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BY

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM

Author of

"Progress," "His People," "Faith," "Hope," "Charity," etc.



LONDON

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3 HENRIETTA STREET, COVENT GARDEN

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TO
MY MOTHER

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The author has to thank the editors of the "Saturday Review" and "Justice" for permission to republish some of the sketches.

PREFACE.

IT is not to be thought that gladiators, when they advanced before the imperial loggia, with their "*Ave Cæsar, te morituri,*" &c., had any great respect or love for the purple-wearing critic of their deeds.

But whatever they may have felt for the emperor himself, it is probable that their feelings for the grimacing crowd were definite enough. Spanish "espada," Roman gladiator, acrobat, actor, politician, author, and even "authoress," when they behold, or think of the grinning faces of the respectable public, must all be filled with feelings of contempt and fear. Contempt of those they feel cannot, even badly, perform that upon which they have to give a verdict, and fear because the verdict (even of unintelligent,

or, at the best, of half comprehending men) is to them final, and has no appeal. Has no appeal, for who but madmen (in a mad world), would not a thousand times rather submit himself to Philip drunk, than seek the verdict of the same Philip, with the whole folly of his unwine-filled brain active and all agog.

If a man tells you that he has a mystery to show, you instantly suspect either a fool or knave. In the same way, when the poor gymnast in the music-hall, advances clothed in trunk hose and tights, and wreathed in smiles, to risk his neck, the tender-hearted Christians in the stalls and pit all secretly hope something untoward may befall. If they did not, those who ride bicycles down iron wires, stretched at an angle of some thirty-five degrees from the roof, into a water tank, would have no vogue.

So that, bereft of verbiage, that verbiage by means of which we put a fig leaf over the realities of life, hiding them from our view,

although we know that they are there in all their natural indecency, the tight-rope dancer, gladiator, author, and seller of corn plaisters at a fair, look upon those that they grimace before, both with contempt and awe. Upon the one side, all the performers, whether of bodily or mental lofty tumbling, are quite aware of their own feelings towards the great gelatinous, but yet Olympian entity, who from its depths or heights (for depth and height are really all the same) surveys their tricks, whether of suppleness of joint or mind.

But now comes in the rub ; the humour, without which all tragedy is incomplete, especially the tragedy of life. The great, good-humoured public, secure in its brute strength (and in the main good humour comes from sense of power), looks on the pigmies who contort themselves before it, with benevolency, and though it fails to comprehend all that they do, just as a tourist, stuck at double price in a "sun" seat, applauds

a bull-fighter, who by a hair's breadth vaults the barrier before the bull, not knowing what he does, it still extends its kindly patronage. Who that has not been weak, and here (with or without its leave) I will presume to turn the great panjandrum into its component parts, each part of which is merely man, having a soul to save and a posterior to be kicked, but must have felt the horror of benevolency?

A tyrant, who as the Spaniards used to say of one of their worst kings, is "mucho rey," who cuts your head off, and acts as inconsiderately as if he were a God, one can respect, even though hating him. But for the tyrant, who yet as fickle as is providence, still pats your head, what words suffice?

I think the monster looks upon us all, oh brothers of the show, brush, pen, and forceps, paring knife, and soiled silk tights, as worshippers all bowing down, and praying day and night for the proud privilege of adoring their

liege lord. Strange that in every act of human life one kisses, and the other reaches out the cheek. So we in England talk with fond unction of America—our flesh and blood beyond the seas, our cousins, brethren of the Anglo-Saxon race, who joined to us could rule the world, we roar and write, almost believe, through iteration damnable, whilst from the other side, the Yankee squirts out tobacco juice, and sticks his tongue into his cheek.

Still, that the feeling of antagonism should exist between the writer and the man who reads, or between listener and composer, and the like, is natural, when it is understood. Write but on subjects light as air and trifling in themselves, such as political economy, which in a decade becomes antiquated, and is consigned to railway lavatories, and perforce all that you write, let it be even as commonplace as all right-thinking men could wish, is different in essence and in form to the ideas of every living

man. Thus, as all men are gods unto themselves, born as is he who writes above the rest of all mankind, superior to them in intelligence, wit, humour, beauty, and morality (morality that makes hypocrites of all men who breathe), it follows that another man's ideas cannot be made acceptable, without a fight.

By so much, therefore, as the man who writes, composes, paints, or speaks, has anything to say, so is the battle with his heaven-sent readers and the rest more keen. So the poor book, sonata, picture, or what not goes forth like "Athanasius contra mundum," and few but will admit that Athanasius, even though a saint, cannot but have looked out upon the world with feelings partly of terror, partly of dislike. Let but the creed be once accepted, and for all I know, the case is changed; but when that happens all the interest of the fight is gone, and the poor writer, painter, or what not, either sinks into the Nirvana of neglect, or, worse,

becomes a classic, and in tree calf, well tooled, and with gilt edges, serves as a resting place for flies in scholars' libraries.

So, be the upshot of the unequal struggle what it may, the real victory is as usual to the big battalions, and what remains to writer, painter, or to acrobat, is but to wipe the sawdust from his hair, and try again. But as he wipes, let him by all means clear, if possible, the cobwebs from his mind, and view the question as it really is, making himself no spiced conscience, as to the very real antagonism betwixt himself and those who may (by accident) chance to peruse his book.

As for myself, I sit in a neglected orange garden, in which all day the doves coo in the trees, and water murmurs in cemented rills; in which the grass grows long and lush, making an everglade in miniature, through which cats (loved of Mohammed) steal like tigers, and over which a stork sits sentinel, calling to prayers, in the

true way, at intervals, and when he feels inclined.

I sit and write this preface, to my slight tales, not seeking to turn off your criticism, but remembering that in the amphitheatre, when the "respectable" turned down its thumb, it could take away the gladiator's life, but still, for all its power and its might, could not prevent the dying man from turning up his eyes, and smiling as he passed.

R. B. CUNNINGHAME GRAHAM.


Fez, 1st July, 1902.

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*“Hoot awa’ lads, hoot awa’,
Ha’ ye heard how the Ridleys and Thirwalls and a’
Ha’ set upon Albany Featherstonhaugh,
And taken his life at the Deidman’s haugh.
Hoot awa’ lads, hoot awa’.”*

BORDER MINSTRELSY.



SUCCESS.

SUCCESS, which touches nothing that it does not vulgarise, should be its own reward. In fact, rewards of any kind are but vulgarities.

We applaud successful folk, and straight forget them, as we do ballet-dancers, actors, and orators. They strut their little hour, and then are relegated to peerages, to baronetcies, to books of landed gentry, and the like.

Quick triumphs make short public memories. Triumph itself only endures the time the triumphal car sways through the street. Your nine days' wonder is a sort of five-legged calf, or a two-headed nightingale, and of the nature of a calculating boy—a seven months' prodigy, born out of time to his own undoing and a mere wonderment for gaping dullards who dislocate their jaws in ecstasy of admiration and then start out to seek new idols to adore. We feel, that after all the successful man is fortune's wanton, and

that good luck and he have but been equal to two common men. Poverty, many can endure with dignity. Success, how few can carry off, even with decency and without baring their innermost infirmities before the public gaze!

Caricatures in bronze and marble, and titles made ridiculous by their exotic style we shower upon all those who have succeeded, in war, in literature, or art; we give them money, and for a season no African Lucullus in Park Lane can dine without them. Then having given, feel that we have paid for service rendered, and generally withhold respect.

For those who fail, for those who have sunk still battling beneath the muddy waves of life, we keep our love, and that curiosity about their lives which makes their memories green when the cheap gold is dusted over, which once we gave success.

How few successful men are interesting! Hannibal, Alcibiades, with Raleigh, Mithridates, and Napoleon, who would compare them for a moment with their mere conquerors?

The unlucky Stuarts, from the first poet king slain at the ball play, to the poor mildewed Cardinal of York, with all their faults, they leave

the stolid Georges millions of miles behind, sunk in their pudding and prosperity. The prosperous Elizabeth, after a life of honours unwillingly surrendering her cosmetics up to death in a state bed, and Mary laying her head upon the block at Fotheringay after the nine and forty years of failure of her life (failure except of love), how many million miles, unfathomable seas, and sierras upon sierras separate them ?

And so of nations, causes, and events. Nations there are as interesting in decadence, as others in their ten-percentish apogee are dull and commonplace. Causes, lost almost from the beginning of the world, but hardly yet despaired of, as the long struggle betwixt rich and poor, which dullards think eternal, but which will one day be resolved, either by the absorption of the rich into the legions of the poor, or vice versâ, still remain interesting, and will do so whilst the unequal combat yet endures.

Causes gone out of vogue, which have become almost as ludicrous as is a hat from Paris of ten years ago ; causes which hang in monumental mockery quite out of fashion, as that of Poland, still are more interesting than is the struggle between the English and the Germans, which

shall sell gin and gunpowder to negroes on the Coast.

Even events long passed, and which right-thinking men have years ago dismissed to gather dust in the waste spaces of their minds, may interest or repel according as they may make for failure or success.

Failure alone can interest speculative minds. Success is for the millions of the working world, who see the engine in eight hours arrive in Edinburgh from London, and marvel at the last improvement in its wheels. The real interest in the matters being the forgotten efforts of some alchemist who, with the majesty of law ever awake to burn him as a witch, with the hoarse laughter of the practical and business men still ringing in his ears, made his rude model of a steam engine, and perhaps lost his eyesight when it burst.

On a deserted beach in Cuba, not far from El Caney, some travellers not long ago came on a skeleton. Seated in a rough chair, it sat and gazed upon the sea. The gulls had roosted on the collar bones, and round the feet sea-wrack and dulse had formed a sort of wreath. A tattered Spanish uniform still fluttered from the

bones, and a cigar-box set beside the chair held papers showing that the man had been an officer of rank. One of these gave the password of the day when he had lost his life, and as the travelers gazed upon the bones, a land crab peeped out of a hole just underneath the chair.

All up and down the coast were strewn the remnants of the pomp and circumstance of glorious war. Rifles with rusty barrels, the stocks set thick with barnacles, steel scabbards with bent swords wasted to scrap iron, fragment of uniforms and belts, ends of brass chains and bones of horses reft from their wind-swept prairies to undergo the agonies of transport in a ship, packed close as sardines in a box, and then left to die wounded with the vultures picking out their eyes. All, all, was there, fairly spread out as in a kindergarten, to point the lesson to the fools who write of war, if they had wit to see. Gun carriages half silted up with sand, and rusted broken Maxims, gave an air of ruin, as is the case wherever Titan man has been at play, broken his toys, and then set out to kill his brother fools.

Withal nothing of dignity about the scene; a stage unskillfully set out with properties all got

up on the cheap; even the ribs and trucks of the decaying ships of what once had been Admiral Cervera's fleet stood roasting in the sun, their port-holes just awash, as they once roasted in the flames which burned them and their crews. Nothing but desolation, in the scene, and yet a desolation of a paltry kind, not caused by time, by famine, pestilence, or anything which could impart an air of tragedy, only the desolation made by those who had respectively sent their poor helots out to fight, staying themselves smug and secure at home, well within reach of the quotations of the Stock Exchange.

So in his mouldering chair the general sat, his pass-word antiquated and become as much the property of the first passer-by as an advertisement of "liver pills." His uniform, no doubt his pride, all rags; his sword (bought at some outfitter's) long stolen away and sold for drink by him who filched it; but yet the sun-dried bones, which once had been a man, were of themselves more interesting than were his living conquerors with their cheap air of insincere success.

The world goes out to greet the conqueror with flowers and with shouts, but first he has to

conquer, and so draw down upon himself the acclamations of the crowd, who do not know that hundreds such as the man they stultify with noise have gloriously failed, and that the odium of success is hard enough to bear, without the added ignominy of popular applause. Who with a spark of humour in his soul can bear success without some irritation in his mind? But for good luck he might have been one of the shouters who run sweating by his car ; doubts must assail him, if success has not already made him pachydermatous to praise, that sublimate which wears away the angles of our self-respect, and leaves us smooth to catch the mud our fellows fling at us, in their fond adoration of accomplished facts. Success is but the recognition (chiefly by yourself) that you are better than your fellows are. A paltry feeling, nearly allied to the base scheme of punishments and of rewards which has made most faiths arid, and rendered actions noble in themselves mere huckstering affairs of fire insurance.

If a man put his life in peril for the Victoria Cross, or pass laborious days in laboratories tormenting dogs, only to be a baronet at last, a plague of courage and laborious days. Arts,

sciences, and literature, with all the other trifles in which hard-working idle men make occupations for themselves, when they lead to material success, spoil their professor, and degrade themselves to piecework at so many pounds an hour.

Nothing can stand against success and yet keep fresh. Nations as well as individuals feel its vulgarising power. Throughout all Europe, Spain alone still rears its head, the unspoiled race, content in philosophic guise to fail in all she does, and thus preserve the individual independence of her sons. Successful nations have to be content with their success, their citizens cannot be interesting. So many hundred feet of sanitary tubes a minute or an hour, so many wage-saving applications of machinery, so many men grown rich; fancy a poet rich through rhyming, or a philosopher choked in banknotes, whilst writing his last scheme of wise philosophy. Yet those who fail, no matter how ingloriously, have their revenge on the successful few, by having kept themselves free from vulgarity, or by having died unknown.

A miner choked with firedamp in a pit, dead in the vain attempt to save some beer-mused comrade left behind entombed, cannot be vulgar,

even if when alive he was a thief. Your crass successful man who has his statue set up in our streets (apparently to scare away the crows), and when he dies his column and a half in penny cyclopædias, turns interest to ashes by his apotheosis in the vulgar eye.

But the forgotten general sitting in his chair, his fleshless feet just lapping in the waves, his whitening bones fast mouldering into dust, nothing can vulgarise him; no fool will crown him with a tin-foiled laurel wreath, no poetaster sing his praise in maudlin ode or halting threnody, for he has passed into the realm of those who by misfortune claim the sympathy of writers who are dumb.

Let him sit on and rest, looking out on the sea, where his last vision saw the loss of his doomed country's fleet.

An archetype of those who fail, let him still sit watching the gulls fly screaming through the air, and mark the fish spring and fall back again with a loud crash, in the still waters of the tropic beach.

THE GUALICHU TREE.

JUST where the Sierra de la Ventana fades out of sight, a mere blue haze on the horizon; close to the second well in the long desert travesia between El Carmen and Bahia Blanca, upon a stony ridge from which to the north the brown interminable Pampa waves a sea of grass, and to the south the wind-swept Patagonian stone-strewed steppes stretch to the Rio Negro, all alone it stands. No other tree for leagues around rises above the sun-browned, frost-nipped grass, and the low scrub of thorny carmamoel and elicui. An altar, as some think, to the Gualichu, the evil spirit, which in the theogony of the wandering Indian tribes has so far hitherto prevailed over the other demon who rules over good, that all the sacrifices which they make, fall to his lot. An espinillo, some have it; a tala, or a chañar, as others say; low, gnarled, and bent to the north-east by the con-

tinual swirl of the Pampero which rages on the southern plains, the tree, by its position and its growth, is formed to have appealed at once to the imagination of the Indian tribes. Certain it is that in the days before the modern rifle slew them so cowardly (the slayers, safe from the weak assaults of lance and bolas by the distance of their weapons' range, and rendered as maleficent as Gods, by the toil of men in Liege or Birmingham, who at the same time forged their own fetters, and helped unknowingly to slay men they had never seen), no Araucanian, Pampa, Pehuelche, or Ranquele passed the Gualichu Tree, without his offering. Thus did they testify by works to their belief both in its power, its majesty, and might.

The Gauchos used to say the tree was the Gualichu incarnated. They being Christians by the grace of God, and by the virtue of some drops of Spanish blood, spoke of the Indians as idolators. The Indians had no idols, and the Gauchos now and then a picture of a saint hung on the walls of their low reed-thatched huts, to which a mare's hide used to serve as door. So of the two, the Gauchos really were greater idolators than their wild cousins, whom they

thus contemned, as Catholics and Protestants condemn each other, secure in the possession of their church and book, and both convinced the other must be damned.

So all the Gauchos firmly held the Indians thought the Tree a God, not knowing that they worshipped two great spirits, one ruling over good, and the more powerful over evil, as is natural to all those who manufacture creeds.

Before a Gaucho passed below the mountains of Tandil, the Jesuits knew the tribes, and Father Falkner has written of the faiths of the Pehuelches and the other tribes who roamed from Cholechel to Santa Cruz, round the Salinas Grandes, about the lake of Nahuel-Huapi, and in the apple forests which fringe the Andes on their southern spurs.

Of all the mountains which faith can, but hitherto has not attempted, to remove, the monstrous cordillera of misconception of other men's beliefs is still the highest upon earth. So, to the Gauchos, and the runagates (forged absolutely on their own anvils), who used to constitute the civilising scum which floats before the flood of progress in the waste spaces of the world, the Gualichu Tree was held an object half of terror,

half of veneration, not to be lightly spoken of except when drunk, or when ten or a dozen of them being together it was not worthy of a man to show his fear.

Among the Indians, and in the estimation of all those who knew them well, the Tree was but an altar on which they placed their free-will offerings of things which, useless to themselves, might, taking into account the difference of his nature from their own, find acceptance, and be treasured by a God.

So fluttering in the breeze it stood, a sort of everlasting Christmas tree, decked out with broken bridles, stirrups, old tin cans, pieces of worn-out ponchos, bolas, lance-heads, and skins of animals, by worshippers to whom the name of Christian meant robber, murderer, and intruder on their lands. No Indian ever passed it without suspending something to its thorny boughs, for the Gualichu, by reason of his omnipotent malevolence, was worth propitiating, although he did not seem to show any particular discernment as to the quality of the offerings which his faithful tied upon his shrine. Around the lone and wind-swept Tree, with its quaint fruit, has many a band of Indians camped,

their lances, twenty feet in length, stuck in the ground, their horses hobbled and jumping stiffly as they strayed about to eat, what time their masters slew a mare, and ate the half-raw flesh, pouring the blood as a libation on the ground, their wizards (as Father Falkner relates) dancing and beating a hide-drum until they fell into the trance in which the Gualichu visited them, and put into their minds that which the Indians wished that he should say.

The earliest travellers in the southern plains describe the Tree as it still stood but twenty years ago; it seemed to strike them but as an evidence of the lowness of the Indians in the human scale. Whether it was so, or if a tree which rears its head alone in a vast stony plain, the only upright object in the horizon for leagues on every side, is not a fitting thing to worship, or to imagine that a powerful spirit has his habitation in it, I leave to missionaries, to "scientists," and to all those who, knowing little, are sure that savages know nothing, and view their faith as of a different nature from their own. But, after all, faith is not absolutely the sole quality which goes to make belief. No doubt the Indians saw in the Tree the incarnation of

he spirit of their race, in all its loneliness and isolation from any other type of man. Into the Tree there must have entered in some mysterious way the spirit of their own long fight with nature, the sadness of the Pampa, with its wild noises of the night ; its silent animals, as the guanaco, ostrich, matabo, the quiriquincho, and the Patagonian hare ; its flights of red flamingoes ; the horses wild as antelopes, and shyer than any animal on earth ; the rustle of the pampas grass upon the watercourses, in which the pumas and the jaguars lurk ; the birth of spring covering the ground with red verbena, and the dark leaden-looking grass which grows on the guadal ; the giant bones of long-extinct strange animals which in some places strew the ground ; all the lone magic of the summer's days, when the light trembles, and from every stem of grass the fleecy particles, which the north wind blows, tremble and quake, whilst over all the sun beats down, the universal god worshipped from California to Punta Arenas by every section of their race.

To Christians too the tree had memories, but chiefly as a landmark, though few of them, half in derision, half in the kindness which comes

of long communication (even with enemies) who would pass without an offering of an empty match-box, a dirty pocket-handkerchief, a brimless hat, or empty sardine tin—something, in short, to bring the beauty of our culture and our arts home to the Indians' minds. One Christian at least had offered up his life beneath its boughs—an ostrich hunter, who, finding ostriches grow scarce, the price of ostrich feathers fall, or being possessed with a strange wish for regular, dull work, had hired himself to carry mail bags from Bahia Blanca to Carmen de Patagones, the furthest settlement in those days, towards the south. As all the country which he travelled was exposed to Indian raids, and as he generally, when chased, had to throw off his saddle and escape barebacked ("en pelo", as the Gauchos say), by degrees he found it too expensive to make good the saddles he had lost. So all the eighty leagues he used to ride "en pelo", use having made him part and parcel of his horse. An ostrich hunter from his youth up, aware one day that he would die the ostrich hunter's death, by hunger, thirst, or by an Indian's lance, well did he know the great green inland sea of grass in which men used to sleep with their

faces set towards the way they had to go, knowing that he who lost the trail had forfeited his life, unless by a hard, lucky chance he reached an Indian tolderia, there to become a slave. Well did the ex-ostrich hunter know the desert lore, to take in everything instinctively as he galloped on the plain, to mark the flight of birds, heed distant smoke, whether the deer or other animals were shy or tame, to keep the wind ever ablowing on the same side of his face, at night to ride towards some star; but yet it fell upon a day, between the first well and the Rio Colorado, his horse tired with him, and as his trail showed afterwards, he had to lead it to the second well, which he found dry. Then after long hours of thirst, he must have sighted the Gualichu Tree, and made for it, hoping to find some travellers with water skins; reached it, and, having hung his mail bags on it to keep them safe, wandered about and waited for relief. Then, his last cigarette smoked and thrown aside (where the belated rescuers found it on the grass), he had sat down stoically to meet the ostrich hunter's fate. A league or two along the trail his horse had struggled on, making for the water which he knew must be in the river Colorado, and like his

master, having done his best, died in the circle of brown withered grass which the last dying struggle of an animal upon the Pampa makes.

Landmark to wandering Gauchos, altar or God to all the Indian tribes, a curiosity of nature to "scientists," who, like Darwin, may camp beneath its boughs, and to the humourist looking half sadly through his humour at the world, a thorny Christmas tree, but scarce redeemed from being quite grotesque, when, amongst its heterogeneous fruit, it chanced to bear a human hand, a foot, or a long tress or two of blue-black hair, torn from some captive Christian woman's head, long may it stand.

You in the future who, starting from Bahia Blanca pass the Romero Grande, leave the Cabeza del Buey on the right hand, and at the Rio Colorado exchange the grassy Pampa for the stony southern plains, may you find water in both wells, and coming to the tree neither cut branches from it to light your fire, or fasten horses to its trunk to rub the bark. Remember that it has been cathedral, church, town-hall, and centre of a religion and the lives of men now passed away ; and, in remembering, reflect that from Bahia Blanca to El Carmen, it was once

the solitary living thing which reared its head above the grass and the low thorny scrub. So let it stand upon its stony ridge, just where the Sierra de la Ventana fades out of sight, hard by the second well, right in the middle of the travesia—a solitary natural landmark if naught else, which once bore fruit ripened in the imaginations of a wild race of men, who at the least had for their virtue constancy of faith, not shaken by unanswered prayer; a tombstone, set up by accident or nature, to mark the passing of light riding bands upon their journey towards Trapalanda; passing or passed; but all so silently, that their unshod horses' feet have scarcely left a trail upon the grass.

LOS SEGUIDORES.

ONLY the intimate life of man with the domestic animals which takes place upon the pampas of the River Plate could have produced "Los Seguidores."

