subdued, in simple change, the effect is exquisite. It is the accompaniment on a living instrument to a solo.

A correspondent of the 'Times' recently gave us an account of the Japanese ballet, which illustrates what I insist on. He tells us that the Maikos or Japanese ballet-dancers are girls of from sixteen to eighteen years of age; they wear long fine silk dresses, natural flowers in their hair, and hold fans in their hands. Their dance is perfectly decorous, exquisitely graceful, and of marvellous artistic beauty. It partakes of the nature of the minuet and the gavotte; it makes no violent demands on lungs and muscles; its object is to give pleasure to the spectators through the exhibition of harmony of lines, elegance of posture, beauty of dress, grace with which the folds of the long drapery fall, the play of light, and change of arrangement of colour. It is a dance full of noble and stately beauty and has nothing in common with our European ballet, with its extravagance and indelicacy, and—it must be added—inelegance. It is a play without words, and a feast of pure delight to the artistic eye.

Æsthetically, the dance is, or may be, one of the most beautiful creations of man, an art, and an art of no mean order. In it each man and woman has to sustain a part, is one of many, a member of a company, enchained to it by laws which all must obey. And yet each has in his part a certain scope for individual expansion, for the exercise of liberty. It is a figure of the world of men, in which each has a part to perform in relation to all the rest. If the performer uses his freedom in excess, the dancers in the social ball are thrown into disorder, and the beauty and unity of the performance is lost.

Now all this beauty is taken from us. The waltz has invaded our ball-rooms and drives all other dances out of it. Next to the polka the waltz is the rudest and most elementary of step and figure dances; it has extirpated before it the lovely and intricate

dances, highly artistic, and of elaborate organisation, which were performed a century ago. How is it now in a ball? Even the quadrille and lancers, the sole remnants of an art beautiful to lookers-on, are sat out, or, after having been entered on the list, are omitted, and a waltz substituted for it. 'Valse, valse, toujours valse!' A book on dances, published in 1821, speaks of the introduction of the waltz as a new thing, and of the rarity of finding persons at a ball who could dance it.

'The company at balls having no partners who are acquainted with waltzing or quadrilles, generally become spectators of each other in a promenade round the rooms, so that the waltz or quadrille ball ends in country dances, sometimes not one of these dances being performed during the evening.' That was a little over sixty years ago. Waltz and quadrille came in hand-in-hand, and displaced the old artistic and picturesque country dances, and then waltz prevailed and kicked quadrille out at the door. The country dance is the old English dance, the dance of our forefathers—the dance which worked such wonders in the heart of the old father in Steele's papers in the 'Spectator.'

The country dance has nothing to do with the country; it has no smack of rusticity about it. The designation is properly *contre-danse*, or counter-dance, and is given to all that class of dances which are performed by the gentlemen standing on one side and the ladies on the other in lines. The quadrille—a square dance—does not belong to it, nor any of those figures where the performers stand in a circle. As a general rule, foreign dances are circular or square. In Brittany is La Boulangère, and in the South of France La Tapageuse, which are set in lines; but with a few exceptions most continental dances are square or round; the speciality of the English dance was that it was counter. Probably all old dances in this country, with the exception of reels, were so set. A writer at the beginning of this century said: 'An English country dance differs from any other known dance in form and construction, except Ecossaise and quadrille country dances, as most others composed of a number of persons are either round, octagon, circular, or angular. The pastoral dances on the stage approximate the nearest to English country dances, being formed longways.'

The number of performers was unlimited, but could not consist of less than six. An English country dance was composed of the putting together of several figures, and it allowed of almost

infinite variation, according to the number and arrangement of the figures introduced. Sir Roger de Coverley, which is not quite driven out, consists of seven figures. Some figures are quite elementary, as turning the partner, setting, leading down the middle. Others are more elaborate, as Turn Corners, and Swing Corners; some are called Short Figures, as requiring in their performance a whole strain of short measure, or half a strain of long measure. Long Figures, on the other hand, occupy a strain of eight bars in long measure—a strain being that part of an air which is terminated by a double bar, and usually consists in country dances of four, eight, or sixteen single bars. Country dance tunes usually consist of two strains, though they sometimes extend to three, four, or five, and of eight bars each.

The names and character of the old country dances are quite forgotten.

The following is a list of some of the dances given in 'The Complete Country Dancing Master,' published near the beginning of last century:—

Whitehall	The Whirligig
Ackroyd's Pad	Amarillis
Buttered Pease	Sweet Kate
Bravo and Florimel	Granny's Delight
Pope Joan	Essex Buildings
Have at thy coat, old woman	Lord Byron's Maggot
The Battle of the Boyne	Ballamera
The Gossip's Frolic	The Dumps
The Intrigue	Rub her down with straw
Prince and Princess	Moll Peatley
A Health to Betty	Cheerily and Merrily.
Bobbing Joan	

In Waylet's 'Collection of Country Dances,' published in 1749, we have these:—

The Lass of Livingstone	Bonny Lass
Highland Laddie	The Grasshopper
Down the Burn, Davy	The Pallet
Eltham Assembly	Jack Lattin
Cephalus and Procris	Farinelle's Maggot
Joy go with her	Buttered Pease
Duke of Monmouth's Jig	The Star.

Some of these dances were simplicity itself, consisting of only a very few elementary figures. This is the description of 'Sweet Kate.'

'Lead up all a double and back. That again. Set your right foot to your woman's, then your left, clasp your woman on her

right hand, then on the left, wind your hands and hold up your finger, wind your hands again and hold up another finger of the other hand, then single; and all this again.'

'Bobbing Joan' is no more than this. First couple dances between the second, which then take their places, dance down, hands and all round, first two men snap fingers and change places, first women do the same, these two changes to the last, and the rest follow.

The tune of 'The Triumph' is still found in collections of dance music, but it is only here and there in country places that it can be performed. We saw some old villagers of sixty and seventy years of age dance it last Christmas, but no young people knew anything about it. It is a slight, easy but graceful dance—graceful when not danced by old gaffers and grannies.

Very probably one reason of the disapproval which country dancing has encountered arises from the fact that it allows no opportunities of conversation and consequently of flirtation, as the partners stand opposite each other, and in the figures take part with other performers quite as much as with their own proper *vis-à-vis*. But then is a dance arranged simply to enable a young pair to clasp each other and whisper into each other's ears? Are art, beauty, pleasure to the spectators to be left out of count altogether? The wall-fruit are deserving of commiseration, for they now see nothing that can gratify the eye in a ball-room; the waltz has been like the Norwegian rat—it has driven the native out altogether, and the native dance and the native rat were the more beautiful of the two.

It is not often we get a graceful dance on the stage either. Country dancing is banished thence also; the minuet and distorted antics that are without grace, and of scanty decency, have supplanted it.

It seems incredible that what was regarded as a necessary acquisition of every lady and gentleman sixty or seventy years ago should have gone, and gone utterly—so utterly that probably dancing-masters of the present day would not know how to teach the old country dances. In 'The Complete System of Country Dancing, by Thomas Wilson,' published about 1821 (there is no date on the title-page), the author insists on this being the national dance of the English, of its being in constant practice, of its being a general favourite 'in every city and town throughout the United Kingdom;' as constituting 'the principal amuse-

ment with the greater part of the inhabitants of this country.' Not only so, but the English country dance was carried to all the foreign European Courts, where it 'was very popular, and became the most favourite species of dancing;' and yet it is gone—gone utterly.

The minuet was, no doubt, a tedious and over-formal dance; it was only tolerable when those engaged wore hoops and powder and knee-breeches; but the English country dance is not stiff at all, and only so far formal as all complications of figures must be formal. It is at the same time infinitely elastic, for it allows of expansion or contraction by the addition or subtraction of figures. There are about a hundred figures in all, and these can be changed in place like the pieces of glass in a kaleidoscope.

Why, in this age of revivals, when we fill our rooms with Chippendale furniture and rococo mirrors and inlaid Florentine cabinets, and use the subdued colours of our grandmothers, when our books are printed in old type with head and tail pieces of two centuries ago, when the edges are left in the rough—why should we allow the waltz, the foreign waltz, to monopolise our ball-rooms to the exclusion of all beautiful figure-dancing, and let an old English art disappear completely without an attempt to recover it? It will be in these delightful, graceful, old national dances that our girls will, like the daughter of Philipater in the 'Spectator,' dance themselves into our esteem, as it is pretty sure that in the approved fashion of waltzing they will dance themselves out of it.

A PIRATICAL F. S. A.

A SHORT time ago, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A., of England, carried on excavations on Egyptian soil, with the full permission of H. H. the Khedive not only to dig, but to appropriate their finds. The astute Turk kept quiet for a time, and allowed them to spend their money and their labour; but at the last moment, when the treasure-trove was neatly packed and ready for exportation, down he bore upon them, saying 'Inasmuch as we are suzerains of Egypt, this treasure-trove belongs to us,' and, acting on this principle, he removed all the F. S. A.'s spoil to Constantinople. Being unable to obtain leave from the aforesaid Turk for anything like a favourable continuation of their work, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. determined to become pirates, and, unfettered by conventionalities of any kind, to wander in a hired Greek boat along the south coast of Asia Minor, in quest of those ancient sites and objects which are so dear to them. Their adventures, which were not a few, they here separate from all things archæological, and leave them to tell their own tale.

Many busy days were spent in the little Greek port of Syra in preparing for the piratical cruise. The F. S. A.'s inspected many craft, and at last entered into a 'symphony' with the skipper of a two-masted Greek schooner, possessing a capacious hold for their workmen and the trophies to be found, a fore-castle cabin into which in some mysterious manner four sailors packed themselves, namely, Captain Nicholas, burly and stout; Andreas, first mate, bulky; Gregory, second mate, of ordinary dimensions; and Stavros or Cross, a loutish boy, the slave of everybody, very little higher in the social scale than the ship's dog, Yuruk.

Eleven workmen were engaged with spades and pickaxes, and Matthew, the cook and body servant, was established as general overseer of the expedition. When it appeared that a sufficiency of tins of meat, sacks of biscuits, gruyère cheese, barrels of wine, and ammunition for the benefit of the lawless tribes in the proposed hunting ground, had been put on board, Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. set sail in the good ship 'Evangelistria,' which being interpreted means 'Annunciation;' and, both names appearing to

them too long, they generally spoke of the craft as the 'Blue Ship,' from the gaudy colour with which her sides were painted.

It was very sad for everybody concerned that the 'Blue Ship' put out into a boisterous sea before the process of unpacking had been performed. Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. struggled hopelessly with a table and two chairs, refractory bed-clothes and a hammock, and grew to hate the many luxuries they had provided for their comfort when they danced around them like evil spirits that could not be laid. As for the workmen, nothing could exceed the excellence of the spirits in which they came on board—"the boys" they used to call themselves—and peals of laughter came up from the hold as they selected their respective nests in the ballast in which to sleep. But their ribaldry was of short duration; very soon they were all prostrate on their hard beds, and a night of horror ensued such as made the heart of the boldest pirate quake. When morning dawned the wind was even fresher, and around the 'Blue Ship' white foaming billows danced and raged, and Andreas, the mate, a sullen fellow, who seldom spoke except to utter evil prognostications concerning the weather, informed Mr. F. S. A. as he crawled on deck, that though the bold headland of Cape Krio, the first point of Asia Minor at which he intended to touch, was straight ahead, it would be impossible to reach it that day, and that a haven of safety must be sought. This was a sorry haven indeed, behind a headland, which offered protection only from the wind; and for twenty-four hours the 'Blue Ship' lay at anchor there dancing like a kitten, to the infinite annoyance of those within. During all this sad period, not one of 'the boys' was more prostrate than the cook, so that Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. were greatly embarrassed for food suitable to the nature of their appetites at that juncture; and if an immediate return to the luxuries of home, and a life of honesty, had then been feasible, it is highly probable that their piratical cruise would have been brought to an abrupt termination.

All past inconveniences were speedily forgotten when the 'Blue Ship' rode peacefully at anchor in the tight little harbour where once the galleys of ancient Cnidos lay; it is at the extreme end of one of those limb-like promontories which Asia Minor throws out into the Ægean. Cape Ram is its translated name—doubtless given it from the likeness of the headland to a ram's head, joined by a narrow neck to the mainland, on either side of which neck are snug little harbours around which are the imposing

ruins of Cnidos; and for those two peaceful days of work and enjoyment amid these ruins, the F. S. A.'s would have been willing to forgive even greater discomforts in the retrospect. But then down from a village in the mountains came angry Turks bidding the F. S. A.'s to desist from their labours. A black Æthiopian soldier with a gun threatened to shoot the next 'boy' who should put a spade in the ground; so finally, after a council of war, it was decided to send Matthew to treat as best he could with the Governor of the district, necessitating a three days' journey of no ordinary difficulty.

