

SPRING DAYS. P. 79.

Drawn by J. D. Watson

LONDON SOCIETY.

An Illustrated Magazine

OF

LIGHT AND AMUSING LITERATURE

FOR

THE HOURS OF RELAXATION.

VOLUME I.

LONDON:
OFFICE, 49 FLEET STREET, E.C.
1862.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

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LONDON SOCIETY.

FEBRUARY, 1862.

A STROLL IN 'THE PARK.'

A DAY cold, gray, cheerless as any day in February, and yet there is something in the air that speaks of milder breezes, of violets, and of spring-time; a something that lures me away from the warm, glowing hearth, out from between hermetically closed windows and doors; through the dreary, bustling town and away from the din and fashion of Piccadilly.

Past that statue which Westmacott and the ladies of England have raised to do honour to the Duke and themselves, to a quiet spot — quiet enough at this season of the year — in the Park which takes its name from the old manor of the Hyde adjoining Knightsbridge.

Back to some of the seventeenth-century summers as I walk along over the delicate coating of hoar-frost crisping under my feet, through some of the years that have gone by since Hyde Park, then in possession of abbot and convent, was first enclosed for the public good.

It is not a very important fact that the first keeper, George Roper, was appointed early in the reign of Edward VI.; but it is rather interesting to know that he had only 'sixpence per diem' as a reward for the trouble it must have cost him to keep such a great, wild, unkempt and uncared-for place, as we learn this then highly rural Park was. Nor will it be necessary to dwell at length on the division of the Park in 1652 into three portions. The names of the purchasers and the sums they gave are of little consequence; they were large sums, all ending in a few pence.

Back through the years that have passed since Hyde Park was intersected by a chain of ponds, now flowing together—the Serpentine of our days — to the time when the 'Ring' which was laid out in the reign of Charles I. was in its glory; long, long before it was deserted for the 'Ride' and 'Ladies' Mile,' and left to present an appearance which causes an observer of the present day to waver between whether it might be the remains of a Roman encampment, or of an unrivalled troupe from Astley's at which he gazed, instead of having once been the resort of all that was brilliant, wealthy, witty and beautiful in the world of the London society of that day.

And thus, as I walk, gradually fade away these our modern days and forms, and before me rises a time when the doings here were so gay that prudent, far-sighted Pepys (the most wonderful instance on record of a man succeeding in life through always doing the right thing at the right time, whether that right thing chanced to be the eating of humble pie before Majesty, or the breathing a long-winded prayer before the Puritan Protector)—Pepys on a pleasure-tour heaved a sigh on the night of the 30th April, 1661, for that he 'was somewhere else, and could not be in Hyde Park among the great gallants and ladies which will be very fine.'

Down the stream of time to later days than when Cromwell, whom somehow or other one can never imagine to have been much of a

whip, came to grief here through lashing very furiously a set of Friesland coach-horses which had been presented to him by the Duke of Holstein—an injudicious present the course of events proved them to be. Cromwell loved Hyde Park well; the stern-faced Protector visited it often; and now, when those of whom he dreamed not tread the turf he once trod, and make merry in the vicinity of that place in which he once proved himself such an inefficient Jehu, he lies quietly, and sleeps a deep sleep, hard by at Tyburn.

Back to the days when the reign of gloom was over and the tide of merriment had set in—to those days when Charles II. — the 'merry monarch' with the 'melancholy face'—was king: who seems to have been as charming and reprehensible as most men who never say foolish things and never do wise ones are—to the days when he was king and England was 'merry England,' as we are told so often that we have reason to doubt it.

That must have been a goodly company which assembled in Hyde Park then. Conspicuous in that bright ring of which Charles himself was the centre stands Villiers — foremost in beauty, bravery, wit, and gallantry, and every other dangerously fascinating quality which goes to the making up of the character of the perfect courtier. That Villiers who is described by Flecknoe as possessing

> 'The gallant'st person and the noblest mind
> In all the world his prince could ever find;'

and who fell upon evil days and died after a long career of splendour and success in the 'worst inn's worst room,' where, according to Pope (although the story is now denied), 'tawdry yellow strove with dirty red.' That poor 'great Buckingham,' whom a fastidious king pronounced to be 'the only English gentleman he had ever seen.' And with Villiers, the oval-faced and gleaming-eyed — the gay, dashing lord and husband of the 'Puritan's daughter,' the 'little, short, brown, demure' lady, Mary Fairfax; the friend of Cowley, to whom at least, whatever may have been his faults to others, he was faithful, generous, and kind; with him came De Grammont, the polished, graceful Frenchman, the lover, and after six years of uncertain courtship, the husband of that Miss Hamilton who was the greatest beauty in a court, where 'to be' was to be beautiful.

There was also St. Evremond, the blue-eyed Norman, most splendid specimen of a most magnificently handsome race, who at the age of fifty became the lover of Madame Mazarin. This lady, in addition to having the reputation of being the most beautiful woman in Europe of her day, took high honours as a practical joker. Amongst many other facetious tricks may be mentioned her swamping the poor nuns of a convent in which she had taken refuge once when in dire distress, in their uncomfortable beds. This feat she accomplished by causing the large reservoirs which supplied the establishment with water, to overflow. She also mixed ink with their holy water in order to make the cross stand out well upon their foreheads. This last trick was shocking, but harmless in comparison with the other; seclusion and rheumatism together must be intolerable.

And Rochester was here too—the 'most symmetrical and handsomest man of his age.' He joined that witty, wicked group, an innocent Adonis and fell away terribly. He confessed to Bishop Burnet on his death-bed that 'for five years he had never been sober.' But as I see him in the 'Ring,' walking along by the side of one of the daintiest of the court dames, he is young and fair and good, as he looks in the only portrait I have seen of him. The long love-locks are not dishevelled as yet, nor the deep clear-cut eyes glazed, and the lower part of the face is still exquisitely refined—not heavy and coarse as it must have grown before those five years had come to an end.

And chivalrous, daring, happy Dorset was here; happy because 'he could do everything, and was never to blame.' And fair, lovely, insipid Mrs. Hyde, of the light falling ring-

lets and rather weak expression, which Sir Peter Lely has handed down to posterity for admiration. And the dark queen, with the small brown hands, and long-suffering spirits. Lovely, foolish Jane Middleton; the bright brunette, Miss Warmestre; and countless others, who were 'beauties' in their day, and had names and fames a trifle higher than would be awarded them now. They all came here to the Ring in Hyde Park.

And here, too, came one who has told us more about them and their doings than any one else. Here came Pepys—ever-present Samuel—of course he did. 'Following the duke' (equally of course) 'into the Park, I found Mr. Coventry's people had a horse ready for me; so fine a one that I was almost afraid to get upon him, but I did, and found myself more feared than hurt.'

Pepys would have risked breaking any number of bones to follow 'a duke,' the brave fellow! The act of mounting a great fine horse, of which he stood in mortal dread, for the pleasure of following the Duke of York into the Park and being seen in his company by the fine folks in the Ring, is worthy of the gallant gentleman 'who did extend his charity to his sister Jane by allowing her to be his servant;' and who lay in 'mighty trembling,' but cautiously passive one night, when he thought one of his domestics (possibly the aforesaid sister Jane) was being murdered in his house. Pepys, with something beneath him that he dared not hit, must have been a 'mighty fine sight' indeed; as fine as any in the Ring.

As far as personal appearance goes, Charles I. was far worthier of being the leader of such a bright, brilliant, beautiful court, than was his plain, dark-visaged son.

Here they all came, powdered and patched and hooped; with the ever-ready sword and joke, and made love and witty speeches and quarrels after the most approved fashion of that gay and gallant set.

And now, as I stand here, the bevy of noble cavaliers and ladies my imagination has conjured up to people this now-deserted Park with, fades away—fades away and leaves me standing cold and solitary in the wintry sunbeams, alone.

Far into the reigns of the Georges the Ring continued to be the pre-eminently fashionable portion of Hyde Park. William III. gave a certain tone to the Kensington division by going to reside in the red-bricked palace there— the palace which now has a deeper claim on our interest, for there our own queen was born. And Queen Caroline, consort of George II., added to the attractiveness of this quarter by causing large gardens to be laid out there, which were opened to the public—to the 'full-dressed' public—every Sunday, when the king and herself had betaken themselves to Richmond. When the court ceased to reside at Kensington these gardens were thrown open altogether. For a long time they retained much of their secluded character, but *now* every other portion of the Park will be thrown into the shade by them in point of gaiety.

Wandering along yet further from the sounds of busy life, the fleecy clouds—half-mist, half-smoke hovering over everything, show me other scenes and forms.

Here, in later days, came Hervey, the pleasing refined wit; and Pope, the cynical unpleasing one. Lady Mary Wortley Montagu 'the emancipated,' who was allowed to 'say anything' (rare privilege!) without anything being said about her—who always dressed becomingly and untidily and attracted by so doing; and who, with a keen bright intellect, had but a 'neat-featured' face, which latter won the regard of both Hervey and Pope.

And those 'three Marys'—those 'maids of honour' about whom so much has been said and written; who have been the thread on which so many fine verses have been strung — Mary Lepell herself, Hervey's wife, who was good and charming, Mary Howard, and 'jolly' Mary Bellenden, as she is called.

The amiable king who dreaded being left alone the night his poor faithful loving wife died, 'for fear he should see a spirit,' came here and sighed that he could not instead

be breathing the air of his own beloved Hanover. And Caroline herself was by his side of course; with her fair, comely face, and gracious form, and winning sweet manner; that model wife who appears to have acted with such consistent, judicious humility all through her conjugal life. Before the king had cause to express that fear and dread, she came here with him frequently and planned improvements in Hyde Park.

And the Prince of Wales—their son—was here, but not with *them*. Sir Robert Walpole calls him 'a poor, weak, irresolute, false, lying, contemptible wretch;' and his own mother the fair comely queen, with the gracious manner, seems in his case to have taken leave of those her special qualities of 'gracious sweetness,' for she says: 'Popularity always make me sick, but *Fritys* makes me vomit.' The names Sir Robert Walpole called him must have been hard to bear, yet that sentence from his mother's lips was surely harder.

In the years between 1798 and 1816, Beau Brummel and *his* set adorned the Park. He came here frequently—did the kind beau—to show inferior beings how friends—old friends—and new coats should be cut. He was as perfect in these noble arts as was the friend of his early days, the Prince Regent, whose countenance he lost through an impertinence. Many mean, base, weak and worthless ones, I doubt not, take a turn in Hyde Park daily throughout the season, but surely none so weak, base, mean and worthless as this dethroned idol of what were called the 'Bucks'—as this man who spent half of every day in tying his cravat, and the other half in showing the world—*his* world—how it should be tied. He is not a pleasing object to contemplate through the fleecy clouds of time. Nothing worthier is recorded of him—that I can recal—than that he asked 'for damson jam tart' when little more than a baby; 'Who is your fat friend?' when full-grown; and several ridiculous questions as to cabbage and peas at different stages of his highly useful and ornamental career. I see him dimly through the mists, standing by the visionary rails—not by any means *leaning* against them, *that* would have discomposed his attire—and hoping every one who passes will observe the number and gorgeousness of his waistcoats. I can forgive the man who would commit all sorts of extravagances in the way of point lace ruffles, and maroon-coloured velvet coats, because they were beautiful and grand, and looked well then, and will continue to look well in pictures through all time. But the one who would ruin himself in table-cloths to wind around his throat, and several coloured waistcoats one over the other, and a blue coat with a velvet collar half hiding his head, and the waist indicated by two brass buttons up between his shoulders, is simply despicable.

And now, as I wander further south — on towards those quieter Kensington regions—the gray mist seems to clear away. The trees burst forth into leaf. The sun shines fully, gloriously over everything, and somewhere high in the upper air an invisible lark is pouring forth a wild sweet melody. It is the summer season of 1861, and here are assembled representatives of all classes—of 'all' save the 'stout peasantry' of England, who with quilted 'smocks,' and heavy, weather-reddened complexions, have no call, find no place here. Poverty and wretchedness come here often enough to look at their betters, but it is not 'rural' poverty and wretchedness.

Here comes the world-famed minister, the wise and witty statesman on whom the years that he has passed in the public service tell so slightly to all outward seeming; who holds with equal judgment and skill the reins of government and those which restrain the eager footsteps of a fine-drawn high-couraged Irish mare. The author, favourite of fortune and fashion. The artist, seeking as he leans idly over those rails for a face fairer than his ideal, with which to delight the world next year at the Academy. The beauty, whose roses are paled a

little, and whose eye is less bright than it is well the eye of beauty on promotion should be, through a little over-dancing and over-fagging generally on the great social treadmill. She is still fresh and lovely enough though as she sits 'well back' on her thorough-bred, perfectly-trained horse—who although his mouth is of the finest 'pulls' ever so slightly—just enough to steady her in fact—as she holds him with the light, firm hand a good horsewoman always possesses, raising a murmur of admiration on the lips of those who do *not* know her, and a deeper feeling it may be in the hearts of those who do;—surely, as that fairy on the chestnut—the little chestnut with the white off-fore-leg and the white star on his forehead—passes, the young artist who only wants a subject might be satisfied. She has rich wavy hair—this lady on the chestnut, hair of a light, golden-tinted brown—something like her horse's—with a long undulating wave in it; not kinked up and down in abrupt hillocks, as if it had been plaited up tight overnight to its own destruction, but just undulating gracefully in long waves. She has a broad fair brow. From underneath the brim of her little Spanish hat look out a pair of deep blue, stedfast eyes,—'grave' at most times, but lighting up with flashes of merriment as she speaks to the pretty little sister who rides by her side. The blue eyes are shaded by wonderful lashes—long and dark and heavy, like a silk fringe; and these latter have somewhat of a haughty droop as she bends in return for the frequently doffed hat. 'She is but seventeen; but she is tall and stately,' and a fair sight she is, that young patrician, as she sits there, going along so easily yet so firmly that her little chestnut would find it a hard matter to shake her in the saddle, should he be so minded.

The elderly gentleman, who dreamed not in his youth of the partnership in the house in which he was then toiling as a clerk; and a stately mansion in one of the stateliest of the Regent's Park terraces; and a stately wife, who, when she steps from the well-built carriage, horsed by a pair of browns, looks as if she had been all her life a duchess at least; and daughters who are pretty and accomplished, and well-dressed and well-bred, and capable of holding their own should the course of events roll them yet higher; and a well-bound library, containing all the right books and none of the wrong ones, in splendid preservation; and curious old port, and a place in the country;—who dreamed not, I say, that all this would ever be his, comes pounding over the spongy ground, at a brisk trot on a sturdy cob, very wide between the ears, and broad of chest, and short of leg, not a beautiful horse, but a safe and good one; one who would no more back or shy, or do anything foolish, than his master. Behind him comes his pad-groom, on a fine, handsome, showy bay, with black points, and a martingale, and a prance.

Far different in appearance is the other elderly gentleman who follows close upon the heels of the sturdy cob. He has been riding from the time he was three years old, when he commenced on the great-grandmother of the little black pony *his* grandson is now careering on by his side. When the rider of the cob was having his little private battle with life in the counting-house, this one was probably following the hounds three times a week across a stiff bit of country. He is mounted now on a horse with a pedigree as long as his own; amiably as he walks along, suffering himself to be perpetually passed without exhibiting the least trace of emotion, he would, if put to it, 'fly the heads' both of the other old gentleman and the groom on the fidgety, prancing steed.

The group that comes rushing by now is a fine one—three young ladies, a brother, and one or two of the brother's friends. They converse as freely as they ride along—the ladies at a hard canter, which very much resembles a gallop, and the gentlemen at a long slinging trot—as if they were walking slowly along on the promenade out yonder. They never lose their breath, nor

catch it; they never swerve in their saddles; they never jerk either their reins or their words. If their horses 'lost their heads,' *they* would not, for they have been riding all their lives and know what it means. There are dozens, hundreds, like them here daily.

The lady—the stout lady—who passes along now, offers a fine contrast to the spirited group I have attempted to portray. She has come into a fortune late in life and has, on the strength of it, commenced equestrian exercise. She protests that she 'thinks riding delightful,' but she passes a horrible time up there on that horse, who will keep dragging the reins out of her unaccustomed hands. He shakes her, too, cruelly, for they cannot time their rises together, and she loses her breath, and pants forth involuntary notes of interrogation at every step. And now a troop of children pass her as fast as their little steeds can lay their legs to the ground, and her horse foolishly thinks he would like to do the same; so he starts off suddenly, which sends her forward in a helpless heap on his neck; and then, the absurdity of the thing striking him, he stops even more suddenly, and bumps her in the chest. She has gone to expense as to habit and hat, and whip and gloves, but I fear the investment is a bad one. She is a braver—not to say a more foolish—woman, than she looks, if she ever makes the ascent of a horse's back after that bump.

One of the greatest charms about riding is, that you rarely meet with an instance of glaring bad taste in point of costume. Ladies are not allowed much scope, certainly, and the result is harmonious and pleasing. There are some—very few—who will persist in wearing a scarf, or veil, or feather, which will of course fly and look odious; but, as a rule, the habit ends at the throat in a small white collar, and at the waist in a little six-inch basque or jockey. Altogether, the riding-habit, well made and without even a *button* more than is necessary about it, is, without any exception, the prettiest costume in the world. Taken in conjunction with a well-shaped and by all means *small*, hat, and white gauntlets, if in the country—dark short kids if in town—it is nearly perfection.

But the glories of Rotten Row, attractive as they are, must not be allowed entirely to overshadow the claims of the drive and promenade

Here, through the hot hours of this summer afternoon, I stand and watch an almost unbroken line of well-appointed carriages and matchless horses.

The mail phaeton, driven by one who would in other days have taken high honours on 'the road.' The heavy chariot, with its gorgeous hammer-cloth and severe-looking driver and magnificent footmen; with its rather hearse-like horses and pretty occupants—an aristocratic mamma, and three or four pretty, fair-haired children. The phaeton of the lovely bride—a countess—drawn by a pair of ponies fourteen hands high, and matched to a hair: she drives them herself, and the whole turn-out causes seas of envy and admiration to ebb through the hearts of her old friends the yet expectant ones, who are still sitting in the parental coach—which is magnificent, and heavy, and comfortable—and from which they would gladly step into a 'small park phaeton, with a pair of ponies fourteen hands high, and matched to a hair.' The waggonette, and every possible description of bodies upon wheels, are here in endless number.

The promenade is, after all, perhaps the gayest and most glittering portion of this gay and glittering Park.

Pretty, elegant, well-dressed women are always a delightful spectacle, and here they are in *such* force.

How dresses so light, so web-like, can ever have been *got* together and persuaded to *remain* together, is wonderful. Colossal cobwebs, they bear down hazily upon you on every side. So fragile are they, that as they trail in orthodox fashion half a yard on the ground behind their bearers, you sympathize with them as with a bruised butterfly's wing.