Brothers, or trained to be as brothers by being tied together by the neck till they had conquered the repugnance which every animal, including man, has for his fellow, this was the name the Gauchos gave two horses which to their owner were as one. The followers (los seguidores) on the darkest night trotted along, the loose horse following the mounted brother, as it had been a shadow on the grass. At night, when one was picketed to feed, the other pastured round about him like a satellite, and in the morning sometimes the two were found either asleep or resting with their heads upon each others' necks. When saddled for a march, the owner mounting never even turned his head to look, so

sure he was that the loose horse would follow on his trail. Even in crossing rivers, after the first deep plunge which takes the rider to his neck, one swam behind the other, spurting out water like a whale, or biting at the quarters of the ridden horse, and on emerging, both of them shook themselves like water dogs, and the unmounted follower patiently waited for the start, and then after a plunge or two, to shake the water from his coat, trotting along contentedly behind his brother, on the plain.

Such a pair I knew, the property of one Cruz Cabrera, a Gaucho living close to the little river Mocoretá which separates the province of Entre Rios from that of Corrientes, to the north. Both horses were picazos, that is, black with white noses, and so like each other that it was a saying in the district where he lived, "Like, yes, as like as are the two picazos which Cruz Cabrera rides." In a mud rancho, bare of furniture save for a horse's head or two to sit upon, an iron spit stuck in the floor, a kettle, a bed, made scissors-wise of some hard wood with a lacing of raw hide thongs, an ox's horn in which he kept his salt, and a few pegs on which he hung his silver reins and patent leather boots with an eagle

worked in red thread upon the legs, the owner of the seguidores lived. A mare's hide formed the door, and in a corner a saddle and a poncho lay, a pair or two of bolas, and some lazos; raw hide bridles hung from the rafters, whilst in the thatch was stuck a knife or two, some pairs of sheep shears and a spare iron spit. Outside his rancho fed a flock of long-haired, long-legged sheep resembling goats, two or three hundred head of cattle, and some fifty mares, from which the celebrated seguidores had been bred.

His brother Froilan lived with him, and though only a year separated them in age, oceans and continents were set between them in all the essential qualities which go to make a man.

The elder brother was a quiet man; hard working too, when he had horses on which to work, and peaceable when no one came across his path, and when at the neighbouring pulperia he had not too incautiously indulged in square-faced gin (Albert Von Hoytema, the Palm Tree brand), on which occasions he was wont to forget his ordinary prudence, and become as the profane. But, in the main, an honourable, hard-riding man enough, not much addicted to brand his neighbour's cows, to steal

their horses, or to meddle with their wives, even when military service or the exigencies of ordinary Gaucho life called men out on the frontier, or made them seek the shelter of the woods.

Froilan never in all his life had done what is called honest work. No cow, no horse, no sheep, still less a "China" girl, ever escaped him; withal, a well-built long-haired knave before the Lord, riding a half-wild horse as if the two had issued from the womb together as one flesh. A great guitar player, and what is called a "payador"—that is, a rhymester—for, as the Gauchos say, "The townsman sings, and is a poet, but when the Gaucho sings he is a payador." A lovable and quite irresponsible case for an immortal soul, about the possession or the future state of which he never troubled himself, saying, after the fashion of his kind, "God cannot possibly be a bad man," and thus having made, as it were, a full profession of his faith, esteeming it unworthy of a believing man to trouble further in so manifest a thing.

In fact, a pagan of the type of those who lived their lives in peace, content with nature as they found her, in the blithe days before Moham-

medanism and Christianity, and their mad myriad sects, loomed on the world and made men miserable, forcing them back upon themselves, making them introspective, and causing them to lose their time in thinking upon things which neither they nor anyone in the ridiculous revolving world can ever solve, and losing thus the enjoyment of the sun, the silent satisfaction of listening to the storm, and all the joys which stir the natural man when the light breeze blows on his cheek as his horse gallops on the plain.

But still the neighbours (for even on the pampa man cannot live alone, although he does his best to separate his dwelling from that of his loved fellow human beings) preferred Froilan before his elder brother, Cruz. Their respect, as is most natural, for respect is near akin to fear, and fear is always uppermost in the mind towards those who have a severer code of life than we ourselves (and hatred ever steps upon its heels), was given to Don Cruz. He was a serious man and formal, complying outwardly with all the forms that they themselves were disregarding of, and so religious that it was said, once in Concordia he had even gone to mass after a drinking bout. But as the flesh is weak

—as is but just when one reflects upon the providential scheme, for without its weakness where would the due amount of credit be apportioned to the Creator of mankind—Cruz would when all was safe fall into some of the weaknesses his brother suffered from, but in so carefully concealed and hidden fashion that the said weaknesses in him, seemed strength. Still the two brothers loved one another after the fashion of men who, living amongst unconquered nature, think first of their daily battle with a superior force, and have but little leisure for domestic ties. Love, hate, attachment to the animals amongst whom they lived, and perhaps a vague unreasoned feeling of the beauty of the lonely plains and exultation in the free life they led, were the chief springs which moved the brothers' lives.

The elementary passions, which moved the other animals, and which, though we so strenuously deny their strength, move all of us, despite of our attempts to bury them beneath the pseudo duties and the unnecessary necessities of modern life, acted there directly, making them relatively honest in their worst actions, in a way we cannot understand at all, in our

more complicated life. With the two brothers all went well, as it so often does with those who, neither honest nor dishonest, yet keep a foot in either camp, and are esteemed as estimable citizens by those in office, and are respected by dishonest men as having just enough intelligence to guard their own. Their flocks and herds multiplied steadily, and when the locusts did not come in too great quantities, or the green parroquettes refrained from eating the green corn, the patch of maize which Cruz grew, partly for an occasional dish of "mazamorra," and more especially to keep the "seguidores" in condition during winter, was duly reaped by the aid of a Basque or a Canary Islander, and stored in bunches hanging from the roof of a long straw-thatched shed. Before their house upon most days of every year stood a half-starved and much tucked-up young horse, enduring the rough process known as "being tamed," which consisted in being forcibly thrown down and saddled on the ground, then mounted and let loose, when it indulged in antics which, as the Gauchos used to say, made it more fit for a perch for a wild bird than for the saddle of a Christian man.

The "seguidores," the greatest objects of the brothers' love, were black as jet, with their off fore and the off hind feet white, so that the rider, riding on a cross, was safe from the assaults of evil fiends by night, and from ill luck which makes its presence felt at every moment when the Christian thinks himself secure. Both of the horses were so round you could have counted money on their backs; their tails just touched their pasterns, and were cut off square; their noses both were blazed with white, and in addition one had a faint white star upon his forehead, and the other one or two girth marks which had left white hairs upon his flank. Both had their manes well hogged, save for a mounting lock, and on the top of the smooth arch made by the cut-off hair, castles and crosses were ingeniously cut, giving them both the appearance of having been designed after the pattern of the knight at chess. Both horses were rather quick to mount, not liking to be kept a moment when the foot was in the stirrup iron, and both of them, well trained to lazo work, could keep a strain upon the rope when once a bull was caught, so that their master could get off and, creeping up behind, despatch the animal, thus lassoed, with

a knife. Rather straight on the pasterns, and a little heavy in the shoulder, they could turn, when galloping, in their own length, their unshod feet cutting the turf as a sharp skate cuts ice when a swift skater turns at topmost speed. Full-eyed, flat-jointed, their nostrils red and open, their coats as soft as satin, and their gallop easy as an iceboat's rush before the wind, the two picazos were as good specimens of their race as any of the breed between Los Ballesteros and the Gualeguay, or from San Fructuoso to the mountains of Tandil.

In the mud-reed-thatched hut, or to be accurate, in another hut beside it, dwelt the mother of the two brothers and their half-sister Luz. The mother, dried by the sun and cured by the smoke of sixty years (which blackened all the thatch, polishing it as it had been japanned), loved her two sons in the submissive fashion in which a mare may love her colts when they are grown to their full strength. Seated upon a horse's head, she watched the meat roast on a spit, boiled water for the perpetual *maté*, and seldom went outside the house. A Christian, if simple faith, convinced of all things hard to believe and quite impossible to understand, can make one

such, she was. Although the nearest church was twenty leagues away, and in her life she had been but a few times there, she knew the dogmas of her faith to the full as well as if communion with the church and the free use of books had placed hell fire always in her view. Octaves, novenas, and the rest she never missed, and on the rare occasions when some neighbouring women rode over to take *matè* and eat maza-morra with her, she acted as a sort of fogle-woman, leading the hymns and prayers out of a tattered book, which, in times past, she had partly learned to read. Outside religion, she was as strict in her materialism as the other women of her race, making herself no spiced conscience about any subject upon earth. From her youth upwards she had seen blood shed as easily as water; had seen the uncomplaining agony of the animals under the knife, observing "pobrecito" when a lamb's throat was slowly cut, and then (being a Christian, and thus of a different flesh to that of beasts) hurrying up quickly to assist in taking off its skin. Like most of us, of her own impulse she was pitiful, but yet not strong enough to stand against the universal cruelty which habit has rendered

second nature to the most tender-hearted and the kindest of mankind. Spanish and Indian blood had made her look at things without the veil, which northern melancholy has cast over them, and thus she clearly looked at all, without hypocrisy, just as she saw the locusts moving in a cloud, the dust storms whirling in the air, and all the other wild phenomena of life upon the plains. She saw the human beast in all his animalism, and thought it no disgrace to admit that in essentials all his actions sprang from the motives which influenced all the other links in the same chain of which she formed a part. Seeing so clearly, she saw that Luz, although their sister, was an object of desire to both her brothers, and the old woman knew that fire and tow are safe to make a blaze if they are brought too close. Much did she muse upon the problem, muttering to herself proverbs which spoke of the necessity of a stone wall between a male and female saint, and she resolved to keep Luz from her brothers as far as it was possible within the narrow limits of the hut. The girl herself, like many "Chinas"* when just

* China is the term applied to the Gaucho girls of Indian blood. It is also used in Peru and the Habana, why, no one seems to know.

grown up, was pretty, and attractive as a young deer or colt may be attractive, by its inexperience and youth. In colour, something like a ripe bamboo, with a faint flush of pink showing through upon the cheeks and palms; round faced, and dark eyed, dressed in a gay print gown made loose, and round her neck a coloured handkerchief, Luz was as pretty as a girl upon the pampas ever is, for being semi-civilised and Christian she lacked the graces of a half-clothed Indian maid, and yet had not resources which in a town make many a girl, designed by nature to scrub floors and suckle fools, a goddess in the eyes of those who think a stick well dressed is more desirable than Venus rising naked from the foam.

She, too, having seen from youth the tragedy of animal birth, love, and death displayed before her eyes, was not exactly innocent; but yet, having no standard of false shame to measure by, was at the same time outspoken upon things which in Europe old women of both sexes feign to be reticent about, and still was timid by the very virtue of the knowledge which she had. The life of women on the pampa, or, for that matter, in all wild countries, is of necessity much

more circumscribed than that of those their sisters who in other lands approach more nearly to their more godlike brothers by the fact of wearing stiffly starched collars and most of the insignia of man's estate. Philosophers have set it down that what is known as sexual morality is a sealed book to women, and that, whilst outwardly conforming, most of them rage inwardly at the restrictions which men, to guard their property, have set upon their lives. This may be so, for who can read what passes in the heart of any other man, even if he has felt its closest beat for years? And it may well be that the most Puritan of happy England's wives chafe at the liberty their husbands all enjoy, and from which they, bound in their petticoats, stays, flounces, furbelows, veils, bonnets, garters, and their Paisley shawls, are impiously debarred.

But speculations upon sex problems did not greatly trouble Luz, who, when she thought, thought chiefly of the chance of going into town, buying new clothes, attending mass, and meeting her few friends, and so it never came into her head but that her two half-brothers, both of them far older than herself, regarded

her but as their sister and a child. Some say the heart of man is wicked from his birth, and so it may be to those men who, reading in their own, see naught but mud. But if it is so, then either the framer of man's heart worked on a faulty plan, or those who furbish for us codes of morality, have missed his meaning and misunderstood his scheme. As the brothers never thought, most likely never had heard in all their lives about morality, which in despite of theorists seems not to be a thing implanted in mankind, but supergrafted mainly with an eye to the consecration of our property, they found themselves attracted towards Luz after a fashion which, had it happened in regard to any other girl, they could have understood. Certain it is, that both of them felt vaguely that she was near to them in blood, and neither of them perhaps had formulated in his mind exactly what he felt. They watched each other narrowly, and neither cared to see the other alone with Luz, but neither Cruz or Froilan spoke to their half-sister or to each other, but by degrees they grew morose and quarrelsome, making their mother miserable, and their half-sister sad at their changed temper both to each other and to her. Their mother,

with the experience of her sixty years, saw how the matter lay, and recognised that on the pampa strange things did take place, for, as she said, "El Cristiano macho (the male Christian) is the hardest to restrain of all God's beasts," having had no doubt experience of his ways with her two husbands in the days gone by. So, whilst the petty tragedy was brewing, so to speak, nature, serene, inimitable and pitilessly sad, but all unconscious of the puny passions of mankind, unrolled the panorama of the seasons as quietly as if no human souls hung trembling in the scales. Night followed day, the scanty twilight scarcely intervening, the hot sun sinking red upon the low horizon as at sea, and in an instant the whole world changed from a yellow sun-burnt waste to a cool shadow, from the depths of which the cries of animals ascended to the unhearing sky which overhung them like a deep blue inverted bowl flecked with a thousand stars. The frogs croaked with a harsh metallic note, and from the thorny trees great drops of moisture hung, or dripped upon the roofs. Again night yielded up its mysteries to the dawn, advancing, conquering and flushed with power. So by degrees the summer melted in-

sensibly to autumn, and the vast beds of giant thistles, with stems all frosted over with their silver down, began to vanish, and the thin animals wandered about, or perished in the sand, as the Pampero whistled across the plains. But winter too faded before the inexorable unfelt turning of the world; the red verbenas spread like carpets, covering the earth as with a blanket, the shoots of pampas grass shot up green spikes almost between the dusk and dawn, and on their little meeting places outside their towns, biscachos sat and looked out on the world, and found it good, whilst the small owls which keep them company nodded their stupid looking, wise, little heads, and gave assent.

The horses played upon the edges of the woods, rearing and striking at each other with their fore feet, and some who in the autumn had been left thin and tired out suddenly thought upon their homes, and, throwing up their heads, snorted, and, trotting round a little, struck the home trail as surely as a sea-gull finds its way across the sea.

But all the magic of the perpetual kaleidoscopic change of season, which ought to interest any man a million times more keenly than his

own never-changing round of sordid cares, brought no distraction to the brothers, who had grown to look upon each other partly as rivals, and partly with astonishment that the same thoughts which tortured each one were present in the other's mind. But the mere fact of feeling the identity of thought confirmed them in their purpose, and in a measure served to confirm them in their course, for men catch thoughts from one another as they take diseases, by contagion with the worst particles of the sick man they touch.

Upon the pampa, where the passions have full play, quite unrestrained by the complexity of life which in more favoured lands imprisons them in bands of broadcloth and of starch, it was impossible that in the compass of a little hut the situation could endure for long. No doubt it might have been more admirable had one or both the brothers seen the error of their ways, repented, and in chivalry and ashes gone their respective ways to do their duty in the counting-house of life. No doubt in many of the neighbouring farms girls lived as pretty as their half-sister Luz—girls whom they might have loved without a qualm, and made the mothers of their

dusky, thievish children, with or without the blessing of a priest. They might have told their guilty love, and been stricken to the earth by the outraged majesty of their sister's womanhood, or felled to the ground with a bullock's head swung by the nervous hand of her who gave them birth. But chance, that orders everything quite in a different way from that we think should be the case, had ordered otherwise, and the simple tragedy upon the Mocoretá was solved more quickly and as effectually as if justice or outraged public feeling had seen fit to intervene.

How it occurred, up to his dying day Froilan was never sure, but, seated in the semi-darkness, cutting some strips of mare's hide to mend a broken girth, their mother and their sister sitting by, high words broke out between the brothers without apparent cause. Cruz, passing, in Gaucho fashion, in an instant from a grave, silent man, to a foaming maniac, rushed on his brother, a long thin-bladed knife clutched in his hand. Almost before Froilan had had time to draw his knife, or stand on guard, his brother tripped and fell, and the knife piercing his stomach, he lay on the mud floor with but a

short half hour of agonising life. Pressing the knife into the wound, he beckoned to his brother with the other hand, asked his forgiveness, made him swear to see their sister married to some honourable man, and promise that his own body should be laid in consecrated ground. Then, turning to his mother, he asked her blessing, and, summoning his last strength, drew the knife from the wound, and in an instant bled to death. His mother closed his eyes and then with Luz broke out into a death wail, whilst Froilan stood by half stupidly, as if he had not comprehended what had taken place.

The simple preparations over, the short but necessary lie arranged, the alcalde duly notified, and the depositions of the chief actor and the witnesses painfully put on record in a greasy pocket-book, nothing remained but to carry out the wish of the dead man, to lie in consecrated earth. At daybreak Froilan had the two seguidores duly tied before the door, saddled and ready for the road. The neighbours helped to tie the dead man upon his saddle, propping him up with sticks. When all was ready, Froilan mounted his own horse, and took the road to Villaguay, the dead man's horse cantering beside

his fellow as if the rider that he bore had been alive.

Their mother and their sister watched them till they sank into the plain, their hats last vanishing as a ship's top sails sink last into the sea. Then, as she drew her withered hand across her eyes, she turned to Luz, and saying gravely, "The male Christian is the wildest thing which God has made," lifted the mare's hide hung before the door and went into the hut.

UN INFELIZ.

DURING the somewhat fragmentary meal, I had watched him, seeing a difference between him and the usual French Algerian types. Dressed all in grey, his clothes of that peculiar substance which seems specially constructed for Algeria, Morocco, and the Levant, and which, intended to look like English tweed, yet is as different from its prototype as is "kincob," his shirt of greenish flannel, his boots apparently made by a portmanteau maker, his scanty hair a yellowish grey, and his thin beard a greyish yellow, he gave you the idea of some pathetic seabeaten boulder, worn hollow by the beating of the waves of life.

As the smart Spanish-looking, but French-speaking, daughter of the landlady brought round the dishes, in which sea-slieve, stewed in high-smelling oil, made the air redolent, and over which myriads of flies kept up a pande-

moniac concert, or yielded up their lives in the thick oleaginous black sauce, he paid her all those futile, yet kindly compliments, which only men, who in their youth have never known that ginger may be hot in the mouth, pay woman-kind. She easily accepted them, whilst smiling at the commercial travellers, who, with napkins tucked into their waistcoats, performed miraculous feats of sleight of hand, taking up pease as dexterously with the broad-pointed, iron-handled knives, as does an elephant transfer the buns which children give him at a travelling circus, from his proboscis to his mouth. Loose-trousered officers of the Chasseurs d'Afrique sat over the high-smelling foods talking regretfully of Paris, and of "les petites" who there and elsewhere had fallen victims to their all-compelling charms. Detailing all the points both physical and moral of the victims, they pitied them, and spoke regretfully of what they had been, so to speak, impelled to do by the force of circumstances, but still with that well-founded yet chastened pride with which a horseman, once the struggle over, depreciates the efforts of a vicious horse.

Outside, the sandy street, shaded by bella

sombra and by China trees, was full of Arabs straying aimlessly about, existing upon sufferance in their own country, each with his hand ready to raise at once to a military salute and his lips twitching with the salutation of " Bonne chour, Mossi," if the most abject member of the ruling race should deign to greet him as he passed. Dogs, thin and looking like cross-breeds between a jackal and a fox, slunk furtively about, their ears raw with mange, the sores upon their bodies all alive with flies, squirmed in and out between the people's legs, receiving patiently or with a half-choked yelp, blows with the cudgels which all country Arabs use, or kicks administered between their ribs from seedy, unvarnished patent-leather boots with drab cloth tops. At the corners of the streets, horses blinked sleepily, their high and chair-like saddles sharply outlined against the white-washed walls in the fierce glare of the Algerian sun. The hum compounded of the cries of animals and men, not disagreeable and acute as is the noise which rises from a northern crowd, but which throughout the East blends itself into a sort of chant, rose in the air, and when it ceased, the grating of the pebbles on the beach, tossed in

the ceaseless surf, fell on the ear in rhythmic cadences. In all the spaces and streets of the incongruous North-European-looking town, the heterogeneous population lounged about lazily, knowing full well that time was the commodity of which they had the most. Riffians in long white haiks, carrying the sword-shaped sticks with which their ancestors attacked the Roman legionaries, strode to and fro, their heads erect, their faces set like cameos, impassible except their eyes, which lighted for a second in a blaze when a French soldier pushed them roughly, and then became deliberately opaque. Their women with their chins tattooed like Indians, dressed in sprigged muslins, their jet black hair hanging in plaited tails upon their shoulders, walked about staring like half-wild horses at the unfamiliar shops. Wearing no veils, their appearance drew from the wealthier Mohammedans pious ejaculations as to their shamelessness, and aphorisms such as "the married woman is best with a broken leg at home," and others more direct and quite unfitted for our European taste, as we have put a veil of cotton wool before our ears, and count all decent, so that we do not hear.

Over the insubstantial French provincial houses hung that absorbing eastern thin white dust, which in Algeria seems to mock the efforts of the conquering race to Europeanise the land, no matter howsoever mathematically correct they build the spire of Congregational Gothic church or façade of the gingerbread town hall. The streets all duly planted with the most shady-foliaged trees, the arms of the Republic, looking as dignified as the tin plates of fire insurance offices upon "les monuments," even the pomp and circumstance of the military band, crashing out patriotic airs upon the square, were unavailing to remove the feeling that the East was stronger than the West here in its kingdom, and that did some convulsion but remove the interlopers, all would fall back again into its time-worn rut.

Musing upon the instability of accepted facts, and wondering whether after all, if both the English and the French were expelled from India and Algeria, they would leave as much remembered of themselves as have the makers of the tanks in Kandy, or the builders of the walls of Constantine: in fact, having fallen into that state, which we in common with the animals

fall into after eating, but which we usually put down to the workings of the spirit when it is nothing but the efforts of digestion, a voice fell on my ear.

“Would I be good enough to share my carriage with a gentleman, an engineer who wanted to regain his mine some thirty miles away, upon the road.”

The stranger was my dissonance in grey, a blot upon the landscape, an outrage in his baggy trousers amongst the white-robed people of the place. He bore upon his face the not to be mistaken mark of failure: that failure which alone makes a man interesting and redeems him from the vulgarity of mere crass success. Gently but with prolixity, he proffered his request. All the timidity which marks the vanquished of the world exhaled from his address as he politely—first tendering his card—apologised both for existence and for troubling me to recognise the fact. I had the only carriage in the town, the diligence did not run more than once a week, and he was old to make the journey on a mule, besides which, though he had been for five and thirty years a dweller in the province of Oran, he spoke but little Arabic, and it was dull to be

obliged for a long day to talk in nothing but "le petit nègre."

Most willingly I gave consent, and shortly the miserable conveyance drawn by a starveling mule and an apocalyptic horse, and driven by a Jew, dressed in a shoddy suit of European clothes, surmounted by a fez, holding in either hand a rein and carrying for conveniency his whip between his teeth, jangled and rattled to the door. We both stood bowing after the fashion of Don Basilio and Don Bartolo, waving each other in, and making false preparatory steps, only to fall back again, until I fairly shoved my self-invited guest into the carriage, shut to the door, and called upon the Jew to start. He did so, dexterously enveloping his miserable beasts with a well-executed slash of his whip and a few curses, without which no animal will start in any colony, ill-use him as you may.