During this interval of enforced idleness Captain Nicholas was raised to the rank of cook, assisted by as many of 'the boys' as thought they knew anything about the subject, with the natural result that the broth was often spoilt. Each night the nets were cast into the sea, and in the morning such lovely hauls of fish came in of the brightest colours, reminding one of the fish from the enchanted pond in the 'Arabian Nights.' One fish especially merits comment—it is called 'scorpion' sometimes, because it has poison at the end of its fins, and sometimes 'the calf of the sea' because it is excellent to eat; and if Captain Nicholas was unsuccessful when cooking meat, he was quite in his element when making scorpion soup.

The F. S. A.'s had now ample time for the arrangement of their cabin. One bunk was turned into a cupboard for the reception of the loose luxuries, the other Mr. F. S. A. occupied himself, and it was the captain's on ordinary occasions. Mrs. F. S. A. spent as much of her nights as circumstances would allow in her hammock athwartships, and when the table and chairs were up, there was no room for standing. At the stern end of their cabin was the cupboard for the saints, the lamp before which the boy Cross lit every night; and every Friday with great reverence he incensed the cabins and the deck, and dusted St. Michael, St. Nicholas, the Annunciation, and other pictures and relics which were provided to protect the 'Blue Ship' from peril.

Every night when the 'Blue Ship' was in a quiet harbour, one of the 'boys'—George, by name—was called upon by his fellows for some of those weird stories savouring of Æsop in which the Greeks of to-day rejoice. Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. lay awake enraptured as these stories penetrated into their cabin through the narrow partition: one told of a king who took in his own milk at his palace door, and sent his daughter to Paris to learn 'civilisa-

tion'; another told of a dragon which devastated a neighbourhood, and fell a prey to the powers of a modern St. George; others told of caïques freighted with gold, and of mysterious witchcraft, which caused royal childless ladies to be the happy mothers of children. And the F.S.A.'s heard to their contentment that the worst people in these stories were always Russians; the Greeks of a truth have no love for their co-religionists and would-be masters. To pass their time the 'boys' would dance on shore to the tune of a bagpipe, the playing of which was peremptorily forbidden on board. They were a capital set of fellows, willing workers, and excessively good-tempered, causing Mr. F.S.A. no trouble whatsoever during the whole of his fifty days' cruise. Would that he could have said as much for Captain Nicholas and the crew! On returning from a walk on one of these idle days the F.S.A.'s were made aware that their cabin had been the object of close scrutiny, by the sudden influx of animalculæ which it required all their resources in Keating to subdue. This fact, and the presence in the harbour of two smuggling craft, prevented them from wandering far; for though the smugglers came and paid them a visit and seemed to look upon the pirates as belonging to the same profession, nevertheless the F.S.A.'s never liked to put too much confidence in them.

The third evening after Matthew's departure, instead of bringing him, brought to those on the 'Blue Ship' blank dismay in the shape of a hurried note, in which he informed them that he had been unsuccessful with the Governor, and that he had been taken prisoner in the neighbouring village, and would not be released until a sum of money, which Mr. F.S.A. did not feel the least inclined to pay, had been sent. No one slept that night, and many plans of bravery were discussed. It seemed universally the opinion that early in the morning Mr. F.S.A. should march up to the village, which was about two hours distant, at the head of his faithful army, and demand the release of the prisoner, pistol in hand. His qualities as a general having hitherto been untested, it was the greatest relief to him, and doubtless to all concerned, when, early in the morning, Matthew appeared, breathless and excited, telling to eager ears how he had been placed in a room with a strong guard, black and white, how there had been a wedding on the previous evening, and how the guards had freely partaken of the festivities, and how he (Matthew) had, in the dead of night, escaped from a window, sent a Turk to

perdition who opposed his flight; and for the rest of the voyage, whenever the twelve 'boys' were dull, they would call for the story of 'Matthew the Prisoner,' which improved rapidly in the telling, and, doubtless, has been retailed in magnificent proportions to the twelve families at home.

Needless to say, the sails were rapidly unfurled, and the 'Blue Ship' triumphantly put forth to sea, in quest of another hunting-ground. No plan of action having suggested itself during the day, when the anchor was cast at night in a little bay, Captain Nicholas gave it as his advice that the ship should put into a certain harbour on the island of Syme, where there is a monastery well known to sailors, and that her future course should be decided by the counsel that the Superior would willingly give. Never did monastery appear more lovely and peaceful by the edge of its deep land-locked bay than did that of the Archangel Michael to the wanderers in the 'Blue Ship.' It was built for seafarers such as they, by pious hands, just after the fall of Constantinople, and is celebrated amongst the mariners of the Levant. Around the 'Blue Ship,' as she heaved to, swarmed countless geese—holy geese they are, the private property of the Archangel, and they gain their livelihood by picking up the offal cast from the boats which shelter here. None durst do them harm, for does not the legend relate how the first goose came here from Cyprus with an important letter under its wing for the Superior, and also how once a wicked sailor killed and ate one of these holy geese, and the angry Archangel refused to let his boat depart; though the wind was favourable, his boat would not move until he had confessed his crime and paid a heavy fine. No one, so alleges the popular belief, who has stolen anything here can get away. 'So, pirates,' said Captain Nicholas gaily to his men as they got into the ship's boat, 'beware!'

The monastic bell, a very large one, the gift of a sailor saved from shipwreck, rang out a welcome to the strangers as their boat neared the shore; the Superior received them warmly and promised every assistance in his power, and that evening they and all the 'boys,' except two naughty ones who ran off to the town of Syme without leave, attended service in the monastic church, and listened to the monks chanting amid sacred frescoes of the blessed and the damned, fine old pictures, wood-carving, and inlaid work. It was a peculiarly solemn function that day, being the eve of the dead, and many were the baskets of boiled

wheat offered, after the custom of the Eastern Church, at this festival, before the Archangel's shrine; and in the gloaming, at the convent door, the pirates ate with the assembled worshippers this holy food, and drank glasses of mastic to the success of their venture.

Very early next morning, stout Andreas came down into the F.S.A.'s cabin to fetch the sacred pictures, for the 'Blue Ship' and all therein were to be blessed by priests from the monastery. A clean towel was spread on the companion, and on it were placed a bowl of water, the sacred pictures, and a lantern; then, punctually at 7 A.M., two priests arrived in a boat, with their red bundle containing stoles, books, and a large silver diptych representing the Holy Virgin and the Lord Michael the Archangel, and various relics of many saints, who were prayed to grant their blessings to the 'Blue Ship,' that storms might not injure her, that the souls and bodies of all on board might be blessed, and that harmony might reign throughout the voyage. Captain Nicholas first received the blessing, accompanied by a whisk of holy water with the sprig of basil and a wave from the censer; then the sailors and the 'boys,' and lastly Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A., who, being heterodox, had modestly retired to a distant corner. Holy water was sprinkled over the deck and down into the cabins with the afore-said sprig, the pictures were kissed by the orthodox, and then this lovely and impressive service, as the brilliant light of the morning sun glimmered on the waves, was brought to a conclusion by Captain Nicholas, who divided what was left of the holy water between the two water casks, and then brought up a large black bottle of rum with which to regale the holy men.

During the morning, the pirates wandered amid the precincts of the convent, and visited the numerous cells, which are only filled when pilgrims visit the shrine on the Archangel's Day; and this is the reason why there is so large a dining-room, with wooden tables and benches to seat five hundred, a raised daïs for the rich, and huge cauldrons in which to cook the food. 'Enough for the meal of forty dragons,' as a fable-loving 'boy' put it.

The Superior, Makarios, who was busily engaged all the morning in attending to the simmering of a savoury pot, insisted on the F.S.A.'s dining with him. And what a meal it was! A huge bowl of rice soup was followed by an exquisitely cooked lamb, stuffed with rice and herbs, which Makarios pulled to pieces with his fingers and distributed to the assembled guests; and into Mr.

F. S. A.'s luckless mouth he would occasionally insert with finger and thumb such bits as he considered particularly tit. Scarcely had this course disappeared, than up came a roast leg of lamb, which received similar treatment; then curds, then honey, then cream; and, like Captain Dalgetty, the guests ate gluttonously, not knowing when they might come across so good a meal. Makarios, on parting, gave them his blessing, his best map, and his man John to act as guide; and when the two truant boys had returned and been well scolded, towards evening the 'Blue Ship' again set sail, and great contentment reigned on board—the joint product of the blessing and the meal. Yet how transient are the effects of even an Archangel's blessing was proved by the fact that the first of a series of brawls took place that very evening between Mr. F. S. A. and Captain Nicholas on the subject of ship-lights, which, for economical reasons, Greek sailors object to carry.

Rounding Cape Fox—not christened, like Cape Ram, from its likeness to the head of the animal in question, but from its resemblance to the tail—the 'Blue Ship' put into a bleak bay, the shores of which are tenanted by wild Greek shepherds, whose reception was kindly, and all manner of dairy produce from their farms was taken on board. Amid the ruins of the ancient Loryma, shepherdesses in quaint red and blue costumes were tending their flocks; their homes were tiny hovels by the shore, scarce fit for pigsties, with enclosures around them for the goats and sheep. Night was rendered hideous by the laughing of jackals and the fierce barkings of the sheepdogs at the wolves, which cause sad havoc among the flocks; and here Sunday was passed in rest and peace. The twelve 'boys' employed their holiday chiefly in dancing on the shore, and in making charcoal out of roots for future consumption on the voyage, whilst Captain Nicholas was busy all day in fishing for *pinna*s, the contents of their red fan-shaped shells making a most excellent scallop.

After sundry investigations had been made in this wild locality, and after the F. S. A.'s had added the name of a town of the ancient world to the map of Asia Minor, which they found about two hours distant from their harbour, the 'Blue Ship' again bore them eastward, thankful to have met with no further interruption in their work. She had a splendid wind for her voyage that day, blowing straight from the mountains on to her stern, which in the evening freshened into a squall and carried her at steamer pace towards her destination, until, with the sun, down

went the wind, and she was left to rock amid the angry billows all night, at the very entrance to the haven in which she would be.

Nothing more lovely can be imagined than the Gulf of Makri, the ancient Telmessos, which the 'Blue Ship' was slowly entering when the F. S. A.'s rose next day; its mouth is studded with well-wooded islands, and the steep shores around are black with fir-trees and bristling with steep rocks; behind tower the snow-capped peaks of the Taurus range. She cast anchor amongst these islets at the mouth of the gulf, some twenty miles from the town of Makri, and, in point of fact, the F. S. A.'s were in as full possession of all around them as if they had descended on some undiscovered island of the Pacific. A few Greeks, very poor and very benighted, live on the island, but, in reality, the Greek element is here almost left behind, the inhabitants of these wild coasts being for the most part nomad wood-cutters, known as Yuruks by the Turks, descendants of the wandering Turcomans. The Greek women on the islet were greatly alarmed at the advent of strangers, and ran from them as if they had been uncanny, and trembled at the sight of the photographic camera as if it had been some new-fangled implement of war. However, one of the male inhabitants, the keeper of a tiny coffee house, turned out a very valuable ally, and conducted the wanderers to many sites of ruins on the mainland opposite.

No F. S. A. could wish for a more delightful spot than the one the Greek led them to next day; it was hidden in a basin surrounded by hills, on a promontory to the north of the gulf. Here were the virgin ruins of an unknown town, which turned out from inscriptions to have been called Lydæ in ancient days, but which as yet had escaped the ken of modern explorers, and a week passed blissfully away in investigating this spot. Nomad Yuruks had their dwellings amongst these ruins, and the study of these formed no small portion of the enjoyment of the sojourn here.

Every morning at six, the large boat left the 'Blue Ship,' bearing the F. S. A.'s and their twelve 'boys' to the shore, where Hassan, the Yuruk, was waiting with a mule for the conveyance of Mrs. F. S. A. to the ruins. It was a curious procession to witness, as the pirates toiled up the fir forest towards the plateau where the ruins lay, the twelve 'boys' armed with guns, spades, and picks, the F. S. A.'s with their revolvers ready charged, and the camera at hand to seize upon any view that struck them. As they

approached the Yuruk encampment, they each armed themselves with stones to drive off the savage dogs which guard the huts; terrible customers they are, the heroes of countless battles with the wolves. The Greek native guide was sent on to tell the tribe that those who came were men of peace, that their object was not rapine amongst the living, but amongst the dead; and, consequently, the reception, though somewhat distant and timorous, was far from hostile.