Such 'beauty,' too! I have just decided that anything more superb than the eldest of those sisters who have passed with their still handsome, dignified mother—the lady with the tall form and dark, pale face and plainly-banded, smooth, glossy, light hair—hair that is neither flaxen, nor golden, nor auburn, but a peculiar tint between lemon and straw-colour—and brown velvet eyes;—I have just decided, I say, that anything more superb than this lady cannot be; I vow that she shall reign queen of beauty in my heart for ever, when my mind is unsettled again by the conflicting claims of this blonde, in her first season, who now comes along with her father. She is very beautiful. She has the face we all love—the white brow and delicately tinted cheeks, and 'upward' eye and lash of the true English girl. The face may not be met with very frequently in life, but we all know it. It has always a broad brow, and the frank eyes are nearly always grey—a bluish grey.

But this lady who passes now, the centre of a group in which the foreign element is easily distinguishable—what has this woman, with the low, narrow forehead, and sharp, brown eyes, and dingy complexion, and rather protruding jaw, done to herself that she should pass for a 'beauty?' I have to look at her, to study her face well before I discover that she is not one. What has she done? I do not know; her dress, even, I cannot undertake to describe, though a sense of its beauty pervades my spirit. I only know that she wears nothing that astonishes you into admiration. She has only two colours about her—that wonderful blue which harmonizes with every shade and order of complexion—and black, great quantities of cloudy black lace, which she causes to take all sorts of graceful folds as she walks along so easily. She is well-gloved, and that foot in the black silk boot is so arched that she could if she liked upset her water-jug and bridge the stream with it, as poor Albert Smith used to recommend ladies to do in order to prove to themselves satisfactorily whether or not *their* feet were as well-formed as those of the boat-girls of Macao. She is a Frenchwoman, and against the testimony of your eyes you are compelled to think her a 'beauty.' The pretty girls who follow her stand no manner of chance against her. 'More millinery' would be tedious to wade through, or I would endeavour to show the reason why they are at such a disadvantage when seen near the less beautiful Frenchwoman. As it is, I will only just hint that they have dresses of one colour and bonnet-ribbons of another; and white clear cloaks, of the shape Mrs. Dion Boucicault has rendered popular; and parasols with the richest chintz borders Sangster has in his shop. Perhaps this is the reason why, with far prettier faces, they stand no chance against the elegant lady in cloudy black lace.

But this is a trifling, seldom-made error. Such cases, though they exist, are exceptional. As a rule, my countrywomen have ceased to believe in anything florid. Their fresh, fair beauty is as generally set off by elegant attire as is a Frenchwoman's less faultless appearance; and though all have not yet arrived at that artistic perception of the exact thing to be worn to best become them, as well as the time and place, which knowledge on nearly all occasions characterizes our neighbours—although they have not yet attained this, I say, they soon will. The constant communication between the two nations will soon graft permanently on us what is innate with them. And if Buckingham, and the matchless Norman and Dorset, and the like, whose names always seem to sparkle on the page of romance, once rendered brilliant the old 'Ring' with their charms of wit and superb, manly beauty and clothes, surely there are many who may be fairly instanced as competing with them now. Though not set off by velvet coat, powdered peruke and jewelled sword; though shorn of the glittering, make-believe, diamond buckle on knee and shoe and of the point-lace ruffle, the Englishman of the present day is worthy of mention with the proudest of them

all. The general type is the tall, well-formed, fair, fresh-faced man, with the long, drooping, tawny moustache and whisker—that shape which the 'military cut' has rendered fashionable. If they had a little less of that repose of manner about which Mr. N. P. Willis has raved so much, some of them would be more pleasing objects to contemplate, perhaps; but it is wrong to find fault with what is so nearly perfect of its kind. Quiet as they look, when occasion offers these 'curled darlings' can do and dare anything, as has been proved often and often.

Looking on this constant succession of bright and pretty faces, on this long and never-ending line of lovely women, fine men, splendid horses and stately equipages, one is tempted to congratulate oneself, after all, as having fallen upon the best days of The Park.

That building rising at Kensington, away to the south there. Charles the 'merry monarch,' nor Villiers the unfortunate, nor staid Mary Fairfax, nor the 'impudent comedian' Nell Gwynne (of whom, remembering Chelsea Hospital, we should always think kindly)—not one of these ever witnessed anything half so wonderful as will be that building and its contents. Nor did they see anything much more humorous, probably, than will be some of the performances we shall be treated to in Rotten Row by visitors from non-riding but obligingly-imitative nations.

The chief glory of the International Exhibition of 1862 departed 'ere ever 1862 was born—departed on that sad Saturday night for England when the great bell of St. Paul's boomed forth on the silent air, telling its tale of woe to anxious, listening thousands. Not the grey mist, hanging cloudily over these leafless trees, looms with a drearier darkness under the wintry sky than does the shadow of the funeral-pall now overspreading the land. The sorrow that bows the most honoured head in it, is the sorrow of the whole nation. But time is good to us, and we shall still look forward to the opening of that building with interest—with interest painful and subdued—but strong and earnest, nevertheless.

They have all passed away as I bring my gaze back from Kensington—all these spirits who have been bearing me company. Passed, and left a dreary void. The cloudy mists wreathe themselves away as the sun (what there is of him) lowers in the west, leaving the afternoon clear enough, but rapidly ending, and very, very cold. There is no ice on the Serpentine, consequently the banks are not thronged with admiring thousands watching the progress of the best cutter of the outside edge. A moisture is over everything. it pervades the Ride, and causes the composition to cling to the hoofs of the solitary horse who has brought a solitary rider here to look for an appetite The rumbling of the wheels of a carriage going through at a business-like pace rouses me from the dreamy state I have fallen into while strolling here alone through the summers of the past. I wake to find it winter—to find the trees leafless, and to hear the pathetic twitter of a robin-redbreast, whose crumbs have not been forthcoming to-day, instead of the clear carol of the lark high up in the air.

But the song-bird of summer will come back, and soon, very soon the gay riders, and vehicles, and forms of those who walk the earth will fill again the 'Row' and 'Ladies' Mile.' And once more the present shall be so gay that the past shall not be a 'sorrow's crown of sorrow' by bringing back the memories of 'happier things.'

A. H. T.



A WINTER-DAY SKETCH IN ROTTEN ROW. DRAWN BY H. SANDERSON.

LONDON FLOWERS.

IN passing along the streets and through the squares of London, how often do we see the casual passer lingering—turning his head, as on a hot June day a breath of fragrance falls; or as, in early March, he catches suddenly the first bright glimpse of spring—the pot of yellow crocuses in some area window. Many long days will pass, perhaps, before the world will know the good that flowers have done; the saving recollections that they have first recalled; the sins that they have hindered; the kind deeds that they have brought out. One always augurs well of a man who can say honestly he *has* a favourite flower. He would not care to dwell on painful recollections; the favourite flower speaks of some sweet and innocent early association; and how much depends on those early days, and what their memories are.

Now it is quite a fact that very few indeed are the London homes which do not possess some means of growing flowers well, and few are the London dwellers who do not long to grow them. This is, however, one of the many cases in which people fail in a great delight entirely or chiefly because they fancy difficulties which do not really exist.

We buy a massive, heavy volume which professes to treat of flower-culture generally, and there, alas! we find a treatise on raising auriculas from seed; one on obtaining new kinds of hollyhocks; another on training roses, and yet another on exhibition flowers!

Well—London people may get prizes sometimes; but I do not think that exhibition plants, or even the excitement of raising florists' flowers, is the recreation most suited to our London homes.

People ought, then, to know first what they want to grow; when that is settled, we will soon see a way to working it out most suitably. Wants, however, are wide, and a good deal diversified. I know some people who 'want' to have brilliant geraniums, roses, and fuchsias in a greenhouse that looks due north! Now I feel convinced that if that conservatory faced towards the south, their hearts would be set on ferns and camellias, which on the northern aspect would thrive most perfectly.

People with heat at command long outrageously for little English wild flowers; those with air and light, but without any heat, delight so in begonias that they will have nothing else!

Now let me describe some flowers for one wide-spread class—the very many, that is, who would like to see the outside, at least, of their windows perpetually gay.

There are few requisites out of our reach, even here in London, that are quite essential to the growth of plants, and yet when I say the growth, I always take for granted that *healthy* growth is meant.

The essential requisites are, indeed, but three. Light, more or less; air, more or less, warmth, more or less. The difference between the less and more of these is what must decide us on the plants to grow. Then there are other things which are *negatively* essential—their absence, that is, being urgently required.

Plants must *not* be allowed to have their leaves and stems all choked up with soot.

Plants must *not* be exposed to have their roots all scorched up and baked by a burning sun, or by 'a fine drying wind' striking on the flower-pots and reducing the earth to a sort of brick. Mud is moreover only a stage towards bricks. The more, therefore, the unlucky plants are drenched and sodden by water placed in saucers to rectify the evil of the sun and wind, the more it is certain the poor things will suffer. When I think of London plants, I always hope that they do not feel!

It really does seem quite inconceivable that in the face of such plain facts as these, the plants should still be allowed to die, without adopting the easy means of saving them which every one can supply—means, too, which render them fully threefold ornaments.

As to the soot: where plants are few it is but a few minutes' work to wash their leaves and make them fresh and beautiful. A fine rose on a watering-pot, or a light brass syringe would do the work still more quickly in cases where there are many.

The scorching rays of the summer sun, and the keen, drying blasts of the cold March winds, may equally be kept off with most slender care, from striking upon the roots. The mere wooden frame, for instance, which I use in my own window, answers every purpose, and is removed at once when it is not wanted: this, however, is for a balcony or a down-stairs window opening to the ground. It is made like a fender, front and two ends only, with a narrow lining to fit into the window-frame. Being rather longer at each end than the window, about eighteen inches wide, and deep enough to contain an eight-inch pot, it answers every purpose of a raised bed of flowers.

The plants being washed occasionally; being preserved from drying, and *having the benefit of thorough drainage* (provided by crocks and clinkers at the bottom of the box), will, even without any further care, look very fresh and green. It has, however, been often found very useful to have a small glass frame to fit into the box, so that the plants within are sheltered from the severest frost, while in very cold weather some dry moss may be carefully placed round them. Two hand-glasses answer quite as well, but are less ornamental than the light glazed frame, and it is now the fashion, also, to have little projecting glass structures, made so to fit the window that the sash itself forms one side of the little enclosed glazed garden.

Snowdrops, blue and striped crocuses, blue scillas, dwarf red Van Thol tulips, with the double red and yellow kinds, are alone enough to make any window very gay and fragrant.

The snowdrops and scillas are the first to blossom, and very fair and lovely the little dots of blue and white appear, peeping above the green of moss, or even through the brown mould. These little flowers may all be planted in autumn in small-sized (4-inch) flower-pots, and kept in a light window, even looking north. They should be put in a dark cellar or cupboard for a time when meant for in-door flowering, and not be covered up; but for outside the window they may be planted at least two inches deep in light sandy soil. The soil does not seem to me, however, to signify in the least, so that it is well aired and mixed with bits of charcoal.

A lovely window-box may be secured by having alternate pots of snowdrops and scilla siberica, then alternate crocuses and Van Thols, and at each end a pretty spreading fir—cypress, arbor vitæ, or spruce firs are amongst the best. Again, hardy rhododendrons and Ghent azaleas are pretty evergreens, giving beautiful flowers in May. The Daphne cneorum, also, an American plant, which grows best in a very rich, sandy peat soil, is a charming plant for training down or along the box. I had it covered with flowers every spring regularly, many miles further north than London, without the least protection. In London I have found it especially improved by washing. The bright pink flowers at the end of every shoot have perhaps greater fragrance than any other spring flower.

Purple violets of the double Russian kind do also in this way; often auriculas grow beautifully, as all they care for is to avoid heat and damp. Hepaticas and primroses make delightful February gardens; and where a few pots of double daisies, white alyssum, double white and blue primroses, wallflowers, and hepaticas (of which the double pink is best) can be got together, the window may be always bright—the pots of bulbs when ready making a pleasant change.

No plan, however, looks prettier than that most simple one of pots of snowdrops and scillas, and the common spring crocuses and tulips, with plants of primroses nestling up against and underneath the prettily-growing evergreens and firs.

For culture, the chief points are—

never to wet the leaves in cold and frosty weather, *unless the frost has touched them:* then, on the principle of frost-bitten fingers being rubbed with snow, the coldest water should be plentifully used to wet and thaw the leaves *before the sun shines on them*, otherwise, and more safely, the glass should be shaded. This is the safer plan, because otherwise it is difficult to get rid of extra wet lodging in the soil. The more slowly the things thaw the better. The absence of heat and sunshine is indeed the reason why trees on a northern aspect sometimes escape when those which are exposed to the south or east, 'look,' as old gardeners say, 'as if the blast had driven on them.' The more air, the more light, the less water (consistent with fresh and unflagging foliage), and the less damp, clinging moisture, the better will be the success, and the brighter and sweeter will the flowers bloom. These hints, when one reads them, sound so very simple, that I have a fear no one will think that they can be worth practising. At the same time it is quite sure that to say the same thing in very learned words (which I cannot do) would not mend the matter. I only hope that the experiment will be tried, and that the result will not be disappointing. To me, indeed, it seems something like a duty, for those who have the means to buy and the taste to arrange, that they should try to bring a trace of fields and flowers into the dreary streets where so many children wander.

So much, then, for the flowers we grow. We will next approach the subject of the gathered blossoms—dinner-tables, drawing-room vases, wreaths, and pretty bouquets: here it is very difficult to know what to speak of first.

Dinner-tables, however, will perhaps be the most useful; for it needs a good deal of practice amongst flowers to be able at first to choose a really good set for this peculiar purpose. For one great rule, however, there *cannot* be too much green; for a second rule, that green should be *evergreen*. Those large shining leaves look more self-sustained; a very few flowers amongst them are enough for brightness, and I do not think that a crowd of flowers is ever so effective as a lighter group, in which the separate flowers, as on the branch, are visible.

At this time of year, nothing is more beautiful than *a few* camellias grouped with their own dark leaves, and edged with snowdrops and with the adiantum, or harefoot ferns; (Davallia canariensis, D. dissecta, and Adiantum formosum being about the best). Now this is precisely a case in point with what I said of quantity of flowers. One of the really best of the usual modes of filling a centre vase, or a large épergne, is to provide a perfect mass of blossoms for the stiff and formal 'bouquets géométrique.' This, however, is a shocking waste, for half the beauty of flowers consists in the graceful shape of each especial spray. Why not let us see the beauty of the shining round camellias, with their delicate notched petals; and the lily-shaped, slender forms of the azalea clusters, which always look so singularly elegant, with their pencillings of colour, and their perfect freshness, and the delightful fragrance which yet is so indefinable. It does seem a frightful waste to mass such flowers together in perfect rings, or sharply defined wedges, or even in waving lines—the said waves, besides, being of most artificial guiding. And for the waste! The flowers that make up one single group like this, would, rightly used, be enough to fill half a table.

For the centre-piece especially, being a kind of key-note, something should be said about the vase which contains the flowers. A tall white china centre-piece, composed of, or supporting a dish, or tiers of dishes, is always extremely pretty; but then the great thing as regards the flowers is to make the *edges* the chief consideration: little, wreathing, drooping flowers, sprigs of brilliant colour, spreading cool green fern-leaves—these are the things wherewith to adorn such stands.

Colour, again, *must* be much considered. If we have flowers that do

not accord together, it is quite incredible the way they force us to crowd up our vases. It does not occur to us to *take out* special flowers, which by deadening colours give the sense of emptiness, and going on adding more is often the very thing most calculated to increase the harm. Having one colour, and keeping to it, is the grand point to think of. If a thousand shades go well with it, that is all well and good; but it is not certain that because all are flowers all must agree together, or be suited to one another. If, indeed, we could but see some vases done in a natural way—only a profusion of the one graceful lily in its own wide leaves; of the bright geraniums, with their contrasting foliage; the sweet white roses, with their own drooping heads and their small pretty leaf sprays; the beautiful flowers permitted to spread out their graceful petals as though they were still growing in their own garden bed,—we soon should see the harmony between such art and nature. Primroses again, and the blue sweet violets. I do not believe that one person in a hundred has ever seen them once arranged as if they were really growing. And who ever saw bouquet prettier than that sheltered tuft beneath the grey old tree?

'In some cases *—as in impromptu dinners in sea-side or country sojourns, where perhaps the flowers are the only materials really in abundance — it may be well to know how to make them useful; and a wonderfully beautiful display may indeed be wrought at a little expense of most pleasant labour, with the exercise of a little taste, or, as the people "there" would probably call it—gumption. A range of glass milk pans (price from sixpence upwards), or an array of soup plates, supported on finger glasses, have been known to represent a splendid dessert service in a most effective manner—sycamore leaves, and plane leaves, the spreading foliage of beautiful acacias, leaves of water-lilies, ferns gathered on the hill-sides, and many other beautiful shapes of green, utterly concealing the poverty of their supports. The green, it should be remarked, must here be looked upon as a necessary addition, as if it formed a part of the vase itself. I hope this hint may prove a useful one and lead to further attempts to beautify common things; for whatever may be thought of cheap and vulgar *finery*, there is no such thing existing as cheap and vulgar *beauty*.

For those who hardly know what country flowers to think of, I cannot resist the temptation of describing some that may be often found. They are themselves so sweet, though even if they were not so, there is a sort of breath of English woods about them which is more refreshing than any exotic fragrance. Easter is coming, and people go out of town. That is the time for the great white narcissus, lovelier than camellias; for wreaths of white sloe blossom; for garlands of pearly may; and for those richly scented yellow cowslip bells, which country people scorn, or do not, at least, appreciate while they have them. And then, in some hedges, are the wild pink apple blossoms; in many a field long tasselled spikes of grass; larches in plumed foliage, dotted with crimson tufts; woodruffe, nestled under many a bank; pale wood sorrel, with its three-lobed folded leaves; the white 'wind-flower,' with its dark-red, pencilled lines; primroses by myriads; violets blue and white; wild lilac crocuses; sometimes wreaths of woodbine; and, oh prize of prizes! sometimes, we know a wood, where lilies of the valley wave in all their loveliness.

So much for wild flowers.

Why do not more of the London prisoners go out in the fair spring days to bring back home such treasures?

And all these are only our common English wild flowers, for as yet I have not hinted at the garden's store—the piles of clustering lilac, from the purest white to the deep blue lavender; the tapering balls of the Guelders rose; the white waxen

* This plan being mentioned in a little book, just coming out, on 'Flowers,' and seeming so nearly connected with the subject of this chapter, I thought it might be useful to give the passage here.

flowers of the pale syringa, with its scent of orange blossom; and the little crimson China, and the clear pink roses, and then the roses de Meaux; the delightful sweet-briar, and even its single flowers; daphnes, and fringy deutzias; the exquisite white azaleas, and all their attendant train of lovely and early flowers; and the great garden violets, and the spikes of heath, and the old white pinks, and the shining lilies, the sweet old dark-brown wallflowers, and the bowery honeysuckles in every cottage garden; the exquisite briar-roses, and the abounding green.

It is really pleasant to think about such things—even to have them pass in mental review before one.

By way of a contrast now, and again repeating so far what is elsewhere said, I will next describe a very graceful and cool-looking arrangement for a dinner-table in the hottest days of the London season, when cool and refreshing things are most to be desired.