In a melancholy, low-pitched, cultivated voice my fellow-traveller pointed out the objects of chief interest on the road. Here such and such an officer had been led into an ambush and his men "massacred" by Arabs posted on a hill. Their tombs, with little cast-iron crosses sticking in the sparse sandy grass, were hung with im-

mortelles, and the shaky cemetery gate, guarded by a plaster lion modelled apparently from a St. Bernard dog, was there to supplement his history. A palm tree grew luxuriantly outside, "its roots in water and its head in fire," as if to typify the resistance of the land to all that comes from Europe, whilst within the walls exotic trees from France withered and drooped their heads, and seemed to pine for their lost rain and mist. The road, well made and bridged, and casting as it were a shadow of the cross upon the land, wound in and out between a range of hills. At intervals it passed through villages, built on the French provincial type, with a wide street and pointed-steepled church, a "mairie," telegraph station, and a barracks for the troops. An air of discontent, begot of "maladie du pays" and absinthe, seemed endemic in them all: no one looked prosperous but the two Arab soldiers, who on their horses, sitting erect and motionless, turned out to see the passage of the coach.

Long trains of donkeys and of mules passed on the road, driven by men dressed in mere bundles of white rags, or by Mallorcans or Valencians, who, with their sticks shoved down be-

tween their shirts and backs, urged on their beasts with the loud raucous cries which throughout Spain the Moors have left to their descendant muleteers, together with their pack saddles, their baskets of esparto, and the rest of the equipment of the road. Occasionally camels passed by, looking quite out of place on the high road, but still maintaining the same swaying pace with which their ancestors from immemorial time have paced the desert sands.

And as we jangled noisily upon our path, my guest detailed his life, with circumstance, quoting his "acte de naissance," telling the number of his family, his adventures in the colony, on which he looked half with affection, half with dislike, after the fashion of one mated to a loud-tongued wife, who in recounting all his sufferings never forgets to add, "But still she was a splendid housekeeper," thus hoping to deceive his audience and himself.

"The country it is good, you see (he said), but still unsuited for most kinds of crops. Either it rains in torrents and the corn is washed away, or else the drought lasts years, so that the colonist is always grumbling; not that our countrymen as a general rule are agriculturists,

no, that they leave to the Mallorcans and Valencians, but still they grumble at their relatively prosperous life." A comfortable doctrine and a true; for grumbling is as sauce to the hard bread of poverty; without it riches would be bereft of half their charm, and life be rendered tasteless and a mere dream of stertorous content.

As we drove on, the road emerged from woods of greenish-grey Aleppo pine into rough hills clothed with lentiscus and wild olives, and thicketed with cistus and dwarf rhododendrons. Partridges flew across the path continually, occasionally wild boars peeped out, grunted and wheeling back, dived into the recesses of the scrub. Parties of mounted Arabs, their haiks and selhams floating in the wind, carrying hooded hawks on their gloved hands or balancing upon their horses' croups, passed us impassible, making their stallions rear and passage; their reins held high and loosely as they raised themselves almost upright upon their horses' backs. We passed outlying farms, sun-swept and desolate, without the charm of mystery of a ranche in Texas or in Mexico, but looking rather more like bits of railway stations,

cut off in lengths, and dropped upon the hills. I learned that most of them were held by officers and soldiers who had served in times gone by against "les indigenes," and that some of them had grown quite rich by waiting till civilisation had spread up to them; a kind of unearned increment which even dogmatists in points of economics could not be hard on, taking into consideration the time and dulness that the owners had endured. Gourbis of Arabs, mud-built ksour with now and then black goats'-hair tents, each with its horse feeding in front of it, were dotted on the hill sides or on the plains green with palmettos and with camel-thorn. Occasionally white little towns glittered upon the mountain sides or nestled in the corries of the hills. The untiring sun beat down and blended all in one harmonious whole of brown: brown dusty roads, brown shaggy hills and rocks; the animals were all coated with the bright brown dust, and men, scorched copper-coloured, stood leaning on their sticks playing reed pipes and watching goats and sheep, so motionless that they seemed tree-trunks from which floated sound.

Little by little I learned all my companion's life. His college days, his triumphs, medals,

and his entry to the world. wise as he said in scientific knowledge, but a child in the mean necessary arts without which no one can achieve success.

"I was," he said, "bête comme tous les chastes, and therefore fell a victim to the first pretty face . . . I married and adored her, working day and night to make a home, a stupid story of a stupid man, eh? . . . well, well, the usual thing, the husband all day out, planning and striving, and the devil, no not the devil, but the idle fool, who flattered . . . and the nest empty when the working bird came home. So I forswore all women, and lived miserably, came to this colony, and thought I saw an opening, and then married again, this time an honest woman almost a peasant, and have passed my life, the wolf ever just howling close to the door, but not quite entering the house.

"A happy life, yes happy, for you see I knew that I was born a simple, and holy writ says that we simples are to inherit all the earth . . . well so we do, for we maintain all our illusions green, and after all illusions are the best riches, so I have been rich, that is until a month ago. Not rich, you know, in money, though I have

had my chances, but never took them, as when the Germany company offered me fifty thousand francs to discover copper in a mine, where since the beginning of the world no copper ever was. I have seen friends grow rich and have not envied them, for till a month ago I had a treasure in my wife. Yes, a good woman, always equal, ever the same, good year, bad year, smiling but sensible, hard-working, and with just that worldly sense I ever wanted . . . yet looked up to me for my scant book learning. . . . No, no . . . I have not wept much, for I have work to do; not that work deadens grief, as you in England say, but that you cannot work and weep.

“The mine is not a rich mine, ten or twelve Spaniards, the foreman and myself, the sole inhabitants. Dull life, you say. . . . Yes, but no duller than in Paris: life is life, no matter where you have to live. No I do not shoot; why should one shoot? rabbits and hares are under every tuft of grass; the Spanish workmen kill them now and then with stones. Ah, there is the mine, that yellowish mark upon the hill, those tunnels, and the huts.”

We rattled down the hill, the miserable jades

both galloped for their lives, the carriage bounding after them, checked but by a rusty Arab stirrup fastened to a chain, which acted as a drag. We pulled up sharply, and the drag chain breaking left the stirrup stranded on the road. As the driver went to retrieve it, and to repair the damage, I had full time to contemplate the mine. Twelve or thirteen kilometres from the nearest house just perched above the road, it seemed as if some giant rabbit had burrowed in the hill. Two or three tunnels, one of which vomited yellowish water underneath the road, two or three workings, open-cast and left deserted, two or three heaps of cinders, and a pumping engine broken and left to rust, together with the ten or a dozen cottages flanked by the dreary unsuccessful gardens which in all countries miners seem to own, were its chief features. An iron water tank upon a pile of masonry, and several heaps of coal dumped in the bushes which grew between the dark grey boulders with which the hill was strewn, served as embellishments toward the melancholy scene. Slatternly women washed their husbands' clothes, or stood and looked out listlessly into the driving mist; a mangy goat or two grazed

on the prickly shrubs, and a keen wind, whistling and screeching through the gullies of the hills, made the coarse skirts and flannel petticoats crack in the air like whips. The sort of place which might have had a kind of grandeur of its own had not the mine been there, but which disfigured and made vulgar as it was became more desolating than a slum outside a town. The engineer collected his few traps, his carpet bag and shoddy plaid, his bulgy umbrella and his new hat carefully carried in a handbox all the journey on his knee: he tendered me his card, large, limp, and shiny, and with his "noms," his "prénoms," and his "titres," duly set forth upon it.

Then, having thanked me with prolixity, he took his leave of me, and slinging all his things upon his back, struck into a small footpath up the hill, winding his way amongst the boulders, looking so like them in his worn grey clothes that it appeared all were identical, only that one was moving on the ground. I called and waved my hand, but he went upwards towards the huts without once turning, and when I looked again, the bent grey moving figure had disappeared amongst the stones.

FROM THE MOUTH OF THE SAHARA.

UP from the Arab market comes a hum of voices as the white-robed figures shuffle noiselessly about the sandy open space.

The saddles of the kneeling camels stand out like islands in some prehistoric sea, outlined against the background of the white-washed walls. A yellowish red glow towards the north bathes palm trees and the long line of tawny hills in the declining light. To the south the white-topped sierras of the Atlas are all flushed with pink. The Kutubieh tower stands up four square, a deserted lighthouse in the ebbing ocean of Islam; Marrakesh, wrapt in a shroud of mystery, the houses blended together in the grey violet haze of twilight, stretches out, silent and looking like some Babylonian ruin of the past. Horses neigh shrilly now and then, and camels grumble; the muezzin calls to prayers, fatiguing the bewildered Allah with his cry, whilst the unbelievers day by day push back the faithful and usurp their lands. A whirring

sound as of a city inhabited by human insects fills the ear, and from the beggars sitting blind besides the gates rises the cry, Oh! Abd-el-Kader el Jilani, Ah! Abd-el-Kader el Jilani, the invocation to the saint of far Jilan, he who forty years besieged the Lord with prayers for the poor. From tortuous bazaars and narrow streets sunk deep below the houses, as they were gullies in a hill, the noiseless crowds emerge, all pressing forward to the Jamal-el-Fanar, the centre space in which converges all the life and movement of the town. There, jugglers play, swallowing their swords, twisting themselves into strange shapes, and walking on the tight rope after the fashion of the Eastern juggler from the time of Moses to the present day. Five deep the listeners stand, as a man tells stories from the Arabian nights, whilst horsemen with one leg across the saddle-bow, and with one hand grasping the gun and rein, the other playing with a rosary, sit silently, occasionally sententiously ejaculating, Allah, as the artist tells of the enchanted princess and her adventures with Ginoun. In the middle of the listening crowd the tale unfolds itself, accompanied by gesture and by change of voice

that in another land would make the teller's fortune on the stage. He starts and turns, whilst tears rise to his eyes, he laughs, and with him start and weep his audience, although he never for a moment misses an opportunity as he rests for breath, to urge a boy to make his rounds, holding a wooden bowl or battered white enamelled coffee cup for pence. Then, when the offertory is done, resumes his tale, the hearers standing fascinated, though they have heard it all a thousand times. All the wild life of ancient civilisation, further removed from us by far than is the life of savages who soon assimilate all that is worst of progress, was in full swing as it has been since Haroun-er-Raschid went forth in Bagad, tired of the dullness of his palace life, to listen to the secrets of the poor who then as now were nearer nature and more interesting than cultured dullards in their pride of books. It may be that the railway, which has obliterated most of ancient life, which was but half-a-century ago unchanged in all essentials from remotest times, will work its trumpery transformation on the city of Yusuf-ibn-Tachfin. Before its smoke the world grows grey. Its whistle crumbles down the walls of

every Jericho, even as it puffs along the plain, making the whole world but a replica of Leeds. Caste, dignity, repose, the joy even in a hard life, all vanish in the rush to catch a train. The Bedouin draped in blue rags, his sandals on his feet, seated upon a hide-bound "wind-drinker," or perched upon a camel, with his long gun or spear in his hand, retains an air of dignity, such as might grace a king. The same man, waiting at a railway station for a train, becomes a beggar, and as you pass him, bound in your hat and hosen, and with your umbrella in your hand, you hold your travelling rug away, so that it may not touch his rags. So does our progress make commercial travellers of us all, and take away the primeval joy in sun, in wind, in divine idleness, the first and greatest gift that nature ever gave to man.

Still in Marrakesh the world wags as in the days of the Arabian nights, and though the Sultan buys balloons and motor cars, these are as much outside the national life as literature and painting are outside the life of England.

Balloons and literature, painting and motor cars, are but in England and Morocco forms of sport for the cultured few; trifles by means of

which the well-to-do pass idle hours, and which the bulk of business and God-fearing men do not reject, as they are quite outside their lives, but do without, deeming them childish, dangerous, or effeminate, anti-Mohammedan, or un-English as the case may be. But in Marrakesh, before the flush upon the tapia walls had died away, before the muezzin from the innumerable mosque towers had called to evening prayer the crowds, which from the remotest quarters of the town had poured towards the sandy square, were packed, like sardines in an esparto basket, waiting to see the procession of the desert men, who with the Sultan's gifts were to pass out to camp just underneath the walls. Throughout Morocco, and the Arab portion of the east, the desert dweller is invested with a kind of sanctity. This only he himself in person ever entirely dissipates, in the same fashion as the sight of Rome was said to dissipate the fervour of the neophyte. Let but the Saharawi or the Bedouin but keep at home and ride his camels in the sand, and he is still a sort of link with pre-historic times. His unshorn head, with curled and well oiled locks bound round the temples with a string of camel's hair, his purity of speech, his nomad life

and freedom from contamination by the infidel, make him, amongst the dwellers in the town, a sort of prototype. Knowledge, they say, is in the Sahara, and in a certain way it is; that is, the knowledge which in remotest times, the Arabs bought with the camels and the horses from the Yemen and from Hadramut. There in the desert the traditions of the race are better kept than in the towns, or in the "tiresome Tell," where men are so much lost to self respect (sons of the shameless mothers), that they use horses in the plough, set them to carry packs upon their backs, and thus degrade the animal the prophet loved, and which Allah himself gave to the Ishmaelites to ride to war. Certain it is that in the Sahara, your man-ennobling toil is looked on as the primeval curse, and who so impious as to try with sophistry and argument, to prove that that which Allah laid on men for chastisement is but a paltry blessing in disguise. What reasonable man with an immortal soul, a healthy body, and an intelligence with which to cheat, who cares for blessings when they come in a disguise? As soon may children like the medicine lurking in black-currant jam, or sea-sick folk, writhen and pallid in their paroxysm,

listen with equanimity to him who tells them it will do them good, as Arabs understand the meaning of a blessing which is hid. The sun, the wind which blows across the sea and bends the suddra bushes till they work patterns on the sands, the hours of idleness stretched in the goats' hair tents, whilst women play the gimbray and the hot air quivers and shakes outside upon the plain, all these are blessings—blessings which Allah gives to those his Arabs whom he loves.

There in the Sahara the wild old life, the life in which man and the animals seem to be nearer to each other than in the countries where we have changed beasts into meat-producing engines deprived of individuality, still takes its course, as it has done from immemorial time. Children respect their parents, wives look at their husbands almost as gods, and at the tent door elders administer what they imagine justice, stroking their long white beards, and as impressed with their judicial functions as if their dirty turbans or ropes of camels' hair bound round their heads, were horse hair wigs, and the torn mat on which they sit a woolsack or a judge's bench, with a carved wooden canopy above it, decked with the royal arms.

Thus, when the blue baft-clad, thin, wiry desert-dweller on his lean horse or mangy camel comes into a town, the townsmen look on him as we should look on one of Cromwell's Ironsides, or on a Highlander, of those who marched to Derby and set King George's teeth, in pudding time, on edge. Not that the town-bred Arabs look at the desert man with reverence, but with a curiosity mixed with respect, as upon one who though a fool—for everyone who does not live as we do is a fool—yet as the prototype of what he was himself and would be now, but for the special care which fate has had of him, and the exertion of his individual powers.

The throngs who all the afternoon had listened to the story-tellers, or watched the tumblers, went to swell the crowd. The grave and silent men who sitting in wooden box-like shops, with high up-lifted flap, suspended by a string fixed to a wooden peg stuck in the wall, careless about their sales, and yet as eager for a farthing should a sale occur, as an Italian or a Scotchman, all joined the crowd and slowly walked towards the Jamal-el-Fanar. Along the walls blind beggars sat with wooden bowls; flies clustered round their eyes, and as the people passed they cla-

moured in the self same way that orientals pray, seeking to force their wishes on Allah, just as in times gone by blind Bartimæus sat beside the gate, and no doubt as he sat kept up a constant cry for alms. Grave sheikhs rode past, mere bundles of white fleecy wrappings, as they sat high on their pacing mules. If they were holy, that is descended from Mohammed, and rich men, a true believer now and then, when their mules halted in the crowd, and the attendants on the sheikh parted the press with cries of "balak," "balicum," stepped up and kissed their robes. Had they been twice as well descended and been poor, 'tis ten to one no one had had sufficient faith to see the holy blood as it ran through the veins beneath the dirty rags. Faith is not absolute either in east or west, and those who have it, enjoy it as they do good teeth, without volition of their own, and even then they hold it, so to speak on sufferance, and a too strenuous stretching may in a moment break the strings. Wild Berbers from the hills, their heads shaved all but a love or war lock, call it what you will, with scanty beards and Mongol-looking eyes, went trotting by in bands. And as they ran they held each other's hands, for

those who dwell in cities are sons of devils, and it is wise to keep together in a town. So running hand in hand, their clubs beneath their arms or stuck into their waist-belts, or between their orange-eyed achnifs and their bare backs, they passed towards the Jamal-el-Fanar. Long trains of camels at the cross streets blocked the way, the planks they carried trailing on the ground. Loud rose the cries of "balak," and as the camels stood, whilst dogs and children ran between their legs, and men on donkeys which they guided with a club, made themselves flat against the walls and glided past, the donkeys' tripping feet just brushing on the ground, the riders sitting so steadily they might have carried in their hands a bowl of water without spilling it, they stretched their necks towards the piles of dates, which in a solid mass, made living by the myriads of flies, lay piled up in the shops. A smell of spices, mingled with horsedung, hung in the air, as from the shops the bags of asafoetida, bundles of cinnamon, attar of roses, tamar-el-hindi, and the like gave out their various scents to mingle with the acrid odours of the crowd. Occasionally a madman in an old sack, his hair like ropes hanging upon his shoulders,

and in his hand a stick, his eyes staring about or wrapt, stalked by. The people murmured devoutly as he walked, for madness is a proof of Allah's love, and those we shut in prisons, all well sanitated and with electric light, to save our eyes the unpleasant spectacle of seeing those whose blood flows to the brain too slowly or in too great force, the Easterns cherish and allow to roam about the streets, believing that Allah made all things according to his will, and not presuming to step in and help him in the details of the plan. Pigeons strolled in and out amongst the throng, walking as gravely as if they too were slaves of the one God, and no man harmed them, either in their walk, or when they sat upon the matting stretched across the street, well within reach of those who passed along. Brown boys, half naked, and with stomachs swollen like tubs, formed up in bands, and danced the "heidus," stamping and clapping hands to a half rythmic chant coeval with the times when the first chimpanzee, after due cogitation, thought he had a soul. Within the square, soldiers who looked unmitigated pimps, and dressed in ragged uniforms of pink or red, struggled to keep a passage in the throng, as

with their rifles stacked they smoked and sang, and one of them, a tray hung from his neck, sold sweetstuff, calling as he sold upon Edris, Muley Edris, the patron of the sweetmeat sellers and of all those who use the sugar of the cane. The officers, each dressed according to his will, but generally in clean white Arab clothes, riding fat horses which passed sidling through the crowds, tossing their heads, and ready to say Ha, did trumpets sound, leisurely got the soldiers into line. A thrill of expectation moved all hearts, and then from underneath a horseshoe archway at the furthest corner of the square the desert men appeared.

Our Lord the Sultan had been gracious to them, and they had stood before him seeing his face, and listening to his words conveyed to them by the court herald, he who speaks before the King. Horses and pacing mules, with gold embroidered saddles, somewhat the worse for wear, cloth cloaks and shoes, some rifles, though probably with cartridges made for another bore, and jars of butter, which makes glad the heart of man, spices, and watches of the Christians, bearing the mystic name of Waterbury, God's caliph had bestowed upon his Saharowis, with many

gifts even more valuable, for their headman, the holy Ma-el-ainain. Horsemen dressed all in indigo, with naked arms and legs dyed blue with the baft clothes they wore, filed in irregular procession slowly across the square. Olive in colour and wild eyed, their hair unshorn and streaming down their backs, or thick with mutton fat sticking out like a bush, well knit and nervous, with small hands and feet, they looked a race pure and unmixed with any other blood. Some rode their mules as they were camels, with their hands held on a level with their mouths, their guns stuck upright on their saddle-bow, as they were spears, and their quick eyes embracing everything, or fixed and seeing nothing, looking out on the distance after the way of those who live in lands of vast horizons and of unbounded space. Others on foot led horses by the reins, some rode their camels with their faces veiled in blue, their eyelids painted with collyrium, and as the camels paced, they swayed about, backwards and forwards, as ships sway about at sea. So did their ancestors, the Almohades, called by the Spanish chroniclers, "those of the veils," ride when they crossed the narrow straits, which they knew as the "gate of the road," from

Hisnr-el-Mujaz, the castle of the crossing, to invade the Andalus, and introduce again the worship of "the one," which with the Moors in Spain had been obscured by contact with the Christians, and too much study of the Greeks.

The crowd stood silent watching them, half in respect, and half inclined to jeer at their bad horsemanship, for desert men are better on a camel than a horse, but still they murmured as the procession took its way, "these men indeed be Arabs," as who should say, would we were like them in their customs and their faith. Faith certainly they had, and of such quality as to be able not only to remove a mountain, but to erect a sierra out of a grain of sand. Beside them rode men of the Sultan's bodyguard, all horsemen from their birth, drawn from the Arab tribes, and now and then they charged across the square regardless of the people in their way, wheeling their horses as birds wheel upon the wing, standing erect an instant in their saddles, twisting their silver-mounted guns above their heads, then stopping short and firing, whilst from the housetops all around the square the women raised the curious shrill cries which the old Spaniards knew as "Alelies," sharp and ear-

piercing as a jackal's bark or the wild cry of the coyoté in New Mexico.

A dense white dust hung over everything, which in the waning light looked grey and ghastly on the dark blue clothes the Saharowis wore. At length, and just before the last red gleam of sunset sunk into grey and violet tints on the brown tapia walls, and tinged the palm trees which like a sea for leagues embower Marrakesh in a sea of green, the holy man appeared.

Mounted upon a fat white pacing mule, veiled to the eyes, and with a mass of charms depending from his turban like horses' trappings streaming down his face, dressed all in spotless white, except a dark blue cloak, flung over his left shoulder, and guarded from the vulgar by a band of desert youths, who trotted on beside his mule like dogs, he slowly hove in sight.

The crowd closed in anxious to kiss his clothes, to get the holy "baraka" which clings about the person of a saint. Ma-el-Ainain, 'tis he, the crowd exclaimed, the saint of saints, the man our Lord the Sultan honours above all, and as they pressed to touch his stirrups or his clothes, he rode impassible taking all as his due, and slowly pacing through the throng, took his way

desertwards, under the horseshoe gateway at the corner of the square.

Then night descended on the town, and the last gleams of sunlight flickering on the walls, turned paler, changed to violet and to grey, and the pearl-coloured mist creeping up from the palm woods outside the walls enshrouded everything.

AT UTRERA.

"Do you think," says Gonzalo Silvestre, in the "Florida" of Garcilaso de la Vega, to a starving comrade who was complaining of his hunger, "that in this desert we shall find delicacies (manjares) or Utrera cakes?"