The huts of these nomads, as they peeped up amongst the brushwood, and the ruins of Lydæ, were exceedingly picturesque; they were constructed of branches, covered either with skins or with a rough sort of felt, woven by the women with camel's hair in looms fixed in a hole in the ground near each hut. Most of the huts were of skin here, for the tribe is especially nomadic, and carries with it very few women and very few looms.

Hassan had his tent close to some gigantic mausolea of ancient days, which occupied the attention of the F. S. A.'s during most of their stay at Lydæ, and at midday, whilst the twelve 'boys' rested, they generally retired for a chat to his tent, where they made close examination of his nomadic furniture, consisting chiefly of a rug for sleeping on, a pot for boiling in, and a curious contrivance for roasting coffee. Hassan was communicative, too, on the subject of his tribe: it would appear that each branch of it is termed *yaëla*, which branch has the flocks in common, and wanders from place to place under the direction of a chief, called *Yuruk aghasi*; the authority of the head of the tribe, the White Beard (*ak-sakal*), who lives up in the mountains, is the only one they recognise. The Turks, it would appear, leave these nomads entirely to their own devices, demanding no taxes. And splendid fellows they are—just what is required to make the decaying empire a new backbone if they were properly organised and under a strong hand. Some see in these men the remnants of the Seljukians, whose ancestors ruled in these parts before the conquest of the Ottomans; at any rate, they are as different as possible in physique from the wretched Ottomans of Stamboul, and their language, too, is pure and terse.

At present, the sole occupation of these fine fellows is to ruin Asia Minor by cutting down the forests to sell wood and make charcoal. Sometimes, too, they will simply set fire to whole districts for the sole object of having the young grass for their flocks in the ensuing year. It would seem that just now the branch of

the tribe amongst whom the F. S. A.'s found themselves has its eye on the magnificent forests which cover the hills around Lydæ.

Each tribe possesses a goodly number of camels, long strings of which are met on every mountain path, groaning under the weight of newly-hewn timber—veteran camels of evil countenance, and tiny foal camels which ran by their mothers' side, and they are led by Yuruks with closely-shaven heads, having but one single lock left, which projects oddly from beneath their white skull-caps, and the meaning of which is that Mahomed should have it to pull them up to heaven by. Not that they adhere very strictly to the religious observances of the orthodox Mussulmans; they have no mosques at which to pray, they don't appear to mind their wives being seen; in fact, Mr. F. S. A. became very friendly with one Yuruk woman, whom he cured of a bad pain by a magic dose of brandy. She invited him into her tent, made coffee for him, and rolled him a cigarette, with face uncovered and no visible bashfulness.

Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. soon learnt a great deal about the history of Lydæ, and a neighbouring town which they re-christened Lissa, from the inscriptions they found amongst its ruins; and they felt like archæological generals, planting the standard of victory on one fortress after another. Lissa was, perhaps, even more lovely than Lydæ, being an ancient acropolis built on an escarped rock, rising straight out of the densest of forests, and dominating a lake. Nearly a fortnight slipped away deliciously in this enchanting region, and for the rest of their lives Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A. will speak of Lydæ and Lissa in terms of rapture exceeding any previous experience. This fortnight was of the greatest importance also to the well-being of the twelve 'boys,' who, landlubbers as they were, began to weary of the sea, and the close confinement in the hold ('the lower world' and 'Hades,' as they jocosely termed it) was not conducive to health. On the whole, considering the difficulties to be contended with, there was wonderfully little sickness on board the 'Blue Ship.' One day, at Lissa, Nicholas drank water when heated, and got a shocking pain which made him writhe in agonies on the ground for the space of one hour, crying perpetually 'Holy Virgin, let it pass!' Basili, who professed to know somewhat of doctoring, borrowed a tumbler from the F. S. A.'s luncheon-basket, and cupped the sufferer by burning in it a cigarette paper and applying it to the part affected, with so satisfactory a result that, after a good rest, Nicholas was

able to walk the five miles home. Then, again, Guida's toothache was very bad, and Basili attacked it with the milk out of the stem of a spurge, and then got a certain shellfish, which he ground to powder, and made a stuffing; but the toothache continued relentlessly, and poor Guida was a source of anxiety during all the voyage.

Such delicious weather, and such delicious evenings on the 'Blue Ship' after the work of the day was over, gladdened the hearts of the wanderers. Every night Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. might be seen dining on deck in the twilight, and dining right well too, for lambs, milk, honey, and other rural delicacies abound around the Gulf of Makri, and there they would sit watching the stars come out, until the jackals and wild boars on shore warned them that night was come, and then they descended to their beds. Everyone was sorry to leave this enchanting gulf, but one day a personage came who professed to be the owner of the soil, and, knowing that he would not be long in informing the government at Makri of the presence of pirates in their midst, Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. deemed it time to give orders for their departure before worse should happen to them.

The voyage eastward was weary work, for the 'Blue Ship' had constantly to tack, and when the winds, contrary or otherwise, went down, she was left to roll in an angry sea, to the discontent of most of her passengers, who on the second morning hailed with delight a strong stern breeze, which bore them in a few hours to the port of the ancient Myra—the port where St. Paul tarried in his day, and where he found the 'ship of Alexandria.' That nomad Apostle would think Myra sorely changed for the worse if he could see it now; huge banks of sand have reared themselves like great natural earthworks along the shore; the river, which was navigable up to the town in his day, is now blocked up by a bar of sand at its mouth, but it still flows sluggishly past ruins of tombs and temples, and on its bank is still seen the great palace where lived the Roman prætor of Lycia in the days of the Apostle's visit, and which wants only a roof, windows, and wall-papers to make it habitable now.

Surely the rock-cut tombs of Myra ought to be considered as one of the sights of the world. A rocky mountain rising straight above the ruins of the theatre is honeycombed with these architectural gems, and the figures cut in relief in the living rock still stand guarding the portals of these long-since desecrated palaces of

the dead. The plain of Myra is cultivated by a handful of Greeks from the neighbouring flourishing island port of Castellorizo. They have built a small wooden village here, and in its midst is the remarkable church of St. Nicholas, once Bishop of Myra in the early Christian days, and a native of the place. This church the Russians excavated a few years ago, at the cost of 2,000*l.* It was buried, like all ruins in these parts, by some twenty feet of earth; and now, thanks to Russian gold, it is one of the most perfect specimens existing of early Christian art; the pulpit, the altar screen, the synod seats, the tessellated pavement, and the rich alabaster tombs are as they were in the early centuries of our era before destruction came upon them.

The Greek peasants about here are very picturesquely dressed, with scarlet jackets loosely covering a white chemise, a blue handkerchief bound round their necks, a fez adorned with gold spangles, a yellow girdle, and purple shoes embroidered with gold lace—quite the Greek peasants of Byron's days, who have not yet, like their compatriots in free Hellas, abandoned their old costumes for Western ugliness.

Around Myra a few days were spent in pleasant research, and then the 'Blue Ship,' having reached her farthest point eastwards, was prepared to return homewards; but before she left the harbour of Myra, a great alarm awaited those upon her, for a Turkish cruiser in search of smugglers came alongside and demanded admission. Captain Nicholas swore his loudest at them, all hands were summoned on deck, all the weapons were placed *en évidence*, with such satisfactory result that the cruiser quietly retreated, for she had only twelve men on board. Later on, the F.S.A.'s learnt that she had captured a smuggler with a cargo of tobacco on board, within sight of them. He is now doubtless languishing in a Turkish jail, if he has not money enough to bribe the officials to let him out.

Great preparations were made for the arrival of the 'Blue Ship' at the first civilised port she had visited since leaving Syra. One of the 'boys,' it appeared, understood hair-cutting, and borrowed Mrs. F.S.A.'s scissors for that purpose; beards were shaved, and shaggy locks reduced with wonderful rapidity, and Hades was strewn with hair. Castellorizo was the port, and it is a unique specimen of modern Greek enterprise, being a flourishing maritime town, built on a barren islet off the south coast of Asia Minor, far from any other Greek centre—a sort of halfway halting place

in the waves for vessels which trade between Alexandria and the Levantine ports; it has a splendid harbour, and is a town of sailors and sponge divers.

Captain Nicholas knew everybody. 'Where are you come from, my little captain?' asked they. 'From the sea,' he replied mysteriously, with a sly wink at Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A., to show that he did not intend to divulge their piratical secrets. He, his mates, and the twelve 'boys' went on shore for a day's jollification, into the depths of which the F.S.A.'s thought they had better not plunge, so, having visited the red castle of Italian date, and having admired the athletic men and pretty women of the island town, they returned to the 'Blue Ship' for a quiet afternoon.

Alone in the 'Blue Ship,' with none to see them save the ship's dog and the boy Cross, Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. planned and executed a terrible deed. It had for long been obvious to them that they would eventually have to wash their own clothes, but, owing to the busy nomadic life they had led, they had postponed the evil day. For the whole of that hot afternoon they knelt, one on either side of their india-rubber bath, soaping, kneading, wringing—a truly heavy wash; towels, sheets, wearing apparel were cast into the tub, cleansed by them as far as they were able, hung up in the rigging to dry, and then folded up neatly, so as to look as like clothes come home from the wash as possible; and the last scene in this drama was formed by Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. turning their bodies into mangles, for want of better, and behold them seated proudly each on a separate pile of clothes, quite exhausted with their labours, and feeling far more respect than they had ever done before for the washerwoman's trade.

Every one of the twelve 'boys' and the crew came on board that night with obvious proofs of their merry-making; some even had to be dragged up the side of the 'Blue Ship' and placed on their beds by their more sober fellows; all wrangled and quarrelled for a season, and that night no stories were told, but a chorus of heavy snoring told a tale of its own.

Betimes next morning the 'Blue Ship' was off, sailing with a gentle breeze towards another remote harbour, from which the sites of other Lycian ruins could be visited. The old town of Patara, famous in Roman days as 'the metropolis of Lycia,' and likewise visited by St. Paul, was the goal. Its splendid harbour being silted up, the 'Blue Ship' had to anchor some five miles distant, and the walk to the ruins followed for almost the whole way the

course of a ruined aqueduct. Numerous Yuruk encampments were again met with, in each of which violent canine greetings awaited the wanderers. But some of these encampments had more the appearance of settled life than those near Lydæ; for their grain they have actually constructed neat wooden storehouses, though they themselves continue to dwell in skin huts. But the wood-cutters are as wild and wandering as the rest; down by the shore many of them dwelt in huts with their camels and their flocks amid great stacks of wood which they have brought down from the mountains to sell to merchants, who carry on their dealings with these uncultured savages by means of wooden tallies, a set of which Mr. F.S.A. vainly endeavoured to acquire.

The harbour of Patara, into which presumably St. Paul's ship sailed, once stretched for fully a mile inland, and was lined by fine mausolea and palaces; now, by the interposition of a sand-bank, these ruins lie in a fetid, spongy marsh—temples, baths, and other buildings being hidden in rank vegetation and shaded by tall wavy palms. It is a spot of abject desolation, but of great and bewitching beauty; well-wooded slopes fringe the harbour; behind rise the deep-blue mountains of Lycia. It was the last halting-place of the wanderers on the Asiatic coast, and as the 'Blue Ship' sailed away, many a regretful glance was cast on the mighty mountains which had been such conspicuous objects in every view for the last few weeks.

The adventures of the 'Blue Ship' were by no means over when her course was directed straight homewards; much-enduring Ulysses himself could hardly have had a more trying time than Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. in their voyage from Patara to Syra. They were driven by stress of weather first into one bay and then into another; they were threatened with starvation and the complete failure of provisions, so that for several meals tinned lobster, hard biscuits, and arrowroot formed their only sustenance. On more than one occasion, Mr. F.S.A. had terrible rows with Captain Nicholas, whose friends at Castellorizo had replenished for him his rum bottle, and he loved to tarry unnecessarily in quiet harbours to discuss the contents thereof. He paced the deck in furious rage when Mr. F.S.A. mildly suggested that it would be as well to go on; and when Mr. F.S.A. told him plainly that if he did not proceed the future expense of the expedition, according to contract, would rest on his shoulders, perfectly livid with anger, he turned upon him, shrieking, 'I am a free Greek, not an

Indian slave!' whereupon Mr. and Mrs. F.S.A. after a hearty laugh spent a busy afternoon in their cabin making butter out of some goats' milk they had got; nevertheless, despite their apparent indifference, they were relieved to hear an order issued for the weighing of the anchor, as soon as the spirit fumes had left Captain Nicholas and reason returned. From that day until their arrival at Syra, Captain Nicholas and Mr. F.S.A. never spoke; they paced the deck in sullen but expressive silence, and communicated with each other by the medium of Matthew, who considerably modified in the transition their harsher remarks.