In this design both vases and arrangement conspire to the same end—the vases being made of frosted glass and of crystal dew-drops, with the especial purpose of looking really ice-like.* The chief idea in the design of these is, that while presenting a pile of fruit, lying on cool thick leaves, such as might be disturbed as readily as any other fruit-dish, the flowers or ferns above would make a gracefully-waving shade, without that interruption of the view across the table, which is always found so much of a discomfort.

The accidental advantage, also, of a few sprays of fern and wreaths of drooping roses, being sufficient flowers; and the wide limit left for the use of much or little fruit, will, I think, make the arrangement useful for either large or small requirements.

I therefore proceed to describe some of the flowers that have been found best suited for this kind of vase.

It seems to me that *height* should not be attempted. A good arrangement is to place first in the vase, either a branch of rose-leaves, or a bushy piece of myrtle, or of some such-like green, just to fill the centre without standing up, and to keep the flowers and leaves properly in their places.

The ferns will always then wave widely enough around, and a few sprays of heath or epacris, of graceful blue and white bell-shaped flowers, such as the campanulas and beautiful lily tribes; Wistarias, again, and pale rose acacias are all most exquisite, both for leaves and flowers, when laid in large, fan-like layers all round the vase.

Few things are actually more fresh and beautiful than vases filled entirely with white and rose acacias, the central and larger bouquet combining both amidst their own pale leaves. Wistarias and laburnums, even, are beautiful where a pretty simple group is all that is required. Roses, fuchsias, lilies, and passion flowers; the lovely wreaths of the Peruvian climbing-lily, or rose-coloured Lapageria; sprays of drooping orchids and of summer climbers, even the great white bindweed wreathed around the stem—all these are beautiful.

Sometimes, again, the places may be reversed, and grapes having been placed to hang from the upper vase, with their long wreaths of leaves, the dish below may be filled with water-lilies, floating on their own wave.

One arrangement which always answers very well is, however, that of the first-mentioned ferns, placed lightly and yet abundantly, to droop around the vase, and to overshade the white and purple grapes in the dish below. Perhaps, indeed, the very loveliest vase that I ever saw contained ferns alone; but then that was in the very hottest weather, when green, fresh foliage was above all refreshing.

In colder weather more red becomes desirable: rose-coloured and

* Although the vases here described are made purposely in one piece, their arrangement can be imitated most readily by a tall flower-glass, of a graceful tapering form, spreading out widely at the upper lip—set in a low, wide, round dish which would contain the fruit, or for a drawing-room table another supply of flowers.

white camellias, heaths and red poinsettias, hyacinths and red tulips —these are amongst the flowers to which we have to fly.

Then, again, we may take the lower dish for flowers, and filling it with hyacinths, with snowdrops, moss, and blue-bells, we may make such a bouquet as will last us half the winter.

A zinc pan made to fit into the dish, either in two pieces or passing overhead, would answer for this most perfectly, and the flowers, when grown in pots, may be transplanted safely.

There are, however, two special arrangements I wish to recommend. The first of all, roses, is for a summer group; the dishes in all cases being filled with fruit grouped around the base; the roses have to be arranged above, in their own many shades.

White Banksia rose is admirable for entwining part of the vase itself; the pale, shell-tinted Ruga roses, the exquisitely-shaped noisettes, the long multifloras, the old sweet Pæstum, and the shaded Blanii, are also, some of them, abundant everywhere, while they are all first rate for graceful growth and beauty.

Tea roses, moss roses, the Provence, and the various varieties of the China sort, all give many flowers worthy of a place; but those which I name first deserve some pre-eminence for their dark, healthy foliage, as well as for their beauty or their peculiar sweetness.

Suppose the central vase grouped with crimson roses or the sweet pink moss, gathered in the centre—large clusters of the drooping Banksia all around the edge, and little bunches of pink flowers, like the centre rose, here and there appearing; the dish below heaped up with purple grapes, surrounded at the top by a wreath of their own leaves.

To agree well with this, the other vases might then contain white roses whilst these might be broken up with red and crimson flowers, or bright red fruit peeping out through leaves, might continue the brilliant colour.

Smaller vases, if they are used, standing all round the table, might be filled with fairy roses, sweet little roses de Meaux, and white noisettes—so exquisite for those baskets which white little china figures carry upon their heads.

The second, a wintry design for decking out these vases and their accompaniments, looks, I know, most brilliant.

A thick fringe of green is laid in the centre vase, and all around it runs a ring of waving sprays of hyacinths or heaths, of the palest rose and white. Next to these comes a circle of white camellias, or of tulips, of which four or five are enough, with a fringe of fern-leaves, made to stand up above them. Then a group of heaths or hyacinths again, and one or two bright rose camellias or tulips, forming a sort of crown rising up still higher. In this design the ferns keep up the wide impression, and take off the appearance of a too great height.

But for dinner-flowers, and for drawing-room vases, there are so many kinds that no lists can be full. Ivy-leaved geraniums, though common, are very exquisite, each kind being placed *separately* in a vase, to represent a plant. Heaths and ferns, again, and even scarlet, mixed with white geraniums, are more fresh and cool than any one would suppose; while wreaths of clematis, woodbine, and many other graceful climbing plants, make very charming fringes drooping around a vase.



THE ARTIST IN THE LONDON STREETS.—FAIR FACES IN THE CROWD.

THE SISTERS.

ON THE THRESHOLD OF A DOOR.

A Story of First Love

BY THE AUTHOR OF 'COLSIN STELLA;' 'WHO BREAKS, PAYS,' ETC.

CHAPTER I.

THE DAY DREAM.

ON a fine brisk April afternoon, some dozen years ago, a young Italian painter, Romeo Graziosi by name, was seated in his atelier on the fifth story of a house, one of the whitest and most cheerful-looking in the long Rue de Clichy. This street takes its rise in the semi-aristocratic neighbourhood of the Chaussée d'Antin, and pursues its sinuous course until it debouches into the unmitigated democracy of Batignolles; the rich source and the poor outlet being connected by the central region appropriated to the prison for debt. It is alike a comprehensive and a suggestive street; it is also a good perch for youth making progress either way.

Romeo Graziosi is not alone. On a chair—or rather half on, half off a chair—is his friend Ernest, a small Frenchman, preserving his balance by the cane between his knees, the neat little hairy chin of his neat little face resting on the massive knob of the thick cane. He might ride on that cane.

The long windows of Romeo's studio are open, in spite of the sharp spring air—Romeo says, to let in the scent of the lilacs in bloom which he has placed in the small balcony.

For a wonder, neither of the young men is smoking. Ernest is armed cap-à-pie for a visit of peculiar interest; and Romeo's face wears that impatient expression which steals over even the best-disciplined features when the absence of a visitor is ardently desired. Not only Romeo's countenance, but his very manner of sitting, showed in pantomime his wish that Ernest would go.

Br-r-oumm!—brroumm! say successively two great, massive, arpeggio chords on a piano over the way. The vibration dies away—a flight of octaves follows—then comes a rush of notes, warbling, twittering, trilling, one over the other; a concert given by birds (music by Hensolt) in some forest glade, to a fresh, clear, trickling, merry rivulet: at least this was what was pictured on the wide expanse of Romeo's imagination.

'Brā-vo!—brā-vo! Is it la Clauss, or Goria, or Prudent-Chopin? Mais, mon cher, c'est charmant!' exclaims Ernest, lifting his head from his cane, and wagging it scientifically.

'It is not bad,' returns the Italian.

'How?—not bad! Thou art difficult to please. It is astonishing, ravishing, of the first quality of talent. Let us see—is it in the house opposite? Is it in the first, second, third, fourth, fifth? One can never say whence sound cometh. Come, then, Romeo, make me a confidence; for thou knowest, hypocrite. I wager a hundred to one that it is a woman, young, and lovely as a houri. Thou openedst thy window ten minutes ago, in defiance of this chilly wind. Ah! ha, ha! Romeo, I see—I understand—that is it.'

Romeo pouted a little, then, with the confiding spirit of twenty-four, and being perhaps a little glad to talk the matter over, he imparted to his companion that the pianist undoubtedly was a woman; assuredly young, by her figure and gait; but Romeo had never been able to see her face, though he had lain in wait for her at corners of streets with vigorous, vigilant curiosity. The charming sounds came from the sixième opposite. How hard the Unknown worked!—practising for hours before breakfast, even all through the dark winter months and without light; going out regularly every morning at eleven, returning in the afternoon, practising again, and, as a general rule, through the whole evening into the bargain.

'She has made a progress, an incredible progress, during these last months. Poor little girl! she works for bread, I am sure,' ended Romeo.

'She must be very wise,' observes friend Ernest, 'to persevere so long in this course in our gay city of Paris. Ta-ta-ta—how the fingers go! She cannot, then, be pretty.'

'I know not,' replies Romeo. 'That material called English gauze is impervious to the sharpest of eyes; but her feet—oh! they are beautiful!—so small—so small.'

'A woman who systematically hides her face and shows her feet, my poor friend, does not promise well.'

'But I believe her to be English,' insisted Romeo, as a sort of defence of the young lady's costume. 'One cannot see any one more simple. And then—miladies, real miladies, very tall and very thin, with veils, green, or brown, or blue, and long draperies of cloaks, seek her. I know nothing more respectable in the world.'

'Une Anglaise! — allons donc. They are all infamously ugly, or as beautiful as angels. One must see. Does this bird, which makes itself a nest in the sixth in the roof, never come to breathe the air at the window, or to caress a pot of roses?'

'Thou seest she has no roses,' replied Romeo, rather sadly; 'always, always at the piano.'

'Ha! here is something more interesting,' exclaimed Ernest. 'Probably the handsome young milords of the thin respectable miladies—they are now entering the porte cochère of the Unknown. Look, then.'

Romeo Graziosi obeyed, and his every feature swelled, and his swarthy complexion was suddenly dyed a deep crimson, as though he felt a spasm. 'Should these young men be for our incognita,' went on Ernest, 'she is a pretty miss. Should they not, then she may be wise, but not pretty. We shall see. By all the Saints, they are for her!' as the silence of the piano betokened an interruption, the silence continuing just long enough for a person to cross a small room, open a door, and perhaps answer a question.

'Sapristi!' cries Ernest, 'she is wise, my friend, but not pretty. I give her up. Look, there they go, the young milords;' and he pointed to the two young men walking quietly down the street.

Romeo recovered his serenity and his usual olive colour. The piano shortly again sent forth its sound, but recommenced with neither great chords nor flying echoes. With a delicious amplitude, and with a loving, lingering finger, the pianist played, 'Qui la voce suave.'

'Ah!' exclaims Ernest, who must always criticise it and not feel; 'there—that is better—a grand, large style. It is superb!' And he spreads his hands out on either side, as if swimming.

But Romeo did not hear the applause. The music had stirred the quiet waters of the past and from their depths sprang the serpent recollection, winding round him and pressing him in painful coils, that made his breath short and his eyes moist. He thought of home, with dear mother and brethren, all the ties of family, all the links of early habit; of the familiar native faces, the familiar native dialect, the vines, the fig-trees, the mountains, and the plains. The silly boy had been parted from all those through a first love; he had shot his arrow high, as ardent enthusiastic youths often do; he had chosen for his early idolatry a prisoner of state. Romeo, in the enthusiasm of twenty years, had thrown himself on his knees before the tower in which his queenly love languished, and called to her by her forbidden name, Divina Libertà, vowing vows to her, and swearing by his own loyalty that he would strive for her deliverance.

But vows and plots had left the captive more captive than ever, and sent the unlucky champion far from blue skies, orange groves—from brightness and warmth, from passionate mother's love, and from large black eyes, that emphasized the sweet truths spoken by glorious lips, red as the pomegranate flower. Thus Romeo is an exile in Paris, gay Paris, most leaden coloured to him, where the air is not impregnated with the odour of orange flowers—very far from it—where the eyes can all of

them say but one thing, 'Admire me;' while the pinched, narrow lips let slip, in a shrill falsetto, neat little denegations of the demand made by the eyes.

'What is to become of my Ideal in this world of Paris?' mused Romeo, in his small low-roofed room.

Luckily, however, though Romeo's imagination was on scanty rations, the consequence was not starvation to his body. From his earliest years he had been consecrated to the priesthood of Art. He was born a painter; even as a boy he produced pictures; where others put down on paper or canvas tame copies, Romeo gave you a small poem to study. But how? Because he had the gift to do it.

It had been predicted that the child-artist was destined to resuscitate the past glory of the country of Rafaelle and Leonardo; but he fell in love, and now it would seem as if Italy must remain content, as she has so long been, with the glory of the past, and Romeo with daily bread, instead of a world-wide fame. He must clip his soul's wings. Aspirations may be so high, that they escalade heaven itself, and yet not place a coin in the purse. He must keep his thoughts within range, if he meant to do his duty by a mother who had done hers by him. Sacrifice called for sacrifice: he must drudge and struggle. Drudge he did at portraits in oil. Vanity, stinginess, stupidity, self-conceit, paid him forty francs for their semblances. There was one man who had five likenesses taken of himself: oils, crayons, water colours, side face, and full face. He had a wife and three daughters; but the idea of having their pictures taken never crossed his shallow brain; and yet the four women really believed in him, and thought him the first man of his day. Without him, how could Paris get on?

Romeo, after four years of this task-work, had arrived at asking ten times his original price, and the poetry of his nature had sufficiently evaporated to make him, with unfortunate humility, consider himself a successful man.

Romeo had first heard the piano in the opposite house the week before the last Christmas. The grinding at exercises to acquire mechanical skill had in the beginning tortured his ear; but the indomitable energy of the learner (he soon discovered that it was a woman) ended by interesting and attracting him. One day he thought, 'If I now had some of that untiring courage, what might I not accomplish?' and he lay in bed creating a new planet with inhabitants of fairy loveliness, and only got up because he had the portrait of a very commonplace individual of the known world to dash through. His feeling as he pocketed the money for this, was as though he had won it by dishonourable service; he knew he was capable of better things, but then they needed more exertion, and—no battle, no victory.

Always, always, at the piano! no relaxation apparently, but to run through all weathers, fair or foul, in a shabby, thin, little mantle and gown, with a heavy roll of music tied up in a black waterproof case—giving lessons probably in order to receive them herself. 'Poor little one! thy perseverance shall surely conquer one day.'

The unwearied pianist thus first troubles, then mingles in all Romeo's reveries. The studies, those frightful accumulations of scales, trills, and arpeggios are soon diversified by sonatas and adagios. Romeo does not recognize the music; he is not intimate enough with Beethoven to do so; it is a language unknown indeed, but most musical. How the notes beg, and pray, and beseech—they call to him, 'Aspire, aspire!' Then the measure changes from that slow, prayerful one to allegro, prestissimo and Romeo hearkens for days to a duel between the performer and instrument. She is baffled, worn out; her fingers refuse to obey her; but the next day and the next, the brave one resumes the struggle.

'I, too, will fight and conquer,' exclaims the eager listener, and he places a large canvas on his easel. He meditates, and a glow of hope irradiates his handsome face. Shall he, like another Rafaelle, clothe his

ideal in the form of the Holy Mother and Child; or, faithful to his first love, paint her as one of the heroines of Jewish slavedom, freeing her country by sword or hammer? Judith and Holofernes—a fine subject, though rather used up.

His facile pencil traces while his mind hesitates, lines multiply in one corner of the large canvas on the easel; a picture is outlined. The pianist is hard at work. Romeo keeps time to the measure with his brush. Delicate, transparent colours express a girl with a distaff, seated on a bit of grey rock, and a couple of goats browsing near. The girl has dropped her work, and, listening to the music of a Pifferaro, is gazing at the musician's little daughter, crowned with wild flowers, who is dancing. A charming group it was—the two girls so different—the spinner so fresh and demure, with soft, proud eyes; the small dancer so sunburned, so thin, so ragged and so picturesque, withal so brimful of glee. Every inch of her is in motion, not her feet only—she dances, you understand, to the time of the extraordinary allegro the piano-student over the way is playing. Then the piper himself, in his tattered cloak, and his worn gaiters tied by a dozen knotted strings, not a bit like the Pifferari painted from a model. There is just the difference one distinguishes at once in a language spoken by a foreigner and a native.

Thus, while awaiting the happy moment of inspiration to give him a subject for a great picture, Romeo works for many days at the little picture—half whistling, half singing an accompaniment to the music of the indefatigable pianoforte player.

This happened in the early spring days, when butterflies begin to flutter in the bright sun—when showers enamel fields and by-lanes with pale flowers—when in great cities the uproar and crash of gaiety is at the highest. Romeo only lays down his brush when the light fails. He has heard the piano, and only the piano, through all the clash of multitudes and carriages in the streets below. All day it calls to him, 'Work, work!' In the twilight he smokes his pipe, and listens to the voices of his heart.

CHAPTER II.

SITTING IN JUDGMENT.

The first of May chanced to be a flower market-day at the Madeleine. On the pavement to the left of the church looking towards the Rue Royale, some of every kind of spring or early summer flowers glittered, and some of perhaps every class of Parisians were gathered before the flowers. The workwoman in her pretty cap, so inimitably worked and frilled, and, above all, so spotless, tripped along elbowing the elegant lady who has just stepped out of a coupé, herself to choose the replenishment of her jardinières. The steady young matron with her baby, its head in a cushion, and the Norman nurse with hers in a cambric tower, were there calmly making a choice among plants likely to last, and casting a contemptuous glance at the charming lady who is carelessly ordering the most lovely but most fragile of the show. There is a sprinkling of fashionably-dressed young men, and there are some specimens, too, of a badly-spent life. What can bring that old man here, with face carved by vice, and hand palsied by intemperance? Can spring have any charms for him? Can it awake any tender recollections in him? A young person, modestly dressed in a grey gown and black mantle, too thin both of them for the season, advances; her upright, well-balanced figure and clear, cheerful, strong voice speak of youth, health, and hope, three blessings long lost to the old man standing behind her. It would be difficult to decide, from the attire of the young woman, to what rank of life she belonged; but her voice and language allow of no hesitation. She is a lady, and, what is very touching, a poor lady, with all the delicate instinct of her sex and class struggling with poverty. There is, however, nothing plaintive or melancholy about this grey-gowned young lady; she is speaking with great

decision. She knows very well what she wants, and she is energetically trying to obtain it. She shows character by the philosophy with which she at once submits to the impossibility of obtaining the large rose in full bloom, and by the quick discovery of one smaller, but still of the same kind and as beautiful in its way. She will have that and a pot of cyclameres; now she begins to bargain with widow Raymond Booth—'No, no;' and shows such a frank determination not to be imposed on, that Widow Raymond, a crusty old soul in general, has her ears so agreeably tickled, that she shrugs her shoulders and gruffly yields. The young lady has a mine of good fortune in that voice of hers, though it has now attracted the notice of a young Frenchman, neat and small, shining from head to foot. He bites the head of his large, handsome cane, half closes his eyes, the better to concentrate his view of the merry girl in grey. It is a wonder he does not make a telescope of his hands, as amateurs do at picture exhibitions. There is more of curiosity than admiration in the gaze of the modish gentleman. He smiles at the sort of boy's shoes on the feet of the young lady; small the feet are, but, heavens! what a contrast to those kid boots of that fascinating lady meandering her way to one of the side doors of the church. Grey gown places her rose tree and her cyclameres on the ground by her side, and dives into her pocket for her purse. Out of this shabby leathern receptacle she hands a two-franc piece and a franc, receiving back some sous in change. Then, as if the desire were quite uncontrollable, she asks if she can have a root of double daisies for the sous, and receives them from Madame Raymond with a delight quite child-like, as if she had been very clever indeed. The man old in many sins on one side of her, and the man young in many vanities on the other, each moved by some inexplicable sympathy, suddenly offer her—the one his bouquet of lilies of the valley, the other a bunch of narcissus. She turned smartly from the young man with a peremptory negative 'Merci,' but hesitated (only for an instant though; it was not in her nature to hesitate) glancing through her thick brown veil of 'English material,' at the wreck of manliness before her, then drew out two or three of the flowers from the bouquet he was holding towards her and bowed. It was a movement of charity such as must have made angels smile. Now she turns to look for her treasures, they are gone—vanished. 'That young man has them,' says Widow Raymond, pointing to a lad in a blouse with a porter's ticket on his arm.