This little sentence in the enchanting history of the old half Inca prince, half Spanish gentleman, has always made Utrera, for me, an entity. True that I have often seen the place, often waited wearily at it for the compulsory forty minutes for breakfast, in the heat and dust. But I knew it only as an unnecessary junction outside Seville, a station, amongst others, between Las dos Hermanas and El Arrahal, until I read that line. Most towns we pass upon a journey have no real being for us. Even if we stopped at them, they would perhaps have as little to distinguish them from their immediate neighbours as have the majority of the educated voters of

the world. But let a writer, such as Garcilaso, mention them, but cursorily, and they become as it were alive, and have a real existence of their own, ten times as real as the existence which their streets, their churches, dust-heaps, prosperity, and all the want of circumstance of their municipality, seem to impart. So much more vital is the pen of genius than is the simulacrum of vitality, which is called actual life. Not that in southern towns there does not still exist a real life, far more intense than that which northerners enjoy. We in the north have quite obscured the actors in the setting of the piece. Our interest in the welfare of mankind—an interest which our modern and unwise philosophers declare is to be centered in the future, and that mankind to-day is in such keen necessity of everything, that it becomes unwise to meddle with it—renders us dwellers as it were in a camera obscura, wherein we see ourselves as people sitting at a play. So have we lost our sense of being players, which the Southerners still have, and go about our lives, trying by sport, athletics, and the like to make believe we live.

All that makes life worth having we neglect or relegate back to the middle distance of our

minds, as cabs and omnibuses passing in the street, appear to float in space, *fata morganas* in the panes of the black mirror window in West Halkin Street. So that life's mainsprings, if not quite unknown (for every animal, northern and southern, man, wolf, and bull, feel in a measure hatred and love), are so beset with property, convention, and so be-fig-leaved, as to be relegated from the first place they should enjoy, to that of waiters on prosperity; for in the lands where County Councils rule, no one has time for either love or hate till his position is assured, and he begins to feel the ache between the shoulder blades. But in the countries of the sun a man's best property is after all his life, and power of love and hate, and therefore he becomes a child in things which we think all important, and a profound philosopher in those other things, as hate, love, well-filled idleness, and indifference to care, to which no one of us attains.

Except in dress, the people at Utrera could not have greatly changed since when Silvestre sailed from San Lucar in some high-pooed ship, or caravel small as *La Pinta*, from the rail of which a sailor sitting fishing had his leg bitten by a shark in the first voyage that Columbus

made. An iron wheel or two, a water tank from which the wheezing engine fills its boilers twice a day, a telegraph which, if it works, is used alone for things in which the general public have no share, have not vitality enough to alter greatly or at all the single race of Europe which has remained unspoiled. Even the railway, which in other lands bends people to its will, in Spain is changed and puts on some of the graces of a bullock cart. About the station, looking at the train, but with its thoughts turned inward on itself, the lazy crowd of olive-coloured, under-sized, but well-knit men, in tightly-fitting trousers, low-crowned, broad-brimmed hats, each with his cigarette alight or burnt out in his lips, as it had been part of his system at his birth, strolled gravely up and down, looking the women as they passed full in the face, and being in their turn severely scrutinised by their black unflinching eyes. The heterogeneous mass of bundles, the corded, hairy, cowskin trunks, and cotton umbrellas, which form the bulk of luggage at a southern railway station, lay on the platform blistering in the sun. The electric bell twittered and chattered like a grasshopper, whilst the grave station-master, arrayed in white, strolled

up and down, absorbed in the full emptiness of mind which gives an air of seriousness to southern folk. In the refreshment-room the waiters lounged round the table bearing stews yellow with saffron, pilaffs of rice, salads and fruit, smoking the while, and exchanging their ideas on politics and things in general with the company they served. The company itself, seated without a vestige of class separation, talked as unconstrainedly as they had all been intimate with one another from their youth. The gentlemen all had an air of having been at one time bull-fighters, or at least "intelligents" (inteligentes), and the stray bull-fighters looked like gentlemen who pursued their calling from the love of sport. The ladies, dressed in the extreme of Paris fashions, still looked like "chulas" in disguise; the "chulas" gave you the impression that were they painted with more art, and dressed in Paris, they could straight pose as ladies, and be successful in their part. Not that the ladies were not ladies, or that the "chulas" aped their ways, or envied their position, but yet, the type was so alike in each, that outwardly all the distinction was in dress. Both of them heard without resentment compliments of the most violent kind,

accepted them at their true value, and recognised, perhaps by instinct and without reasoning, but clearly all the same, that the first duty that their sex owed to itself was to be women, thus conquering without an effort the respect which it has taken northern women centuries of struggle to achieve.

Outside the station, donkeys and mules and horses nodded their heads, tied to a bar between two posts by esparto ropes, their woollen-covered saddles, striped red and purple, looking almost Oriental against the background of the sand. Men slept in corners close to their horses, mere brown bundles, their olive riding-sticks stuck down between their naked backs and ragged shirts, and standing up stiffly, or projecting out fantastically beyond their heads in the intense abandonment of life, which seemed to come upon them in their sun-steeped sleep.

Over the whole incongruous meeting of the powerful semi-Oriental life with the sour breath of the new-fangled and progressive world as typified in the cheaply run-up station and the Belgian engine snorting on the track, the sun shone down, fiery and merciless, exposing all the shams of life, and making men more simple in their

villainy and their nobility than it is possible to be in the dim regions of electric light.

Trains came and went, the passengers scaling their steps from the level of the line, after the fashion of a soldier mounting the deadly imminent breach, the men ascending first, and holding out their hands to the women, who were shoved behind by any passing stranger, and dumped like bales of goods upon the carriage floor. The water-sellers, with their Andujar pottery water-coolers, called out their merchandise so gutturally, that their cry seemed Arabic, and the sellers of fruit and toasted ground-nuts, crawled along the platform seemingly quite unconcerned about a sale. Boys climbed the windows, and whined for halfpence, turning their blessings into curses if they were refused. All the bright, lazy, virile elements of southern Spanish life passed swaying on their hips, and looking fixedly with unblinking eyes, whilst in the middle of the line a tame white pigeon walked about, picking up grains of corn, and diving in and out between the carriage wheels, to the terror of the countrywomen, who after their custom attached a sort of sanctity to it, because it was so white.

Strange that the qualities which endear both

animals or men to us are all inherent and impossible to be acquired. No study, education, striving, nor a whole life of wishing, will give beauty or a sweet disposition to an ugly fool. A pigeon born of another colour, by a whole century of self-sacrifice cannot attain to whiteness, so perhaps those who in that tint see sanctity, are right, for anything that is attainable by work is of its very nature common, and open to us all. So underneath the wheels, and on the line, playing at hide and seek with death, the holy whiteling walked, occasionally picking an insect from its feathers with its coral beak, as naturally as if it had been black, slate-coloured, or a mere speckled ordinary bird. Trains came and went, clanging and rattling, and the passengers proceeded on their way packed in the sweltering carriages, contented, almost as patient in their endurance of the miseries of transit, as they had all of them been born without the vaunted power of reasoning, which takes away from man the placid dignity which animals possess.

Men rolled their cigarettes between their fingers browned with tobacco juice, and women fanned themselves, using their fans as they had

come into the world with a small fan stuck in their baby hands, ready for future use. All talked incessantly, and as they talked, and smoked, and fanned, the tame white pigeon wove its way in and out amongst the wheels. All the bright comedy of southern life displayed itself, cheap, careless, philosophic, and intent to enjoy the world it lives in; heedless of pain, of suffering, of life itself; trembling at the idea of death when spoken of, and yet prepared to meet it stoically at its real approach. Simple, yet subtle in trivialities, convinced that none but they themselves had grace, wit, beauty, or intelligence, and yet not greatly self-exalted by the fee simple of the only qualities which make men loveable, but taking all as their own due, the people accepted everything that was, and looked upon the trains, the station, the electric bells, the telegraph, and the grave Catalonian engine-drivers perspiring in the sun upon their engines, with lumps of cotton waste in their strong dirty hands, as things sent into the glad world by Providence on their behalf. An attitude which after all may be as good as that of northerners, who, thinking that all the planets turn round their own particular place of abode, yet hold

that they themselves in some mysterious way are half accountable for every revolution that they make, and if they stopped but for a moment in their efforts, or but withdrew a tittle of their countenance, that the whole solar system would crumble on their heads.

Seated upon the platform drinking coffee, and thinking listlessly on things, the "chicas," the coming bull fight, if the Madrid express would ever come, and if Silvestre, if he came to life, would find much difference, beyond the railway, in Utrera, I saw the local train start with a puffing, jangling of couplings, banging of doors, and belching forth of smoke. The two grave gendarmes got into their van, belated passengers worked themselves along the footboard to their seats, and in a cloud of dust engine and carriages bumped off upon their way. Clinkers and straws were wafted in my face, the multitudinous last words floated in the still air, and on the line lay something which at first sight appeared a newspaper, but that it seemed alive, and here and there was flecked with red; it flapped a little feebly, turned over once or twice, and then lay motionless upon the six-foot way.

MIGHT, MAJESTY, AND DOMINION.

A NATION dressed in black, a city wreathed in purple hangings, woe upon every face, and grief in every heart. A troop of horses in the streets ridden by kings; a fleet of ships from every nation upon earth; all the world's business stilled for three long days to mourn the passing of her who was the mother of her people, even of the poorest of her people in the land. The newspapers all diapered in black, the clouds dark-grey and sullen, and a hush upon the islands, and upon all their vast dependencies throughout the world. Not only for the passing of the Queen, the virtuous woman, the good mother, the slave of duty; but because she was the mother of her people, even the poorest of her people in the land. Sixty odd years of full prosperity; England advancing towards universal Empire; an advance in the material arts of progress such as the world has never

known ; and yet to-day she who was to most Englishmen the concentration of the national idea, borne on a gun-carriage through the same streets which she had so often passed through in the full joy of life. Full sixty years of progress ; wages at least thrice higher than, when a girl, she mounted on her throne ; England's dominions more than thrice extended ; arts, sciences, and everything that tends to bridge space over, a thousand times advanced, and a new era brought about by steam and electricity, all in the lifetime of her who passed so silently through the once well-known streets. The national wealth swollen beyond even the dreams of those who saw the beginning of the reign ; churches innumerable built by the pious care of those who thought the gospel should be brought home to the poor. Great battleships, torpedo boats, submarine vessels, guns, rifles, stinkpot shells, and all the contrivances of those who think that the material progress of the Anglo-Saxon race should enter into the polity of savage states, as Latin used to enter schoolboys' minds, with blood. Again, a hum of factories in the land, wheels whizzing, bands revolving so rapidly that the eye of man can hardly follow them,

making machinery a tangled mass of steel, heaving and jumping in its action, so that the unpractical looker-on fears that some bolt may break and straight destroy him, like a cannon ball.

All this, and coal mines, with blast furnaces, and smelting works with men half-naked working by day and night before the fires. Infinite and incredible contrivances to save all labour; aerial ships projected; speech practicable between continents without the aid of wires; charities such as the world has never known before; a very cacoethes of good doing; a sort of half-baked goodwill to all men, so that the charities came from superfluous wealth and the goodwill is of platonic kind; all this and more during the brief dream of sixty years in which the ruler, she who was mother of her people, trod the earth. All these material instances of the great change in human life, which in her reign had happened, and which she suffered unresistingly, just as the meanest of her subjects suffered them, and as both she and they welcomed the sun from heaven as something quite outside of them, and, as it were, ordained, her people, in some dull faithful way, had grown into

the habit of connecting in some vague manner with herself. For sixty years, before the most of us now living had uttered our first cry, she held the orb and sceptre, and appeared to us a mother Atlas, to sustain the world. She left us, almost without a warning, and a nation mourned her, because she was the mother of her people, yes, even of the meanest of her people in the land.

So down the streets in the hard biting wind, right through the rows of dreary living-boxes which like a tunnel seemed to encase the assembled mass of men, her funeral procession passed. On housetops and on balconies her former subjects swarmed like bees; the trees held rookeries of men, and the keen wind swayed them about, but still they kept their place, chilled to the bone but uncomplainingly, knowing their former ruler had been the mother of them all.

Emperors and kings passed on, the martial pomp and majesty of glorious war clattering and clanking at their heels. The silent crowds stood reverently all dressed in black. At length, when the last soldier had ridden out of sight, the torrent of humanity broke into myriad waves, leaving upon the grass of the down-trodden park

its scum of sandwich papers, which, like the foam of some great ocean, clung to the railings, round the roots of trees, was driven fitfully before the wind over the boot-stained grass, or trodden deep into the mud, or else swayed rhythmically to and fro as seaweed sways and moans in the slack water of a beach.

At length they all dispersed, and a well-bred and well-fed dog or two roamed to and fro, sniffing disdainfully at the remains of the rejected food which the fallen papers held.

Lastly, a man grown old in the long reign of the much-mourned ruler, whose funeral procession had just passed, stumbled about, slipping upon the muddy grass, and taking up a paper from the mud fed ravenously on that which the two dogs had looked at with disdain.

His hunger satisfied, he took up of the fragments that remained a pocketful, and then, whistling a snatch from a forgotten opera, slouched slowly onward and was swallowed by the gloom.

SURSUM CORDA.

THERE is a plethora of talk, which seems to stop all thought, and by its ceaseless noise drive those who wish to think back on themselves. All talk, and no one listens, still less answers, for all must swell the general output of the chatter of the world. Bishops and Deans, with politicians, agitators, betting men, Women's Rights Advocates, members of Parliament, lawyers, nay even soldiers, sailors, the incredible average man, and most egregious superior person, must all be at it for their very lives. Still, talking serves a purpose, if only that of saving us from the dire tedium of our thoughts. Tobacco, sleep, narcotics, dice, cards, drink, horse racing, women, and religion, with palmistry, thought reading, the "occult," athletic sports, politics, all stand out ineffectual as consolers when compared to speech. What triumphs in the world can be compared to those speech gives?

The writer writes, toils, waits, publishes, and succeeds at last, but feels no flush of triumph like to that which the "cabotin," preacher, pleader, or mob orator enjoys when he perceives the eyes of the whole audience fixed upon him like a myriad of electric sparks; their ears drink in his words, and men and women, rich, poor, old, young, foolish, and wise alike, are bound together by the spell of speech. So after all it may be that, though silence is of silver, speech is purest gold. Pity that, being golden, it should be abused; but still to what base uses gold is put, and so of speech.

But be that as it may, let speech be only silver, silence gold, take but away our speech, chain us within the terror of ourselves by silence long enforced, and the most abject drivel of the sound business man, whose every thought is abject platitude, whose mind has never passed from the strict limits of his villa and his counting-house, becomes as sweet as music to our ears. Let those who doubt try for a month to keep strict silence, never to speak, to hear and never dare to answer, to enchain their thoughts, their wishes, their desires, passions, anxieties, affections, regrets, remorse, anger, hatreds, loves—in

brief, to leave the gamut of that inner life which makes a man, with all the notes untouched. Whilst listening to a painful preacher, sitting out a play, endeavouring to understand in Parliament what a dull speaker thinks he means to say, the thought creeps in, why teach the dumb to speak? Why rive away from them that which at first sight seems the chief blessing, want of speech, and so enable them to set their folly forth and talk themselves down fools. Then comes experience, experience that stands as a divinity to reasoning men, and clamours out, Nay, let them speak although they know not what they say; their speech may strike a chord they know not of in some man's heart.

Think on a silent world, a world in which men walked about in all respects equipped with every organ, every sense, but without speech. They might converse by signs as Indians do upon the trail, but I maintain no city of tremendous night could be more awful than the horror of a speechless world. Never to speak, only to find our tongues in agony of fear, as horses tied within a burning stable, dumb idiots in great peril of their lives, or, as the animal under curare, upon the vivisector's bench (calling to man who should be

as his God), give out occasionally some horrid sound, and even then know it would be unheard. Shepherds upon the hills, men in a cattle "puesto" in La Plata, hut keepers in Australia, the Gambusino straying amongst the valleys of the Sierra Madre, Arab rekass, monks, fishermen, lighthouse-keepers, and the poor educated man lost in the crowded solitude of London, all know of silence and its fears. Still they can talk if only to themselves, sing, whistle, speak to their animals, look at the sea, the desert, scan the immeasurable brown of pampas, the green of prairie, or the dull duskiness of bush, or if in London launch into objurgation on mankind, knowing that if they objurgate enough some one will answer, for we Britons cannot stand reproaches, knowing that we are just. An inward something seems to assure us of our righteousness, and all we do is never done as it is done in other and less favoured lands, from impulse, prejudice, or hurriedly, but well thought out, and therefore as inexorably unjust in the working as is fate itself. Let speech be golden, silver, diffusive, tedious, flippant, deceptive, corrupting, somnolent, evasive, let it be what you will, it is the only medium by which we can assert that majesty

which some folks tell us is inherent in mankind, but which the greater part of us (from democratic sentiment perchance) rarely allow to creep into the light of day; it is the only humanizing influence innate in men, and thus it seems unwise to put restraint upon it, except in Parliament. Chained dogs, parrots in cages, squirrels within their stationary bicycles, gold fish in globes, wild animals behind their bars, monkeys tied to an organ dressed in their little red woollen gowns (the fashion never changes), bears fastened to a Savoyard, camels on which climb multitudinous bands of children, elephants accompanied by a miserable "native" tramping about with tons of tourists on their backs, move me to wrath, and set me thinking what is it they can have done in an anterior state to undergo such treatment, and whether they were men who must as beasts thus expiate their crimes of *lèse-majesté* against the animals. Yet they are not condemned to silence, and perchance may fabulate at night or when their keepers sleep, or lie drunk, and in their ratiocination exhale their cares.

No, silence is reserved for men who have offended against the hazy principles of right and

wrong, or over-stepped that ever-shifting frontier line, never too well defined, and which advancing toleration—that toleration which shall some day lighten life—may soon obliterate, or, if not quite obliterate, yet render the return across the line more feasible than now. When one considers it, how crass it is to shut men up in vast hotels, withdrawing them from any possible influence which might ever change their lives, and to confine them in a white-washed cell, with windows of Dutch glass, gas, and a Bible, table, chair, little square salt-box, wooden spoon, tin pan, schedule of rules, hell in their hearts, a pound of oakum in their hands, condemned to silence and to count the days, pricking them off under the ventilator with a bent nail or pin!

Well was it said, the only humanizing influence in a prison comes from the prisoners. Let the officials do their duty as they think they should, the governor be humane, the doctor know a little of his work, the chaplain not too inept, still prisoners of whatever rank or class, imprisoned for whatever crime, offence, or misdemeanour, look on each other as old friends after a day or two within the prison walls. Day follows day with “skilly,” exercise, with chapel,

with dreary dulness, and with counting hours. Night follows night, and when the light goes out the tramping up and down the cells begins, the rappings, and the mysterious code by which the prisoners communicate, sound through the building like an imprisoned woodpecker tapping to be free; tremendous nights of eight and forty hours, a twisting, turning, rising oft, and lying down to rise again, of watching, counting up to a million, walking about and touching every separate article; of thinking upon every base action of one's life, of breaking out a cursing like a drab; then falling to a fitful, unrefreshing sleep which seems to last but for a minute, and then the morning bell.

Happier by far the men who, in my youth in Spain, fished with a basket from the window for alms from passers by, smoked, drank, and played at cards, talked to their friends; whose wives and sisters brought them food in baskets, sat talking to them from outside, talked all day long, and passed the time of day with other citizens who walked the streets, read newspapers, and were known to other men as the "unhappy ones." A hell on earth you say, contaminating influences, murderers and petty

thieves, with forgers, shop-lifters and debtors all together. At most a hell within a hell, and for the influence for good or ill, I take it that the communion of the sinners was at least as tolerable as we can hope to find (should we attain it) the communion of the saints. Philosophers can theorize to good effect as to the probability of other worlds, the atmosphere of Mars, the Delphic E, the Atomic Theory, the possible perfectibility of the pneumatic tyre, on form, style, taste, or forms of government, on Socialism, Anarchy, the Trinity, on Cosmic Theism, Gnosticism, or the cessation of direct divine interposition in affairs sublunary, discuss their theories and the muzzling of their dogs, weave their philosophies (no man regarding them), invent their faiths, destroy them, and set to work again in the construction of new faiths just as ridiculous as the faiths destroyed ; but when they come to theorize upon the treatment of mankind, all their acumen straight evaporates.

But leaving theorists weaving the ropes to hang themselves, spun from the cobwebs of their minds, and coming back to practice and to common sense—that common sense which makes

so foolish most things that we do. A recent essayist fresh from his Malebolge has set forth all that men suffer shut within the silence of themselves, has written down the lessons that a man gains from the companionship of those who no doubt are in general not much more guilty than judges, gaolers, their chaplains, warders, or than ourselves who sit forgetting that our neglect entailed on them the lack of opportunity.

Well has he spoken of the humility of prisoners, their cheerfulness, compassion for one another, well described the circling miserable ring of lame folk, aged men, those on the sick list, and the rest, who in the prison yard revolve in a small circle round a post, too feeble to keep pace with the robuster rogues at exercise. I see them, too (can do so any time I close my eyes), in their long shoddy greatcoats, thin, pale, abject as dogs, purposeless, shiftless, self-abased, down-eyed, and shuffling in the prison shoes; expectorating, coughing, and a jest to those who trot around the ring stamping and cursing underneath their breath, what time the warders stand blowing their fingers, side arms belted on, stiff and immovable, and on the watch to pounce upon a contravention of the

rules. But whilst the quondam humourist now turned moralizer has left his faithful picture of the misery of those he lived amongst for two long years, he has omitted to set down the one event of prison life which breaks the dull monotony of weeks and days, and lets men feel for a brief space that they are men once more.

The dull week over, oakum all duly picked, cells well swept out, the skilly and brown bread discussed, beds all rolled up, the inspection over, faces all washed, with clean checked handkerchiefs (coarse as the topsail of a sugar droger) duly served out to last the week, the terrors of the bath encountered, the creepy silence of the vast unmurmuring hive is broken by the Sabbath bell. Then cells give up their dead, and corridors are full of the pale skilly-fed shuffling crowd, each headed by its warder, and every man with something of anticipation in his eye, ready to march to church. To the vast chapel streams the voiceless crowd, and soon each seat is filled, a warder duly placed at each bench end to see the worshippers do not engage in speculations as to the nature of the Trinity, but stand and kneel and sit, do everthing in fact that other congregations do, omitting only the due dumping

of the threepenny bit into the plate, and not forgetting that when two or three are gathered thus to pray, their Creator stands amongst them, although they all are thieves. And thus assembled in their hundreds, to make their prayer before the God of Prisons, the congregation sits—prisoners and captives, shut within themselves, and each man tortured by the thought that those outside have lost him from their minds. The chapel built in a semicircle, with the back seats gradually rising, so that all may be in view, the pulpit made of deal and varnished brown, the organ cased in deal, and for all ornament, over the altar the Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Ten Commandments, and those last look at the congregation as if ironically, and seem designed to fill the place of prison rules for all mankind. Furtively Bill greets Jack, and 'Enery, George: "'Ow are yer blokes? Another bloomin' week gone past." "I ain't a-talkin', Sir, 'twas t' other bloke," and a mysterious twitch makes itself felt from bench to bench till the whole chapel thus has said good-day. Loud peals the voluntary, the convicted organist—some thievish schoolmaster or poor bank clerk having made (according to himself) a slight mis-

take in counting out some notes—attacks an organ fugue, making wrong notes, drawing out all the stops alternately, keeping the vox humana permanently on, and plays and plays and plays till a grim warder stalks across the floor and bids him cease. “Dearly Beloved” seemed a little forced, our daily skilly scarce a matter worth much thanks, the trespasses of others we forgave thinking our own were all wiped out by our mere presence in the place, the Creed we treated as a subject well thrashed out, “Prisoners and Captives” made us all feel bad, the litany we roared out like a chant, calling upon the Lord to hear us in voices that I feel He must have heard; epistle, gospel, collects we endured, sitting as patiently as toads in mud, all waiting for the hymn. The chaplain names it, and the organ roars, the organist rocks in his chair, on every brow the perspiration starts, all hands are clenched, and no one dares to look his neighbour in the eyes; then like an earthquake the pent-up sound breaks forth, the chapel quivers like a ship from stem to stern, dust flies, and loud from every throat the pious doggerel peals. And in the sounds the prison melts away, the doors are opened, and each man sits in his home sur-

rounded by his friends, his Sunday dinner smokes, his children all clean washed are by his side, and so we sing, lift up our hearts and roar vociferously (praising some kind of God), shaken inside and out, yelling, perspiring, shouting each other down. Old lags and forgers, area sneaks, burglars, cheats, swindlers, confidence trick men, horse thieves, and dog stealers, men in for rape, for crimes of violence, assault and battery, with "smashers," swell mobsmen, blackmailers, all the vilest of the vile, no worse perhaps if all were known than are the most immaculate of all the good, made human once again during the sixteen verses of the hymn, and all the miseries of the past week wiped out in the brief exercise of unusual speech. The sixteen verses over, we sit down, and for a moment look at one another just in the same way as the worshippers are wont to do in St. Paul's, Knightsbridge, or St. Peter's, Eaton Square.