The wild winds at length bore them to a desert island in the Ægean, called in modern times St. John's Island, from a tiny church thereon dedicated to that Saint; it is almost the most remote spot in all these seas—a lone, treeless, soilless islet, with stupendous rocks overhanging the sea, but interesting to the F.S.A.'s as bearing traces of the stone age, and hence, presumably, one of the stepping-stones by which the earlier mariners made their way to Europe. It is now leased to a farmer for 5*l.* a year, and contains nine souls—an old man and his wife and their descendants, who live in a state of wonderful simplicity in a small cabin of rough stone. The old granny was alone when they visited her, her husband being absent at his dairy on the hills, so they made a pilgrimage to visit him, and found a charming specimen of a bygone age busy making cheese. Of course, he groaned over his excessive rent—what farmer does not in all quarters of the globe? And he groaned, moreover, about a recent visit some thieves had paid him, making off with his cauldrons, his milk-troughs, and the fattest of his lambs. Occasionally a priest comes to perform service at the little church; now and again boats call for cheese and dairy produce—these are their only points of union with the outer world. Mr. F.S.A. admired with a view to purchase some nice-looking loaves of bread, but the honest old fellow told him how a boat from Rhodes had brought some flour to exchange for cheese, with which he had made the loaves in question, only to find them uneatable, for the flour had been kept in petroleum casks! It is to be feared that these good folk often get taken in, and that Matthew's injunction to the 'boys' to pay honestly for the cheese they bought would not be closely attended to.

Next morning, just as the 'Blue Ship' was preparing to depart, the twelve 'boys' came on board with magnificent bunches of yellow

marigold, for that night Hades had been visited by an invasion of fleas, caught doubtless in the old woman's hovel, and constant were the muttered oaths which told that the 'boys' were suffering keenly from the onslaught of the unwelcome visitors. The bunches of marigold were to remedy this, and a practical illustration of the effects of 'fleabane' was brought before the notice of the F. S. A.'s.

Tossed about again by the winds for two more days, on the third the 'Blue Ship' was obliged to take refuge from a fearful gale in the island of Patmos, a spot which aroused all the legendary lore of the simple-minded shipboy Cross, and, delighted at having such willing listeners as the F. S. A.'s, he poured into their ears quaint stories concerning the author of the Revelation: how a rock in the harbour represented the petrified body of an adversary of the exiled divine; and how the shellfish which are caught thereon have a disgusting smell and are unfit for food. Cross, too, in a subdued and awe-struck voice, gave them his opinion concerning those mysterious mast-head lights, the fires of St. Elmo, which appear in storms. He had seen them off Andros, he said, and 'they are,' he added, 'a sort of soft bird with a light on their heads, which sit and eat the inside of the masts, so that they become hollow, and break with the next gust of wind; they are wild things which God sends to punish men.' The boy Cross was quite Homeric in his yarns, and in consequence gave keen delight to the F. S. A.'s.

Meanwhile, the commissariat department was causing great anxiety—the 'boys' had long since finished their stores, and were living on herbs they picked up on shore, shellfish, and cheese. Mr. and Mrs. F. S. A., who always dreaded being reduced to similar rations, could do nothing but curb their appetites and whistle for a fair wind, which came at last, and bore the 'Blue Ship' bravely on her way to Syra. As they approached, mate Andreas, who, though active as a lizard and a capital sailor, was terribly glum and ugly, actually made a joke. 'Now,' said he, 'is the time to black our boots,' at which everyone on board laughed heartily, so very low had sunk their sense of humour.

On the fiftieth day after her departure, the 'Blue Ship' deposited the wanderers once more amongst the busy haunts of men, and the F. S. A.'s one regret in leaving her was having to bid adieu to the affectionate ship's dog, which had had fifty feast days in his life off their remains, and would probably have no more.

A LIFE'S MORNING.

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'DEMOS,' 'THYRZA,' ETC.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE UNEXPECTED.

LATE in the evening Wilfrid received a visit from his father. Mr. Athel had dined with his sister, and subsequently accompanied his nieces to a concert. Beatrice should have sung, but had broken her engagement on the plea of ill-health.

'Been at home all the evening?' Mr. Athel began by asking.

'I got home late,' Wilfrid answered, rising from his chair.

His father had something to say which cost him hesitation. He walked about with his hands between the tails of his coat.

'Seen Beatrice lately?' he inquired at length.

'No; not since last Monday.'

'I'm afraid she isn't well. She didn't sing to-night. Didn't dine with us either.'

Wilfrid kept silence.

'Something wrong?' was his father's next question.

'Yes, there is.'

'I'm sorry to hear that.'

Wilfrid went to the fire-place and leaned his arm upon the mantelpiece. As he did not seem disposed to speak, his father continued—

'Nothing serious, I hope?'

'Yes; something serious.'

'You don't mean that? Anything you can talk about?'

'I'm afraid not. I shall go and see Beatrice as usual to-morrow. I may be at liberty to tell you after that, though probably not for a few days.'

Mr. Athel looked annoyed.

'I hope this is not of your doing,' he said. 'They tell me the girl is causing them a good deal of anxiety. For the last few days she has been sitting alone, scarcely touching food, and refusing to speak to anyone. If this goes on she will be ill.'

Wilfrid spoke hoarsely.

'I can't help it. I shall see her to-morrow.'

'All right,' observed his father, with the impatience which was his way of meeting disorders in this admirable universe. 'Your aunt asked me to tell you this; of course I can do no more.'

Wilfrid made no reply, and Mr. Athel left him.

It was an hour of terrible suffering that Wilfrid lived through before he left the study and went to lay his head on the pillow. He had not thought very much of Beatrice hitherto; the passion which had spurred him blindly on made him forgetful of everything but the end his heart desired. Now that the end was within reach, he could consider what it was that he had done. He was acting like a very madman. He could not hope that any soul would regard his frenzy even with compassion; on all sides he would meet with the sternest condemnation. Who would recognise his wife? This step which he was taking meant rupture with all his relatives, perchance with all his friends; for it would be universally declared that he had been guilty of utter baseness. His career was ruined. It might happen that he would have to leave England with Emily, abandoning for her sake everything else that he prized.

How would Beatrice bear the revelation? Mere suspense had made her ill; such a blow as this might kill her. Never before had he been consciously guilty of an act of cruelty or of wrong to any the least valued of those with whom he had dealt; to realise what his treachery meant to Beatrice was so terrible that he dared not fix his thought upon it. Her love for him was intense beyond anything he had imagined in woman; Emily had never seemed to him possessed with so vehement a passion. Indeed he had often doubted whether Emily's was a passionate nature; at times she was almost cold—appeared so, in his thought of her—and never had she given way to that self-forgetful ardour which was so common in Beatrice. Sweat broke out upon his forehead as he saw the tragic issues to which his life was tending. There was no retreat, save by a second act of apostasy so unspeakably shameful that the brand of it would drive him to self-destruction. He had made his choice, or had been driven upon it by the powers which ruled his destiny; it only remained to have the courage of his resolve and to defy consequences. At least it was in no less a cause than that of his life's one love. There was no stamp of

turpitude on the end for which he would sacrifice so much and occasion so much misery.

He passed the time in his own rooms till the afternoon of the following day; then, at the customary hour, he set forth to visit Beatrice. Would she see him? In his heart he hoped that she would refuse; yet he dreaded lest he should be told that she was too unwell. It was a new thing in Wilfrid's experience to approach any door with shame and dread; between his ringing the bell and the servant's answer he learnt well what those words mean.

He was admitted as usual, the servant making no remark. As usual, he was led to Beatrice's room.

She was sitting in the chair she always occupied, and was dressed with the accustomed perfection. But her face was an index to the sufferings she had endured this past week. As soon as the door had closed, she stood to receive him, but not with extended hand. Her eyes were fixed upon him steadily, and Wilfrid, with difficulty meeting them, experienced a shock of new fear, a kind of fear he could not account for. Outwardly she was quite calm; it was something in her look, an indefinable suggestion of secret anguish, that impressed him so. He did not try to take her hand, but, having laid down his hat, came near to her and spoke as quietly as he could.

'May I speak to you of what passed between us last Monday?'

'How can we avoid speaking of it?' she replied, in a low voice, her eyes still searching him.

'I ought to have come to see you before this,' Wilfrid continued, taking the seat to which she pointed, whilst she also sat down. 'I could not.'

'I have been expecting you,' Beatrice said, in an emotionless way.

The nervous tension with which he had come into her presence had yielded to a fit of trembling. Coldness ran along his veins; his tongue refused its office; his eyes sank before her gaze.

'I felt sure you would come to-day,' Beatrice continued, with the same absence of pronounced feeling. 'If not, I must have gone to your house. What do you wish to say to me?'

'That which I find it very difficult to say. I feel that after what happened on Monday we cannot be quite the same to each other. I fear I said some things that were not wholly true.'

Beatrice seemed to be holding her breath. Her face was marble. She sat unmoving.

‘You mean,’ she said at length, ‘that those letters represented more than you were willing to confess?’

It was calmly asked. Evidently Wilfrid had no outbreak of resentment to fear. He would have preferred it to this dreadful self-command.

‘More,’ he answered, ‘than I felt at the time. I spoke no word of conscious falsehood.’

‘Has anything happened to prove to you what you then denied?’

He looked at her in doubt. Could she in any way have learnt what had come to pass? Whilst talking, he had made up his mind to disclose nothing definitely; he would explain his behaviour merely as arising from doubt of himself. It would make the rest easier for her to bear hereafter.

‘I have read those letters again,’ he answered.

‘And you have learnt that you never loved me?’

He held his eyes down, unable to utter words. Beatrice also was silent for a long time. At length she said—

‘I think you are keeping something from me?’

He raised his face.

‘Has nothing else happened?’ she asked, with measured tone, a little sad, nothing more.

The truth was forced from him, and its utterance gave him a relief which was in itself a source of new agitation.

‘Yes, something else has happened.’

‘I knew it.’

‘How did you——?’

‘I felt it. You have met her again.’

Again he was speechless. Beatrice asked—

‘Does she live in London?’

‘She does.’

‘You have met her, and have—have wished that you were free?’

‘Beatrice, I have done worse. I have acted as though I were free.’

She shook, as if a blow had fallen upon her. Then a smile came to her lips.

‘You have asked her again to be your wife?’

‘I have.’

‘And she has consented?’

‘Because I deceived her at the same time that I behaved dishonourably to you.’

She fixed upon him eyes which had a strange inward look, eyes veiled with reverie, vaguely troubled, unimpassioned. It was as though she calmly readjusted in her own mind the relations between him and herself. The misery of Wilfrid’s situation was mitigated in a degree by mere wonder at her mode of receiving his admissions. This interview was no logical sequence upon the scene of a week ago; and the issue then had been, one would have thought, less provocative of demonstration than to-day’s.

Directness once more armed her gaze, and again he was powerless to meet it. Still no resentment, no condemnation. She asked—

‘It is your intention to marry soon?’

He could not reply.

‘Will you let me see you once more before your marriage?’ she continued. ‘That is, if I find I wish it. I am not sure. I may or may not.’

It was rather a debate with herself than an address to him.

‘May I leave you now, Beatrice?’ he said, suddenly. ‘Every drop of blood in me is shame-heated. In telling you this, I have done something which I thought would be beyond my force.’

‘Yes,’ she murmured, ‘it will be better if we part now.’

She rose and watched him as he stepped to the table and took his hat. There was a moment’s hesitation on either side, but Beatrice did not offer her hand. She stood superbly, as a queen might dismiss one from whom her thoughts were already wandering. He bowed, with inward self-mockery, and left her.

Some hours later, when already the summer evening had cloaked itself, Wilfrid found himself wandering by the river, not far from Hammersmith. The influence of a great water flowing from darkness into darkness was strong upon him; he was seeking for a hope in the transitoriness of all things earthly. Would not the hour come when this present anguish, this blood-poisoning shame, would have passed far away and have left no mark? Was it not thinking too grandiosely to attribute to the actions of such a one as himself a tragic gravity? Was there not supernal laughter at the sight of him, Wilfrid Athel, an English gentleman, a member of the Lower House of the British Parliament

posing as the arbiter of destinies? What did it all come to? An imbroglia on the threshold of matrimony; a temporary doubt which of two women was to enjoy the honour of styling herself Mrs. Athel. The day's long shame led to this completeness of self-contempt. As if Beatrice would greatly care! Why, in his very behaviour he had offered the cure for her heartburn; and her calmness showed how effective the remedy would be. The very wife whom he held securely had only been won by keeping silence; tell her the story of the last few days, and behold him altogether wifeless. He laughed scornfully. To this had he come from those dreams which guided him when he was a youth. A commonplace man, why should he not have commonplace experiences?