'How, then!' exclaims grey gown with a spirited dash at the youth.

'Mademoiselle, permit me; I am going to carry them home for you.'

'Thank you infinitely, my friend, but I don't need any one to carry them for me;' and the young lady took hold of the pot of cyclameres in the porter's grasp and gave it a good pull.

'It is impossible; mademoiselle cannot carry one, two, three plants herself.'

'What is that you say? Impossible! I am going to show you that, for understand, my friend, I do not need your services, and I will not have them. Give me my flowers,' and with great determination a pair of small hands, cased in grey cotton gloves, took firm hold of first one flower-pot and then the other.

'C'est-il drôle, ces étrangères,' observed the discomfited man of the people, as the young lady walked off embracing a flower-pot with each arm—her root of daisies and her lilies of the valley in her hand. Her step was as resolute as it was elastic. She placed her foot on the ground as if the soil were hers. Across the Place du Havre she went, down the Rue St. Lazare, up the Rue Taitbout into the aristocratic Rue d'Aumale. Romeo's friend Ernest, cigar in mouth, followed, a few yards behind it is true, but making it cruelly evident to the passers by that he was following the young person in grey, taking equal care, however, that it should be patent to every looker-on that the chase was not a hot one. But why a chase at all? Ernest strongly doubts and strongly suspects.

Even should this not be Romeo's pianist with the brown veil, it gratified Ernest to be seen engaged as a young man comme il faut ought to be in Paris; but he was not really wicked. Appearances contented his small vanity. The unconscious girl, too much occupied with her burden to have eyes for aught else, entered the porte cochère of a fine hotel. Ernest, whose zeal was reanimated by the disappearance of his prey in a dwelling of so much pretension, hurried after her in time to catch a sight of her gown floating up the grand staircase.

'Pardon, madam,' thus he addresses the lady who guards the door. 'Mademoiselle with the flowers.

'H—Oui, mossieu. She is gone up this moment to Mr. Chopin.'

'Very well,' responds Ernest, and returns to the street. In five minutes grey gown reappeared without the two flower-pots, but with the root of daisies in her hand, and took the road in the direction of the Barrière de Clichy. Step by step Ernest accompanied her, until he saw her enter the door of the house opposite to the one inhabited by Romeo. How clever of him to guess it was the pianoforte student by her brown veil! A visit to Romeo was indispensable—or of what use all this trouble? Turning round, Ernest found himself face to face with the old man of the lilies of the valley. 'The old mummy,' mutters the little dandy, and running up the four flights of stairs at a breath, he bursts with a laugh into the serious young Italian's atelier.

'On my word of honour a pretty discovery,' Ernest exclaims. 'We are undone, ruined, lost, my dear. The lady is a wandering princess; has her little adventures, and her rendezvous according to rule.'

'Hein! and thou, with thy ruin and thy princesses, art a wandering mystery.'

'Seriously, my dear,' went on Ernest, 'the industrious artiste up there is not worth thy attention. She has every bad quality; she is English or even Scotch. I am sure I saw a tuft of hair, colour of carrots, unfailing local colour of the children of perfidious Albion—perhaps it is the tint proper for Protestants, that Judas tint.'

'I recognize thy French blood by thy diatribes against thy Britannic neighbours.'

'It is true, the English enrage me. She is English, for believest thou she buys a dozen pots of flowers and she will carry them every one herself; she buys a root of weeds and utters cries of delight. I offer her some fresh, but very fresh narcissus; she refuses them with the air of a Juno — an old mummy (the famous, infamous A. de B—) presents a bouquet to her. Ah! from him she accepts lilies of the valley. Pah! speak to me of women's instincts; I believe they are all like Eve—the crawling snake attracts them always.'

'My dear, the snake did not crawl when he whispered to Eve, it was afterwards; thy French scepticism and cynicism blind thee. This young lady refused thee because she sees in thee a vain young puppy, who would construe a politeness into the encouragement of advances. She took the good-for-nothing R.'s flowers, it is clear, from compassion, perhaps, even, because she saw he was a sinner and would not throw the stone; who knows?'

'Poet and romancer! thou canst think thus of the women of our day?'

'Thou hast, then, had no mother?' said Romeo. 'It is from my mother I judge women'

'Ha! there is something in that How is it that mothers are all good?'

'I am glad thou canst allow so much. Poor little woman! Listen —how hard she works.'

The pianist was attacking—that's the word for it—one of her last new pieces. She tried it first one way, then another; there was impatience and dissatisfaction in the continual going back to the beginning; at last she has hit on the right time and the right strength of tone — she begins slow and soft, and manages a good rapid crescendo.

'Brava! brava!' murmurs the Italian, settling himself to his easel as though he had received a remonstrance against idleness.

'Schubert's Marguérite au Rouet,' says Ernest. 'How magnificently Goria executes it! Quite another affair—rapid! r—r—r oumm! and it is done. Thou thinkest this best, that regards thee. Ah! my friend, take care; Chopin may well be her Faust. She is very enthusiastic in her music; she took the flowers to him.'

'Then she is grateful as well as enthusiastic,' returned Romeo.

'Art thou by accident in love with this Unknown?'

'No,' replied Romeo, 'but her modesty and industry please me.'

'She inspires thee to paint spinners I see. Pretty little trifle! But when wilt thou decide on a subject for the salon? When wilt thou come and see my Endymion?'

'That is, then, the subject for thy future great picture?'

'Yes; simple, you see: two figures—five metres by three, but with effects of light, my dear! The moon here and fire-light there. Seriously, thou must give up these nothings'—pointing to another small canvas on which was already sketched a group—'and address thyself in earnest to work'

'That is soon said,' quoth Romeo; 'what if I have no inspiration but for nothings?'

'Give up thy inspirations and thy spinning-wheels, though truly this little thing is not without a kind of merit; but with such thou wilt not arrive at the dignity of historical painting.'

'I fear,' said Romeo, 'that I am not born to dignity; one cannot ask from a linnet the strength or the flight of an eagle.'

'That is true,' replied Ernest, drawing himself up, and strutting; 'come and see my Endymion; he is like a young poplar which balances itself in the breeze; and my Diane—' here Ernest made a bunch of his fingers and kissed the tips fervently.

A vigorous pull at Romeo's door-bell made the Frenchman rap out 'saprejeu,' and the Italian jump up with a 'corpo di Satanasso,' and hasten to see who might be the importunate visitor. Ernest hearing a woman's voice, stepped briskly forward in time to hear in an unmistakeable Britannic accent:

'Vous êtes le peintre italien, je suppose?'

'Oui madame, à vos ordres.'

A very tall and very handsome woman walked or rather sailed into the atelier:

'Madame désire,' says Romeo, suggestively, dusting and placing one of his chairs—the one that always figured in his portraits.

'Oui, monsieur, je veux avoir mon portrait fait. Je suis Mademoiselle Torrington.'

'Je veux' in such cases as the preceding does not mean 'I wish,' but 'I will,' and a most peremptory will was Miss Torrington's.

'I leave thee, my dear,' said Ernest, with a charming fatuity of look and tone. 'Au revoir,' and he made the lady a swimming glisséing bow with his hat skimming the floor.

CHAPTER III.

MISS TORRINGTON APPEARS.

'Is he a painter also?' asked Miss Torrington, as she seated herself; she spoke French badly but fluently.

'Yes, madame.'

'Little monkey, thinks himself an Adonis, as all Frenchmen do.' Miss Torrington then indulged herself in a survey of the painter and his room. 'You are very young to paint such good portraits.'

Romeo coloured with pleasure, and began to feel reconciled to his visitor.

'Madame has seen some?'

'Yes, or I should not be here. Beginners,' continued the lady, 'generally make strong likenesses, so strong as to be almost caricatures—most portraits are detestable. Very few people are as ugly as the pictures made of them.'

'Madame could not make but a lovely figure.'

Miss Torrington sighed and said, 'A fine ruin, but still a ruin.'

'Madame jests.'

She shook her head and asked, 'How old do you think I am?'

Romeo hesitated. 'When Madame

came into the room I should have said thirty years at most.'

'And now?'

'A little more than that, certainly,' returned the young painter, his cheeks a deep red.

'Very well. Now understand, you are to make a picture of me like what I appeared to you when you first saw me—can you do it?'

'Yes, readily; it is only to keep the line of the jaw——'

'Never mind telling me how you will do it—do it.'

'And the size?'

'Ah! it must be easy to carry. Can you begin at once?'

'Certainly.'

The English lady took off her bonnet and shook down a thicket of nut-brown curls. Without her bonnet Miss Torrington was even handsomer than Romeo had at first thought her. There was something in her face that reminded him of Guido's Cenci; that something unfathomable, so at variance with the soft features and complexion. Time had not injured a single feature; but he had run away with the youthful texture of the skin, and given a slight fulness and droop to the lower part of the face. Nevertheless, she was still admirably beautiful, and she saw that the painter felt her to be so.

'*You* are not more than five-and-twenty,' she said, while he was collecting his implements.

'Twenty-four last birthday.'

A silence.

'Talk to me,' began the lady; 'it is one of a portrait painter's duties to amuse his patients.'

Romeo smiled. How could such a hermit as he was find discourse to amuse a fashionable lady?

'Tell me your day-dreams. You may talk to me without reserve. I am old enough for any confidences. Young men of your age look upon women of mine much as they would on their grandmothers—that's the truth, is it not?'

'Till I saw you, madame,' replied Romeo, 'I might have thought so.'

'Thank you. Now for your beau-idéal. You shake your head. What! Young, an artist, an Italian, and not have dreamed?'

'Because I am an Italian, and have dreamed of one beautiful and lofty as the fair expanse of heaven, I am here an exile, sketching an English lady's portrait.'

'Indeed! I was sure you had a romantic story. I am curious to hear it. The year of Queen Victoria's accession to the throne, the madhouses in England were at a loss where to lodge all the young men who went love-crazed for her young majesty. I have been much in Italy of late, but I cannot guess what sovereign lady has broken your heart.'

'Cannot you? Did you never hear of one who is a mystery and a terror for Italy?'

'No; if you were an English girl instead of an Italian youth, I should suppose you had fallen in love with the pope.'

Romeo laughed, then said with solemnity, 'Madame, did you never hear of Divine Liberty?'

'Ah! I understand now; you are a carbonaro, a ferocious republican, a Paladin in search of adventures. My young friend, I am afraid you are born to die a disagreeable death, that is, if you are constant to your first love. In the mean time I wish you would close your windows; the sound of that eternal piano jars my nerves.'

'She plays well, however,' said Romeo, as he obeyed.

'She! You know it is a woman, do you? So in spite of your grand passion you condescend to interest yourself in common mortals. A compassionate soul you find the musician, I dare say.'

'I have not the honour of her acquaintance.'

'If introductions were necessary in that quarter, I could introduce you.'

'Madame knows the young lady?'

'Madame knows the young lady. Youlia Evanovna Belokuroff — which means Julia, the daughter of John Belokuroff—was once my dame de compagnie.'

'She is not, then, English?'

'No, Russian — all that is most Russian. She is, to boot, a Krepostnaria, a serf, the descendant of serfs.'

'But she is free, once over the Russian frontier,' exclaimed Romeo.

'Perhaps she is, but Russia has long claws; besides, Youlia Evanovna's owner, the Princess S——, though two-thirds cracked, did not bring her to Paris without a contract that binds the genius here or anywhere.'

Romeo was silent.

'She is young, so probably she won't find her price difficult to obtain in Paris,' said Miss Torrington.

'God's blessing be on her efforts!' returned Romeo, gravely.

'I don't believe you are half so innocent as you pretend to be, Monsieur Grazioso.'

Romeo had put aside his chalk and was gazing stedfastly at the speaker. She asked him abruptly, 'Why don't you go on with your drawing?'

'Impossible! The expression of your face is changed and the lines are deepened.'

'Indeed! Well, it's no wonder if I look bitter, for I feel bitterly. The sting of ingratitude is hard to bear, and that girl to whom I confided my inmost feelings is a lump of treachery. Sir, you are very young and very impressionable. Take my advice—stick to that first charmer of your imagination; though fabulous, it is beautiful. Love, friendship, gratitude, disappointment, deceive and forsake us. I, who speak to you, know this by experience.'

Miss Torrington gathered up her bonnet and mantle, making an exit as abrupt as her entrance had been. Romeo had not felt so lonely nor so miserable since his first days in Paris. That beautiful woman had come and robbed him of his serenity; he was one patient of all things except of wilful evil, either in himself or others. For the moment Miss Torrington had numbed his tender, vivacious nature. The effect was, perhaps, out of proportion to the cause, but the fact remains that Romeo's heart had shrunk together at her words as the leaves of the sensitive plant do at the merest approach of a rough finger. The tone of mockery, together with the wicked smile which outraged the beauty of the Englishwoman's lips had brought loneliness and discouragement to the generous-hearted child of genius. Who pauses to think of the harm that may be done by heartless words, lightly said or lightly written? Who stays the bitter eloquence with which his pen or lip stings because it may, forsooth, drive a tender spirit out into the desert of distrust?

Romeo eyed with disdain his beautiful little picture, the last one of the young mother, frowned at it, and at the murmurs of Julie Evanovna's piano which would penetrate his closed window. He seized a large blunt stick of charcoal, striving to force his brain to conceive some subject to fill the large canvas yet a blank—half bent on annihilating the precious bit in the corner. Straight lines and curves disfigure the white surface, but it would have taken the most skilful of clairvoyants to have made out an intention. Is it Samson and Delilah, or Armida and Rinaldo? Truly as like the one group as the other. Romeo flung away his blunt charcoal and threw himself on his bed, burying his face in the pillow to shut out those continuous sounds which seemed to say so plainly, 'I am wedded to labour, I am wedded to labour.' Humbug! Why should that rich, beautiful woman speak ill of a serf girl? Women only calumniate one another when rivalry exists between them. How could Romeo guess that rich beauty had soothed her wounded pride by the flattering unction that she had failed in her pursuit of wealth—station, not by her own demerits but through the intrigues of her young companion? And, after all, what was it to him? It was all right, quite right! What did it signify to him how Julie Evanovna won her way through life? This being decided, he started up, made an elaborate toilet. Yes, he would go forth and seek pleasure; *that* was tangible, he said, even if love and friendship were slipping forth. And where on all the round earth is pleasure so easily commanded as in its great mart, Paris? Romeo went to seek it.

'My dear,' says Ernest, the next visit he pays—and on an average he sees Romeo every other day—'My dear, I have come expressly to give thee the history of the little Russian.'

'Much obliged.'

'She is pretty, and Russian, not English; and she caused the breaking off the marriage of the belle Anglaise with a great personnage.'

'Bah!' returns Romeo, trying to appear unconscious and indifferent.

'I tell thee it is true the great personnage planted the belle Anglaise and would have gathered the humble flower; and what is droll, the little Russian and she are again rivals, and they say the hero this time is as handsome and young, ah! as handsome as my Endymion. He is the grandson of a benevolent miladi who protects thy Julie; and he is here beneath thee,' and Ernest taps the floor with his little toes; 'that is the secret of thy having the lady to paint, and not thy fame, oh Graziosi! Thou art not the rose, but——'

'And thou repeatest these miserable canards as truths.'

'The half of Paris knows them to be true.'

'And the other half knows them to be lies,' said Romeo.

'I really understand not thy defence of this little one. Hast thou any objection to my trying my luck with Madlle. Julie.'

'Try!' cried Romeo. The word was scarcely uttered before he hated himself for it. By what right did he urge on this attack on an innocent person? He had come back to his original opinion—that steady earnest daily work was irrefragable proof to him; he would have staked his life that Julie was steady and prudent. The material time was wanting for evil doing. Did he not know the distribution of her hours? Romeo looked at Ernest, and in that happy combination of vanity and egotism, where was he to find the right spot to hit with his appeal? Should he recal his defiant 'Try!'

'I don't want to meddle with prior claims,' says Ernest; 'the victory, I fancy, would scarcely indemnify me for the trouble; in truth, it is more to convince thee than to pleasure myself.'

How Romeo hated his friend. 'I defy you,' he retorted.

'I accept thy challenge. In less than twenty-four hours I will kiss my hand to you from that charming hole called a window.'

'You may kiss your hand'—Romeo no longer used the familiar, friendly 'thou' and 'thee'—for 'I know the measure of your impertinence, and yet have no right to boast of the acquaintance of Mademoiselle Belokuroff.'

'Wilt thou be satisfied if I invite thee to join us?'

A sort of cramp seized on Romeo's heart as he listened to Ernest's retreating steps; the cramp of remorse for having by his pettish folly fired the train for an impertinence to an unprotected woman. What ought he to do? Warn her? How could he after his own defying speeches? besides, his warning might cause even more serious scandal.

For more than four months Romeo had listened to that piano; it had solaced and cheered many a solitary gloomy hour; it had been like a good friend spurring him by example to persevering labour; it had been a suggester of noble thoughts. Romeo was in a puzzle—the piano or the pianiste, or both, or how was it, or were they identical? He was trying to unpuzzle himself when Miss Torrington came in for her last sitting, and with her was a fine young man about Romeo's own age. Romeo at once recognized in the stranger one of the young men Ernest had protested were milords going to visit the unknown.

'A neighbour of yours, Mr. Graziosi,' said Miss Torrington, introducing the Englishman to the Italian.

'Part of Ernest's story, then, is true,' thought the troubled Romeo.

'A fine likeness,' said the strange visitor; 'your colours are true and transparent'—the words were approving, but there was neither interest of tone nor look accompanying them. Miss Torrington wished her friend to point out any alteration that would improve the picture.

'I see no need of any change: it is excellent.'

'But you, as a friend, ought to know my face better than a stranger, and be able to give hints.'

'Indeed, Mr. Graziosi seems to me to have very ably performed his task,' the gentleman was gazing round the room. 'Ah! what is this?'—with a slight haste, taking up the Pifferaro, and carrying it to the light. 'This is charming; why do you paint portraits?'

Romeo sighed.