"Does you good, No. 8, the bloomin' 'ymn," an old lag says, but for the moment dazed by the ceasing of the noise, as Bernal Biaz says he was when the long tumult ended and Mexico was won, I do not answer, but at length deal him a friendly kick and think

the sixteen verses of the hymn were all too short.

So in a side street when the frequent loafer sidles up, and says mysteriously "Gawd bless yer, chuck us arf a pint ; I was in with you in that crooil plaice," I do so, not that I think he speaks the truth nor yet imagine that the prison, large though it was, contained two million prisoners, but to relieve his thirst and for the sake of those condemned to silence, there "inside," and for the recollection of the "bloomin 'ymn."

THE PYRAMID.

FAT, meretricious women in evening gowns had sung their ballads, their patter songs, their patriotic airs, in sentimental or in alcoholic tones. Comedians in checked clothes and sandy wigs, adorned with great red whiskers, and holding either short canes or bulgy umbrellas, had made the whole "Pretoria" laugh, till the vast music hall seemed to rock, as a volcano in activity is shaken with its interior fire.

Women and men had hung head downward from trapezes, had swung across the audience and been caught by the feet or hands by other "artistes" swinging to meet them suspended by one foot. Tottering and miserably anthropomorphic dogs had fired off cannons, and cats had tremblingly got into baskets with fox terriers; a skinny, sallow French "divette" had edified the audience with indecencies, rendered quite tolerable because half understood. Men

THE PYRAMID ICI

dressed in evening clothes had hawled about the empire, holding a champagne glass in one hand whilst with their other hand they pressed a satin opera hat against their epigastrium ; and as the songs became more patriotic or more obscene, and as each trick of the equilibrists, trapezists, wire-walkers and the rest became more dangerous, the public—the respectable, the discerning, the sovereign public—had testified its joy in shouts, in clappings, and in stampings, and by thumping with its sticks and umbrellas on the floor.

Over the auditorium, tobacco smoke hung like a vulgar incense in the shoddy temple of some false and tinsel god. In the great lounges the women sat at tables, dressed in a caricature of the prevailing styles ; their boots too pointed, their gowns too tightly laced, their hair too curled or too much flattened to the head ; and talked to youths in evening dress ; to men who had the mark of husbands out on strike ; to padded and painted elders, who whispered in their ears and plied them with champagne. Others who, out of luck, had found no man to hire them, walked up and down in pairs, pushing against such men as looked like customers, laughing and joking to one another, or singly stalked about, bored and

dejected, and their legs trailing along imprisoned in their rustling skirts, enduring all the martyrdom of the perpetual walking which is the curse entailed upon their class. Behind the bars, the barmaids, painted and curled, kept up a running fire of half indecent chaff with the intelligent consumers of American drinks, of whisky-splits, or lemon-squashes, returning change for half a sovereign if the drinker was too far gone in liquor to observe it was a sovereign he put down.

Cadaverous and painted youths, with hot-house flowers in their buttonholes, paraded up and down, as it seemed for no particular purpose, speaking to no one, but occasionally exchanging glances with the women as they passed upon their beat.

In fact, the great, the generous, public was represented in all its phases, of alcoholic, of bestial, brutal, lustful, stupid, and of commonplace. Yet each one knew he was a part and parcel of a great empire, and was well convinced that in his person in some mysterious way he made for righteousness. The soldier sitting with his sweetheart in the gallery; the rich young idler about town, with his dressed-up and be-jewelled

mistress in the stalls; the betting men—made, it is well not to forget, in their creator's image—each, all, and every one, knew he was not as men of other nations, but in some way was better, purer, and more manly than the best citizen of any foreign race. And so they sat, confident that all the performers, of whatever class, lived on their approbation, as it was certain they existed on their entrance fee. No trick so dangerous as to awake their pity, no song quite vile enough to make them feel ashamed to see a man or woman publicly prostitute their talents for their sport. Brutal, yet kindly folk they were, quite unappreciative of anything but fun and coarse indecency; of feats on which the performer's life hung on a hair; but still idealistic, sentimental souls, easily moved to tears with claptrap sentiment, and prone to clench their fists, and feel an ardour as of William Tell, when from the stage a man waved a small Union Jack or sang of Britain and her Colonies, ending each verse of his patriotic chant with a refrain of "hands across the sea."

And so the evening wore away. The performer on the fiddle with one string was succeeded by the quick-change "artiste," who in

an instant appeared as a life-guardsman, walked across the stage and came on as a ballet dancer or an archdeacon, a costermonger, or lady from a cathedral city, and still in every change of costume looked the clever humorous Italian that he was.

Footmen in gorgeous liveries removed the numbers from the wings, and stuck up others, doing their duty proudly, being well aware their noble calves saved them from ridicule. The orchestra boomed and thumped through German waltzes, popular songs, and Spanish music, with the Spanish rhythm all left out, so that it sounded just as common as it were made at home.

Between eleven and twelve, turn number seventeen, the début of "La Famiglia Sinigaglia" stood announced. Carpenters came and went upon the stage, and reared a kind of scaffold some fifteen feet in height. Then the "Famiglia Sinigaglia" came upon the scene—the father, mother, two children under ten years old, and five tall girls ranging from sixteen up to five-and-twenty years. The father, of some fifty years of age, was stout and muscular, his eyes as black as sloes, moustache and chin-tuft

waxed to points, hair gone upon the crown, which shone like ivory, but still clinging to the occiput like sea weed to a rock. Those who had been responsible for what they did had called him at his baptism Anibale, which name he bore as conscious of the responsibility it laid on him, half modestly and half defiantly, with a perception of the ludicrous in life which yet did not distract him an iota from his profession, which he esteemed the noblest in the world.

“Altro Signore, ours is reality, not like the painters and the poets, with the musicians and the actors, who, if they miss their tip, can try again; but we, per Baccho, when we miss, straight to the Campo Santo, Corpo del Bambin.”

The mother, stout and merry-looking, was flaccid from the waist upwards, and had legs as of a mastodon, into the skin of which her high blue satin boots seemed to embed themselves, and to become incorporated. The children passed from hand to hand like cricket balls, being projected from Anibale to his wife La Sinigaglia, behind his back, flying between his legs, alighting on her shoulders or her head like birds upon a bough. Watching this tumbling stood the five daughters in a row. All dressed in tights, with

trunks so short, they seemed to cut into their flesh, and so cut open on the hips, that it seemed marvellous what kept them in their place. They were all muscular, especially the eldest, who bid fair to be a rival to her mother in flesh and merriness; her eyes, roving about the theatre, smiled pleasantly when they met anyone's, after the fashion of a Newfoundland dog. The others, slighter in form, were replicas of her at stated intervals. The youngest, thinner than the rest, seemed less goodnatured, and with her brown bare arms folded across her chest stood rather sullenly looking at nothing, smoothing down her tights, crossing her feet, and then uncrossing them, and now and then, raising her head, looked out into the theatre, half frightened, half defiantly. The tumbling of the children done, the father lying on his back threw the fattest of his girls from his feet towards the mother who caught her with her feet right in the middle of the back, after a somersault. The public knowing the trick was dangerous applauded joyfully, and then the five tall girls stepped out to build the pyramid. The eldest, straddling her legs, folded her arms, after saluting right and left with the "te morituri" gesture, which perhaps

the modern acrobat has had straight from the gladiator. Her sister climbed upon her shoulders and stood upright, waving her arms a minute, smiling as the applause broke out from the spectators in the theatre. Taking a lace-edged pocket-handkerchief from some mysterious hiding place, she wiped her hands, and bending down signed to another sister, who clambered up, and in her turn stood on her shoulders. The fourth succeeded, and as they stood, the lowest sister staggered a little, and took a step to get her balance, making the pyramid all rock, and causing Anibale to swear beneath his breath, and mutter to his wife.

"Su Gigia," and the fifth sister ran up the staging like a monkey, and stepping from it stood on the topmost sister's hands in the attitude of John of Bologna's Mercury, one arm uplifted, and her eyes turned upwards to the roof. The supporting sister staggered a pace or two into the middle of the stage, the perspiration dripping from her face, and then saluted cautiously with her right hand, and the three others broke into a smile which they had learned together with their tricks.

The audience burst into applause, Anibale

and La Sinigaglia looked at each other with content, knowing their turn had taken on, and from the top of the high pyramid the youngest sister glared at the applauders with hatred and contempt, opening her eyes so that the pupils almost seemed to burst, but as she glared the public kept applauding, being aware that acrobats live on its breath, and counting it as righteousness they were not stinted in their food.

TERROR.

THE scent of horse-dung filled the summer air ; the whispering trees stood out black menacing masses in the moonlight ; the stuccoed houses frowned respectably upon the streets, looking like artificial cliffs bounding some silent and exclusive sea. Belgravia lay asleep, steeped in the pseudo-moonbeams of the electric light ; the roar of traffic, which by day-time deafens and renders by degrees the ear incapable of hearing anything but noise, was dulled, or only rumbled fitfully in the far-off streets, whilst in the silent squares a breeze shook the dust-powdered trees, and rained the first dry summer leaves upon the ground. At corners, a stray prostitute or two still lingered, lying in wait for the belated diner-out.

At the opening of a mews, a knot of stablemen, in shirt-sleeves, with their braces hanging down their backs, girt with broad webbing belts,

stood talking about horses, but seriously and without emotion, as befits the solemn nature of their theme. The strange and ragged loiterers who at night parade the streets, coming out silently from the nothingness of misery, "dossing" in the park, and at the first approach of dawn sinking again into the misery of nothingness which is their life, were all abroad. Women, who seemed mere bundles of black rags in motion, and men in greasy, old frock-coats and trousers with a fringe behind the heels, passed one another silently, ships on a sea of failure, without a salutation or a sign.

Mechanically they scratched themselves, their hands like claws of mangy vultures, raking amongst their rags. Munching a hunch of dirty bread, they passed into the night, a silent menace to their well-fed brothers in the Lord. All that by day is hidden from our sight, was out, giving the lie to optimists, to statisticians, and to all those who make pretence to think that progress makes for happiness, and that the increase of wealth acts as a sort of blotting-pad on poverty, and sucks up grief.

Dressed in their blue-serge jumpers, and sweating in the thick blue trousers and the am-

munition boots which a paternal government deals out to them, so that their lightest step shall thunder on the pavement and give ill-doers a fair chance of stealing themselves away to safety, the police stood at the crossings and conversed in pairs, or, leaning against some iron railings, courted the servant girls, as they watched for the welfare of the sleeping town. A homing cab or two lurched wearily along, the horse and driver nodding in their respective situations, each of them conscious of having earned his meed of beer or corn. The bicyclist's sharp bell startled the swinkt pedestrian at the crossings, as the machine, vanguard of those which will soon sweep pedestrians from all streets, slipped noiselessly along and vanished in the distance, its rider seeming to be suspended in the air as his legs worked like wings.

From the windows of a distant house, the music of a valse floated out fitfully; the shadows of the dancers turned as in a mist behind the glass; outside, the group of waiting footmen lounged, and waifs and strays, leaning against the railings of the square, completed the gradations of society, thus seeming, by their presence, at the same time to act as foil to those inside,

and yet unite them in the bonds of brotherhood and faith.

The happy, rich, successful, vulgar-looking city, after the toils of business and of fashion, seemed to be taking its well-earned repose. A light night-breeze just stirred the dust upon the leaves of the black walnuts in the oblong square, shut at one end by the bulk of the long, cake-like church, with bell-tower pepper-box and portico, upon the steps of which the high-heeled boots of fashionable worshippers had left the imprints of the first stage upon their journey towards their self-appointed place.

Nothing on all the face of the quiet, well-regulated town seemed to be out of joint, for tramps and prostitutes have each their proper place in the Chinese puzzle of society, and it is possible, were they but removed, that institutions men deem honourable might find themselves without a place. But nature, pitiless and ever on the watch, and seemingly intent to lower our pride whenever we look round complacently upon our puny so-called scientific triumphs, by linking us inexorably to the other animals in all our passions and our feelings, was not asleep.

Between some iron railings and a stretch of bare and stuccoed wall, some smoke-stained lilacs grew, their roots a lurking-place for cats and a receptacle for bones and empty tins, straws, and the scraps of newspapers which act as banners to our progress, driven by the wind. Right opposite this urban jungle, close to the curbstone, its head upon some horse-dung and its legs stretched out upon the little waves and inequalities of hardened mud left by the rain, lay the dead body of a white-and-yellow cat. Upon its staring coat, each individual hair, stiff with dry sweat and mud, stood out like frozen grass protruding from the snow. Its eyes stared glassy and distended, its legs and tail had taken the rigid forms of feline death, rendered more horrible by contrast with the subtle grace of life. Its body, swollen to twice its proper size, seemed just about to burst.

Killed by a passing cab, or worried by a dog, or perhaps slain out of pure joy in death and love of field-sports by some sportsman to whom the joys of shooting elephants and giraffes were unattainable through lack of means, it lay, pending the arrival of the dust-cart, as a *memento mori* to the young guardsman sauntering home in

evening dress, his coat upon his arm, but one step lower than the angels in the estimation of himself and of his friends.

The grimy lilacs rustled and parted, and through the iron railings was stuck out a head. A body followed, squirming like a snake, and, with a squeal, a small black-and-white cat bounded upon the pavement, and stood staring at the body in the street.

Poised lightly on its feet, arching its back a little, and its tail quivering as it slowly lashed its sides, it stood and gazed. With bristling hair and crouching low upon the ground, slowly it crawled towards the stiff dead cat, as if drawn by a magnet irresistibly; its whiskers touched the body, and, as if horrified, it bounded back. Slowly it made a circuit, swelling, and visibly distraught with fear; then, with a spring or two, took refuge on the pavement, but always looking at the object of its dread and quivering with fear. Backing, and with its eyes wide staring, it sought the shelter of the lilacs, but in an instant, with a squeal, bounced out again and rushed away, only to stop and once again to steal along up to the dead with every limb aquake.

A fascination, such as seems to draw the eyes of women to some sight their nerves abhor, possessed it, and it lay down, purring, close to the corpse, stretched out a paw in horror, felt the cold flesh, and, shrieking, fled again into the street. Five or six times, it ventured close and shrunk away, unable, as it seemed, to leave the spot; then lightly leaped from side to side, alighting with its legs as stiff as posts, like a horse buck-jumping, and, lastly, crouching once more its belly to the ground, retired into the shrubs.

A drunkard howled a song, three or four semi-Hooligans lurched down the street, a carriage rattled by the kerb, the wheel crushing the body of the dead yellow cat, causing its entrails to protrude; the spell was broken, the fascinated and terror-stricken black-and-white little cat ran swiftly up a wall, and, with a last long look into the street, was gone.

Elizabet

POSTPONED.

CONVICTION, one might think, cometh neither from the east nor from the west. In fact, in many cases, it is a mere matter of digestion. Be that as it may, the Rev. Arthur Bannerman, a widower with two little girls, abruptly forsook the Anglican Communion and fell away to Rome. What were his real motives, perhaps even he himself could not have quite explained. A love of continuity; doubts as to the true and apostolical succession of orders transmitted at the Nag's Head; a lingering fear that the laity, if once admitted to the cup, might still exceed after the fashion of the early Christians at their feasts—these causes may have accounted for the step. Or, again, they may have had but little influence, for most conversions spring from impulse rather than a due reasoning out of motives for the change of faith.

The Rev. Bannerman (as most of his parishi-

oners styled him) though a good man, was of a mean presence, with the fair hair, blue eyes, and freckled skin which, with a stutter and a shamle, fit a man for ministration to his fellows, or might enable him to burlesque himself with great effect upon the stage. Good and ridiculous, but lovable, he had a heart whose workings, obfuscated by the foibles of the outward man, beat like a bull-dog's. Some men seem born for heroes; so tall, so straight are they, their eyes so piercing and their gait so free, that it appears impossible when one learns that they are stock-brokers or chiropodists. Having run all the gamut of parochial duties in the English Churches, presided at the mothers' meeting, visited the poor, worn vestments, dabbled in the outskirts of Theosophy, and dallied with Spiritualism, Mr. Bannerman yet had found his life not full enough of sacrifice. By degrees his parsonage (twined round with roses, and with its glebe stretching away beyond the Saxon church into the lush meadows of the squire), his Jersey cow, even his cob, the faithful sharer of his rambles while studying the fossils of the neighbouring downs, the bobs and curtseys of the village children, the waving salutation of

the smock-frocked boy who was "woful tired a' scaring o' birds," all grew to be distasteful, and seemed chains which but attached him to a material world.

How many men before the Rev. Arthur Bannerman have failed to see that there is nothing so materialistic as the mystic and the supernatural, and that the dullest duties of the dreariest parish are in reality more transcendental than the dreams of the theologist?

But into speculations of this nature he did not enter. Seeing his duty—that is, his inclination—straight ahead, he embraced it and the Roman Church. Then after the due steps (for once a Levite is to be a Levite to the end, no matter how wide apart is set the new faith from the old), he became a priest, more or less after the order of Melchizedek. A priest and still ridiculous—never in time at Mass, stumbling about the confessional with furtive gait—he seemed a tree transplanted from a cold soil into another hardly less uncongenial which stunts it in its growth. Still, the reliance on a hierarchy, the consciousness that he was (so to speak) in telephonic rapport with St. Peter and St. Paul, by way of Constantine, Charlemagne, Bernard of

Clairvaux, the blessed bloody Mary, and the seminary priests slain by that paragon of virgins, stout Queen Bess (who wished to show that she was as zealous for her faith as was her sister), brought comfort to his heart. That is, to his intellectual heart; for now and then he thought upon his children, given away to a pious lady and brought up far from him with a view to convents, as if the marriage of their father before he knew the truth had rendered them unclean for ordinary intercourse with fellow beings, and only fit for God. So, in his communings with himself, at times his natural love strove strongly with his artificial and dogmatic instincts; and after the fashion of all those who strive to conquer nature by the force of reason, he always thought that he did something praiseworthy when he choked down his tears, his longings, and everything which really, being natural, makes for righteousness. The children, far from their father, grew up half-bastard, half-legitimate, knowing their father's name, yet not allowed to mention him, as if their very being was a tacit scandal upon themselves and him. The pious lady loved them in a way, feeding them heavily, as kind-hearted but religious

people always do; making their lives a round of prayer, half looking on them as a scandal to the faith, and half regarding them as material evidence of her own strength of mind and freedom from all petty prejudice. The children, duly called after Anglo-Saxon saints (having been baptized before the time when their father's eyes were opened), meekly bore the names of Edelwitha and Cunegunde and, though they loved their father, thought of him with the easy contempt accorded by the female sex to those who act on principle or form their conduct upon abstract lines.

Seated among the other shavelings in his clergy-house, Mr. Bannerman was regarded as in the world one looks upon a man whose conduct in his youth has been a little wild—that is, with reprobation tempered by envy and respect. His fellows talked with him about the glorious days when England once again should own the Papal sway, the poor be fed at the monastery gate, the so-called Reformation be held a thing accursed, and statues be erected (at the national expense) to the twin saints of Smithfield, Bonner and Gardiner, of pious memory and of Christian renown.

Much did the priest employ himself in parish work, having found that his conversion had changed the collar, but left the load as heavy as before; much did he read the Fathers of the Church; much muse upon the Jesuits and all their works, and on the mystics of the Church in Spain, St. Peter of Alcantara, St. John of the Cross, St. Francis Borgia, and all the glorious band grouped round the Saint of Avila, who, as a colonel of artillery, ought to have been at Santiago when Cervera's fleet steamed from its "bottle" to destruction by the unbelievers' guns.

The assiduity of the Church impressed him—the missions in Alaska, in China, those of the Franciscans in Bolivia; the curious rechristianisation of the faithful in Japan, those who without their priests maintained their faith two hundred years, until the faithful from the West revisited them. All the romance and mysticism of the sole enduring Christian sect amazed and strengthened him, entering into his spirit, and making him feel part and parcel of something stable, so pitched inside and out with such authority, that against its strength all the assaults of reason were foredoomed to fail.

But still, the human virus in his blood, against

whose promptings even churchmen at times have found their teaching no avail, simmered and effervesced, troubling his soul, and prompting questions whether his duty lay with his children rather than with the souls of men. After writhing all the night in tears, he would descant upon the wonders of the Church, and dwell (as converts who have left their hearts outside the Church, owing conversion to a reason or a sentiment, will do) upon the comfort that he felt, the blessed calm of mind, the joy it was to know he could not doubt, and generally cheat himself with words, after the fashion of mankind, who always have from the first ages sought relief from facts and theories in rhapsodies, in mysticism, striving to build a wall of cobwebs up between that which they knew, and that they wished to be the case. What wall so strong as cobwebs, or what so easily renewed when broken down? The substance, equally applicable to a cut finger and to a broken heart, is your best mental hint.

But, when a Protestant charity girls' school passed by, robed in their shoddy capes and scanty skirts, and sheltered by their pre-Victorian brown straw hats, with pale blue ribbons hanging down

their backs—or when a nurse, with children bowling hoops, walked down the streets—the Rev. Arthur Bannerman found his cross heavy on his neck, and hoped the road to Golgotha was short. But yet he steeled himself; thinking that, as a year or two had passed, the children must have forgotten him; hoping that time would bring relief both to himself and them. Then, after the way of good and foolish men, he thought himself to blame, exclaimed aloud upon his weakness, redoubled work and prayers, and threw himself in agony of spirit upon the ground, grasping his cross after the fashion of the penitents in early Flemish pictures, but without finding rest.