He had walked in this direction with the thought of passing beneath Emily's window before he returned home, yet, now that he was not more than half an hour's walk from her, he felt weary and looked aside for a street which should lead him to the region of vehicles. As he did so, he noticed a woman's form leaning over the riverside parapet at a short distance. A thought drew him nearer to her. Yes, it was Emily herself.

'You were coming to see me?' she asked.

Love in a woman's voice—what cynicism so perdurable that it will bear against that assailant? In the dusk, he put her gloved hand against his lips, and the touch made him once more noble.

'I had meant to, beautiful, but it seemed too late, and I was just on the point of turning back. You always appear to me when I most need you.'

'You wanted to speak to me, Wilfrid?'

'When do I not? My life seems so thin and poor; only your breath gives it colour. Emily, I shall ask so much of you. I have lost all faith in myself; you must restore it.'

They stood close to each other, hand in hand, looking down at the dark flow.

'If I had not met you, Wilfrid,' she said, or whispered, 'I think my end must have been there—there, below us. I have often come here at night. It is always a lonely place, and at high tide the water is deep.'

His hand closed upon hers with rescuing force.

'I am carrying a letter,' Emily continued, 'that I was going to post before I went in. I will give it you now, and I am glad of the opportunity; it seems safer. I have written what I feel I

could never say to you. Read it and destroy it, and never speak of what it contains.'

She gave him the letter, and then he walked with her homewards.

On the morrow, shortly after breakfast, he was sitting in his study, when a knock came at the door. He bade enter, and it was Beatrice. She came towards him, gave her hand mechanically, and said—

'Can you spare me a few minutes?'

He placed a chair for her. Her eyes had not closed since they last looked at him; he saw it, though the expression of her features was not weariness.

'There is one thing, Wilfrid, that I think I have a right to ask you. Will you tell me why she left you, years ago?'

Her tone was that of one continuing a conversation. There might have been no break between yesterday and to-day. We cannot always gather from the voice what struggle has preceded utterance.

Wilfrid turned away. On the table lay that letter of Emily's; he had read it many times, and was reading it when the knock disturbed him. With a sudden movement, he took up the sheet of paper, and held it to Beatrice.

'It is there—the reason. I myself have only known it a few hours. Read that. I have no right to show it you—and no right to refuse.'

Beatrice held the letter for a brief space without turning her eyes upon it. Wilfrid walked to a distance, and at length she read. Emily had recounted every circumstance of her father's death, and told the history of her own feelings, all with complete simplicity, almost coldly. Only an uncertainty in the handwriting here and there showed the suffering it had cost her to look once more into the very eyes of the past. Yet it was of another than herself that she wrote; she felt that even in her memory of woe.

They faced each other again. Beatrice's eyes were distended; their depths lightened.

'I am glad! I am glad you met her before it was too late!'

Her voice quivered upon a low, rich note. Such an utterance was the outcome of a nature strong to the last limit of self-conquest. Wilfrid heard and regarded her with a kind of fear; her intensity passed to him; he trembled.

'I have nothing to pardon,' she continued. 'You were hers long before my love had touched your heart. You have tried to love me; but this has come soon enough to save us both.'

And again—

'If I did not love you, I should act selfishly; but self is all gone from me. In this moment I could do greater things to help you to happiness. Tell me; have you yet spoken to—to the others?'

'To no one.'

'Then do not. It shall all come from me. No one shall cast upon you a shadow of blame. You have done me no wrong; you were hers, and you wronged her when you tried to love me. I will help you—at least I can be your friend. Listen; I shall see her. It shall be I who have brought you together again—that is how they shall all think of it. I shall see her, and as your friend, as the only one to whom you have yet spoken. Do you understand me, Wilfrid? Do you see that I make the future smooth for her and you? She must never know what *we* know. And the others—they shall do as I will; they shall not dare to speak one word against you. What right have they, if *I* am—am glad?'

He stood in amaze. It was impossible to doubt her sincerity; her face, the music of her voice, the gestures by which her eagerness expressed itself, all were too truthful. What divine nature had lain hidden in this woman! He gazed at her as on a being more than mortal.

'How can I accept this from you?' he asked hoarsely.

'Accept? How can you refuse? It is my right, it is my will! Would you refuse me this one poor chance of proving that my love was unselfish? I would have killed myself to win a tender look from you at the last moment, and you shall not go away thinking less of me than I deserve. You know already that I am not the idle, powerless woman you once thought me; you shall know that I can do yet more. If *she* is noble in your eyes, can *I* consent to be less so?'

Passion the most exalted possessed her. It infected Wilfrid. He felt that the common laws of intercourse between man and woman had here no application; the higher ground to which she summoned him knew no authority of the conventional. To hang his head was to proclaim his own littleness.

'You are not less noble, Beatrice,' his voice murmured.

'You have said it. So there is no longer a constraint between us. How simple it is to do for love's sake what those who do not know love think impossible. I will see her, then the last difficulty is removed. That letter has told me where she lives. If I go there to-day, I shall find her?'

'Not till the evening,' Wilfrid replied under his breath.

'When is your marriage?'

He looked at her without speaking.

'Very soon? Before the end of the session?'

'The day after to-morrow.'

She was white to the lips, but kept her eyes on him steadily.

'And you go away at once?'

'I had thought'—he began; then added, 'Yes, at once; it is better.'

'Yes, better. Your friend stays and makes all ready for your return. Perhaps I shall not see you after to-day, for that time. Then we are to each other what we used to be. You will bring her to hear me sing? I shall not give it up now.'

She smiled, moved a little away from him, then turned again and gave her hand for leave-taking.

'Wilfrid!'

'Beatrice?'

'She would not grudge it me. Kiss me—the last time—on my lips!'

He kissed her. When the light came again to his eyes, Beatrice had gone.

In the evening Emily sat expectant. Either Wilfrid would come or there would be a letter from him; yes, he would come; for, after reading what she had written, the desire to speak with her must be strong in him. She sat at her window and looked along the dull street.

She had spent the day as usual—that is to say, in the familiar school routine; but the heart she had brought to her work was far other than that which for long years had laboriously pulsed the flagging moments of her life. Her pupils were no longer featureless beings, the sole end of whose existence was to give trouble; girl-children and budding womanhood had circled about her; the lips which recited lessons made unconscious music; the eyes, dark or sunny, laughed with secret foresight of love to come. Kindly affection to one and all grew warm within her; what had been only languid preferences developed in an hour to

little less than attachments, and dislikes softened to pity. The girls who gave promise of beauty and tenderness she looked upon with the eyes of a sister; their lot it would be to know the ecstasy of whispered vows, to give and to receive that happiness which is not to be named lest the gods become envious. Voices singing together in the class practice which had ever been a weariness, stirred her to a passion of delight; it was the choral symphony of love's handmaidens. Did they see a change in her? Emily fancied that the elder girls looked at each other and smiled and exchanged words in an undertone—about her.

It was well to have told Wilfrid all her secrets, yet in the impatience of waiting she had tremors of misgiving; would he, perchance, think as she so long had thought, that to speak to anyone, however near, of that bygone woe and shame was a sin against the pieties of nature, least of all excusable when committed at the bidding of her own desires? He would never breathe to her a word which could reveal such a thought, but Wilfrid, with his susceptibility to the beautiful in character, his nature so intensely in sympathy with her own, might more or less consciously judge her to have fallen from fidelity to the high ideal. Could he have learnt the story of her life, she still persevering on her widowed way, would he not have deemed her nobler? Aid against this subtlety of conscience rose in the form of self-reproof administered by that joyous voice of nature which no longer timidly begged a hearing, but came as a mandate from an unveiled sovereign. With what right, pray, did she desire to show in Wilfrid's eyes as other than she was? That part in life alone becomes us which is the very expression of ourselves. What merit can there be in playing the votary of an ascetic conviction when the heart is bursting with its stifled cry for light and warmth, for human joy, for the golden fruit of the tree of life? She had been sincere in her renunciation; the way of worthiness was to cherish a sincerity as complete, now that her soul flamed to the bliss which fate once more offered her.

The hours passed slowly; how long the night would be if Wilfrid neither wrote to her nor came! But he had written; at eight o'clock the glad signal of the postman drew her to the door of her room where she stood trembling whilst someone went to the letter-box, and—oh, joy! ascended the stairs. It was her letter; because her hands were too unsteady to hold it for reading, she knelt by a chair, like a child with a new picture-book, and

spread the sheet open. And, having read it twice, she let her face fall upon her palms, to repeat to herself the words which danced fire-like before her darkened eyes. He wrote rather sadly, but she would not have had it otherwise, for the sadness was of love's innermost heart, which is the shrine of mortality.

As Emily knelt thus by the chair there came another knock at the house-door, the knock of a visitor. She did not hear it, nor yet the tap at her own door which followed. She was startled to consciousness by her landlady's voice.

'There's a lady wishes to see you, Miss Hood.'

'A lady?' Emily repeated in surprise. Then it occurred to her that it must be Mrs. Baxendale, who knew her address and was likely to be in London at this time of the year. 'Does she give any name?'

No name. Emily requested that the visitor should be introduced.

Not Mrs. Baxendale, but a face at first barely remembered, then growing with suggestiveness upon Emily's gaze until all was known save the name attached to it. A face which at present seemed to bear the pale signs of suffering, though it smiled; a beautiful visage of high meanings, impressive beneath its crown of dark hair. It smiled and still smiled; the eyes looked searchingly.

'You do not remember me, Miss Hood?'

'Indeed, I remember you—your face, your voice. But your name——? You are Mrs. Baxendale's niece.'

'Yes; Miss Redwing.'

'O, how could I forget!'

Emily became silent. The eyes that searched her so were surely kind, but it was the time of fears. Impossible that so strange a visit should be unconnected with her fate. And the voice thrilled upon her strung nerves ominously; the lips she watched were so eloquent of repressed feeling. Why should this lady come to her? Their acquaintance had been so very slight.

She murmured an invitation to be seated.

'For a moment,' returned Beatrice, 'you must wonder to see me. But I think you remember that I was a friend of the Athels. I am come with Mr. Athel's leave—Mr. Wilfrid.'

Emily was agitated and could not smooth her features.

'O, don't think I bring you bad news,' pursued the other

quickly, leaning a little forward and again raising her eyes. She had dropped them on the mention of Wilfrid's name. 'I have come, in fact, to put Mr. Athel at ease in his mind.' She laughed nervously. 'He and I have been close friends for a very long time, indeed since we were all but children, and I—he—you won't misunderstand? He has told me—me alone as yet—of what has happened, of the great good fortune that has come to him so unexpectedly. If you knew the terms of our friendship you would understand how natural it was for him to take me into his confidence, Miss Hood. And I begged him to let me visit you, because'—again she laughed in the same nervous way—'because he was in a foolish anxiety lest you might have vanished. I told him it was best that he should have the evidence of a very practical person's senses that you were really here and that he hadn't only dreamt it. And as we did know each other, you see—— You will construe my behaviour kindly, will you not?'

'Surely I will, Miss Redwing,' Emily responded warmly. 'How else could I meet your own great kindness?'

'I feared so many things; even at the door I almost turned away. There seemed so little excuse for my visit. It was like intruding upon you. But Mr. Athel assured me that I should not be unwelcome.'

Emily, overcome by the sense of relief after her apprehensions, gave free utterance to the warm words in which her joy voiced itself. She forgot all that was strange in Beatrice's manner or attributed it merely to timidity. Sympathy just now was like sunshine to her; she could not inquire whence or why it came, but was content to let it bathe her in its divine solace.

'If you knew how it has flattered me!' Beatrice continued, with a semblance of light-hearted goodness which her hearer had no thought of criticising. 'It is the final proof of Mr. Athel's good opinion. You know his poor opinion of conventional people and conventional behaviour. He is determined that no one shall be told till—till after Wednesday—making me the sole exception, you see. But seriously I am glad he did so, and that I have been able to meet you again just at this time. Now I can assure him that you are indeed a living being, and that there is no danger whatever of your disappearing.'

Emily did not join the musical laugh, but her heart was full, and she just laid her hand on that of Beatrice.

'It was only for a moment,' the latter said, rising as she felt

the touch. 'This is no hour for paying visits, and, indeed, I have to hurry back again. I should like to—only to say that you have my very kindest wishes. You forgive my coming; you forgive my hastening away so?'