'Have you any more like this?'

Romeo moved his big canvas from the wall, and showed the nearly completed picture of the Young Mother and Child; nothing but a girl bending over her first born, sleeping in a cradle. Long, long, did the stranger gaze at this picture.

'Curious,' he said, at last. 'One would say, sir, that you had been trying to idealize some charming model, and been betrayed by your own admiration of the original. A brilliant performance, this simple portrait, Signor Graziosi—for it is a portrait, is it not?' and the Englishman smiled kindly, but with a certain significance.

'No, sir. I painted it from—from instinct.'

'Indeed! rather say inspiration. Miss Torrington, is not the resemblance striking to our fair musician?'

Miss Torrington looked at the picture, then at Romeo, and said, 'So you would not take my advice?'

'Indeed, madam, this is quite an ideal head.'

'Ah! your present ideal.'

'Is this a commission?' inquired the Englishman.

'Yes,' said Miss Torrington, hastily; 'Mr. Graziosi's first picture is mine by priority of application: he has only to name his price and the picture is mine.'

Romeo was better pleased Miss Torrington should have it than the stranger: he had heard the observation about the fair musician; there were the elements of Othello about him. He could name no sum, for he confessed this was the first time he had had an offer save for likenesses.

'Well,' said the friendly Englishman, 'allow me to bring a friend or two to-morrow, and they shall decide its value.'

Miss Torrington and the stranger were gone. The flush of pleasure faded from the young Italian's cheek and the proud beat of his heart was checked. He missed the sound of the faithful piano; he longed for it as he might have done for the congratulations of a dear friend. How was this? It was not one of the hours for her to be absent: he knew her habits as well as his own. Could Ernest have forced his threatened visit on her already? Romeo seized his hat and sallied forth. He asks breathlessly of the portière of the opposite house for Mademoiselle Belokuroff. 'Sortie,' was the laconic reply. Romeo's lessons in jealousy were accumulating. That haughty, handsome Englishman — that vain, young Frenchman? The Italian began to suffer as those do who lose the illusions of blind love. On he wandered, taking involuntarily the direction of Ernest's lodging on the other side of the Seine. The afternoon was sultry, with occasional gusts of hot wind, which bent the branches of the trees in a manner most threatening to the still delicate young leaves; the air was such as unstrings the best-braced nerves. The Seine swirled sullen and repulsive through the bridges. Ernest was not at home, had not been at home since the morning. Romeo turns and walks towards the Tuileries: in so doing he comes on a great excited crowd; the gendarmes are there. A revolution! It must be owned that Romeo's heart gave a revolutionary bound back to the banner of his first love, and that he plunged resolutely into the very thickest of the mob. Oh! Heaven, what is that? What are those rough unshorn men carrying? A girl with long dishevelled fair hair that drips water—a pale—pale girl in grey. The men put the brancard on which she lies so still on the ground—Romeo pushes forward.

'Real, fine, white satin that, master,' said one of the bearers, pointing to the bare shoulder, 'a rare weaver made that.'

'A doctor, for mercy's sake!'

'Dead—dead!' every one murmurs hoarsely, 'no need of doctors.' A horrid fear creeps into Romeo's heart as he looks and looks. Fair locks and a grey dress—is not that the description Ernest gave him of the Unknown? In the twinkling of an eye, improbabilities become realities for the excited young painter. Miss Torrington—Ernest—himself had done the girl to death. On—on he ran, and rushed like a whirlwind up to the porteress of Julie's dwelling. 'Mademoiselle Belokuroff?' he gasped.

'Au lit.'

'God be thanked! I shall return to-morrow morning,' he said in a resolved manner.

'Bien—bien—bien,' replies the porteress, her 'back up' at once. 'I do not say no.'

CHAPTER IV.

ALL'S WELL THAT ENDS WELL.

ROMEO dreamed through the night—dreamed with his eyes open more wildly than with them shut. He made up his mind as to the course he would pursue next day: he resolved no longer to waste his best feelings on a phantom: he would see and judge, and work out his fate. But what seems very easy and dashing at night with a fevered pulse, looks often very hazardous and foolish by broad common-sense daylight. Romeo did not allow this to himself, but attributed his hesitation to the necessity of waiting for his new-found patron. He made, however, a peculiarly careful toilet, and when at midday three gentlemen entered his atelier, they found the young painter dressed as if for a marriage. The handsome Englishman introduced his friends—one a famous critical writer on Art, a little old man with but one eye, but that, like Tibbie Fowler's, was a piercer, and Romeo felt it go through him as if it had been an awl, when it rested on his gay waistcoat. The other gentleman was one since well known for his mural paintings. The grey-haired critic took his eye from the young artist to look at the picture on the easel, and said, 'Ah! monsieur has not considered originality as a primary merit.' Was this praise or censure? Romeo kept silence. 'Nevertheless,' went on the critic, 'the composition is good in the philosophic sense of the word, and so is the clair-obscure, and there is transparency and a firm touch. Young gentleman, I perceive you have pursued a conscientious study of your art, and I honour you for it.'

Poor Romeo! this last unmerited praise crushed him by its jewelled weight.

'Have you ever tried your hand at fresco?' here asked the great painter.

'When I was a boy—yes.'

'Many years ago?' questioned the gentleman with a smile.

'Some seven or eight years ago,' answered the unconscious Romeo, with gravity.

The Englishman now begged his friend to look at 'The Mother and Child.'

'Tiens—that is better!' emphatically pronounced the critic. 'Naïve but excellent. You wish me to fix its value? Young man, send it to the salon, and let the public, the only really impartial judge, do that for you. If you only want me to name its marketable price, I say——' and he named what seemed an extravagant sum to Romeo. 'You have imagination and heart enough,' continued the feuilletonist, 'to be a worthy artist, but don't live alone—don't live alone—bad for real art Seek that companionship in a wife, without which man's heart hardens. Work for her, and keep your affections, in which your power lies, healthy by proper exercise.'

'Wonderful man!' thought Romeo.

'Come and see me, and I'll mention you in my first article on this year's paintings.'

'Here is my card, sir,' said the fresco painter. 'I hope we shall see more of one another. I am on the look-out for co-labourers—à l'avantage, Mons. Graziosi.'

The Frenchmen bow and retreat; the Englishman gives the Italian's hand a dislocating shake and whispers, 'Put "sold" on the Pifferaro. Miss Torrington must not have

both, and in future let us be good neighbours. You pass my door daily—come and make the acquaintance of my mother and grandmother.'

They are gone, and Romeo feels himself as happy as a prince, happier probably. He longs for sympathy. Where's the piano? What! silent again, and in the moment of his triumph? Perhaps this sudden draught of the elixir of success has intoxicated him, for he catches up his hat, glances in the looking-glass, and is away.

'Mademoiselle Belokuroff, if you please.'

'At the sixth above the entresol,' screams the porteress after him—as if Romeo did not know that

Julie Evanovna Belokuroff had been out early that morning to take her music lesson of M. Chopin. He taught her for very little: he knew the courageous girl was trying to ransom herself, and he had allowed her to fix the remuneration she could afford to pay, as she refused his gratuitous instruction, and Chopin and some of his English friends found beginners for her to teach. The great master considered Julie as one of his most promising pupils, and he was, besides, touched by the sort of savage enthusiasm she felt for himself. He came to look on her quite as a daughter, even as a friend He found Julie a very honest friend. With her, wrong-doing was wrong-doing, let the culprit be whom he would, but then after her severest tirades, she would cry her eyes out for his sufferings of body and mind.

This particular morning it had been the master's turn to reproach—yes, reproach her, who, of all maidens, had the best right to be proud of herself. Yes, she had to listen to denunciations of her folly—to listen to his sermonizing against receiving gentlemen visitors, let them be as old as Methusaleh, or young as Cherubino. It is an error to say she listened to M. Chopin, for at the first word of accusation she started up with a fierce monosyllabic denial, and a fierce demand for the name of the scandalmonger. Mons. Chopin went on without heeding the denial or the question, and Julie, in a storm of tears, went on reiterating Miss Torrington's name. For who but Miss Torrington—whose wicked jealousy had driven her from the home she had forced on her with fleeting enthusiasm a few months before—who but Miss Torrington would so malign her, punishing her for having pleased her too well at first?

Receiving no contradiction of her suspicions, Julie rushed from M. Chopin's presence, and ran home with all sorts of violent projects fermenting in her head. She *would* have justice—she must, or she should break her heart. She would go to the police—the juge de paix—the English ambassador—no—not to Lady G. N. because of her excellent handsome grandson's name having been mixed up in the scandal.

Without heeding a speech made to her by the porteress, Julie hurried up to her garret and nearly fell down at the sight of a costly bouquet of white lilacs, a letter with a red seal as big as a five-franc piece, and a visiting card with a name in microscopic letters, all waiting for her spread out on her table. She clasped her hands and looked round the room with something of dread in her glance; but there were no recesses large enough to hide anything bigger than a mouse.

'Oh, that wicked wretch!' burst out the daughter of John Belokuroff. She tore open the letter without the least respect for the coronet on the seal; it was an anonymous declaration. She caught up the card—Ernest de Pelissier. 'What's that? c'est un sort—witchcraft. I must go away! I must go away!'

Large drops fell out of Julie's large eyes down on the red-tiled floor. Not like common tears, reddening the eyelids and discolouring the face, they resembled nothing so much as heat-drops, which fall when not a cloud veils the sky.

To Julie, going away meant renouncing her dearest hopes; renouncing freedom to pursue an honourable career of industry in a land where there were no serfs. It meant poverty and innocence yielding to the insolence of rank, riches,

and evil passions; it meant living and dying with the serf's collar round her throat. Julie's spirit was up in rebellion. 'I could bear disappointment,' she muttered to herself, 'if it came because I had not talent enough to succeed; but to be destroyed by a silly, jealous woman, so old as she is, too!' The *old* was not true, Julie.

'Lovers, indeed! I wish I *had* one to defend me—to make these gossiping fools leave me in peace,' eyeing the bouquet, the card, and the letter with grand contempt. 'A lover! where's a poor girl like me to unearth an honest man to be her lover and take care of her? If I could find one, wouldn't I love him, and be careful of his honourable name, which should be a protection to me!'

All this time Julie was pacing up and down her little room, angry, tortured, sick and giddy, forgetting even that she had not yet had her breakfast.

Meanwhile, Romeo was striving to gather courage to pull the string of her door-bell.

On a sudden the door was violently thrown open, and the young lady sprang out so precipitately that she nearly knocked Romeo over. She recovered her balance with a little cry of alarm, and then said, in her sharpest tone, 'What are you doing here, sir? On what errand of mischief are you bent? No doubt you are a spy of that horrid English old maid Don't put on a face as if you didn't understand me.'

'Oh, never, never, Mademoiselle,' protested Romeo, pale with mortification. 'Pray, madam, do not judge from appearances.'

'Appearances, sir! When I discover you at my door—peeping in, perhaps, at my keyhole—I am not to judge from appearances that you are no man of honour. I wish you to understand that I am too wild a bird for your Parisian chaff.'

'I am not a Parisian—not a Frenchman at all; I am a Roman,' faltered Romeo, crestfallen under the beauty's avalanche of angry words and angrier glances.

'I wish you joy of that, at all events; but, French or Roman, let me tell you that I do not want your nosegay—I hate it; and your letter—I laugh at it. Is that your card? So much for it.' And she tore it in halves, and flung it first, and then the flowers, on the floor, trampling on them with her pretty little feet. 'Now go away.'

'Brava! brava!' cried Romeo, enraptured. 'God bless you for doing so. I knew you were an angel. Oh, what a load you have taken off my heart!'

'Are you in your right senses, sir? You do not speak as if you were'

'Never mind, if you only knew what I have suffered on your account.'

'On my account, sir? Why, I never remember to have set eyes on you before.'

'And perhaps you never did; for this is the first time I ever beheld your face, except in dreams. But, I have listened to you, heard you. Yes, your music came to the lonely exile, and the poor enthusiastic Italian has for many a month made of you his beau-ideal. You have been my good angel; to you I owe my success; you inspired me; a cloud—a Miss Torrington—hid you from me, but now that I see you, the cloud has passed, and my ideal is a reality.'

'Eh, eh! how fast you go, sir,' said Julie, unable to help a smile. 'You really know nothing of me.'

'I see what you are in your smile, in your frown, in your paleness. I see it in your poverty; all in you and around you is a prophecy of good. You will fill a man's home with happiness.'

'Oh, dear!' said Julie, with a beginning of embarrassment, 'you are surely a very odd man.'

'Not at all; but I despise conventionalities. I know you are friendless—so am I; you work for your bread—so do I. Let us associate our honest purpose, and no longer tread the world alone. Will you be my wife?'

Nothing like shy, reserved people for going the most terrible lengths when once roused from their timidity. Romeo's soul had passed into his eyes; his face was really magnificent with the expression given

to it by an irresistible and noble sentiment. Julie's Russian heart was stirred for the first time in her life: she was penetrated by his deep feeling. Her clear, blue eyes were veiled as they had never been before; her merry defiant voice was almost low and husky, belying her effort to make it sportive, as she said, 'I am half tempted to take you at your word, were it only for the originality of the proceeding. A match concluded on the threshold of the door would be like the end of a farce.'

'You are cruel, madam. I see I am ridiculous in your eyes.'

'God help me! who am I that I should make a jest of generous words?' said Julie, seriously. 'But, sir, I do not even know your name.'

'I am Romeo Graziosi.'

'What! the genius! the great artist?' exclaimed Julie, brightening up. 'Oh, sir, you are very good to interest yourself in me; my best friends—they live in the same house with you—spoke to me of you, only last evening.'

Instead of also brightening up at this, Romeo clouded over. 'Ah! you mean a handsome young Englishman?'

'I mean the mother and grandmother of the handsome Englishman. I adore them all.'

'What! all of them?'

'Yes, all of them. Why, sir, I should have drowned myself in the Seine but for them; would you have me ungrateful?'

'No—but——'

'Sir, you do not know who I am. I am Youlia Evanovna Bolokuroff, a bondswoman to the Princess S——, and they, these English, are of noble rank, and when I was persecuted and slandered, they upheld me. You are not a generous man if you do not see that it is my duty to worship them all.'

'Then I am too late.'

'Too late, sir! What do you mean?'

'Your heart is not free.'

'My heart, sir, must not speak till my body is free.'

'Mademoiselle!'

'Do you not understand the meaning of the word bondswoman. I belong as a chair or a table in her drawing-room does, to the Princess S——'

'But I—I have money,' stammered Romeo.

'Do you mean you would like to buy me?' asked Julie, hovering between a laugh and a cry.

'Yes—yes—buy you. Enshrine you in my heart and home, as my guardian angel and wife.'

Julie turned very red, then very pale, and finally swooned away at Romeo's feet; just the most imprudent thing she could have done—the landing so narrow and Romeo so inexperienced in the management of fainting fits.

But aid was tripping jauntily up the stairs. Ernest, comet-like, arrives at the inconvenient spot where Romeo was standing over Julie's prostrate body.

'Romeo!' exclaims Ernest, and 'Ernest!' answers Romeo, and a silence of a second ensues.

'Ah ça, my dear,' begins Ernest, 'thou hast then forgotten our yesterday's agreement'

'Hein!' ejaculates Romeo.

'We must discuss this treachery, sir,' continues the little Frenchman, balancing himself on the top step, 'but not here, sir—not in the presence of a lady. I shall send you a friend.'

'Are you jesting, Ernest?' returns Romeo, also using the ceremonious second person of the plural.

'Sir,' replied Ernest, solemnly, 'to-morrow we will untie that hypocritical question with swords. At present, we had better pick up this prostrate Helen.'

'Touch her at your peril,' shouts Romeo, and so loudly that doors begin to open below, and suddenly up runs Miss Torrington.

'No fighting, gentlemen, or I'll call in the police,' meaning the gendarmes.

'Minerva repressing the fury of Achilles,' says Ernest, gallantly, to the tall English lady.

Miss Torrington laughed, and said, 'Suppose we leave the heroics, and help the heroine. Monsieur Graziosi, you are the strongest, assist me to carry Mademoiselle Julie into her room.'

When Julie was laid on the hard sofa—her bed by night—Romeo, leaving Miss Torrington to bathe the still half insensible girl's forehead, turned to Ernest, and taking hold of the little man's arm, he somewhat roughly led him round the room, pointing to the uncarpeted floor, the small, uncomfortable chair, the thinly curtained window, the absence of any fireplace, and then exclaimed, 'Quite the habitation for a wandering princess, eh? Quite the salon for receptions, eh?'

'I took you for a man of sense, Mr. Romeo,' said Miss Torrington. 'Upon my word I now begin to have some idea that you are mad This Julie is opening her blue eyes, suppose you go and fetch her a cup of soup or coffee from the shop next door.'

Romeo looked at Julie, and his heart gave a great throb as the blue eyes alluded to, losing the blank look with which they had evidenced a return to consciousness, glanced eagerly towards him. He obeyed the mute call.

'Go away, go away, all of you, directly,' she whispered

'No, you are my betrothed, and I will defend you with my life,' said Romeo, with a fierce look at Ernest.

'Ah! who will help me—who will save me?' moaned Julie.

'What's the matter,' said a clear voice from the doorway. Every one looked round, and there stood a tiny figure, its face hid in a great Leghorn bonnet from which hung a long blue veil.

'I save myself. I,'—exclaimed Ernest skipping out of the room, while Julie, who had been lying helpless on the sofa, suddenly sprang up, and in an instant had the new comer enclosed within her young powerful arms.

'Gently, gently, my poor child—leave me some breath,' and Lady G. N., for she it was who took refuge on the nearest chair, while Julie, who had exhausted all her strength in this last effort, sat down at the old lady's feet, resting her head on her knees.

'What is the matter, if you please?' asked Lady G. N., taking off her bonnet and showing a very pretty, little, old face.

Miss Torrington shrugged her shoulders slightly, laughed, then said, as if in deprecation of some accusation: 'Indeed, Lady G., my visit here was one of angelic charity. I am quite disinterested, I assure you. Good day. Adieu, ma petite,' to Julie.

How capitally Miss Torrington managed to mark the difference of rank between herself and Julie. Romeo and Ernest had looked and spoken ferociously to one another, but the viperish insolence of the woman went inconceivably far beyond the men's wild-beast instinct.

'I am Lady G N, sir,' said the old lady to Romeo. 'Now, sir, who are you, and what brought you here? This young lady is my adopted daughter,' laying her hand on Julie's fair head Heaven alone knew the number of such daughters which this good Samaritan had.

'Madame, I am here because I came to propose honourable marriage to Mademoiselle Julie.'

In the extremity of her astonishment Lady G exclaimed, 'Plait-il?' a more civil way of asking enlightenment than the English 'what?'

'Madame, I am Romeo Graziosi, a painter by profession, an exile from Italy I live over the way.'

'My grandson's rara avis,' said the old lady to herself in English; then aloud, in French of course, 'I begin to understand. Julie, my child, how came you never to speak to us of this gentleman?'

'I never spoke to him before to-day,' replied Julie, her face upturned to that of her benefactress, a slight flush for a moment chasing away her pallor. Nothing but what was truth and candour on that noble face.