At times he wandered passed the villa where, in the odour of respectability, his children lived, half hoping to catch sight of them, and half expecting that a miracle would keep them from his sight; and then, becoming suddenly aware of his transgression, would hurry through the street as if the whole world depended on his arriving at some place whose whereabouts he could not ascertain. By degrees he grew still more eccentric, still more ridiculous; for sorrow seldom gives dignity, but, on the contrary, brings

out our petty foibles, and makes us sport for fools, as if the whole world had been created in a fit of spleen, and a malignant demon looked out mockingly upon our woes. Occasionally the priest would start his mass in English, break off and stop, and then begin on a wrong note, taxing the gravity of the choir and of the faithful in the Church, and drawing from the Irish worshippers who clustered round the door, in the sort of "leper's squint" in which the economies of the Church usually give them places, the remark that "The Divil had put a mortal spraddle on his Riverence's spache." At times in the confessional his memory played him false; and girls who had accused themselves of gluttony, of telling falsehoods, or any other futile uninteresting sin of youthful and inexperienced penitents, were rebuked with sternness, told to repent and make their peace with outraged husbands, and sent giggling away. These lapses did not detract a whit from the affection in which his congregation (especially the children, and those who are to inherit all the earth while millionaires lie howling) held him; for they all knew the priest for a kind poor soul, even as a horse discounts an indifferent rider before the man has got upon his back.

At last the Rev. Arthur Bannerman found his strength waning ; and on a day he approached the villa where the lady who had taken the care of his two children on herself dwelt, in the glories of plate-glass, an araucaria (*imbricata*), trim gravel walks, and yellow calceolarias, all duly separated from the next-door neighbour by a wall blinded by a privet hedge. Twice did he pace the street, passing through vistas of plate-glass and araucarias ; reading the styles and titles of the houses, as " Beau Sejour," " Sea View," and " Qui Si Sana " ; admiring the imagination of the nomenclature as a condemned criminal may admire the judge's wig and the paltry sword of justice over the bench, or as a patient, seated in the dental surgeon's chair, scans the heraldic figures on the window, which reflects a bluish glare upon his face, while he, gripping the arms of the chair, perspires in terror, as the dentist fumbles for his tools. Twice did he catch himself entering at the wrong gate ; and when at last he stood before the hedge of bay trees and euonymus which, like a fig leaf, covered the mysteries of the interior garden plot of Beau Sejour from the public gaze, he trembled and perspired.

On the exterior gate the name was writ in brass above the letter-box, a wire communicating with the inside forming (as it were) a telegraph between the outer world and the interior graces of the house. He paused and chewed a dusty bay leaf, and then rang fitfully and waited at the gate. Three times he rang, waiting while butcher boys passed the time of day with bakers cycling their daily bread to residents along the street. At last the gate flew open suddenly, surprising him, and causing him to drop his umbrella in the mud. Then, advancing on the crunching gravel path, he passed between the stucco urns in which twin iron cactuses bloomed perennially, and gainted the porch, the housemaid waiting with the door half-opened in her hand. Ushered into the dining-room, and left to contemplate the horsehair sofa, and the plated biscuit-box embedded in its woolly mat upon the sideboard, the black slab clock upon the mantelpiece, the views of Cader Idris and the Trossachs in washy water-colours on the walls, he sat expectant, thinking each moment that his children might rush in, or that at least he might catch their footsteps on the stairs, or hear them singing in the upper regions of the house.

The interval which passed while Mrs. Macnamara was employed in preparation of mind and body for the interview seemed to him mortal. The lady rustled in, perturbed, but kindly; and the poor priest began to tell her of his struggles, and the consuming longing which had come over him to see his children, and to hold them on his knee. After much weeping on both sides, and offers of clean pocket-handkerchiefs ("For yours is so damp, ye'll get a cold with using it"), the priest became more calm. Then did the kindly Irishwoman reason with him, and put before him that it was better to let things take their course, telling him that the girls were happy, and that she loved them as they had been her own, and pointing out to him what would ensue if he persisted in his wish.

Some time he pondered on her words, straining his ears as a horse strains when listening for a distant sound, to catch even a footstep of the children on the stairs. Then, calm, but snuffling, he choked down his tears, and with an effort said, "God bless you! I think I'll wait to see them till the Judgment Day."

He took his leave, and left the house composed and cheerful, whistling a lively air, all out

of tune, and, passing by the Irish beggar-woman at her customary post, gave her a half-penny, which she received with thanks and a due sense of the benefit which alms bring down upon the soul of him who gives. Then looking after him, she broke into professional blessings, and exclaimed, "By the holy Paul, his Riverence looks so cheerful, sure the 'good people' must have been with him this morning, just at the birth of day."

LONDON.

“BUDDHA wishes the child health, riches, and prosperity, that she may have no enemies, enjoy good fortune, and be a comfort to her parents in their old age. May she be as pure and as lovely as these flowers; and I the headman of the Cingalese here present, after the custom of our country, call the child after the city she was born in, London.”

Then the mother knelt before a figure of Buddha, and the headman sprinkled her with rose leaves, which fell upon her like flakes of scented snow; and all around an Earl's Court crowd, composed of what is styled the “general public,” looked on and gaped. The little band of Cingalese no doubt were part and parcel of the general public of Ceylon. They formed a brownish-whitish group, dressed in their unsubstantial hot-country clothes; their thin brown hands, and semi-prehensile feet, unused to boots,

contrasting strangely with the hands and feet of all around them.

In the midst the little London, about as big as a young monkey, with large black eyes as preternaturally grave as are the eyes of all the Eastern races, who never emerge from childhood all their lives. Not that their eternal childhood keeps them free from lies and theft, for these are attributes of children, but it preserves them largely from hypocrisy, and from commerce, the worst of all the crimes that mankind suffers from; that is, of course, *successful* commerce, for the commerce of the East is so entirely futile in its villainy as to be almost harmless, even to those it cheats.

At Kandy, or Colombo, or by some village hidden in the forests, or on the margin of a rice-swamp, the relatives all in good time will learn the news, and how the child was named; and they will know of all the wonders of the great city, seen, so to speak, without perspective, and distorted through the medium of the teller's mind. A stucco city, where it is always dark, upon a river which flows liquid mud, and yet so rich the very beggars have their three meals a day. The residence of the great Queen, she who

is Empress; and of Madame Tussaud, the great magician, who makes copies of all men and women, just as they are in life, and by her art preserves them, so that they never die—that is, those who are once included in her palace never die, for it costs sixpence to enter and to see, and those who write have entered (after the payment) and have seen.

Much they will hear about the wondrous Western life, so different to their own, and framed apparently without regard to anything that they consider common-sense. The streets of houses forming great stucco drains, the noise which ceases not; the atmosphere impregnated with particles of coal and horse-dung; the rush, the hurry, the sameness of the people, all so alike, that to a Cingalese they all seem brothers; the curious justice so ingeniously contrived as to appear the grossest tyranny, or at best a nightmare—all will in the due fulness of the post arrive, and will be read by the letter-writer in the evening under the mango trees. Girls carrying water in long earthen jars, the wandering beggars, the herdsmen bringing home the kine, the elders of the place, the monkeys seated on the neighbouring trees, all will give ear and comment (the

monkeys loudest and with perhaps more emphasis than all the rest), and then, the letter ended, silence and the sadness of the evening will descend on all. These things, such a strange country, and the lucky child, will be the themes of conversation for many days, until the salt-tax, the want of water, the failing crops, the locusts, or that standing topic in the East, the price of bread, will once again hold sway.

But in the wondrous West, London, and all her family, going from town to town, from hideous capital to hideous capital, will sit in "exhibitions," and make believe to spin, to weave, to carve, or exercise some of the simple Eastern arts; all preternaturally grave, all marking everything they see in a distorted way, like faces seen in water, or like a landscape in a black mirror with the shadows all reversed. Nothing so saddening as to see an animal mewed in a public garden in a cage, walking about and turning at the corner of his den with a quick whirl, whilst the intelligent spectators read his Latin name and grin at him; except it be the miserable "native," giving, on a rainy day, within the fetid atmosphere of an "exhibition" (admission sixpence), a counterfeit presentment of arts and

industries which should be carried on in the full blaze of sun.

So in the various towns, and in the stifling exhibitions, growing up, squatted at sham work before the eternal crowds of unintelligent and unappreciative civilised spectators, the little London expanded gradually from the almost simian childhood of the Easterns into precocious womanhood. And in Ceylon, upon the rare occasions when the cares of daily life left time for conversation, and thoughts of those who in the magic West were coining gold, no doubt a vision of the growing London haunted her kinsfolk as of a countrywoman of their own, but rich, both in possessions and the wondrous knowledge of the West. A glorious vision of a being knowing how telegraphs and telephones are worked, and how the power is lent by steam to iron carriages, those devil-invented engines which snort through the forests, and, best of all, respected by, almost an equal of, the Europeans amongst whom she lived. A vision of a glorious half Eastern, half European London (oh, the strange name!) appeared to them. But in the atmosphere of eternal fog she grew up neither a European nor an Eastern, chattering cockney

English and bad French, blanched for the want of sun, as orchids grown in greenhouses are blanched, and never look the least like what they appear when clinging to the trees in Paraguayan or in Venezuelan wilds. Knowledge, of course, she had, especially of evil, for the "exhibition" is, in its interior human view, chiefly remarkable as a meeting place of the most diverse races of mankind, all thrown together without the restraining influence of their respective fetishes. But though the school board, benevolent and wooden-headed, had done its task up to some standard of obligatory non-excellence, still little London remained a doubtful native, yet, after the fashion of a rare hot-country weed reared in an English garden as a flower, and become wild again in some half favourable soil.

Not quite an Eastern, and still less a European, without the Oriental grace, and with the European stolidity, which, with the northern races, makes up for cunning and quick wittedness, London remained a sort of "exhibition" gipsy, always a foreigner wherever she might go. An Oriental in all prejudices, and in appearance, but so to speak only at second-hand, and a true

European but as regards her clothes, and the accomplishments of reading, writing, and the like, forced on her by the school board, and acquired against her will, and in despite of the opposition of her family to such unwomanly pursuits. Thin and still undeveloped, with the unstable-looking bust of Oriental women when dressed in European clothes, and the small, simian feet which in her case were not a beauty, but in her cheap, ill-fitting shoes only ridiculous, she grew to womanhood.

The impertinence of those who, from the theological fortress of their black rusty clothes, presumed to talk about a thing so ethereal as should be a soul, rendered her life at times a misery. These would-be savers of her soul had no idea that in such matters Eastern women have no part; for souls and philosophical discussions, with shoemaking and bullock-driving, are affairs of men, and women have their work in other ways, spinning and weaving, bearing their children, and doing that which since the beginning of the (Eastern) world has always been their lot. But yet the fact of being noticed, to an outcast such as perforce must be the exhibition-bred transplanted Oriental, is

better than neglect. And so she passed her life, superior in knowledge to her parents, and inferior to them in manual dexterity at the trade at which they worked.

Then came the fitful fever of the blood which humorists call love. Love, the ennobling, the passion which takes us out of our common nature, and raises us to heights of self-abnegation; love, the magician, the strongest passion in our nature, sung of by poets, etherealised by writers, and which has given our men of science so many opportunities for pathologic study in our hospitals and streets. Cupid revealed himself to London, as he reveals himself so often, in a disguise, perhaps because most women cannot well bear the god's full blaze of beauty, or perhaps because the god himself takes many incarnations and strange shapes. So her brief union with a Zulu brought her no joy, and left her with a monstrous child, stamped from its birth with the misshapen limbs which children born of such ill-assorted parents generally have.

Desertion and the streets, drink and disease, and then the hospital—and the thin body of the Earl's Court Cingalese lay in the mortuary, the knees and elbows making sharp angles in the

covering sheet. The headman's blessing, perhaps from having been pronounced outside the influence, or on uncongenial soil to Buddha, had been ineffectual, and the Western life too powerful for the Oriental born within its pale. The flickering corpse-candle of the brief life had failed in the full glare of the electric light.

All in good time the news of her decease was duly notified to the surviving relations in their village in Ceylon. They read it, apathetic but incredulous, being aware that no one ever dies, but is absorbed in the air of the place wherein the body and soul separate. So in the vast conglomerate of villages, the stucco labyrinth, built on the clay where day and night the myriads come and go, as little conscious of each other's presence as of the footprints on the pavement, which all of them must leave, where the foul atmosphere of sweat and dust and the scent rising from millions of animals and men commingle in the air, no doubt some particles of little London float. Or it may be (for after all it is but faith) her soul looks down contentedly upon the dingy crowd, and surveys happily the butcher-boys, the nursery-maids, and all the waifs and strays who flatten their bodies on

the rails and crane their heads to view the police recruits being drilled upon the guards' parade-ground, whilst a few drummer-boys stand by and criticise.

BEATTOCK FOR MOFFAT.

THE bustle on the Euston platform stopped for an instant to let the men who carried him to the third class compartment pass along the train. Gaunt and emaciated, he looked just at death's door, and, as they propped him in the carriage between two pillows, he faintly said, "Jock, do ye thing I'll live as far as Moffat? I should na' like to die in London in the smoke."

His cockney wife, drying her tears with a cheap hem-stitched pocket handkerchief, her scanty town-bred hair looking like wisps of tow beneath her hat, bought from some window in which each individual article was marked at seven-and-sixpence, could only sob. His brother, with the country sun and wind burn still upon his face, and his huge hands hanging like hams in front of him, made answer.

"Andra," he said, "gin ye last as far as Beattock, we'll gie ye a braw hurl back to the farm,

syne the bask air, ye ken, and the milk, and, and—but can ye last as far as Beattock, Andra?”

The sick man, sitting with the cold sweat upon his face, his shrunken limbs looking like sticks inside his ill-made black slop suit, after considering the proposition on its merits, looked up, and said, “I should na’ like to bet I feel fair boss, God knows; but there, the mischief of it is, he will na’ tell ye, so that, as ye may say, his knowlidge has na commercial value. I ken I look as gash as Garscadden. Ye mind, Jock, in the braw auld times, when the auld laird just slipped awa’, whiles they were birlin’ at the clairet. A braw death, Jock . . . do ye think it’ll be rainin’ about Ecclefechan? Aye . . . sure to be rainin’ about Lockerbie. Nae Christians there, Jock, a’ Johnstones and Jardines, ye mind?”

The wife, who had been occupied with an air cushion, and, having lost the bellows, had been blowing into it till her cheeks seemed almost bursting, and her false teeth were loosened in her head, left off her toil to ask her husband “If’e could pick a bit of something, a porkpie, or a nice sausage roll, or something tasty,” which she could fetch from the refreshment room. The

invalid having declined to eat, and his brother having drawn from his pocket a dirty bag, in which were peppermints, gave him a "drop," telling him that he "minded he aye used to like them weel, when the meenister had fairly got into his prelection in the auld kirk, outby."

The train slid almost imperceptibly away, the passengers upon the platform looking after it with that half foolish, half astonished look with which men watch a disappearing train. Then a few sandwich papers rose with the dust almost to the level of the platform, sank again, the clock struck twelve, and the station fell into a half quiescence, like a volcano in the interval between the lava showers. Inside the third class carriage all was quiet until the lights of Harrow shone upon the left, when the sick man, turning himself with difficulty, said, "Good-bye, Harrow-on-the-Hill. I aye liked Harrow for the hill's sake, tho' ye can scarcely ca' yon wee bit mound a hill, Jean."

His wife, who, even in her grief, still smarted under the Scotch variant of her name, which all her life she had pronounced as "Jayne," and who, true cockney as she was, bounded her world within the lines of Plaistow, Peckham

Rye, the Welch 'Arp ('Endon way), and Willesden, moved uncomfortably at the depreciation of the chief mountain in her kosmos, but held her peace. Loving her husband in a sort of half antagonistic fashion, born of the difference of type between the hard, unyielding, yet humorous and sentimental Lowland Scot, and the conglomerate of all races of the island which meet in London, and produce the weedy, shallow breed, almost incapable of reproduction, and yet high strung and nervous, there had arisen between them that intangible veil of misconception which, though not excluding love, is yet impervious to respect. Each saw the other's failings, or, perhaps, thought the good qualities which each possessed were faults, for usually men judge each other by their good points, which, seen through prejudice of race, religion, and surroundings, appear to them defects.

The brother, who but a week ago had left his farm unwillingly, just when the "neeps were wantin' heughin' and a feck o' things requirin' to be done, forby a puckle sheep waitin' for keelin'," to come and see his brother for the last time, sat in that dour and seeming apathetic attitude which falls upon the country man, torn

from his daily toil, and plunged into a town. Most things in London, during the brief intervals he had passed away from the sick bed, seemed foolish to him, and of a nature such as a self-respecting Moffat man, in the hebdomadal enjoyment of the "prelections" of a Free Church minister could not authorise.

"Man, saw ye e'er a carter sittin' on his cart, and drivin' at a trot, instead o' walkin' in a proper manner alongside his horse?" had been his first remark.

The short-tailed sheep dogs, and the way they worked, the inferior quality of the cart horses, their shoes with hardly any calkins worth the name, all was repugnant to him.

On Sabbath, too, he had received a shock, for, after walking miles to sit under the "brither of the U.P. minister at Symington," he had found Erastian hymn books in the pews, and noticed with stern reprobation that the congregation stood to sing, and that, instead of sitting solidly whilst the "man wrestled in prayer," stooped forward in the fashion called the Nonconformist lounge.

His troubled spirit had received refreshment from the sermon, which, though short, and ex-

tending to but some five-and-forty minutes, had still been powerful, for he said:

“When yon wee, shilpit meenister—brither, ye ken, of rantin’ Ferguson, out by Symington—shook the congregation ower the pit mouth, ye could hae fancied that the very sowls in hell just girmed. Man, he garred the very stour to flee about the kirk, and, hadna’ the big book been weel brass banded, he would hae dang the haricles fair oot.”

So the train slipped past Watford, swaying round the curves like a gigantic serpent, and jolting at the facing points as a horse “pecks” in his gallop at an obstruction in the ground.

The moon shone brightly into the compartment, extinguishing the flickering of the half-candle power electric light. Rugby, the station all lit up, and with its platforms occupied but by a few belated passengers, all muffled up like race horses taking their exercise, flashed past. They slipped through Cannock Chase, which stretches down with heath and firs, clear brawling streams, and birch trees, an out-post of the north lost in the midland clay. They crossed the oily Trent, flowing through alder copses, and with its backwaters all overgrown with

lilies, like an "aguapey" in Paraguay or in Brazil.

The sick man, wrapped in cheap rugs, and sitting like Guy Fawkes, in the half comic, half pathetic way that sick folk sit, making them sport for fools, and, at the same time, moistening the eye of the judicious, who reflect that they themselves may one day sit as they do, bereft of all the dignity of strength, looked listlessly at nothing as the train sped on. His loving, tactless wife, whose cheap "sized" handkerchief had long since become a rag with mopping up her tears, endeavoured to bring round her husband's thoughts to paradise, which she conceived a sort of music hall, where angels sat with their wings folded, listening to sentimental songs.

Her brother-in-law, reared on the fiery faith of Moffat Calvinism, eyed her with great disfavour, as a terrier eyes a rat imprisoned in a cage.

"Jean wumman," he burst out, "to hear ye talk, I would jist think your meenister had been a perfectly illeeterate man, pairadise here, pairadise there, what do ye think a man like Andra could dae daunderin' about a gairden naked, pu'in soor aipples frae the trees?"

Cockney and Scotch conceit, impervious alike to outside criticism, and each so bolstered in its pride as to be quite incapable of seeing that anything existed outside the purlieus of their sight, would soon have made the carriage into a battle-field, had not the husband, with the authority of approaching death, put in his word.

“Whist, Jeanie wumman. Jock, dae ye no ken that the Odium-Theologicum is just a curse—pairadise—set ye baith up—pairadise. I dinna’ even richtly ken if I can last as far as Beattock.”

Stafford, its iron furnaces belching out flames, which burned red holes into the night, seemed to approach, rather than be approached, so smoothly ran the train. The mingled moonlight and the glare of iron-works lit the canal beside the railway, and from the water rose white vapours as from Styx or Periphlegethon. Through Cheshire ran the train, its timbered houses showing ghastly in the frost which coated all the carriage windows, and rendered them opaque. Preston, the catholic city, lay silent in the night, its river babbling through the public park, and then the hills of Lancashire loomed lofty in the night. Past Garstang, with its water-lily-covered ponds, Garstang

where, in the days gone by, catholic squires, against their will, were forced on Sundays to "take wine" in Church on pain of fine, the puffing serpent slid.

The talk inside the carriage had given place to sleep, that is, the brother-in-law and wife slept fitfully, but the sick man looked out, counting the miles to Moffat, and speculating on his strength. Big drops of sweat stood on his forehead, and his breath came double, whistling through his lungs.

They passed by Lancaster, skirting the sea on which the moon shone bright, setting the fishing boats in silver as they lay scarcely moving on the waves. Then, so to speak, the train set its face up against Shap Fell, and, puffing heavily, drew up into the hills, the scattered grey stone houses of the north, flanked by their gnarled and twisted ash trees, hanging upon the edge of the streams, as lonely, and as cut off from the world (except the passing train) as they had been in Central Africa. The moorland roads, winding amongst the heather, showed that the feet of generations had marked them out, and not the line, spade, and theodolite, with all the circumstance of modern road makers.

They, too, looked white and unearthly in the moonlight, and now and then a sheep, aroused by the snorting of the train, moved from the heather into the middle of the road, and stood there motionless, its shadow filling the narrow track, and flickering on the heather at the edge.

The keen and penetrating air of the hills and night roused the two sleepers, and they began to talk, after the Scottish fashion, of the funeral, before the anticipated corpse.

“Ye ken, we’ve got a braw new hearse outby, sort of Epescopalian lookin’, we’ gless a’ roond, so’s ye can see the kist. Very conceity too, they mak’ the hearses noo-a-days. I min’ when they were jist auld sort o’ ruckly boxes, awfu’ licht, ye ken upon the springs, and just went dodderin’ alang, the body swinging to and fro, as if it would flee richt oot. The roads, ye ken, were no nigh hand so richtly metalled in thae days.”

The subject of the conversation took it cheerfully, expressing pleasure at the advance of progress as typefied in the new hearse, hoping his brother had a decent “stan’ o’ black,” and looking at his death, after the fashion of his kind, as it were something outside himself, a fact indeed, on which, at the same time, he could express

himself with confidence as being in some measure interested. His wife, not being Scotch, took quite another view, and seemed to think that the mere mention of the word was impious, or, at the least, of such a nature as to bring on immediate dissolution, holding the English theory that unpleasant things should not be mentioned, and that, by this means, they can be kept at bay. Half from affection, half from the inborn love of cant, inseparable from the true Anglo-Saxon, she endeavoured to persuade her husband that he looked better, and yet would mend, once in his native air.

“At Moffit, ye’d ’ave the benefit of the ’ill breezes, and that ’ere country milk, which never ’as no cream in it, but ’olesome, as you say. Why yuss, in about eight days at Moffit, you’ll be as ’earty as you ever was. Yuss, you will, you take my word.”

Like a true Londoner, she did not talk religion, being too thin in mind and body even to have grasped the dogma of any of the sects. Her Heaven a music ’all, her paradise to see the king drive through the streets, her literary pleasure to read lies in newspapers, or pore on novelettes, which showed her the pure elevated lives of

duchesses, placing the knaves and prostitutes within the limits of her own class; which view of life she accepted as quite natural, and as a thing ordained to be by the bright stars who write.