'I feel I ought to thank you more,' broke from Emily's lips. 'To me, believe, it is all very like a dream. O, it was kind of you to come. You can't think,' she added, with only apparent irrelevance, 'how often I have recalled your beautiful singing; I have always thought of you with gratitude for that deep pleasure you gave me.'

'O, you shall hear me sing again,' laughed Beatrice. 'Ask Mr. Athel to tell you something about that. Indeed, it must be good-bye.'

They took each other's hands, but for Emily it was not sufficient; she stepped nearer, offering her lips.

Beatrice kissed her.

CHAPTER XXV.

A FAMILY CONCLAVE.

AT eleven o'clock on Wednesday morning Beatrice called at the Athels' house. Receiving the expected information that Wilfrid was not at home, she requested that Mr. Athel senior might not be disturbed and went to Wilfrid's study.

Alone in the room, she took from her hand-bag a little packet addressed to Wilfrid on which she had written the word 'private,' and laid it on the writing-table.

She appeared to have given special attention to her toilet this morning; her attire was that of a lady of fashion, rich, elaborate, devised with consummate art, its luxury draping well the superb form wherein blended with such strange ardour the flames of heroism and voluptuousness. Her moving made the air delicate with faint perfume; her attitude as she laid down the packet and kept her hand upon it for a moment was self-conscious, but nobly so; if an actress, she was cast by nature for the great parts and threw her soul into the playing of them.

She lingered by the table, touching objects with the tips of her gloved fingers, as if lovingly and sadly; at length she seated herself in Wilfrid's chair and gazed about the room with languid, wistful eyes. Her bosom heaved; once or twice a sigh trembled

to all but a sob. She lost herself in reverie. Then the clock near her chimed silverly half-past eleven. Beatrice drew a deep breath, rose slowly, and slowly went from the room.

A cab took her to Mrs. Baxendale's. That lady was at home and alone, reading in fact; she closed her book as Beatrice entered, and a placid smile accompanied her observation of her niece's magnificence.

'I was coming to make inquiries,' she said. 'Mrs. Birks gave me a disturbing account of you yesterday. Has your headache gone?'

'Over, all over,' Beatrice replied, quietly. 'They make too much of it.'

'I think it is you who make too little of it. You are wretchedly pale.'

'Am I? That will soon go. I think I must leave town before long. Advise me; where shall I go?'

'But you don't think of going before——?'

'Yes, quite soon.'

'You are mysterious,' remarked Mrs. Baxendale, raising her eyebrows a little as she smiled.

'Well, aunt, I will be so no longer. I want to cross-examine you, if you will let me. Do you promise to answer?'

'To the best of my poor ability.'

'Then the first question shall be this,—when did you last hear of Emily Hood?'

'Of Emily Hood?'

Mrs. Baxendale had the habit of controlling the display of her emotions, it was part of her originality. But it was evident that the question occasioned her extreme surprise, and not a little trouble.

'Yes, will you tell me?' said Beatrice, in a tone of calm interest.

'It's a strange question. Still, if you really desire to know, I heard from her about six months ago.'

'She was in London then?'

Mrs. Baxendale had quite ceased to smile. When any puzzling matter occupied her thought she always frowned very low; at present her frown indicated anxiety.

'What reason have you to think she was in London, Beatrice?'

'Only her being here now.'

Beatrice said it with a show of pleasant artfulness, holding

her head aside a little and smiling into her aunt's eyes. Mrs. Baxendale relaxed her frown and looked away.

'Have you seen her lately?' Beatrice continued.

'I have not seen her for years.'

'Ah! But you have corresponded with her?'

'At very long intervals.'

Before Beatrice spoke again, her aunt resumed.

'Don't lay traps for me, my dear. Suppose you explain at once your interest in Emily Hood's whereabouts.'

'Yes, I wish to do so. I have come to you to talk about it, aunt, because I know you take things quietly, and just now I want a little help of the kind you can give. You have guessed, of course, what I am going to tell you,—part of it at least. Wilfrid and she have met.'

'They have met,' repeated the other, musingly, her face still rather anxious. 'In what way?'

'By chance, pure chance.'

'By chance? It was not, I suppose, by chance that you heard of the meeting?'

'No. Wilfrid told me of it. He told me on Sunday——'

Her voice was a little uncertain.

'Give me your hand, dear,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'There, now tell me the rest.'

Beatrice half sobbed.

'Yes, I can now more easily,' she continued, with hurried utterance. 'Your hand is just what I wanted; it is help, dear help. But you mustn't think I am weak; I could have stood alone. Yes, he told me on Sunday. And that of course was the end.'

'At his desire?'

'His and mine. He was honest with me. It was better than such discoveries when it would have been too late.'

'And he is going to marry her?'

'They were married an hour ago.'

Mrs. Baxendale looked with grave inquiry into Beatrice's face. Incredulity was checked by what she saw there. She averted her eyes again, and both were silent for awhile.

'So it is all well over, you see,' Beatrice said at length, trying at light-heartedness.

'Over, it seems. As to the well or ill, I can't say.'

'Surely well,' rejoined Beatrice. 'He loves her, and he would

never have loved me. We can't help it. She has suffered dreadful things; you see it in her face.'

'Her face?'

'I went to see her on Monday evening,' Beatrice explained, with simplicity, though her lips quivered. 'I asked leave of Wilfrid to do so; he had told me all her story, as he had just heard it from herself, and I—indeed I was curious to see her again. Then there was another reason. If I saw her and brought her to believe that Wilfrid and I were merely intimate friends, as we used to be—how much easier it would make everything. You understand me, aunt?'

Mrs. Baxendale was again looking at her with grave, searching eyes, eyes which began to glimmer a little when the light caught them. Beatrice's hand she held pressed more and more closely in both her own. She made no reply to the last question, and the speaker went on with a voice which lost its clearness, and seemed to come between parched lips.

'You see how easy that makes everything? I want your help, of course; I told Wilfrid that this was how I should act. It is very simple; let us say that I prefer to be thought an unselfish woman; anyone can be jealous and malicious. You are to think that I care as little as it would seem; I don't yet know how I am to live, but of course I shall, it will come in time. It was better they should be married in this way. Then he must come back after the holidays, and everything be smooth for him. That will be our work, yours and mine, dear aunt. You understand me? You will talk to Mrs. Birks; it will be better from you; and then Mr. Athel shall be told. Yes, it is hard for me, but perhaps not quite in the way you think. I don't hate her, indeed I don't. If you knew that story, which you never can! No, I don't hate her. I kissed her, aunt, with my lips—indeed. She couldn't find me out; I acted too well for that. But I couldn't have done it if I had hated her. She is so altered from what she was. You know that I liked her years ago. She interested me in a strange, strange way; it seems to me now that I foresaw how her fate would be connected with mine. I knew that Wilfrid loved her before anyone else had dreamt of such a thing. Now promise your help.'

'Have they gone away?' her aunt asked.

'I don't know. It is likely.'

Her face went white to the lips; for a moment she quivered.

'Beatrice, stay with me,' said Mrs. Baxendale. 'Stay with me here for a day or two.'

'Willingly. I wished it. Mrs. Birks is all kindness, but I find it hard to talk, and she won't let me be by myself. Don't think I am ill—no, indeed no! It's only rest that I want. It seems a long time since Sunday. But you haven't yet promised me, aunt. It will be much harder if I have to do everything myself. I promised him that everything should be made smooth. I want to show him that my—that my love was worth having. It's more than all women would do, isn't it, aunt? Of course it isn't only that; there's the pleasure of doing something for him. And he cannot help being grateful to me as long as he lives. Suppose I had gone and told her! She would never have married him. She was never beautiful, you know, and now her face is dreadfully worn, but I think I understand why he loves her. Of course you cannot know her as well as I do. And you will help me, aunt?'

'Are you perfectly sure that they have been married this morning?' Mrs. Baxendale asked, with quiet earnestness.

'Sure, quite sure.'

'In any other case I don't know whether I should have done as you wish.'

'You would have tried to prevent it? O no, you are too wise. After all this time, and he loves her as much as ever. Don't you see how foolish it would be to fret about it? It is fate, that's all. You know we all have our fate. Do you know what I used to think mine would be? I feared madness; my poor father—— But I shall not fear that now; I have gone through too much; my mind has borne it. But I must have rest, and I can only rest if I know that you are helping me. You promise?'

'I will do my best, dear.'

'And your best is best indeed, aunt. You will go to Mrs. Birks and tell her where I am? The sooner you speak to her the better. I will lie down. If you knew how worn-out I feel!'

She rose, but stood with difficulty. Mrs. Baxendale put her arm about her and kissed her cheek. Then she led her to another room.

Tension in Beatrice was nearing the point of fever. She had begun the conversation with every appearance of calmness; now she was only to be satisfied by immediate action towards the end she had in view, every successive minute of delay was an

added torment. She pressed her aunt to go to Mrs. Birks forthwith; that alone could soothe her. Mrs. Baxendale yielded and set out.

But it was not to Mrs. Birks that she paid her first visit. Though it was clear that Beatrice firmly believed all she said, Mrs. Baxendale could not accept this as positive assurance; before taking upon herself to announce such a piece of news she felt the need of some further testimony. She had a difficulty in reconciling precipitate action of this kind with Wilfrid's character as it had of late years developed itself; political, even social, ambition had become so pronounced in him that it was difficult to imagine him turning with such sudden vehemence from the path in which every consideration of interest would tend to hold him. The best of women worship success, and though Mrs. Baxendale well knew that Wilfrid's aims had suffered a degradation she could not, even apart from her feeling for Beatrice, welcome his return to the high allegiance of former days, when it would surely check or altogether terminate a brilliant career. The situation had too fantastic a look. Could it be that Beatrice was suffering from some delusion? Had a chance discovery of Emily Hood's proximity, together perhaps with some ambiguous behaviour on Wilfrid's part, affected her mind? It was an extreme supposition, but on the whole as easy of acceptance as the story Beatrice had poured forth.

In pursuit of evidence Mrs. Baxendale drove to the Athels. It was about luncheon-time. She inquired for Wilfrid, and heard with mingled feelings that he was at home. She found him in his study; he had before him a little heap of letters, the contents of a packet he had found on his table on entering a quarter of an hour before.

Mrs. Baxendale regarded him observantly. The results of her examination led her to come to the point at once.

'I have just left Beatrice,' she said. 'She has been telling me an extraordinary story. Do you know what it was?'

'She has told you the truth,' Wilfrid replied, simply.

'And you were married this morning?'

Wilfrid bent his head in assent.

Mrs. Baxendale seated herself.

'My dear Wilfrid,' were her next words, 'you have been guilty of what is commonly called a dishonourable action.'

'I fear I have. I can only excuse myself by begging you to

believe that no other course was open to me. I have simply cut a hard knot. It was better than wasting my own life and others' lives in despair at its hopelessness.'

Wilfrid was collected. The leap taken, he felt his foot once more on firm ground. He felt, too, that he had left behind him much of which he was heartily ashamed. He was in no mood to feign an aspect of contrition.

'You will admit,' observed the lady, 'that this cutting of the knot makes a rather harsh severance.'

'It would be impertinent to say that I am sorry for Beatrice. Her behaviour to me has been incredibly magnanimous, and I feel sure that her happiness as well as my own has been consulted. I don't know in what sense she has spoken to you——'

'Very nobly, be sure of it.'

'I can only thank her and reverence her.'

Mrs. Baxendale remained for a moment in thought.

'Well,' she resumed, 'you know that it is not my part to make useless scenes. I began with my hardest words, and they must stand. Beatrice will not die of a broken heart, happily, and if your wife is one half as noble you are indeed a fortunate man. Perhaps we had better talk no more at present; it is possible you have acted rightly, and I must run no risk of saying unkind things. Is your father informed?'

'Not yet.'

'You are leaving town?'

'This afternoon.'

'To go to a distance?'

'No. I shall be in town daily.'

'You doubtless inform your father before you leave?'

'I shall do so.'

'Then we will say good-bye.'

Mrs. Baxendale gave her hand. She did not smile, but just shook her head as she looked Wilfrid steadily in the face.

It was later in the afternoon when she called upon Mrs. Birks. She was conducted to that lady's boudoir, and there found Mr. Athel senior in colloquy with his sister. The subject of the conversation was unmistakable.

'You know?' asked Mrs. Birks, with resignation, as soon as the door was closed behind the visitor.

'I have come to talk it over with you.'

Mr. Athel was standing with his hands clasped behind him;

he was rather redder in the face than usual, and had clearly been delivering himself of ample periods.