'Well, monsieur?' said her ladyship, interrogatively to Romeo.

'Mademoiselle Julie,' cried Romeo, kneeling down by Julie, so as to bring his eyes on a level with hers. 'Mademoiselle Julie, hear me.' His voice was agitated, but there was manliness and dignity in his demeanour. 'You know what I have told you already of the blessed influence of your music; you know

that it has been as the good counsel of a friend to me. Rich or poor, each of us may hope; the future is a mine in which every one has a right to dig. I have plenty of work, more than enough for one. I don't believe you care for fine gowns or bonnets; if you do, and only don't wear them because you have no money to buy them with, send me away at once.' He broke off and looked into her eyes; 'I love the dear industrious one, who has soothed me and elevated me; showing me the right road by her example. I am ready, Mademoiselle Julie, to give you my whole life, but I ask from you, yours; nothing short of that will satisfy me.' Again he stopped, and Julie in a low but very distinct voice said, 'I am not afraid of poverty, and I am accustomed to work.'

'Thank you, thank you. Madame, you have heard her words'

'Very strange, very irregular,' observed the little old lady 'They all tell me I have no head, and I shall get the blame. But, Julie, my dear, have you forgotten,' here there was a short eager whisper.

'He knows,' said Julie, out loud. 'He is to help to buy me'

'Dear me! what will my daughter say? It all seems so nice and natural that I am afraid it is a vastly foolish business Mr. Grazioni, I shall expect you to pay us a visit this evening to exonerate me from all suspicion of having been your fellow-conspirator in this case Now go away if you please, and send up the porteress; if Julie does not get some food she will be fainting again. Pray do go.'

Considering the circumstances of the case, as explained to him by Romeo's new friend, the young Englishman, Ernest gave up his sanguinary intentions, and came to congratulate Madlle. Julie's happy betrothed with the most overflowing sincerity. The half-cracked Princess S—— behaved very well; she was excessively diverted by the story, and drove about Paris relating it until Romeo became quite the fashion, and received orders for pictures which would speedily refill the vacuum left in his purse by the payment of his bride's purchase-money.

Some three months after Romeo's interview with Julie on the threshold of her door, that young person dressed in white, with a wreath of orange flowers on her fair head, accompanied by a tiny old lady, got into a very fine carriage, which had come from the Faubourg St. Germain to the Rue de Clichy to fetch them.

In the carriage was the noble Princess S—— herself. The coachman took the road to the Champs Elysées, the princess sitting obstinately with her illustrious back turned to the horses, that she might hold up before the face of her former 'Krepostnaia jenschuna,' a picture of our blessed Lord within an aureole of pure gold, and glistening with rare jewels. The princess kept her own eyes on Julie to make sure that Julie, as all proper Russian brides are bound to do, kept hers on the picture

Romeo with his friends were already waiting, when the three ladies entered the Russian chapel in the Rue de Berri. As usual at the prospect of any sight, several English were on the benches in the nave When the mass of marriage was over, some national Russian ceremonies followed: first, a piece of rose-coloured satin, about a foot and a half broad and perhaps a couple of yards long, was brought in by one of the attendant priests and spread on the ground before the bridal pair. Romeo was desired to put his foot on it, Julie with the utmost care placing hers on the exact same spot from which he lifted his off. This rose-coloured satin is emblematical of the rosy path in which the newly-made husband and wife are to tread life together. Afterwards followed a ceremony which never fails to create much stir and anxiety among wedding guests. Two tapers are lighted, one given to the bride, one to the bridegroom; the flames are made to commingle and then suddenly blown out. The greatest precaution is always taken that both lights shall expire at the same instant—for if one be extin-

guished before the other, it is held to be prophetical that that one of the couple who is holding it will die first.

'Not a second between them,' whispered the anxious princess to Julie. This matter satisfactorily over, the four bridesmaid were marshalled: two were to carry each a lighted candle behind the bride and bridegroom, and two to go in front holding crowns over their heads, as they made the circuit of the chapel.

The carrying the candles did not demand much presence of mind, but to walk backwards, and at the same time manage to keep a coronet, with outstretched arms, suspended over a moving man or woman's head, requires practice and dexterity. It is not every one who feels himself capable of an impromptu exhibition of this kind, and one of Romeo's Italian friends at this point turned shy and restive. It was evident from Julie's discomposure that she would not have believed herself thoroughly married, had any iota of the matrimonial programme been omitted.

At this crisis an English gentleman, seated on the foremost bench in the nave, and thus near enough to the principal actors to perceive what was the dilemma, started forward. He had a decidedly clerical aspect, not devoid of something even puritanical, an air solely, however, given by the peculiar cut of his clothes, for never did human being possess a pair of eyes more expressive of peace and goodwill to his neighbour. With imperturbable gravity he offered his services to hold the crown over the young lady's head; with imperturbable gravity he performed the task, without a single false step, as if he had been accustomed to do that sort of thing all his life. Perhaps it was as well that it was not known to the officiating priests, nor to the Princess S——, that the individual whose aid they had so gratefully accepted was an English heretic of the most objectionable species.

It may be as well to add that the civil marriage and the Roman Catholic ceremony had already taken place.

Julie and Romeo lived happily ever afterwards. Now this is a true story, and this last is the truest line of all.

Pictures drawn by the Poets.

TENDER WORDS.

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. PICKERSGILL, R.A.

A CHANGE so swift what heart did ever feel!
It rushed upon me like a mighty stream,
And bore me in a moment far from shore.
I've loved away myself; in one short hour
Already am I gone an age of passion.
Was it his youth, his valour, or success?
These might perhaps be found in other men.
'Twas that respect, that awful homage paid me;
That fearful love which trembled in his eyes,
And with a silent earthquake shook his soul.
But, when he spoke, what tender words he said!
So softly, that, like flakes of feathered snow,
They melted as they fell.

DRYDEN.



LADY MAY AND THE BARON'S WALK.

1.

LONG years ago a castle stood
Where now there stands a pond
(A *lake* it's by its owner called),
With a great wide moat beyond.

2.

And all about the turrets tall,
Of this old castle, grew
Lichens and ivy, and at night
The owls from out it flew.

3.

The battlements were always kept
By sturdy men-at-arms;
'Twas in those days when frequently
One heard of 'wars' alarms.'

4.

The moat was wide, and deep, and long,
The drawbridge was a sight
For architects to wonder at,
It was so strong and light.

5.

The terrace-gardens were more fair
Than gardens now-a-days.
I think mediævalists assert
The sun then had more rays.

6.

Howe'er that be it answers, now,
My purpose to declare
That there *were* terrace-gardens,
Moreover they were fair.

7.

And once beneath the summer sun
A lady stood and heard
What she oughtn't to have listened to,
But did hear every word.

8.

The lady was fair,
Her loveliness rare
Was the theme of each bard of the age;
Her wit and her grace
And beautiful face,
Were declared by the wise and the sage,
To be rather too much
Of a good thing, for such
Were considered, most properly, then
To be base coquettes,
And horrible nets,
To ensnare and deceive the poor men.

9.

And now, when the summer sun was high
In the clear, blue heavens o'erhead,
When the little birds didn't care to fly,
Being of *coup de soleil* afraid.

When the flow'rets bent their delicate heads,
Oppressed by the noontide heat,
And the cows and calves made impromptu beds,
And one loathed the idea of meat.
When the only thing that sounded nice,
Was a bottle of 'Bass,' or a strawberry ice;
When Nature herself seemed to think it a bore
That she should be expected to do any more—
In that tropical heat,
When flesh and blood
Couldn't be in a hurry,
That lady stood
As the veriest scrub of a cook might have done,
And talked to her 'follower' under the sun.

10.

And in truth
The bright youth
Was forsooth
One whom the sternest might allow
To be worth a broiling; his lofty brow
And eagle eye and Roman nose,
And superior cut of both moustache and clothes
Proclaimed him, at sight,
One of the bright
Race who were hight
In those golden days of romance and song
A 'lord of the soil;' his doublet was long,
Too long for aught but a 'noble' to wear,
And so was his rapier and chesnut hair;
And his dainty fingers were taper and white,
And his lace was point, and his eyes were bright;
And he looked too handsome, albeit hot,
To come to his end through stopping a shot.
He had all the graces, and all the airs
Of a rope-dancer and a brace of bears
Combined. He poised himself on alternate feet,
And protested he 'weally suffered from heat.'
And then reflected
'Twas rather inhuman
To complain of what *she*,
A delicate woman,
Bore with not so much as a petulant look
At that sun which such dreadful liberties took.

11.

'One short year hence, sweet Lady May,
Shall see me by your side;
One short year from this very day.'
The demoiselle replied—

12.

'Ah, Bernard! but I greatly fear
This stern stepfather of mine,
To whom you know you're aught but dear,
Will ne'er let *me* be thine.

13.

'He told me as this morn I bent
In duty o'er his bed
The warm red flannel Bolus sent,
To wrap around his head,

14.

'Was doing him a world of good,
And as his appetite
Is something horrible—*so* rude,
Our prospects don't look bright.'

15.

'A year's a long time at his age,'
The gallant youth replied.
With all the wisdom of a sage,
The gentle lady cried.

16.

'Weep not, sweet May; I leave you now,
But firmly trust when next
I gaze upon your lovely brow,
We shall not be perplexed
By this most inconsiderate of sire's commands
Being flatly against our joining our hands.'
And then beneath that summer sun
They pledged their vows and swore,
That when the year its course had run
They'd surely part no more.

17.

The Lady May returned to take
Her place by her father's side,
And Bernard thought he'd his exit make
From out that garden wide.
But the drawbridge was up, and alas! alas!
No friendly hand was nigh
To aid the unlucky knight to pass
Over the moat, both safe and dry.
He wore beneath that doublet gay
A coat of chainèd mail
I'll wait, thought he, until the day
Is o'er, and night her veil
Has thrown o'er moat and gardens trim,
And then I'll try my luck,
In iron links I'll dare to swim
Across there—like a duck.
So the brave young noble got out of sight
As best he could, and waited for night.
It's a very tiresome thing 'to wait'
From twelve mid-day until rather late,
With nothing to eat, and nothing to do,
And nothing to think about—save that you
Have got yourself into a precious fix
By indulging a taste for adventurous tricks.

18.

The lord of the castle was stout and old,
And not very easy to please;
And that night this testy baron bold
Did his fair daughter tease,
By declaring that 'As she wouldn't talk,
He'd go out on the ramparts and take a walk!'

19.

Stubbs the sentry had been there
All that weary day;
Stubbs the sentry gave a yawn
As his lord came past that way.

The Baron said, 'My worthy Stubbs
You're slightly fagged, I fear;
Go down and bid the housekeeper
Draw you a pint of beer.
And I the while will keep your guard.
Lend me your arquebuss.'
Stubbs he replied, 'My noble lord,
The boon I'll not refuse.'
The lady moon was sailing fair
O'er hill and dale that night,
And one pure silvery ray shone full
Upon an object bright,
Which mid-way through the water was,
The water of the moat.
The Baron cried—'A wretched dog,
Weasel, or cat, or stoat,
I'll kill him.' And with fatal aim
He pulled the trigger true;
And the hapless cat, or dog, or stoat,
It disappeared from view.
And Stubbs returning by-and-by
The Baron told him what
He'd done; and Stubbs replied with awe,
'Your lordship *is* a shot!'
And thought how noble and how good
That conduct did appear,
Which 'kept a poor man's guard,' and gave
That same poor man his beer
The Baron was old; the Baron was stout;
The Baron had lately been laid up with gout.
It was foolish and venturesome in the extreme
To go trotting about on those ramparts, I deem.
For the wind came around those sharp corners and made
Him feel terribly conscious 'of gout,' I'm afraid.

20.

The Baron went back to his supper, and said
To his daughter, the fair Lady May: 'I the bed
Shall have warmed well to-night—and a cup of mulled wine
Will I take.' Lady May answered: 'Father mine,
Your will is law; your wine they'll prepare,
And I also will order your sheets that they air;
And allow me to add that I hope you will wrap
Your venerable head in a woollen nightcap.
That cough, too! oh *do* some lozenges take,
If not for your *own*—for your stepchild's sake.'
The Baron responded in accents mild,
That he 'thought in this matter he'd pleasure his child'
By following out the directions she gave
In her eager desire his life to save.

21.

The bed was warmly air'd; the cup of ruby-sparkling wine,
Presented on a silver tray, was spiced to taste divine.
The beverage was a generous one, just such a one as might
Be taken by an aged god whose stomach was not right,
The woollen nightcap, close and tight, covered his noble head;
And so with all attention was the Baron put to bed.
But in the morning when they came to give the 'Baron bold'
His cup of shaving-water—lo! they found him stark and cold.

The Lady May was shocked, no doubt, but could not all the same
Regret this stepsire of hers—this 'father,' but in name.
And chaos reigning all that day throughout the servants' hall,
They ate and drank, and cheery grew—and when night 'gan to fall
They had a jolly supper, when they ate, and drank, and wept;
And when they could no longer weep, they went to bed and slept.
The noble Baron soon was laid beside those of his race,
Whose bones lay mouldering in a vault—a nasty darksome place,
Where none but 'noble bones' might rest, and moulder quite away;
And having seen him safely shelved, home went the Lady May.

22.

The fair young heiress soon was sought by many a noble youth;
But honour to her constancy, all honour to her truth,
Her 'heart was his,' she always said, 'who wandered far away,
But who'd return in one short year to claim his "Lady May."'
And she wore such quantities of crape for the dead chief of her race
That vulgar-minded people said, 'All ill weeds grew apace.'
But all unheeding these remarks, the Lady May went on
Her way in peace and quiet, till the year was nearly gone.
But when once more the summer's sun shone bright and hot and fair,
Off came the massive folds of crape—off came the look of care.
The lady was herself again, her own sweet, joyous self.
She mourned no longer for the sire a-lying on the shelf.
And one fine morning after lunch, with drum and bugle sound,
She caused a great noise to be made, that all her people round
Might understand she wanted them; and when they came to see
What all the row meant, stated, 'that it was her fixed decree
That every drop of water from the moat be drained away,
To irrigate the land.' Her vassals hastened to obey.
The moat she'd always found a bore—it ever stood between
Herself and Bernard, who full oft had through its waters been.
'The first sight that shall greet him, and fill him with surprise
When he comes back to claim me, shall be pleasant to his eyes.'
But by-and-by her servants came, with faces pale and scared,
And told her 'something horrible,' which none among them dared
Go up to look at, lay along the bottom of the moat,
And the 'something' had a rusty sword, and a short blue velvet coat.
The Lady May with trembling steps went forward to the spot,
And when she reached it, oh! the sight that greeted her was—what?
A rusty sword—some fleshless bones—a suit of chainèd mail,
Which told to her prophetic heart at once the fatal tale.
'Alas! alas! 'tis Bernard!' the hapless lady cried,
And then down on that rusty sword, the lady fell and died.

MORAL.

To **Ladies**:—The moral is obvious and plain,
When you come into property, don't want 'to drain.'
Don't stand in the sun when your sires have the gout;
When *they* are laid up, *you've* no business out.
Don't let them go out on the ramparts in light
And airy costume too late at night.
To **Gentlemen**:—Mind when you're crossing a moat
In armour, you either get into a boat
Or cross the drawbridge; it's foolish, you know,
To risk being drowned for the child of your foe.
Be careful of draughts—avoid men-at-arms,
And cold ramparts at night—and an heiress whose charms
Are meant for your betters—or, if you will *not*,
Take care to keep clear of 'a first-rate shot.'

THE STORY OF AN OLD ENGLISH MANSION.

Penshurst (Kent)—The Home of the Sidneys.

In Two Chapters.—Chapter I.

'Thou art not, Penshurst, built to envious show
Of touch or marble, nor canst boast a row
Of polished pillars, or a roofe of gold:
Thou hast no lanthorne whereof tales are told;
Or stayre, or courts; but stand'st an ancient pile,
And (these grudged at) art reverenc'd the while.'
Ben Jonson.

HOW many memorable battle-fields are associated with English heroes and English history!—battle-fields, whose very names stir up our hearts as with the sound of a trumpet; whose glories are ever present to our minds from their connection with the liberties which we cherish, and the sweep of empire of which we are so justly proud;—battle-fields, like Azincourt and Crecy, where even the meanest bowman sprang up into a paladin, and did deeds worthy of celebration by an English Homer; like Blenheim, Oudenarde, and Ramillies, where *one* great chief could

'Ride on the whirlwind and direct the storm;'

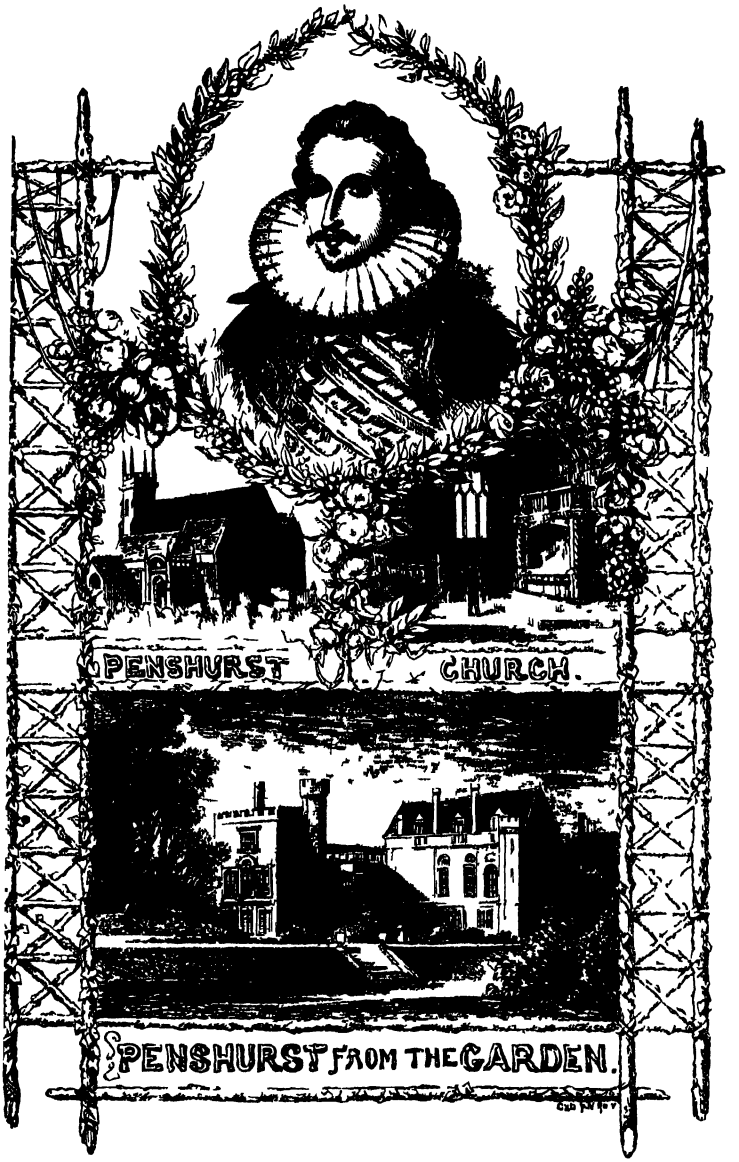
like Talavera and Vittoria, Salamanca and Waterloo—the last, the crowning victory of a series of unparalleled triumphs. These are fields that we are not likely to forget; they are too closely linked to the pride, the patriotism, the self-reverence of the nation. If 'the good knights are dust,' living and immortal are their achievements, and the brightness of their glorious scutcheons is still undimmed in the Walhalla of the English people. We see—in our present 'pride of place'—in the supreme power which we hold among the nations—in the far-reaching empire, whose shores are kissed by the waves of every sea—the monument of our worthies, and we recall, with hearts a-stir and souls a-flame, the memories of a thousand fields where honour has been won.