Just at the Summit they stopped an instant to let a goods train pass, and, in a faint voice, the consumptive said, "I'd almost lay a wager now I'd last to Moffat, Jock. The Shap, ye ken, I aye looked at as the beginning of the run home. The hills, ye ken, are sort 'o heartsome. No that they're bonny hills like Moffat hills, na', na', ill-shapen sort of things, just like Borunty tatties, awfu' puir names too, Shap Fell and Rowland Edge, Hutton Roof Crag, and Arnside Fell; heard ever ony body sich like names for hills? Naething to fill the mooth; man, the Scotch hills jist grap ye in the mooth for a' the world like speerits."

They stopped at Penrith, which the old castle walls make even meaner, in the cold morning light, than other stations look. Little Salkeld, and Armathwaite, Cotehill, and Scotby all rushed past, and the train, slackening, stopped with a jerk upon the platform, at Carlisle. The sleepy porters bawled out "change for Maryport," some drovers slouched into car-

riages, kicking their dogs before them, and, slamming to the doors, exchanged the time of day with others of their tribe, all carrying ash or hazel sticks, all red faced and keen eyed, their caps all crumpled, and their great-coat tails all creased, as if their wearers had laid down to sleep full dressed, so as to lose no time in getting to the labours of the day. The old red sandstone church, with something of a castle in its look, as well befits a shrine close to a frontier where in days gone by the priest had need to watch and pray, frowned on the passing train, and on the manufactories, whose banked up fires sent poisonous fumes into the air, withering the trees which, in the public park, a careful council had hedged round about with wire.

The Eden ran from bank to bank, its water swirling past as wildly as when "The Bauld Buccleugh" and his Moss Troopers, bearing "the Kinmount" fettered in their midst, plunged in and passed it, whilst the keen Lord Scroope stood on the brink amazed and motionless. Gretna, so close to England, and yet a thousand miles away in speech and feeling, found the sands now flying through the glass. All through the mosses which once were the "De-

bateable Land" on which the moss-troopers of the clan Graeme were used to hide the cattle stolen from the "auncient enemy," the now repatriated Scotchman murmured feebly "that it was bonny scenery" although a drearier prospect of "moss hags" and stunted birch trees is not to be found. At Ecclefechan he just raised his head, and faintly spoke of "yon auld carle, Carlyle, ye ken, a dour thrawn body, but a gran' pheelosopher," and then lapsed into silence, broken by frequent struggles to take breath.

His wife and brother sat still, and eyed him as a cow watches a locomotive engine pass, amazed and helpless, and he himself had but the strength to whisper "Jock, I'm dune, I'll no' see Moffat, blast it, yon smoke, ye ken, yon London smoke has been ower muckle for ma lungs."

The tearful, helpless wife, not able even to pump up the harmful and unnecessary conventional lie, which after all, consoles only the liar, sat pale and limp, chewing the fingers of her Berlin gloves. Upon the weather-beaten cheek of Jock glistened a tear, which he brushed off as angrily as it had been a wasp.

"Aye, Andra'" he said, "I would hae liket

awfu' weel that ye should win to Moffat. Man, the rowan trees are a' in bloom, and there's a bonny breer upon the corn—aye, ou aye, the reid bogs are lookin' gran' the year—but Andra', I'll tak' ye east to the auld kirk yaird, ye'll no' ken onything about it, but we'll hae a heart-some funeral."

Lockerbie seemed to fly towards them, and the dying Andra' smiled as his brother pointed out the place and said, "Ye mind, there are no ony Christians in it," and answered, "Aye, I mind, naething but Jardines," as he fought for breath.

The death dewes gathered on his forehead as the train shot by Nethercleugh, passed Wamphray, and Dinwoodie, and with a jerk pulled up at Beattock just at the summit of the pass.

So in the cold spring morning light, the fine rain beating on the platform, as the wife and brother got their almost speechless care out of the carriage, the brother whispered, "Dam't, ye've done it, Andra', here's Beattock; I'll tak' ye east to Moffat yet to dee."

But on the platform, huddled on the bench to which he had been brought, Andra' sat speechless and dying in the rain. The doors banged

to, the guard stepping in lightly as the train flew past, and a belated porter shouted, "Beattock, Beattock for Moffat," and then, summoning his his last strength, Andra' smiled, and whispered faintly in his brother's ear, "Aye, Beattock—for Moffat?" Then his head fell back, and a faint bloody foam oozed from his pallid lips. His wife stood crying helplessly, the rain beating upon the flowers of her cheap hat, rendering it shapeless and ridiculous. But Jock, drawing out a bottle, took a short dram and saying, "Andra', man, ye made a richt gude fecht o' it," snorted an instant in a red pocket handkerchief, and calling up a boy, said, "Rin, Jamie, to the toon, and tell McNicol to send up and fetch a corp." Then, after helping to remove the body to the waiting room, walked out into the rain, and, whistling "Corn Rigs" quietly between his teeth lit up his pipe, and muttered as he smoked "A richt gude fecht—man aye, ou aye, a game yin Andra', pur felly. Weel, weel, he'll hae a braw hurl onyway in the new Moffat hearse."

A FISHERMAN.

THE steamer scrunched against the pier, the gangway plank was drawn back slowly, and with as great an effort as it had weighed a ton, by the West Highland tweed-clad semi-sailors, semi-longshore men. The little groups of drovers separated, each following its fugleman to the nearest public-house. The ropes were cast off from the belaying pins, and whisked like serpents over the slippery slime-covered boards: a collie dog holding on to one of them by its teeth was dragged to the very edge, amongst a shower of Gaelic oaths.

Then with a snort and plunge the "Islesman" met the south-west swell coming up past Pladda from the Mull. The wandering Willie, with his fiddle in a green baize bag, stripped off its cover, and got to work in the wild wind and drizzling rain, at reels, strathspeys, laments, and all the minor music which has from immemorial time

been our delight in Scotland, although, no doubt, it is as terrifying to the Southern as when the bagpipes skirl. His dog beside him, a mere mongrel, looking like a dirty mop, and yet with something half pathetic, half ridiculous about him, sat holding round his neck a battered can for pence. The fiddler, bandy-legged and dressed in heather mixture tweed, which gave out fumes of peat reek, snuff, and stale whisky, stood by the forebits, and round him clustered all the heterogeneous "heids and thraws" of the population of the West Highlands, Glasgow and Greenock, and the other towns upon the Firth of Clyde. Gently the steamer glided through the Kyles of Bute, left Toward Point on her port bow, and headed for Dunoon. And as she steamed along, passing the varied scenery of mist-capped mountain, and of stormy loch, the peaks of Arran in the distance like a gigantic saddle hung outlined in the clouds. The passengers, for the most part, seemed to see nothing but each other's clothes and personal defects, after the fashion of so many travellers, who, with their shells of prejudice borne on their backs as they were snails, go out to criticise that which they were snails, go out to criticise that which they could have seen to just as great advantage

in their homes. Amongst them was a man dressed in a greasy "stan' o' black," who, at first sight, appeared to be what we in Scotland call a "goin' about body," and recognise as having quite a status in the land. His clothes, originally black, had borne the labour, whisky, and the rain of many a funeral. He did not seem a townsman, for he had that wizened, weather-beaten look which, once a sailor, never leaves a man this side the grave. At once you saw that he had made his bread in ships, or boats, or in some way upon that element on which those who go down to it in brigs "smell hell," as the old shellback said who heard the passage in the Bible on the wonders of the deep.

Hard bread it is; damned hard, as the old admiral told his sacred majesty, the fourth William, who asked him whether he had been bred up to the sea.

The nondescript, at least, cared not an atom for the others on the boat, but seemed to know each inlet, stone, and islet on the coast. He carried a geranium cutting in a little pot, hedged round with half a newspaper to shield it from the wind, and as the sun fell on the hills of "Argyle's bowling-green," broke out into a rhapsody, half

born of whisky and half of that perfervidness which is the heritage of every Scot.

“‘There shall be no more sea,’ no a wise like saying of John, though he was sort o’ doited in Patmos; what had the body got against the sea?”

“I followed it myself twal year. First in an auld rickle o’ a boat, at Machrihanish, and syne wi’ the herrin’ fishers about Loch Fyne. Man, a gran’ life the sea. Whiles I am sorry that I left it; but auri sacra famès, ye mind. Nae mair sea! Set John up. But the mountains, the mountains, will remain. Thank the Lord for the mountains.”

No one responding to his remarks, he turned to me, observing that I looked an “edicated man.”

“Aye, ou aye, I mind I made a matter of five hundred pund at the herrin’ fishin’, and then, ye ken, I thocht I saw potentialities (gran’ word, potentiality) of being rich, rich beyond the dreams of avarice, as that auld carle, Dr. Johnson, said. Johnson, ye ken, he that keepit a skule, and ca’ed it an academy, as auld Boswell said. A sort o’ randy body yon Boswell, man, though he gied us a guid book. Many’s the time I hae

launched over it. Puir, silly deevil, but with an eye untill him like a corbie for detail. Details, ye ken, are just the vertebræ of the world. Ye canna do without detail. What did I do? Losh me, I had most forgot. Will ye tak' an apple? It'll keep doun the drouth. Scotch apples are the best apples in the world, but I maun premise I like apples sour, as the auld leddie said.

“Na—weel, ye're maybe right, apples are sort o' wersh without speerits. Bonny wee islands, yon Cumbraes, the wee yin just lik a dunter's heid, the big yin, a braw place for fishin'.

“Whitin' Bay, ye ken, just beyond where the monument for they puir midshipmen stands. An awfu' coast, I mind three laddies, some five and thirty year syne, from up aboot England gaein' oot in a lugsail boat from the Largs. Ane o' they easterly haars cam' on. They just come doon like a judgment of God on this coast—ye canna escape them, nor it. Aye weel, I'll no say no, a judgment, a special judgment o' divine providence, just fa's like a haar, fa's on the just and the unjust alike. Na, na, I'm no meanin' any disrespect to providence, weel do I ken which side my bannock's buttered. . . . The laddies, the easterly wind just drave them aff the

coast, in a wee bit boatie, and had it no' been ane o' them was a sailor laddie, they would ne'er a' won back. Wondrous are His ways, whiles He saves those that never would be missed, and whiles. . . . Do I no believe in the efficacy o' prayer. Hoots aye, that is I'm no sure. Whiles a man just works his knees into horn wi' prayin' for what might profit him, that is, profit him in this world ye see, and providence doesna steer for a' his prayin'. Whiles a man just puts up a supplication for some speeritual matter, and the Lord just answers him before the man is sure he wants the object of his prayer.

“The Cumbraes, sort o' backlyin' islands, but the folk that live on them hae a guid conceit. Sort o' conceity, the bit prayer, the minister in Millport used to pit up for the adjawcent islands o' Great Britain and Ireland, ye'll mind it, ye that seem to be a sort o' eddicated man.

“Yer lookin' at the bit gerawnium. Sort of tragical that gerawnium, if you regard the matter pheelosophically. I tell't you that I aince made a bit o' money at the herrin' fishin'. Shares in a boat or twa. Man, I was happy then, a rough life the fishin', but vera satisfyin'. Just an element o' gambling about it that endears it to

a man. Aye, ou aye, the sea, I ken it noo, I see why I lik't the life sae weel. I felt it then though, just like a collie dog feels the hills, although he doesna ken it. I always fancy that collies look kind o' oot o' place in Glesca.

"A collie dog, ye ken, would rather hear a West Hielandman swear at him in Gaelic than an English leddy ca' him a' the pets in the world. It's no his fault, it's no the swearin' that he likes, but just the tone o' voice. A gran' language the Gaelic, profanity in it just sounds like poetry in any other tongue.

"Weel, a fisherman is just like a collie dog, he'd rather hear the tackle run through the sheaves o' the blocks than a' the kists o' whistles in the Episcopalian churches upabout Edinburgh. And then the sea, dam't I canna tell why I still ettle to get back to it. It took ma fayther, maist o' ma brithers, and the feck o' a' ma folk. It's maybe that, it's the element o' uncertainty there again, but dam't I dinna right know what it is, except that when ye aince get the salt doon into the soul ye ken, ye canna get it oot again. That is, no' on this side the grave. I wouldna have left it, had it not been ma mither, threep, three-pin' on me . . . aye, and the auri sacra fames.

“ . . . Bonny the Largs looks, eh? Gin its no the view of Cuchullin, the hills of Arran frae the Largs is the brawest view in Scotland. That is for a man that likes the sea. But I see I’m wearyin’ ye wi’ ma clash. Ye’d maybe like to see the *Herald*. . . . I hae Bogatsky in my bawg; Bogatsky’s ‘Golden Treasury,’ but maybe its no greatly read in your body. Fine old-fashioned book Bogatsky, nae taint o’ latter-day Erastianism about it. Na, na, I’s’e warrant ye the man compiled Bogatsky gied his congregation mony a richt shake abune the pit. Tophet, ye ken, the real old, what I might ca’ the constitutional Tophet, before they hung thermometers about the walls, in case the temperature should gae ower high.”

The steamer, after plunging uneasily beside the pier at Largs for sufficient time to let a knot of drovers, each with his dog led by a piece of twine, and holding in their hands hooked hazel sticks, reel off towards the town, and to allow the passengers (who did not mark it) space to view the beauties of the place, the little river brawling through the town, and the long bit of sea-swept grass on which goats pasture fixed to chains, and get a living on the scanty herbage,

eked out with bottles, bones and sardine tins, turned eastward once again towards the Clyde.

She ran past Fairlie, with its cliffs all clothed in oak and hazel copse. The passengers by this time being "michtily refreshed," as was the chairman of the curling Club at Coupar-Angus, after his fifteenth tumbler, threw sandwich bags and bottles overboard, and took to dancing on the deck. The elders gathered into knots, talked politics, religion, or with much slapping of red hands upon their knees, enjoyed indecent tales, after the fashion of the Puritan, who though his creed enjoys a modest life, yet places no embargo on the speech. So it is said an Irishman in Lent, meeting a friend who remarked that he was drunk, rejoined, "Sure, God Almighty never set a fast upon the drink."

My philosophic friend and I watched the athletic sports, and when the lassies skirled as partners pinched them, or in the joy of life, which manifests itself in divers ways, and usually in some unseemly fashion when the two sexes meet, he wagged a moralising head, and freely poured out his philosophy.

"Man Rabbie, . . . ye'll hae Burns . . .
Rabbie kenned his countrymen. A fine, free,

fornicatin', pious folk we are. Man, Rabbie kent us better than he kent himsel', I sometimes think. Aye, ou aye, ye canna mak' a saint o' Rabbie. Saints, ye ken, are weel enough in books, but sort o' weary bodies to live wi', they must hae been, the feck o' them. I didna tell ye though about the bit gerawnium. I hae it in the cabin, for fear they cattle micht sit doon on it; ye mind auld Walter Scott, the time he pouched the glass George IV. drank oot o', and then fair dang it into flinders on the road hame? Kind o' weak o' Scott, pouchin' yon glass; a bonny carle, yon George, to touch folk for the King's evil . . . but ou aye, the gerawnium, I mind it.

“Ye see a' my potentialities of growing rich werena just realised. I wrocht twa year in Glesca, ane in Edinburgh, syne sax in Brig o' Weir, whiles takin' a bit flutter on the Stock Exchange. Rogues they fellies on the Exchange, ettlin' to mak' their siller without honest toil. Na, na; I ken what ye're goin' to say—if I had won, I wouldna' hae misca'ed them. Pairfectly reasoned, sir; but then ye ken when a man loses, the chap that get his siller is aye a rogue. Weel, weel, many's the time I wished masel

back at Tobermory in the bit boat, wi' the bonny wee-tanned lug, fishin', aye, fishin', like the Apostles. Weel, I ken why the Lord found His first followers amongst fishermen. Simple folk, ye see, and wi' the gamblin' element weel developed; no like yer hinds—slave, slavin' at the ground—but oot upon the lake, yon sea of Galilee, ye mind; a sort o' loch, just like Loch Fyne, as I ae thocht. When ye sit in the boat, keepin' her full and by, fechtin' the sea, your eye just glancin' on the waves, it kind o' maks ye gleg to risk a wee. Nae fears we'll get another preacher like the Lord; but if we did, there wouldna be a fisherman, from Tobermory down to the Cruives o' Cree that wouldna follow him. I'se warrant them. Dour folk, the fishers, but venturesome; and a' the time I wrocht aboot thae stinkin' towns, I ettled to get back. I aye went aince a year to see our mither; she just stops aboot twa mile west of Tobermory, and I aye tak back ane of they gerawniums in a pot. Why do I no stop there when I win back, ye say? Aye, there's the mystery of it, the sort o' tragedy as I was tellin' ye when we cam through the Kyles.

“Ye see . . . spot yon lassie wi' the sun-

set hair, ane o' the lang backit, short-leggit West Highland kind, built like a kyloe, just gars me think upon yon woman of Samaria . . . I'm haverin' . . . weel, the fack is I canna stop at hame. Tak' a West Hielan' stirk, and put him in a park, doon aboot Falkirk, or in the Lothians, and maybe, at the first, he doesna' thrive, misses the Hielan' grass maybe, and the gran' wind that blaws across the sea. Syne, he gets habeetuated, and if ye take him back to the north, maybe he couldna bide. That's just ma ain case, sir.

“Weel do I mind the auld brow days; a herrin' never tastes sae weel as just fresh caught and brandered in the boat. I mind yon seinin' too, sic splores we had, aye and a feck o' things come back to me when I am in the toon. The peat reek, and a' the comfortable clarty ways we had; the winter nights, when the wind blew fit to tak' aff the flauchter feals o' the old cottage. I mind them a'. That is, I dinna care to mind.”

And as we talked, the steamer slipped past Wemyss Bay, left the Cloch Lighthouse on the left hand, and passed by Inverkip, slid close by Gourrock, and then opened up the valley of the

Clyde. Greenock with all its smoky chimneys rose in view, sending a haze of fog into the air. The timber in the ponds upon the shore surged to and fro against the railings as the steamer's swell lifted it slowly, and then settled down again to season in the mud. Dumbarton Rock showed dimly, and the river narrowed; the fairway marks showing the channel like a green ribbon winding through mud banks, as the vessel drew towards the pier.

Gathering their packages and parcels, and smoothing out their clothes, the passengers passed down the gangway, laughing and pushing one another in their haste to get away.

The man with the geranium in the pot still lingered, looking back towards the sea. Then, gathering up his traps and tucking his umbrella underneath his arm, prepared to follow them.

"Good-bye," he said, "we hae had a pleasant crack, I'll just be off and daunder up the toon. Doddered and poor, and a wee thing addicted to strong drink, strong drink, ye ken, speerits, that maketh glad the heart o' man; neither a fisher nor a townsman, a sort o' failure, as ye may say, I am. Good-bye, ye seem a sort o' eddicated man. . . . Na, na, I will na drop it, never

fear. I broacht it a' the way from Tobermory, and ye ken, sir, Greenock is no' a guid place for gerawniums after all."

He stumbled out along the gangway plank, his rusty "stan o' black" looking more storm-worn and ridiculous than ever in the evening sun. Holding his flower-pot in his hand, wrapped round with newspaper, he passed out of my sight amongst the crowd, and left me wondering if the flower in the pot would live, and he return, and die in Tobermory, by the sea.

THE IMPENITENT THIEF.

DIMAS or Gestas, Gestas or Dimas, who can say which, when even monkish legends disagree?

At any rate, one of the two died game.

Passion o' me, I hate your penitents.

Live out your life: drink, women, dice, murder, adultery, meanness, oppression, snobbery (by which sin the English fall); be lavish of others' money, and get thereby a name for generosity. Bow down to wealth alone, discerning talent, beauty, humour (the most pathetic of all qualities), wit, courage, and pathos, only in gilded fools.

Keep on whilst still digestion waits on appetite, and at the first advance of age, at the first tinge of gout, sciatica, at the first wrinkle, crow's-foot, when the hair grows thin upon the temples, the knees get "schaucle," when the fresh horse seems wild, the jolting of the express crossing the facing points makes you contract

your muscles, and when all life seems to grow flat, stale, and unprofitable outside the library, forsake your former naughty life, and straight turn traitor on your friends, ideas, beliefs, and prejudices, and stand confessed apostate to yourself. For the mere bettering of your spiritual fortunes leaves you a turncoat still. It is mean, unreasonable, and shows a caitiff spirit, or impaired intellect in the poor penitent who, to save his paltry soul, denies his life.

Dimas or Gestas, whiche'er it was, no doubt some unambitious oriental thief, a misappropriator of some poor bag of almonds, sack of grain, bundle of canes, some frail of fruit, camel's hair picket rope, or other too well considered trifle, the theft of which the economic state of Eastern lands makes capital, had given him brevet rank amongst the world's most honoured criminals, set up on high to testify that human nature, even beside a coward and a God, is still supreme.

Perhaps again some sordid knave, whipped from the markets, an eye put out, finger lopped off, nose slit, ears cropped, and hoisted up to starve upon his cross as an example of the folly of the law, crassness of reason, to appease the

terrors of the rich, or, perhaps, but to exemplify that Rome had a far-reaching arm, thick head, and owned a conscience like to that enjoyed by Rome's successor in the empire of the world.

Dimas or Gestas, perhaps some cattle thief from the Hauran, some tribesman sent for judgment to Jerusalem, black bearded, olive in colour, his limbs cast like an Arab's, or a Kio-way's twisted in agony, his whole frame racked with pain, his brain confused, but yet feeling, somehow, in some vague way, that he, too, suffered for humanity to the full as much as did his great companion, who to him, of course, was but a Jewish Thaumaturgist, as his adjuration, "If thou be the Son of God, save us and thyself," so plainly shows.

And still, pethaps, impenitent Gestas (or Dimas) was the most human of the three, a thief, and not ashamed of having exercised his trade. How much more dignified than some cold-hearted scoundrel who, as solicitor, banker, or confidential agent, swindles for years, and in the dock recants, and calls upon his God to pardon him, either because he is a cur at heart, or else because he knows the public always feels

tenderly towards a cheat, having, perhaps, a fellow-feeling, and being therefore kind.

I like the story of the Indian who, finding his birch canoe caught in the current, and drifted hopelessly towards Niagara, ceased all his paddling when he found his efforts vain, lighted his pipe, and went it, on a lone hand, peacefully smoking, as the spectators watched him through their opera glasses.

And so perhaps this stony-hearted knave, whom foolish painters bereft of all imagination, have delighted to revile in paint, making him villainous in face, humpbacked, blind of one eye, and all of them drawing the wretched man with devils waiting for his poor pain-racked soul, as if the cross was not a hell enough for any act of man, may have repented (of his poor unsuccessful villainies) long years ago. He may have found no opportunity, and being caught red-handed and condemned to death, made up his mind to cease his useless paddling, and die after the fashion he had lived. This may have been, and yet, perhaps again, this tribesman, as the night stole on the flowers, the waters, and the stones, all sleeping, reckoned up his life, saw nothing to repent of, and thought the cross but

one injustice more. As gradually hope left his weakening body, he may have thought upon the folded sheep, the oxen in their stalls, the camels resting on their hardened knees, men sleeping wrapped up in their "haiks" beneath the trees, or at the foot of walls, mere mummies rolled in white rags, under the moonbeams and the keen rays of El Sohail. No one awake except himself and the two figures on his either hand, during the intolerable agony of the long hours, when jackals howl, hyenas grunt, and as from Golgotha, Jerusalem looked like a city of the dead, all hushed except the rustling of the palm trees in the breeze. Then may his thoughts have wandered to his "duar" on the plains, and in his tent he may have seen his wives, and heard them moan, heard his horse straining on his picket rope and stamping, and wept, but silently, so that his fellow sufferers should not see his tears.