'Really, Mrs. Baxendale,' he began, 'I have a difficulty in expressing myself on the subject. The affair is simply monstrous. It indicates a form of insanity. I—uh—I—uh—in truth I don't know from what point to look at it.'

'Where is Beatrice?' Mrs. Birks asked.

'She will stay with me for a day or two,' replied Mrs. Baxendale.

'How—how is she?' inquired Mr. Athel, sympathetically.

'Upset, of course, but not seriously, I hope.'

'Really,' Mrs. Birks exclaimed, 'Wilfrid might have had some consideration for other people. Here are the friendships of a lifetime broken up on his account.'

'I don't know that that is exactly the point of view,' remarked her brother, judicially. 'One doesn't expect such things to seriously weigh—I mean, of course, when there is reason on the man's side. What distresses me is the personal recklessness of the step.'

'Perhaps that is not so great as it appears,' put in Mrs. Baxendale, quietly.

'You defend him?' exclaimed Mrs. Birks.

'I'm not sure that I should do so, but I want to explain how Beatrice regards it.'

'*She* defends him?' cried Mr. Athel.

'Yes, she does. At present there is only one thing I fear for her, and that is a refusal on your part to carry out her wishes. Beatrice has made up her mind that as little trouble as possible shall result. I bring, in fact, the most urgent request from her that you, Mr. Athel, and you, Mrs. Birks, will join in a sort of conspiracy to make things smooth for Wilfrid. She desires—it is no mere whim, I believe her health depends upon it—that no obstacle whatever may be put in the way of Wilfrid's return to society with his wife. We are to act as though their engagement had come to an end by mutual agreement, and as approving the marriage. This is my niece's serious desire.'

'My dear Mrs. Baxendale!' murmured the listening lady. 'How very extraordinary! Are you quite sure——'

'Oh, this surely is out of the question,' broke in her brother. 'That Beatrice should make such a request is very admirable, but I—uh—I really——'

Mr. Athel paused, as if expecting and hoping that someone would defeat his objections.

'I admit it sounds rather unreal,' pursued Mrs. Baxendale, 'but fortunately I can give you good evidence of her sincerity. She has visited the lady who is now Mrs. Athel, and that with the express purpose of representing herself as nothing more than a friend of Wilfrid's. You remember she had a slight acquaintance with Miss Hood. After this I don't see how we can refuse to aid her plan.'

'She visited Miss Hood?' asked Mrs. Birks, with the mild amazement of a lady who respects her emotions. 'Does Wilfrid know that?'

'Beatrice asked his permission to go.'

'This is altogether beyond me,' confessed Mr. Athel, drawing down his waistcoat and taking a turn across the room. 'Of course, if they have been amusing themselves with a kind of game, well, we have nothing to do but to regret that our invitation to join in it has come rather late. For my own part, I was disposed to take a somewhat more serious view. Of course it's no good throwing away one's indignation. I—uh—but what is your own attitude with regard to this proposal, Mrs. Baxendale?'

'I think I must be content to do my niece's bidding,' said the lady addressed.

'There's one thing, it seems to me, being lost sight of,' came from Mrs. Birks, in the disinterested tone of a person who wishes to deliver with all clearness an unpleasant suggestion. 'We are very much in the dark as to Miss Hood's—I should say Mrs. Athel's—antecedents. You yourself,' she regarded Mrs. Baxendale, 'confess that her story is very mysterious. If we are asked to receive her, really—doesn't this occur to you?'

At this moment the door opened and amid general silence Beatrice came forward. Mrs. Birks rose quickly and met her. Mrs. Baxendale understood at a glance what had brought her niece here. Agitation had grown insupportable. It was not in Beatrice's character to lie still whilst others decided matters in which she had supreme interest. The more difficult her position the stronger she found herself to support it. The culmination of the drama could not be acted with her behind the scenes.

Mrs. Birks, with a whispered word or two, led her to a seat. Beatrice looked at her aunt, then at Mr. Athel. The proud beauty

of her face was never more impressive. She smiled as if some pleasant trifle were under discussion.

'I heard your voice as I came in,' she said to Mrs. Birks, bending towards her gracefully. 'Were you on my side?'

'I'm afraid not, dear, just then,' was the reply, given in a corresponding tone of affectionateness.

'You will tell me what you were saying?'

Mr. Athel looked as uncomfortable as even an English gentleman can in such a situation. Mrs. Baxendale seemed to be finding amusement in observing him. The lady appealed to plucked for a moment at her sleeve.

'May I make a guess?' Beatrice pursued. 'It had something to do with the private circumstances of the lady Mr. Wilfrid Athel has married?'

'Yes, Beatrice, it had.'

'Then let me help you over that obstacle, dear Mrs. Birks. I have heard from herself a full explanation of what you are uneasy about, and if I were at liberty to repeat it you would know that she has been dreadfully unhappy and has endured things which would have killed most women, all because of her loyalty and purity of heart. I think I may ask you to give as much effect to my words as if you knew everything. Mrs. Athel is in every respect worthy to become a member of your family.'

Her voice began to express emotion.

'Mr. Athel, *you* are not against me? It is so hard to find no sympathy. I have set my heart on this. Perhaps I seem to ask a great deal, but I—have I not some little——'

'My dear Miss Redwing,' broke in Mr. Athel; then, correcting himself, 'My dear Beatrice, no words could convey the anxiety I feel to be of service to you. You see how difficult it is for me to speak decidedly, but I assure you that I could not possibly act in opposition to your expressed desire. Perhaps it would be better for me to withdraw. I am sure these ladies——'

His speech hung in mid-air, and he stood nervously tapping his fingers with his eyeglass.

'No, please remain,' exclaimed Beatrice. 'Aunt, you are not against me? Mrs. Birks, you won't refuse to believe what I have told you?'

The two ladies glanced at each other. In Mrs. Baxendale's look there was appeal.

'Indeed, I believe you implicitly, my dear Beatrice,' said Mrs.

Birks. 'My brother is the one to decide. You are mistaken in thinking I oppose your wish. How could I?'

The last words were very sweetly said. With a smile which did not pass beyond her lips, Beatrice rose from her seat and held her hand to Mr. Athel.

'Then it is understood? When Wilfrid brings his wife to you, you receive her with all kindness. I have your promise?'

Mr. Athel drew himself up very straight, pressed the offered hand and said,—

'It shall be as you wish.'

Beatrice returned with Mrs. Baxendale. Her desire to be alone was respected during the rest of the day. Going to her the last thing at night, her aunt was reassured; weariness had followed upon nervous strain, and the beautiful eyes seemed longing for sleep.

But in the morning appearances were not so hopeful. The night had after all been a troubled one; Beatrice declined breakfast and, having dressed with effort, lay on a sofa, her eyes closed.

At noon Mrs. Baxendale came near and said gently,—

'Dear, you are not going to be ill?'

The sufferer stirred a little, looked in her aunt's face, rose to a sitting position.

'Ill?' She laughed in a forced way. 'O, that would never do! Ill after all? Why, that would spoil everything. Are you going out this morning?'

'Certainly not. I should only have done some idle shopping.'

'Then you shall do the shopping, and I will go with you. Yes, yes, I will go! It is the only way. Let us go where we shall see people; I wish to. I will be ready in five minutes.'

'But, Beatrice—'

'O, don't fear my looks; you shall see if I betray myself! Quick, quick,—to Regent Street, Bond Street, where we shall see people! I shall be ready before you.'

They set forth, and Beatrice had no illness.

CHAPTER XXVI.

MID-DAY.

ONCE more at The Firs. Wilfrid had decided to make this his abode. It was near enough to London to allow of his going backwards and forwards as often as might be necessary; his father's town house offered the means of change for Emily, and supplied him with a *pied-à-terre* in time of session. By limiting his attendance at the House as far as decency would allow, he was able to enjoy with small interruption the quiet of his home in Surrey, and a growing certainty that the life of the present Parliament would be short encouraged him in looking forward to the day when politics would no longer exist for him.

He and Emily established themselves at The Firs towards the end of December, having spent a week with Mr. Athel on their return from the Continent. Emily's health had improved, but there was no likelihood that she would ever be other than a delicate flower, to be jealously guarded from the sky's ruder breath by him to whom she was a life within life. Ambition as he formerly understood it had no more meaning for Wilfrid; the fine ardour of his being rejected grosser nourishment and burned in altar-flame towards the passion-pale woman whom he after all called wife. Emily was an unfailing inspiration; by her side the nobler zeal of his youth renewed itself; in the light of her pure soul he saw the world as poetry and strove for that detachment of the intellect which in Emily was a gift of nature.

She, Emily—Emily Athel, as she joyed to write herself,—moved in her new sphere like a spirit humbled by victory over fate. It was a mild winter; the Surrey hills were tender against the brief daylight, and gardens breathed the freshness of evergreens. When the sun trembled over the landscape for a short hour, Emily loved to stray as far as that hollow on the heath where she had sat with Wilfrid years ago, and heard him for the first time speak freely of his aims and his hopes. That spot was sacred; as she stood there beneath the faint blue of the winter sky, all the exquisite sadness of life, the memory of those whom death had led to his kindly haven, the sorrows of new-born love, the dear heart-ache for woe passed into eternity, touched the deepest fountains of her nature and made dim her eyes. She would not have had life

other than it was given to her, for she had learned the secrets of infinite passion in the sunless valleys of despair.

She rested. In the last few months she had traversed a whole existence; repose was needful that she might assimilate all her new experiences and range in due order the gifts which joy had lavishly heaped upon her. The skies of the south, the murmur of blue seas on shores of glorious name, the shrines of Art, the hallowed scenes where earth's greatest have loved and wrought—these were no longer a dream; with her bodily eyes she had looked upon Greece and Italy, and to have done so was a consecration, it cast a light upon her brows. 'Talk to me of Rome:' those were always her words when Wilfrid came to her side in the evening. 'Talk to me of Rome, as you alone can.' And as Wilfrid recalled their life in the world's holy of holies, she closed her eyes for the full rapture of the inner light, and her heart sang praise.

Wilfrid was awed by his blessedness. There were times when he scarcely dared to take in his own that fine-moulded hand which was the symbol of life made perfect; Emily uttered thoughts which made him fear to profane her purity by his touch. She realised to the uttermost his ideal of womanhood, none the less so that it seemed no child would be born of her to trouble the exclusiveness of their love. He clad her in queenly garments and did homage at her feet. Her beauty was all for him, for though Emily could grace any scene she found no pleasure in society, and the hours of absence from home were to Wilfrid full of anxiety to return. All their plans were for solitude; life was too short for more than the inevitable concessions to the outside world.

But one morning in February, Emily's eye fell upon an announcement in the newspaper which excited in her a wish to go up to town. Among the list of singers at a concert to be given that day she had caught the name of Miss Beatrice Redwing. It was Saturday; Wilfrid had no occasion for leaving home, and already they had enjoyed in advance the two unbroken days.

'But I should indeed like to hear her,' Emily said, 'and she seems to sing so rarely.'

'She has only just returned to England,' Wilfrid remarked.

They had heard of Beatrice having been in Florence a week or two prior to their own stay there. She was travelling with the Baxendales. Emily was anxious to meet her, and Wilfrid had

held out a hope that this might come about in Italy, but circumstances had proved adverse.

‘Have you seen her?’ Emily inquired.

Her husband had not. He seemed at first a little disinclined to go up for the concert, but on Emily’s becoming silent he hastened to give a cheerful acquiescence.

‘Couldn’t we see her to-morrow?’ she went on to ask.

‘No doubt we can. It’s only the facing of my aunt’s drawing-room on a Sunday afternoon.’

‘O, surely that is needless, Wilfrid? Couldn’t we go and see her quietly? She would be at home in the morning, I should think.’

‘I should think so. We’ll make inquiries to-night.’

They left home early in the afternoon and procured tickets on their way from the station to Mr. Athel’s. Their arrival being quite unexpected, they found that Mr. Athel had left town for a day or two. It was all that Emily needed for the completing of her pleasure; her father-in-law was scrupulously polite in his behaviour to her, but the politeness fell a little short as yet of entire ease, and conversation with him involved effort. She ran a risk of letting Wilfrid perceive the gladness with which she discovered an empty house; he did, in fact, attribute to its true cause the light-heartedness she showed as they sat together at dinner, and smiled to think that he himself shared in the feeling of relief. There were reasons why he could not look forward to the evening with unalloyed happiness, but the unwonted gaiety which shone on Emily’s face and gave a new melody to her voice, moved him to tenderness and gratitude. He felt that it would be well to listen again to the music of that strong heart whose pain had been his bliss. He overcame ignoble anxieties and went to the concert as to a sacred office.