But amongst these stormy recollections a softer and, it may be, a purer association obtrudes itself, until we recognize that the name of Poitiers or Blenheim, Assaye or Waterloo, is scarcely more powerful in its influence than that of a field where no special renown attended our arms, but yet our Saxon character was illustrated with an undying glory—the field of Zutphen. It is not that there we contended for a good cause; it is not that the fight was ordered by any surpassing military genius; but that *one* man fought and bled upon the field, whom all Englishmen acknowledge to have been truest knight and perfect gentleman. This was Sir Philip Sidney, the noblest son of a noble race,—the pride and boast of a court which glowed with chivalry, and was informed by the subtlest and most daring spirits,—the *preux chevalier* of a knightly age,—soldier with courage unimpeached, friend with loyalty undoubted, man with virtue unstained, and courtier polluted by no shameless adulation—

'Sidney, than whom no gentler, braver man
His own delightful genius ever feigned,
Illustrating the vales of Arcady,
With courteous courage and with loyal loves.'
Southey.

And this we take to be sufficient epitaph for our brave English Bayard. Courteous in his courage—loyal in his love—never false to friend, never unjust to foe—uplifting against a lie the calm brow of unswerving truthfulness—to friendship stretching out the ready, cordial hand; I protest that among all our English worthies—that glorious list to which every day adds some honoured name—I know of few brighter characters than the gentle poet and gallant soldier who in his thirty-second year was stricken to the death upon the fatal plain of Zutphen.

Who does not remember the story? It is one of those historical pictures which will outlive history; it is in itself a noble poem, a lyric, as it were, which the hearts of the wise and gentle will, age after age, repeat. And how vital are the truth and beautifulness of such a poem! How many souls are moved to exalted feelings—how many minds are touched with noble thoughts—how many



SIR PHILIP SIDNEY 1 42

(THE STORY OF AN OLD ENGLISH MANSION)

Frontispiece from D Shalfox

may have read, and been influenced to heroic deeds of self-abnegation and self-control by, the story of Sidney and Zutphen! . . . I see it before me as in a picture. The clouds hang luridly over the blood-soaked plain, where, amid the dead and dying, lies the wounded knight, scarce heeding the distant press of battle and the disorder of the vanquished foe. His eagle eye is dim; his brow moist and hot with agony; the lips are parched, and the faltering tongue can scarcely sigh forth its earnest prayer for 'Water! water!' And already the cooling cup is before him, and the living lymph sparkles with refreshing power. But see how yonder dying soldier raises his writhing limbs from the hard earth, and bends on that blessed cup the keenest, eagerest, and most wistful eyes! The hero-chief catches their glance of mute, irrepressible agony, and puts aside the wished-for draught:—'Take it,' he faintly says, 'to yonder soldier: he has more need of it than I!'

This well-known anecdote, so indicative of the self-control and self-denial which are the prime elements of true greatness, is the chief thing that familiarizes the name of Sir Philip Sidney to thousands of Englishmen. And yet he was a man worthy to be more fully and more closely known. Had he not died so early, he would undoubtedly have occupied a noble niche in our England's history. His views were broad and comprehensive; his mind had been sedulously cultivated; he had a large heart, as well as a large brain;—the making, in fact, of a generous statesman as well as an accomplished knight. But he was destined to be one of those 'inheritors of unfulfilled renown,' of whom Shelley speaks; of those great men whose lives have been, so to speak, incomplete,—the torsos of grand but unfinished monuments.

Sir Philip Sidney was born at Penshurst, in Kent, in 1554. He was the son of Sir Henry Sidney, thrice Lord Deputy in Ireland, himself a man of grave ability and singular virtue, and of Lady Mary, daughter of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, and the sister-in-law of the ill-fated Lady Jane Grey. Spenser has celebrated this noble matron in his 'Ruins of Time,' as that 'goodly ladie,' who

> 'Forth out of her happy womb did bring
> The sacred gift of learning and all honour;
> In whom the heavens poured all their gifts upon her.'

The young Sidney's studies were successively pursued at Shrewsbury, Oxford, and Cambridge, where his quick intelligence and happy judgment marked him out as designed for a great and glorious career. He afterwards occupied three years in continental travel; and, returning to England, at once took up a high position in Elizabeth's brilliant court, and became 'the observed of all observers,' from the grace of his manners, the versatility of his accomplishments, and the chivalrous refinement of his disposition.

About 1578 he was introduced by Gabriel Harvey to the poet Spenser, whose warm and generous patron he remained through life, and whose 'Faery Queen' was undertaken at his encouragement. Spenser was domiciled a while at Penshurst, directing his chivalrous patron's poetical studies, and encouraging that peculiar Platonism of feeling which was then the fashion with the wits and courtiers of the great Gloriana's train. The poet of the 'Faery Queen' was, however, susceptible of a warmer and more passionate love, and nourished in the groves of Penshurst his devotion to a certain fair beauty of the North, whom he celebrated as Rosalind, 'the widow's daughter of the glens,' and whose cold loveliness was not to be forgotten even in the sunny Kentish dales,

> 'where shepherds rich,
> And fruitful flocks bene eyerywhere to see.'

In that portion of the 'Shepherd's Calendar' which was written at Penshurst (the 9th Eclogue), and which the poet dedicated to 'the noble and most virtuous gentleman, most worthy of all titles both of learning and chivalry, Master Philip Sidney,' he disconsolately exclaims—

> 'Ye gentle shepherds! which your flocks do feed,
> Whether on hills, or dales, or other where,
> Bear witness all of this my wicked deed;

And tell the lass, whose flower is waxed a weed,
And faithless faith is turned to faithless fear,
That she the truest shepherd's heart made bleed,
That lives on earth, and loved her most dear.'

From their charming dreams of Rosalinds, kind and unkind, — from their pleasant pastoral fancies of well-mannered shepherds and well-looking shepherdesses, — the two friends returned to the sparkling gaieties of courtly London. Sidney resumed his place in the brilliant circle that glittered around Elizabeth; Spenser (in July, 1580) accompanied the new Lord-Lieutenant, Arthur, Lord Grey of Wilton, to Ireland, as his private secretary, a post which the influence of Leicester and Sidney had procured him.

Sidney's stay at court was not of long duration. An affront put upon him by the Earl of Oxford, 'a nobleman of new-fashioned apparel and Tuscanish gestures, cringing sidenecke, eyes glauncing, figmome smirking,'—whom Gabriel Harvey, in a 'rattling bundle of English hexameters,' has described as

'Delicate in speech, queynte in araye, conceited in all poyntes,
In courtly guyles a passing singular odd man,'

induced him to retire to his brother-in-law's seat at Wilton, the stately hall of the earls of Pembroke, where he occupied himself in the composition of his romance of the 'Arcadia.' This fine prose-poem, so unjustly neglected in these later days, the gentle writer never lived to finish. He appears to have originally prepared it for the delectation of his beloved sister, who perused it as he wrote it, sheet by sheet. He next produced his noble 'Defence of Poesy,' wherein he lauds the poet in no unworthy language. Often his rolling sentences seem full of deep-sounding music, like the sea; and at all times he speaks in an elevated and majestic strain. Thus: 'Of all sciences,' he enthusiastically exclaims, 'the poet is monarch! For he doth not only show the way, but giveth so sweet a prospect into the way, as will entice any man to enter into it. Nay, he doth, as if your journey should lie through a fair vineyard, at the very first give you a cluster of grapes; that, full of that taste, you may long to pass farther. He beginneth not with obscure definitions, which must blur the margin with interpretations, and load the memory with doubtfulness; but he cometh to you with words set with delightful proportion, either accompanied with, or prepared for, the well-enchanting skill of music, and with a tale, forsooth, he cometh unto you, with a tale which holdeth children from play, and old men from the chimney-corner; and pretending no more, doth intend the winning of the mind from wickedness to virtue; even as the child is often brought to take most wholesome things, by hiding them in such others as have a pleasant taste.'

In 1581 Sir Philip shone 'a bright particular star' in the tourneys and joustings with which Elizabeth celebrated the visit of the Duke of Anjou, and was selected to accompany that unsuccessful wooer on his return to the continent. On the occasion of the investiture of the Prince Palatine, in 1583, with the order of the Garter, Sidney, who was his representative and proxy, was knighted by his royal mistress. He never lost her favour. When his adventurous spirit prompted him to join the heroic Drake in his forays against the Spaniards, and to explore the virgin treasures of the New World, the queen's anxious mandate stopped him on the point of embarkation at Plymouth. It was perhaps her jealousy, rather than her regard, that again interfered to prevent him from developing his capacity for an active life, and caused him to lose the proffered crown of Poland, though Camden asserts that she refused 'to further his advancement, out of fear that she should lose the jewel of her times.' But when she decided upon aiding the Netherlanders in their brave revolt against the oppressions of Spain, Sidney was appointed to the governorship of Flushing, one of the towns which the Dutch had gratefully ceded to England, and made General of the Horse in the Earl of Leicester's army. The nephew, however, by no means approved the strategy of his powerful uncle, and passed severe and not

unmerited censures on his misconduct of the war. But his gallant spirit was no longer to chafe at its compulsory inaction. On the 22nd of September, 1586, he fell in with a detachment of the Spanish army proceeding to the reinforcement of Zutphen, and, though his own forces were far inferior in number, he led them to the attack, and won a complete success. In the fight he displayed all the valour of an English cavalier. One horse was shot under him, but he mounted another, and again plunged into the thickest of the fray. A ball, however, wounded him in the left thigh, and, faint from loss of blood, he was borne from the field. The wound proved mortal, and on the 25th of October the poet-soldier died. His body was removed to England, and interred, by command of the queen, in St Paul's cathedral, the funeral rites being celebrated with peculiar pomp.

A monument to his memory was raised by Spenser, the friend whom he had loved so well, in the 'Pastorall Elegie of Astrophel,' where the poet does justice to the general grief with which the nation regarded Sir Philip's untimely fate—

'Hereof when tidings far abroad did pass,
The shepherds all which lovèd him full dear,
And sure full dear of all he lovèd was,
Did thither flock to see what they did hear.
And when that piteous spectacle they viewed,
The same with bitter tears they all bedewed

'And every one did make exceeding moan,
With inward anguish and great grief oppreest:
And every one did weep and wail, and moan,
And means devis'd to show his sorrow best,
That from that hour, since first on grassy green
Shepherds kept sheep, was not like mourning seen.'

Sir Philip's sister, the amiable and accomplished Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, also dedicated some graceful elegiac verses to the memory of the lost Astrophel—

'Woods, hills, and rivers, now are desolate,
Since he is gone the which them all did grace;
And all the fields do wail their widow-state,
Since death their fairest flow'r did late deface.
The fairest flower in field that ever grew
Was Astrophel; that *was*, we all may rue.'

I think it is Todd who says that in upwards of two hundred authors he had found eulogiums upon Sidney; but perhaps not one of them has penned a nobler panegyric than that expressed by the self-recorded epitaph of the admirable Fulke Greville, Lord Brooke: 'Here lies the Friend of Sir Philip Sidney.' As if to have been *his* friend was sufficient praise: was the summing up of a grand, true life. And, indeed, of all the best and brightest spirits of that heroic age, he was the faithful friend; of Dyer and Raleigh, of Wotton, and Drake, and the learned Hubert Languet. This man must have had in him a wonderful grace and fascination of manner, a singular loyalty of heart and sweetness of disposition, thus to have attached to himself the love of the great and good, the favour of his queen, the affection of the commonalty, and the high opinion of foreign nations. Could he have been that wilting whom the petit-maître of English literature, Horace Walpole, dared to ridicule? He of whom his grave and sagacious father wrote to his brother Robert: 'Imitate his virtues, exercises, studies, and actions. He is a rare ornament of his age; the very formula that all well-disposed young gentlemen of our court do form their manners and life by. In truth,' adds the father, 'I speak it without flattery of him, or myself: he hath the most virtues that I ever found in any man.' And so as poet, romancist, statesman, and soldier he has left a great example,

'To teach high thought, and amiable words,
And courtliness, and the desire of fame,
And love of truth, and all that makes a man.'
TENNYSON.

Yes: this is he whom Horace Walpole *sneered at!*—whose noble 'Arcadia' that literary coxcomb denounced as a 'tedious, lamentable, pedantic, pastoral romance.' Had the creator of the Gothic frivolities of Strawberry Hill ever read it? Could he feel the nobility of that fine prayer of Pamela's, which Charles I. murmured as he went forward to the sharp axe and the bloody scaffold—'Let calamity be the exercise, but not the overthrow of my virtue. Let the power of my enemies prevail, but prevail not to my destruction. Let my greatness be their prey; let my pain be the sweetness of their revenge; let

them, if so it seem good unto thee, vex me with more and more punishment: but, O Lord, let never their wickedness have such a hand, but that I may carry *a pure mind in a pure body.*' To the taste of to-day—a taste which rejoices in flimsy 'railway volumes' and sensation-melodramas—the elaborate polish of the 'Arcadia,' and its Platonic purity, may, perhaps, be unacceptable; but the scholar and the poet will never weary of its exquisite moral fancies and its beautiful descriptive passages. Here is a 'pastoral picture' which Walpole may not have been able to relish, but which has a true Kentish colouring about it, and was probably suggested by the neighbourhood of Penshurst itself—

'There were hills which garnished their proud heights with stately trees, humble vallies whose base estate seemed comforted with the refreshing of silver rivers; meadows enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers; thickets which, being lined with most pleasant shade, were witnessed so too, by the cheerful disposition of many well-tuned birds; each pasture stored with sheep feeding with sober security, while the pretty lambs with bleating oratory craved the dams' comfort; here a shepherd's boy piping as though he should never be old, there a young shepherdess knitting, and withal singing, and it seemed that her voice comforted her hands to work, and her hands kept time to her voice-music. As for the houses of the country (for many houses came under their eye) they were all scattered, no two being one by the other, and yet not so far off as that it barred mutual succour; a show, as it were, of an accompanionable solitariness, and of a civil wilderness.'

Of Sidney's poetry I may not speak with an unqualified praise. Too often, indeed, it walks upon stilts; it deals too liberally in conceits and euphuisms Nevertheless, his Sonnets are full of fine thought and tender feeling. The beautiful opening of one of the most fanciful has been rendered familiar to English readers by Wordsworth's adaptation—

'With how sad steps, O Moon, thou climb'st the skies,
How silently, and with how sad a face!'

The remainder is also worth quotation—

'What may it be, that even in heavenly place
That busy archers his sharp arrows tries?
Sure if that long-with-love-acquainted eyes
Can judge of love, *thou* feelst a lover's case.
I read it in thy looks thy languish'd grace
To me that feel the like, thy state descries
Then, even of fellowship, O Moon, tell me,
Is constant love deem'd there but want of wit?
Are beauties there as proud as here they be?
Do they above love to be lov'd, and yet
Those lovers scorn whom that love doth possess?
Do they call virtue that ungratefulness?'

To fill up this cursory notice of Sir Philip's life, we need but glance at the poet's love-history. While still a youth he grew enamoured of the beautiful Lady Rich, whom in the fashion of his age he celebrated in his 'Astrophel and Stella,' and whose graces inspired his 'Sonnets.' But his suit proved unsuccessful, and his maturer fancy then turned to the fair daughter of Elizabeth's secretary, Sir Francis Walsingham The lady became his wife, and brought him an only daughter. After Sir Philip Sidney's death she married the Earl of Essex, but accepted from Spenser the dedication of 'Astrophel,' the elegy in which he commemorated her first husband.

Next to the pleasure of looking upon the faces of those we love is that of visiting their favourite haunts—the trees in whose shadows they reposed—the bowers in which they beguiled the time with fairy fancies—the scenes of their joys and pleasures, hopes, griefs, and fears—the hallowed ground which genius or affection has rendered ever sacred. To the field of Hastings,—the ruins of Kenilworth,—the venerable halls of Newstead,—the modest house in the High Street of Stratford-upon-Avon,—how many a pilgrim wends his way in reverent love, and having gazed upon the 'cherished shrine,' returns rejoicing and exultant in the knowledge of a new and closer approach to the poet he has loved or the hero he has mourned! The scenes which a great man has dwelt among, and preferred, during his earthly career, have always seemed to me the fullest and most eloquent of his relics—material developments

of his genius, silent revelations of his innermost soul, pregnant commentaries upon his life, his deeds, his thoughts.* It is not enough to read Shakspeare in the closet,—you must study him on the banks of the Avon. You best understand the characters and feelings of the Elizabethan worthies when seated in the dim quaint oriel, or treading the 'banquet-hall deserted' of an old Elizabethan mansion And so having gossiped of Sidney and his 'Arcadia'—his eventful life, and hero's death—let us betake ourselves to his birthplace, to the home of his earlier years—to Penshurst.

And a pleasanter pilgrimage no spring or summer day can afford; for Penshurst is one of the fairest of the many fair halls of Kent, and brings, as it were, the splendour and *poetical materialism* of the Elizabethan age within an hour of London. Even so: in one hour you may fly from the din of those grinding wheels of labour which ever revolve in the crowded city, to the green glades of an old park, and the quaint stillness of an old mansion, the old-world solitude of a sequestered Kentish village From the surging and seething life of the capital to the rook-haunted beeches of Saccharissa's Walk, and the murmurous depths of Barbara Gamage's Bower, is almost as great a transition as from the days of locomotives and Armstrong guns back to those of doublets and trunks, Bilboa swords, and heavy arquebusses; but it is a transition which is eminently good for the jaded fancy and wearied intellect Neither in the future nor the present is it well that a man should *wholly* live: both heart and brain demand that he should sometimes seek the eloquent shadows of the past.

Let us, then, suppose ourselves arrived at the Penshurst station on the South-Eastern railway. We have quitted the train, we have yielded up our tickets, and have set forward on our pilgrimage into fresh fields and pastures new. At first we breast a tolerably steep hill, whose grassy slopes on either hand dip far away into pleasant valleys, which again, in the distance, penetrate into the bosom of well-wooded hills. Having accomplished the ascent we turn to the right, and wind through a thorough Kentish lane, deep-banked and leaf-shadowed, into the village of Penshurst —nearly two miles, we believe, from the railway station. But for the pedestrian 'pilgrim' it will be best to turn aside at a small stop-stile, near a well-looking cottage on the left, and opposite to Mr. Wells's house of '*Redleaf*,' and so to strike across the park in a tolerably straight line to the grand old house.* Having examined the Home of the Sidneys he may afterwards sum up his excursion with a visit to Penshurst church, and the quaint, quiet village.