And so the night wore on, till the tenth hour, and what amazed him most was the continual plaint of Dimas (or of Gestas) and his appeals for mercy, so that at last, filled with contempt and sick with pain, he turned and cursed him in his rage.

Repentance, retrospection, and remorse, the furies which beset mankind, making them sure

of nothing; conscious of actions, feeling they are eternal, and that no miracle can wipe them out. They know they forge and carry their own hell about with them, too weak to sin and fear not, and too irrational not to think a minute of repentance can blot out the actions of a life.

Remorse, and retrospection, and regret; what need to conjure up a devil or to invent a place of torment, when these three were ready to our souls. Born in the weakness (or the goodness) of ourselves, never to leave us all our lives; bone of our bone and fibre of our hearts; man's own invention; nature's revenge for all the outrages we heap upon her; reason's despair, and sweet religion's eagerest advocates; what greater evils have we in the whole pack with which we live, than these three devils, called repentance, retrospection, and regret?

But still the penitent upon the other side was human too. Most likely not less wicked in his futile villainy than his brother, whom history has gone out to vilify and to hold up as execrable, because he could not recognise a god in him he saw, even as he himself, in pain, in tears, and as it seemed least fit to bear his suffering, of the three. Repentance is a sort of fire insurance,

hedging on what you will—an endeavour to be all things to all men and to all gods.

Humanity repentant shows itself *en deshabelle*, with the smug mask of virtue clear stripped off, the vizer of consistency drawn up, and the whole entity in its most favourite Janus attitude, looking both ways at once. The penitent on the right hand, whom painters have set forth, a fair young man, with curly golden hair, well rounded limbs, tears of contrition streaming from his eyes, with angels hovering around his head to carry off his soul, whom writers have held up for generations as a bright instance of redeeming faith duly rewarded at the last, was to the outward faithless eye much as his brother thief.

Perhaps he was some camel driver, who, entrusted with a bag of gold, took it, and came into Jerusalem showing some self-inflicted wounds, and called upon Jehovah or Allah to witness that he had received them guarding the money against thieves. That which he said upon the cross he may have thought was true, and yet men not infrequently die, as they have lived, with lies upon their lips. He may have seen that in his fellow sufferer which compelled respect,

or yet again he may have, in his agony, defied the Jews by testifying that the hated one was king. All things are possible to him who has no faith.

So, when the night grew misty towards dawn, and the white eastern mist crept up, shrouding the sufferers and blotting out their forms, the Roman soldiers keeping watch, had they looked up, could not have said which of the thieves was Gestas and which Dimas, had they not known the side on which their crosses stood.

THE EVOLUTION OF A VILLAGE.

I KNEW a little village in the North of Ireland—call it what you please. A pretty, semi-ruinous, semi-thriving place. In it men did not labour over much. All went easy (*aisy* the people called it); no man troubling much about the sun or moon; still less bothering himself about the fixed stars or planets, or aught outside the village bounds. All about the place there was an air of half-starvation, tempered by half content. Few ever hurried; no one ever ran. Each hedge was shiny, for the people had cut seats in them, which they called "free sates." The able-bodied occupied them all day long, for they served to prop men up as they discoursed for hours on nothing. Cows marched up and down the lanes: and sometimes children led them by a string, or, seated on the ground, they made believe to watch them as they ate, much in the same way, I suppose, that shepherds watched their flocks

upon the night the star shone in the East near Bethlehem, or as the people do in Spain and in the East to-day. Goats wandered freely in and out of all the houses. Children raggeder, and happier, and cunninger than any others on the earth, absolutely swarmed, and Herod (had he lived in those parts) could have made an awful *battue* of them, and they would not have been missed. Children, black-haired, grey-eyed, wild-looking, sat at the doors, played with the pigs, climbed on the tops of cabins, and generally permeated space, as irresponsibly as flies.

Trees there were few. The people said the landlords cut them down, The landlords said the people never left a tree alone. However, let that pass. Creeds there were, two—Catholic and Protestant. Both sides claimed to have a clear majority of sheep. They hated one another; or they said so, which is not the same thing, by the way. Really, they furnished mutually much subject of entertainment and of talk, for in this village no one really hated very much, or very long. All took life quietly.

On the great lake folk fished lazily, and took nothing save only store of midge-bites. The

roads were like pre-Adamite tracks for cattle : nothing but the cow of the country could cope with them ; and even that sometimes sustained defeat. Still, given enough potatoes, the people were not miserable ; far from it. Wages were low—but yet they were not driven like slaves, as is the artizan of more progressive lands.

In the morning early, out into the fields they went, to while away the time and lounge against the miniature round towers that serve for gate-posts.

Those who did not go out remained at home, and, squatting by the fire at ease, looked after their domestic industries, and through the “jamb-wall hole” kept a keen eye on foreign competition, or on the passing girls and women, and criticised them freely as they passed. Still there was peace and plenty, of a relative degree. No factories, no industries at all, plenty of water power running to waste, as the Scotch agent said, and called on God to witness that if there were only a little capital in the town, it would become a paradise. What is a paradise ? Surely it is a land in which there is sufficiency for all ; in which man works as little as he can—that is to say, unless he likes to slave—which no one

did, or he would have been looked on as a madman, in the village by the lake. Men reaped their corn with sickles, as their forefathers did, in lazy fashion, and then left the straw to rot. Agriculture was all it never should have been. Sometimes a woman and an ass wrought in one plough—the husband at the stilts.

Men were strong, lazy, and comfortable; women, ragged, as lazy, and, when children did not come too fast, not badly off. The owner of the soil never came near the place. Patriot lawyers talked of liberty, and oppressed all those they got within their toils; but still the place was happy, relatively. Those who did not like work (and they were not a few) passed through their lives without doing a hand's turn, and were generally loved. Any one who tried to hurry work was soon dubbed tyrant. Thus they lived their lives in their own way.

If they were proud of anything, it was because their village was the birthplace of a famous hound. In my lord's demesne his monument is reared—the glory of the place. Master Magrath—after the Pope, King William, Hugh Roe O'Neill, or Mr. Parnell—he seemed the greatest personage that ever walked the earth. "Him-

self it was that brought prosperity amongst us. Quality would come for miles to see him, and leave their money in the place. A simple little thing to see him: ye had never thought he had been so wonderful. The old Lord (a hard old naygur!) thought the world of him. 'Twas here he used to live, but did his business (winning the Waterloo Cup) over on the other side." England seemed as vague a term as China to them, and quite as far removed. Master Magrath, the Mass, the Preaching, the price of cattle at the fairs, and whether little Tim O'Neil could bate big Pat Finucane—these were the subjects of their daily talk. A peaceful, idle, sympathetic, fightingly-inclined generation of most prolific Celto-Angles or of Anglo-Celts.

Agiotage, Prostitution, Respectability, Morality and Immorality, and all the other curses of progressive life, with them had little place.

Not that they were Arcadians; far removed enough from that. Apt at a bargain, ready to deceive in little things. In great things, on the whole, "dependable" enough. Had there but been enough to eat, less rent to pay, one faith instead of two, a milder whiskey, and if the rain had cleared off now and then, the place had been

about as happy as it is possible to be, here in this vale of tears. Little enough they recked of what went on in Parliament, upon the stock exchange, or in the busy haunts of men.

Once in a way a Home Rule speaker spoke in the village hall. The folk turned out to cheer with all their might, and in a week or two an Orangeman came round, and, if possible, the cheers were louder than before. In fact, they looked upon the rival Cheap Jacks as travelling entertainments sent by Providence on their behalf.

Except on Pitcairn's Island, Tristan d'Acunha, or in some group of islets in the South Seas before the advent of the missionaries, I doubt if anywhere men fared better on the whole.

But still a change was floating in the air.

One day a traveller from Belfast came to the village, and it struck him—"What a place to build a mill! Here there is water running all to waste, the land is cheap, the people vigorous and poor; yes, we must have a mill."

The priest and minister, the local lawyer, and the Scotch land-agent, all approved the scheme. All that they wanted was but capital.

The want of capital is, and always has been, so they said, the drawback of the land. Had we

but capital, we should be rich, and all become as flourishing as over there in England, where, as all know, the streets are paved with gold.

Alas! they never thought that on the golden pavements rain down floods of tears that keep them always wet, hiding the gold from sight. They never dreamt how the world crushes and devours those who leave little villages like this, and launch the vessel of their lives upon its waves. They could not see children perished and half-starved; they did not know the smug sufficiency of commerce; and had never heard the harlot's giddy laugh. Therefore, the proposition seemed to them a revelation straight from God. Yes, build a mill, and all will turn to gold. The landlord will get his rents, the minister his dues, the priest his tithes, the working man, instead of being fed on butter-milk and filthy murphies, will drink tea (they called it *tay*) feast upon bacon, and white bread, and in due course will come to be a gentleman. Wages will rise, of course; our wives and children, instead of running bare-foot or sitting idle at the doors, will wear both shoes and stockings, and attend Mass or preachment "dacent," carrying their parasols.

The syndicate of rogues, with due admixture of fools and dupes, was got together; the mill was built. The village suffered a great and grievous change. All day long a whirr and whiz of wheels was heard. At daybreak a long string of girls and men tramped along the dreary streets, and worked all day. Wealth certainly began to flow; but where? Into the pockets of the shareholders. The people, instead of sturdy, lazy rogues, became bleary-eyed, consumptive weaklings, and the girls, who formerly were patterns of morality, now hardly reached eighteen without an "accident" or two. Close mewing up of boys and girls in hot rooms brought its inevitable result. Wages did not rise, but on the contrary, rather inclined to fall; for people flocked from the country districts to get employment at the far-famed mill.

The economists would have thrown their hats into the air for joy had not their ideas of thrift forbidden them to damage finished products, for which they had to pay. The goods made in the mill were quoted far and wide, and known for their inferior quality throughout two hemispheres.

Yet still content and peace were gone. The

air of the whole place seemed changed. No longer did the population lounge about the roads. No longer did the cows parade the streets, or goats climb cabin-roofs to eat the house leek. The people did not saunter through their lives as in the times when there was lack of capital, and therefore of advancement, as they thought. They had the capital; but the advancement was still far to seek. Capital had come—that capital which is the dream of every patriotic Irishman. It banished idleness, peace, beauty, and content; it made the people slaves. No more they breathed the scent of the fields and lanes, but stifled in the mill. There was a gain, for savages who did not need them purchased, at the bayonet's point, the goods the people made. The villagers gained little by the traffic, and became raggeder as their customers were clothed. Perhaps the thought that savages wore on their arms or round their necks the stockings they had made, consoled them for their lost peaceful lives. Perhaps they liked the change from being wakened by the lowing of the kine, to the "steam hooter's" call to work in the dark winter mornings—calling them out to toil on pain of loss of work and bread, and

seeming, indeed, to say: "Work, brother! Up and to work; it is more blessed far to work than sleep. Up! leave your beds; rise up; get to your daily task of making wealth for others, or else starve; for Capital has come!"

CASTLES IN THE AIR.

YOUR castles in the air are the best castles to possess, and keep a quiet mind. In them no taxes, no housemaids, no men-at-arms, no larders bother, and no slavery of property exists. Their architecture is always perfect, the prospect of and from them always delightful, and, in fact, without them the greater part of humanity would have no house in which to shield their souls against the storms of life. It is prudent, therefore, to keep these aerial fortalices in good repair, not letting them too long out of our mind's eye, in case they vanish altogether into Spain.

Good business men, and those who think that they are practical merely because they lack imagination, have maintained that castles such as these are but the creation of the brain, and that as fancy is but an exercise of the mind, its creations can have no existence in mere fact. To each man after his demerits; to some day.

books, ledgers, cash-boxes, and the entire armour of the Christian business man. Let them put it on, taking in their hands the sword of covetousness, having on their arms the shield of counterfeit, the helmet of double-dealing upon their heads, till they are equipped fully at all points to encounter man's worst enemy, his fellowman. Let them go forth, prevail, destroy, deceive, opening up markets, broadening their balances and their phylacteries; let them at last succeed and build their stucco palace in Park Lane; to them the praise, to them the just reward of their laborious lives; to them blear eyes, loose knee joints, rounded backs, and hands become like claws with holding fast their gold.

But let your castle builders in the perspective of the mind have their life, too; let them pursue their vacuous way, if but to serve as an example of what successful men should all avoid. Buys in safe channels, lighthouses set up on coasts where no ships pass; preachers who preach in city churches where no congregation ever comes except the beadle, a deaf woman, and a child or two; Socialist orators who do "Ye Men of England" to a policeman and an organ-grinder

—all have their uses, and may serve some day if coral insects build their reef, the “Flying Dutchman” should put in for rest, a shower fill the church, or men grow weary of the strife of parties, and why not those who dream? They have their uses, too, because the castles that they build are permanent and suffer no decay. Tantallon, Hermitage, Caerlaverock, Warwick, and Kenilworth must crumble at the last, a heap of stones, grey ruined walls grown green with moss, and viper’s bugloss springing from the crevices, some grassy mounds, a filled-up ditch to mark the moat, a bank or two to show the tilting ground, and a snug lodge, in which the lodge-keeper sits with gold-laced hat to take the tourists’ sixpences—to that favour must they all come, even if masonry be fathoms thick, mortar as hard as adamant, and the men who built have builded not on the modern system, but like beavers or the constructors of the pyramids.

Your visionary castle, though, improves with time, youth sees its bastions rise, and each recurring year adds counterscarps, puts here a rampart or a mamelon, throws out a glacis or constructs a fosse, till middle age sees the whole fort impregnable. But as imagination commonly

improves with years, old age still sees the castle untaken and entire ; and when death comes, and the constructor passes away to sleep beside the million masons of the past, young builders rise to carry on the work ; so that, considered justly, air is the best foundation on which a man can build ; so that he does not wish to see his ashlar scale, mortar return to lime, and to be bothered all his life with patching that which with so much pains in youth he built. The poor man's shelter in the frosts of life ; the rich man's summer house, to which he can retire and ease himself of the tremendous burden of his wealth ; the traveller's best tent ; the very present refuge of all those who fail—your visionary castle rears its head, defying time itself.

Often so real s the castle in the air, that a man sells his own jerry-built, stuccoed mansion in the mud, to journey towards his castle, as travellers have sold their lands to see the deserts in which other people live. Think what a consolation to the outcast in the crowded street, on the wet heath, straying along the interminable road of poverty, to bear about with him a well-conceived and well-constructed dream house, pitched like the ark, inside and out, against not

only weather, but the frowns of fortune—a place in which to shelter in against the tongues of fools, refuge in which to sulk under the misery of misconception, half-comprehension, unintelligent appreciation, and the more real ills of want of bread—for well the Spaniards say that every evil on God's earth is less with bread.

How few can rear a really substantial castle in the clouds: poets, painters, dreamers, the poor of spirit, the men of no account, the easily imposed upon, those who cannot say No, the credulous, the simple-hearted, often the weak, occasionally the generous and the enthusiastic spirits sent into the world to shed as many tears as would float navies; these generally are famous architects of other peoples' fortunes. They rear palaces set in the middle distance of their minds, compared to which the Alhambra, the Alcazar, the Ambras, Windsor and Fontainebleau, and the mysterious palaces in Trapalanda, which the Gauchos used to say were situated somewhere in the recesses of the Andes, beyond the country of the Manzaneros, are heavy, overcharged, flat, commonplace, ignoble, wanting in all distinction, and as inferior as is the four-square house in Belgrave Square, just at the

corner of Lower Belgrave Street, to an Italian palace of the rinascimento, or the old "Casa de Mayorazgo," in the plaza at Jaen.

I read of such a master builder once in a newspaper. He was, I think, a mason, and whilst he worked bedding the bricks in lime, or underneath his shed hewing the stone with chisel and the bulbous-looking mallet masons use, the white dust on his clothes and powdering his hair, or on the scaffold waiting whilst the Irish hodman brought him bricks, he used to think of what some day he would construct for his own pleasure in the far off time when money should be made, wife found, house of his own achieved, and leisure to indulge his whims assured. Needless to say he was not of the kind who rise; master and mates and foreman used to call him dreamy and unpractical. His nickname was "The Castle Builder," for those who had to do with him divined his mind was elsewhere, though his hands performed their task. Still, a good workman, punctual at hours, hard working, conscientious, and not one of those who spend the earnings of a week in a few hours of booze at the week's end. Tall, fair, blue-eyed, and curley-haired, a little loose about

the knees, and in the fibre of the mind; no theologian; though well read, not pious, and still not a *revolté*, thinking the world a pleasant place enough when work was regular, health good, hours not too long, and not inclined to rail on fortune, God, nature, or society for not making him a clerk. Things, on the whole, went pretty well with him; during the week he worked upon the hideous cubelike structures which men love to build; and Sunday come, he walked into the fields to smoke his pipe and muse upon his castles in the air. Then came an evil time—lockout or strike, I can't remember which—no work, plenty of time to dream, till money flew away, and the poor mason started on the tramp to look for work. Travelling, the Easterns say, is hell to those who ride, and how much more than hell for those who walk. I take it that no desert journey in the East, nor yet the awful tramp of the man who left afoot walks for his life, on pampa or on prairie, is comparable in horror to the journey of the workman out of work. On the one hand the walker fights with nature, thirst, hunger, weariness, the sun, the rain, with possible wild beasts, with dangers of wild men, with loss of road; sleeping he lies

down with his head in the direction he intends to take on rising, and rising tramps towards the point he thinks will bring him out ; and as he walks he thinks, smokes, if he has tobacco, takes his pistol out, looks at the cartridges, feels if his knife is safely in his belt, and has a consciousness that if all goes right he may at last strike houses and be saved.

But on the other hand, the wanderer has houses all the way ; carriages pass by him in which sit comfortable folk ; children ride past on ponies, happy and smiling, bicycles flit past, cows go to pasture, horses are led to water, the shepherd tends his sheep, the very dogs have their appointed place in the economy of the world, whilst he alone, willing to work, with hands made callous by the saw, the hammer, file, the plough, axe, adze, scythe, spade, and every kind of tool, a castaway, no use, a broken cogwheel, and of less account than is the cat which sits and purrs outside the door, knowing it has its circle of admirers who would miss it if it died.

Oh, worse than solitude, to wander through a thicket of strange faces, all thorny, all repulsive all unknown ; no terror greater, no nightmare, no creeping horror which assails you alone at

night in a strange house, so awful as the unsympathetic glare of eyes which know you not, and make no sign of recognition as you pass. And so the mason tramped, lost in the everglade of men who, like trees walking, trample upon all those who have no settled root. At first, thinking a mason must of necessity be wanted, either to build or work amongst the stone, he looked for labour at his trade. Then, finding that wheresoe'er he went masons were plentiful as blackberries upon an autumn hedge, he looked for work at any trade, conscious of strength and youth and wish to be of use in the great world which cast him out from it as a lost dog, to stray upon the roads.

Past villages and towns, along the lanes, by rivers and canals he wandered, always seeking work; worked at odd jobs and lost them, slept under railway arches and in the fields, in barns and at the lea of haystacks, and as he went along he dreamed (though now more faintly) of his castles in the air. Then came revolt; he cursed his God who let a workman, a stonemason, starve, with so much work to do, stone to be hewn and houses built, churches to rear, docks to be made, and he alone it seemed to him,

of all mankind, condemned to walk for ever on the roads. At last, tired of his God's and man's injustice, faint from want of food, and with his castle scarcely visible, he sat him down just on the brink of a black, oily river outside a manufacturing town, the water thick and greasy, and at night looking like Periphlegethon, when iron-works belch out their fires and clouds of steam creep on the surface of the flood.

And seated there, his feet just dangling in the noxious stream, the night-shift going to a factory found him, and as they asked him what he did, he murmured, "Castles, castles in the air," and rested from his tramp.

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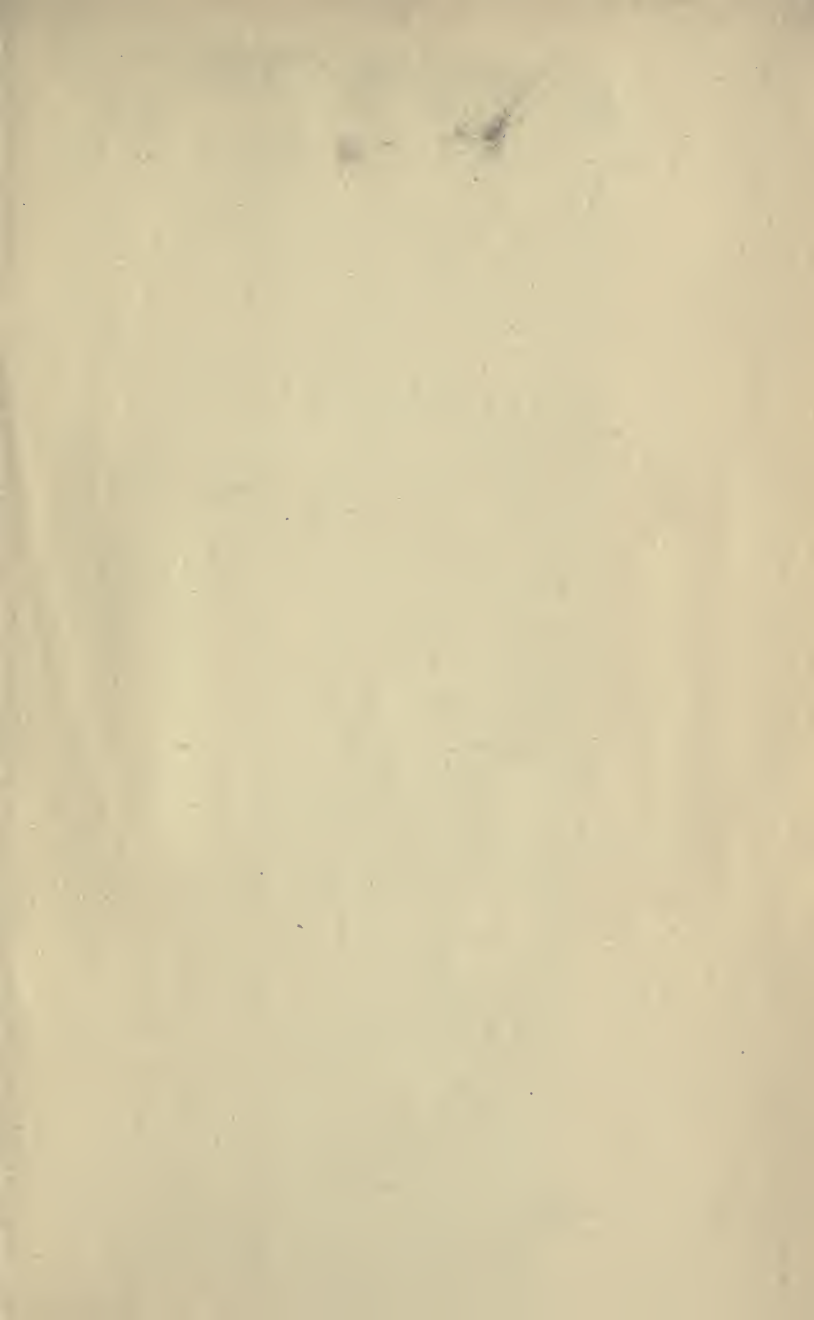
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