Their seats, owing to lateness in applying for them, were not in the best part of the hall; immediately behind them was the first row of a cheaper section, and two men of indifferent behaviour were seated there within ear-shot; they were discussing the various names upon the programme as if for the enlightenment of their neighbours. When Emily had been sitting for a few minutes, she found that it had been unwise to leave her mantle in the cloak-room; there was a bad draught. Wilfrid went to recover it. Whilst waiting, Emily became aware that the men behind her were talking of Miss Redwing; she listened.

‘She’s married, I think, eh?’ said one.

‘Was to have been, you mean. Why, wasn’t it you told me the story? Oh no, it was Drummond. Drummond knows her people, I think.’

‘What story, eh?’

‘Why, she was to have married a Member of Parliament; what the deuce was his name? Something that reminded me of a race-horse, I remember. Was it Blair? No—Athol! That’s the name.’

‘Why didn’t it come off, then?’

‘Oh, the honourable member found somebody he liked better.’

It was not the end of the conversation, but just then the conductor rose in his place and there was ‘hushing.’ Wilfrid returned at the same moment. He noticed that Emily shivered as he put the covering on her shoulders. When he was seated she looked at him so strangely that he asked her in a whisper what was the matter. Emily shook her head and seemed to fix her attention on the music.

Beatrice Redwing was the third singer to come forward. Whilst she sang Emily frequently looked at her husband. Wilfrid did not notice it, he was absorbed in listening. Towards the end Emily, too, lost thought of everything save the magic with which the air was charged. There was vociferous demand for an encore, and Beatrice gave another song.

When the mid-way interval was reached Emily asked her husband if he would leave the hall. She gave no reason and Wilfrid did not question her. When they were in the carriage she said the draught had been too severe. Wilfrid kept silence; he was troubled by inexplicable misgivings.

Servants hastened to light the drawing-room on their arrival earlier than was expected. Emily threw off her wraps and seated herself near the fire.

‘Do you suffer from the chill?’ Wilfrid asked, approaching her as if with diffidence.

She turned her face to him, gazing with the sadness which was so much more natural to her than the joy of two hours ago.

‘It was not the draught that made me come away,’ she said with gentle directness. ‘I must tell you what it was, Wilfrid. I cannot keep any of my thoughts from you.’

‘Tell me,’ he murmured, standing by her.

She related the substance of the conversation she had overheard, always keeping her eyes on him.

‘Is it true?’

‘It is true, Emily.’

Between him and her there could be no paltry embarrassments. A direct question touching both so deeply could be answered only in one way. If Emily had suffered from a brief distrust, his look and voice, sorrowful but frank as though he faced Omniscience, restored her courage at once. There might be grief henceforth, but it was shared between them.

He spoke on and made all plain. Then at the last,—

‘I felt it to be almost impossible that you should not some day know. I could not tell you, perhaps on her account as much as on my own. But now I may say what I had no words for before. She loved me and I believed that I could return her love. When I met you, how could I marry her? A stranger sees my conduct—you have heard how. It is you who alone can judge me.’

‘And she came to me in that way,’ Emily murmured. ‘She could not only lose *you*, but give her hand to the woman who robbed her?’

‘And take my part with everyone, force herself to show a bright face, do her best to have it understood that it was she herself who broke off the marriage—all this.’

‘Dare I go to her, Wilfrid? Would it be cruel to go to her? I wish to speak—oh, not one word that would betray my knowledge, but to say that I love her. Do you think I may go?’

‘I cannot advise you, Emily. Wait until the morning and do then what you think best.’

She decided to go. Beatrice still lived with Mrs. Birks, and it was probable that she would be alone on Sunday morning. It proved to be so.

Wilfrid waited more than an hour for Emily's return. When at length she entered to him, he saw that there was deep content on her countenance. Emily embraced her husband and laid her head upon his breast. He could hear her sigh gently.

‘She wishes to see you, Wilfrid.’

‘She received you kindly?’

‘I will tell you all when I have had time to think of it. But she was sorry you did not come with me. Will you go? She will be alone this afternoon.’

They held each other in silence. Then Emily, raising an awed face, asked softly,—

'Where does she find her strength? Is her nature so spotless that self-sacrifice is her highest joy? Wilfrid, I could have asked pardon at her feet; my heart bled for her.'

'Dearest, you least of all should wonder at the strength which comes of high motive.'

'Oh, but to surrender you to another and to witness that other's happiness! Was not my self-denial perhaps a form of selfishness? I only shrank from love because I dreaded the reproaches of my own heart; I did good to no one, was only anxious to save myself. She—I dare not think of it! My nature is so weak. Take your love from me and you take my life.'

Wilfrid's heart leaped with the wild joy of a mountain torrent.

'She will not always be alone,' he said, perhaps with the readiness of the supremely happy to prophesy smooth things for all. There came the answer of gentle reproach,—

'After loving you, Wilfrid?'

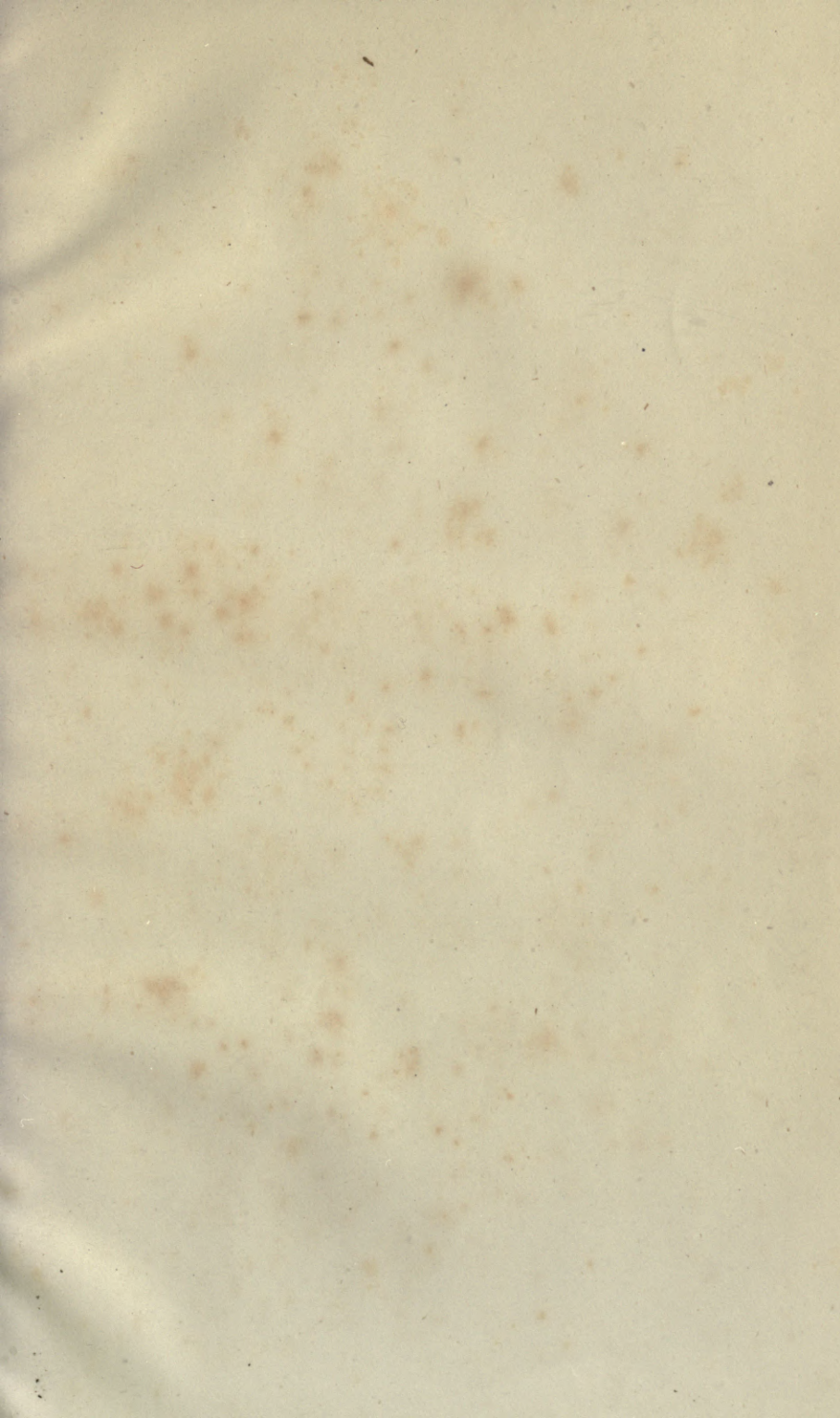
'Beautiful, that is how it seems to you. There is second love, often truer than the first.'

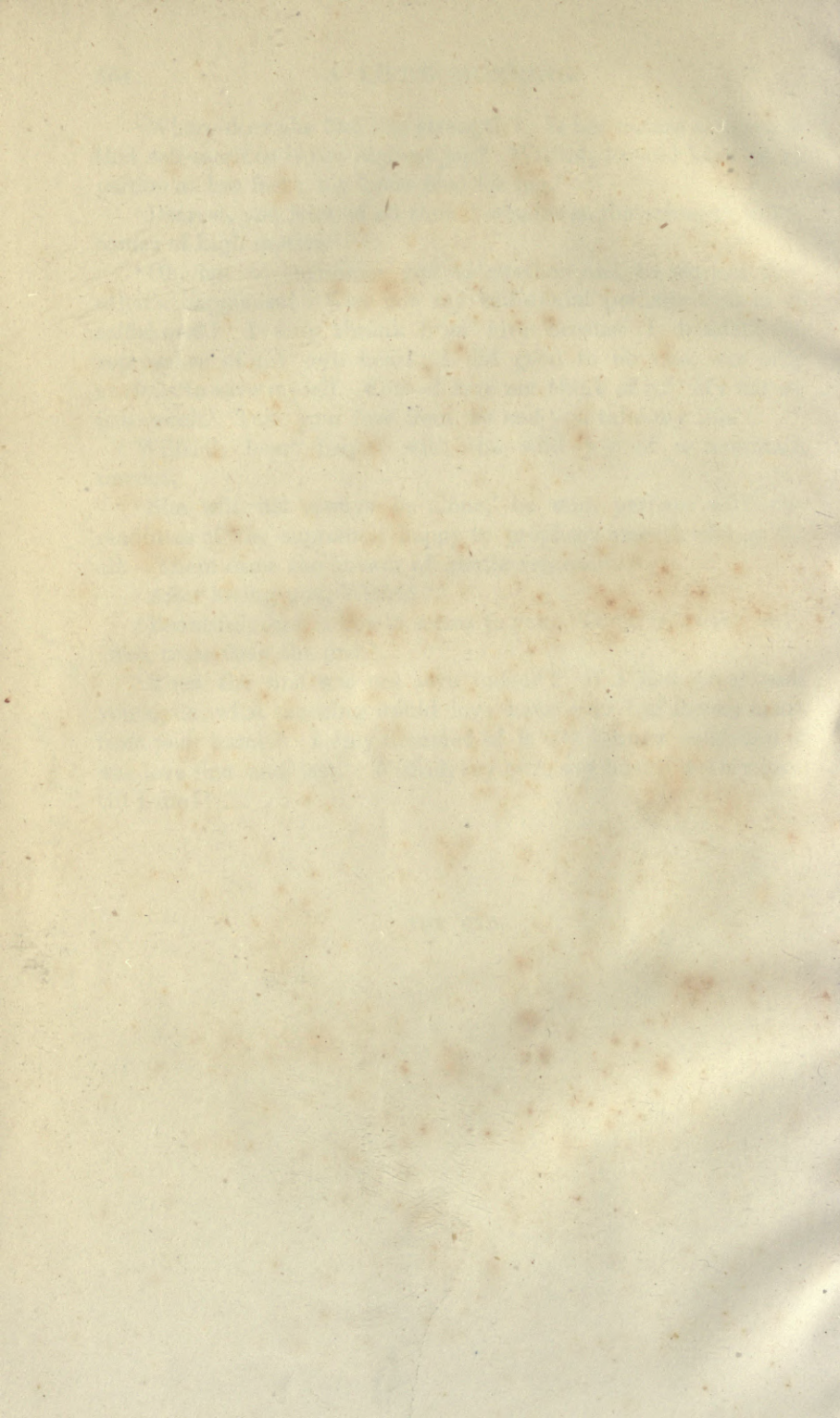
'Then the first was not love indeed! If I had never seen you again, what meaning would love have ever had for me apart from your name? I only dreamed of it till I knew you, then it was love first and last. Wilfrid, my own, my husband—my love till I die!'

THE END.

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