The park is somewhat deficient in timber, but has, nevertheless, a fair abundance of fine old trees, and many 'sunny spots of greenery for poets made.' The views from several points are extremely beautiful; and when a setting sun lights up with crimson glories the fantastic proportions of 'the Place,' the landscape assumes an aspect of peculiar interest. The park ascends from the house in a northerly direction, and sends out on either hand a number of small dells to lose themselves in the green depths of the distant hills. Hop-clusters hang upon the slopes, save where the green sward teems with sheep 'feeding in sober security,' or lies 'enamelled with all sorts of eye-pleasing flowers.' Besides these general beauties the park has special attractions for artist, poet, and scholar in its memorials of genius and virtue, love and loveliness. Assuredly, the pilgrim will press forward to the *Sidney Oak*—

> 'That, taller tree, which of a nut was set
> At his great birth, where all the Muses met.'
> BEN JONSON.

It stands in lonely grandeur, like some deserted king, near the dimpling waters of Lincup (or Lancup)

* Lamartine.

* The house is shown to visitors on Mondays and Saturdays; or, if the family be absent, daily. There is a neat inn opposite the railway station, and another (the Leicester Arms) in Penshurst village.

Well. Its trunk is hollow, but its aged head still wears a triumphant crown of leafiness. At three feet from the ground the girth is said to measure twenty-six feet. And thus it has grown

> 'a stately oak,
> And in the beauty of its strength has stood
> And flourish'd, when its perishable part
> Hath moulder'd dust to dust.'—SOUTHEY.

It was upon the bark of Sidney's tree that Waller proposed to inscribe his love for the Lady Dorothy Sidney, the beauty whom he celebrated under the absurd name of Sacharissa—

> 'Go, boy, and carve this passion on the bark
> Of yonder tree, which stands the sacred mark
> Of noble Sidney's birth.'

The *Lady's Oak* which Ben Jonson sang of—

> 'The ruddy Satyrs oft provoke
> The lighter Fauns to reach thy Lady's Oak'—

was felled, we are told, in 1768.

> 'Thy copse, too, named of Gamage, thou hast there,
> That never fails to serve the season'd deer,'

named after Barbara Gamage, Countess of Leicester, is now reduced to a few decrepit limes, and would no longer tempt to its shades the 'antler'd herd.' Time, moreover, has shorn much of the glory of the beeches in *Saccharissa's Walk*, that once famous avenue where, as the Lady Dorothy mused in 'maiden meditation,' and 'fancy free,' the poet Waller pressed his unregarded suit upon her. Better audience, it seems, was given to his lays by other listeners—

> 'While in this park I sing, the list'ning deer
> Attend my passion, and forget to fear;
> When to the beeches I report my flame,
> They bow their heads as if they felt the same.'

Then, the poet exclaims—

> 'Ye lofty beeches! tell this matchless dame
> That if together ye fed all one flame,
> It would not equalize the hundredth part
> Of what her eyes have kindled in my heart.'
>
> ——The plants admire,
> No less than those of old did Orpheus' lyre:
> If she sits down, with tops all tow'rds her
> bow'd,
> They round about her into arbours crowd:
> Or if she walks, in even ranks they stand,
> Like some well-marshall'd and obsequious
> band.'

Perhaps the finest thing in the park is the long avenue of limes, extending from the terrace eastward, which, I think, has been several times sketched by Lee and others of our landscape-masters. Very noble, indeed, it is; a grand natural arcade, or pillared aisle, of stateliest proportions, within whose silent shadows the gentle Sir Philip dreamed of well-foughten fields of chivalry, and the grave Algernon Sidney mused upon his Utopian commonwealth.

> 'Are days of old familiar to thy mind,
> O reader? Hast thou let the midnight hour
> Pass unperceived, whilst thou in fancy lived
> With high-born beauties and enamoured chiefs
> Sharing their hopes, and with a breathless joy
> Whose expectation touch'd the verge of pain,
> Following their dangerous fortunes?
> If *such* love
> Hath ever thrill'd thy bosom, thou wilt tread,
> As with a pilgrim's reverential thoughts,
> The groves of Penshurst.'

And now, with the echo of Southey's graceful verse soft-ringing in our ears, we pass from the groves to the venerable 'Place' or 'Castle' of Penshurst.* Next month we shall take the reader there with us.

* In old times it was called indifferently the Castle or the Place. Pencester, its early appellation, would seem to mean 'the camp on the hill;' Penshurst, the 'wooded height.'



IS IT FRIENDSHIP? IS IT LOVE? P 4

AN EPISODE OF THE LAST REGIME

Drawn by George Thomas

IS IT FRIENDSHIP? IS IT LOVE?

An Episode of the Ball-Room.

He says he loves my daughter.
I think so too; for never gazed the moon
Upon the water as he'll stand and read
As 'twere my daughter's eyes; and, to be plain,
I think there is not half a kiss to choose
Who loves the other best.

SHAKESPEARE.

I.

LIKE beds of oriental flowers,
Stirred softly by some wandering breeze;
Or white-winged barks, in halcyon hours,
Careering over summer seas;
Hither and thither gently tending,
Where'er the billow sinks or swells,
Now rising quick, now slowly bending,
As that capricious force compels;

II.

So gathered on you frescoed floor,
Like wind-kissed flowers, a brilliant throng,
Till Laurent's stirring strains are o'er,
In measured cadence glide along!
There is no shadow on the brow,
For this one night, at least, no care;
Yet many a heart is beating now,
And many a fruitless hope is there!

III.

Those lively strains have ceased to sound,
And gentle words their music lend;
And those fond courtesies abound
That mark the lover from the friend:
The deferential air, the voice,
Low, tender, sweet, that asks a boon
(Bidding the listener's heart rejoice)
That cannot be conferred too soon!

IV.

The flitting blush, the downcast eye,
That speaks before the lips respond;
The heaving heart's unbidden sigh,
All eloquence of speech beyond;
The lover's boon at once concede;
And syllable as soft an ay
As e'er was granted as the meed
Of service for a longer day!

V.

And other fond, soft-whispered words,
Breathing of questions yet to be,
Fall gently on her bosom's chords,
And wake each thought to melody;
And, bending o'er her flowers, her eyes
Those earnest glances strive to shun;
Her heart's interpreters but sighs;
The only answer he hath won.

VI.

More to require might scarce beseem
A graduate in the school of Love,
Where the glance, blush, and sigh we deem
Of signs all other signs above.
He needs no more; his fate is read;
All verbal tokens now are vain;
And, seeming the bright air to tread,
He leads her to the dance again.

VII.

A mother fond, with anxious love,
Racked by alternate hopes and fears,
Feeling that hour the source may prove
Of bliss or bale for future years;
Foreboding too her child may share
A fate as sad as hers had been,
And, wanting love's own prescience, there
Sits gazing sadly on the scene:

VIII.

Asking her heart if this might be
Affection strong that lasts for life,
Or but that gentle courtesy
With which such festive halls are rife:
Coming events those doubts belie,
Her daughter, fairly wooed and won,
Has realized that triple tie,
Friend, lover, husband, all in one!

SOME 'OLD SCHOOL' REFLECTIONS.

Dear Mr. Editor,

BEING one of an unfortunate and, alas! numerous class of persons, too old and too stupid to set about reforming the world; of that sex that hath been commanded to keep silence in the congregation, and of a mind that considers free will and independent thought the privilege of reasonable beings, I occasionally, in the small hours of night, while I lie awake, amuse myself reviewing the manners, habits of mind, and pursuits of the class among which I live and move. Happily, the world, as regards society, has little charm for me, being of a homely countenance that few delight in; of an unaccomplished mind, that feels more pleasure in an andante movement of Haydn or Scarlotti than in the tornado and avalanche of a Thalberg or a Liszt. Give me a sample tuneful air from the lips of a modest maiden, who seeks to immortalize the author rather than herself, and I care not for your shakes, quavers, and trills, suitable, no doubt, to exercise the organs of the voice, but not to exercise emotions of pain or pleasure in the heart, as God intended when He gave the thrush and lark their merry notes, and filled the nightingale with plaintive sweetness. I must be falling sadly behind the age, for I see more elevation and grandeur in the poorest 'old master,' with the brownness of centuries, the atmosphere of age veiling it as with a garment, than in many of the strange delineations of our yearly exhibitions. To be sure, being of ordinary stature, it is not many I can enjoy with unimpaired vision now-a-days. It may be our women are retrograding in the scale of beauty, or do not cultivate the art of being graceful, as their mothers did. These painters say they copy *Nature as she is*; and as it is the most difficult, so is it the noblest work of man, whether as painter or

poet, to render our 'mother' faithfully. Like her children, she has her dark, ungraceful mood, in contrast to her fruitful, sunny one; but so varied, so changeful, so numberless are her glances, it will be strange if he find not sufficient beauty for *his* lifetime, without falling back upon the untempting for lack of better fare. It seems to me as natural for a woman's face to be pretty as coarse and unrefined. Whatever is beautiful in nature I take to be the rule; whatever plain, the sad exception.

* * * *

Ah! if people would have more self-respect (not self-conceit), more independence and reliance on the judgment God gives them, less doing what others do, and those 'others' because 'somebody' else does it, we'd have more following of the real and true in life, more earnestness, and less surface show. I was quite startled and grieved only the other day at the appearance of my dear niece Mary: a comely girl enough, though with none too much complexion. Well, she came to chat with me on sundry matters connected with a 'certain day' next month; and so pale and sallow—yes—a yellowish white—she looked, that I exclaimed, soothingly, 'Men *will* be men, my dear! they can't help it. Sit down, and tell me what's the matter.' 'Why, aunt,' she cried, laughing quite immoderately, 'it must be mauve!' I told her gravely that, however pretty in itself the colour of her bonnet might be, it had the unpleasing effect of extracting every particle of colour from her cheeks. To-morrow, doubtless, she will startle me with a coiffure of the fashionable magenta, solferino, or some shade equally unsuited to her complexion. Young ladies care not how ugly, inconvenient, or unsuitable an article of dress may be, if it be *the fashion*. Oh, modern Baal that female Israel will bow the knee to! Fancy one of Titian's beauties with a magenta ribbon round her head! What is adornment to one is disfigurement to another; and, without giving too many thoughts to the clothing of the body, each one of us may modify or improve our natural persons, by a just and artistic choice of colour and fall of drapery, without spending more, indeed not so much, of that necessary evil, money, which is a consideration to most of us. If our young girls would but appreciate the beauty of *simplicity*, they would not paint the lily or scent the rose. As it is, fifteen out of twenty are mere living lay-figures for milliners and dressmakers—an honourable destiny, truly! Night after night I am woke from my peaceful slumbers at the moderate hour of half-past ten, by strange noises and whisperings in the next room to mine. Pacings up and down, drawers pulled in and out, boxes knocked about with evident irritability, turnings and twistings before cheval glasses, pullings, tyings, buttonings, pinning, lacing, fastening of wreaths, bunches of scentless flowers, laces, ribbons, puffings, quillings, rushing of sandalled feet, hurry and scurry—and all this commotion because Miss Louisa chooses to follow the multitude at eleven o'clock P.M., spend night after night in dancing and flirtation, and day after day in the unpleasant languor attendant upon hysteria and headache. The former word has been coined to meet the exigencies of the age, I suppose, since I daily learned a page of 'Johnson.' In my time young ladies *were* young ladies, not domestic opera-dancers. Ah, Mr. Editor, when I see so many of my own sex spending the morning and mid-day of their existence like foolish birds that sport from spray to spray, spreading their pretty plumage in the bright sunlight that glitters on their wings, I wonder whether the winter season that *must* come will find them stored and housed, ready to meet the storms and rains that fall in every lifetime! Is such the education for our wives and future mothers? or do those who, going to the other extreme, proclaim the so-called 'rights' of woman, privileges, that cannot go hand in hand with her constitution, mental calibre, or real well-being—do those, I say, elevate womanhood to her original dignity, or keep her in that grand and beautiful dependence, by which her strength is made perfect in her weakness?

If woman seeks to occupy the same public and political pedestal as man, she must be prepared to tread unflinchingly the same rough roads to fame; and, even if gained, it would prove, constituted as she is, most unsatisfactory to her heart and mind. She would give her feeblest strength, her sensitive power, her delicate fancy for bread, and find she was given but a stone—a cold, unsatisfying substance, not the yielding, nourishing food that woman needs. She must be willing to give up the courtesy and manly deference that her sex has ever deservedly inspired; she must expect no 'Make way for the ladies.' She throws down the gauntlet of open and equal combat; therefore she must brave the brunt of the battle, scale the walls of the fortress unaided, perhaps discouraged, receiving no quarter when she gives none.

If a woman feel *that* within her urging to a path of intellectual work or human good, let her by all means, prayerfully, *unostentatiously* work till she gain the desired goal. If she have a partner willing and able to assist, encourage, sanction, and protect—then, indeed, you have *one being* for God's and man's approval. The manly, strengthening, *working* power, added to the woman's flexile, quick-sighted apprehension, makes an enduring whole. The splendid gem, solid and perfect in size and form, would not satisfy the lapidary's eye, until the brilliancy and reflecting light of the polisher's hand had brought out and spiritualized its beauty: then, indeed, it may shine in the diadem of kings, or, still better, be the pride of a loving, happy home. Only, in carrying out in its highest sense our Creator's own reflection—'It is not good for man to be alone'—can either sex attain to perfect human happiness.

Strength, honour, understanding, wedded to gentleness, mercy, purity—thus was the foreshadowing in the mind of God of the *Perfect Man*, who, possessing the attributes of both, became the Universal Saviour.

In the well-ordered household, each has his or her appointed work, the more correctly each act is performed by the one most suited to perform it, the freer from disturbance, jars, and confusion will that household be. This world is the great household of God. Man and woman the chiefs; each has his and her appointed task to do—step out of the rank, and confusion ensues. Each work is honourable, and each worker honoured by the Master of all; and not without a moral is the old Chinese proverb: 'Where man does not work, and woman does not spin, most assuredly somebody is dying of hunger or cold in the kingdom.' Excuse my prosiness, but I cannot help moralizing a little, and, perhaps, am becoming one of those I am about to mention. For the sake of brevity I call them 'Rakers.'

They go about the world, and more especially their own family, bearing in a powerful and unyielding hand a long rake, wherewith they catch up every tiny straw or stick let fall by unfortunate individuals under their lawful or self-imposed surveillance. These instruments of torture have peculiar properties, for which the 'Rakers' have a patent among themselves. First, the smallness and closeness of the teeth enabling them to pounce upon the minutest atom imperceptible to ordinary mortals. Secondly, the extraordinary length of the rake, enabling it to stretch back days, months, years: recalling to memory things said, done, or imagined, that the offending party had happily forgotten, or was totally ignorant of. These wonderful 'Rakers' scrape up stores, from the past and present, of insignificant trifles, till they become a formidable heap, of motley hue and character, upon which the scavengers live, to the terror and discomfort of peaceful people. Nor are they content with the past and present—the future does not often escape. Fearful things are to happen: invasions of the French; continued insults from the Americans; blowings up and sinkings down of trial ships; tunnels from France to England, that are to undermine the foundations of our *Constitution*, and sink Britain in the sea. Various other little matters of the same kind are signs

of the latter end, and they themselves (doubtless) the latter day saints. After all, they are but ignoble imitators of many truly pious and well-meaning teachers of the people. Now it strikes me, that these well-meaning teachers often go a doubtful way to work. They tell their fellows they are miserable, undone sinners (you need not tell the hunchback he is deformed!), that the mass of those with whom we live and move are neither more nor less than ripening slowly but surely for a sorrowful eternity, illuminated by flames of fire! Now, very possibly, I *am* feeble-minded and soft-hearted, but I confess it would be little pleasure to me to walk out into the pure, free air of God, looking upon the faces of my fellows, just to feel that every other I meet—the eager face of manhood, the hopeful glance of maidenhood, the hard-lined visage of the mechanic, and simple, unconscious one of the countryman, were all daily edging nearer the fearful precipice! Give people self-respect, make them feel their power and ability for good, but do not crush and dispirit them! Tell youth that it is vile; that it must utterly give up *all* delights of ear, eye, and senses as temptations to evil, and it will say—'God is a hard taskmaster. He gives us yearnings we dare not satisfy.' So youth turns away. Oh! teachers of the people, bid them embrace all *lawful* means of enjoyment; and so bright will those 'means' appear, resting in the sunshine of their *Father's* sanction, that the sullied and impure will yield no beauty to their sight. Tell a man on a long and perhaps weary journey, with many lets and hindrances of mental and worldly weight to bear, that such very burdens have sunk as frail as he; that the smiles of his youth's love, the ties of kindred or friendship, ought not to be so dear to him, that the road he must travel is dusty, thorny, and only moistened by the dew of tears, and will not that man's heart sink within him; his onward step be trembling, if not stumbling? Cheer thy brother with an honest smile; sing to him glad songs, and make him sing with you. Bid him gaze his fill into earnest, loving eyes, search their depths, and place treasures in their care, hereafter to be claimed anew in the better country. Then will his soul expand within him at the bounty of his God, he will see that the land is beautiful. The thorns and briars he will crush beneath his feet; deep pits he will leap over as a hart; the flowers he will carry close to his bosom, his ear ringing with the glad voice of thanksgiving, and at last—when the bourne is in sight, and the border lands spread out dimly in the mists of his old age—will he be less thankful for the welcome salutation of *the host?* Ah! many a rude, uncultivated flower, with rough exterior and crooked form—if you pluck the outside crumpled leaves away, and probe with skilful hand—will have as pure and beautiful a heart within, as when it sprang fresh and young from the flowerbeds of heaven.

I have become too serious, perhaps, but I am old; so excuse queruity and an absence of the new style called by my young people 'slang.' The writings of that dear, good man, Mr. Addison, would now be considered, doubtless, as 'slow,' and himself 'a muff.' My infirmity of body prevents my being 'fast,' Mr. Editor, so you must excuse my taking so long a time to say so very little.

F. H.

HOME IS HOME, HOWEVER LOWLY.

A Proverb Paraphrased.

I.

HOME is home, however lowly;
Fenced around by many a spell;
If within its precincts holy
Room be found for Love to dwell
There is, sure, no spot on earth,
Wheresoe'er our steps may roam,
Can outshine the smiling hearth
Of a tranquil, happy Home.

II.

Home is home, however lowly;
There is magic in the word;
Strife, avaunt, and Melancholy,
Whilst its comforts I record!
Woman dear my song approve,
To my aid, Penates, come!
Whilst I hymn, with duteous love,
Home, however homely, Home!

III.

Home is home, however lowly;
Peaceful pleasures there abide;
Soothing thoughts and visions holy
Cluster round our own fireside.
Though the outer world be dark,
And its ocean lashed to foam,
Safe within its sheltering ark
All is calm and bright at home!

IV.

Home is home, however lowly;
Oh, how sweet when storms are rife,
And our feet have struggled slowly
Through the tangled ways of life;
Sad, encumbered, faint, and weary,
Spared the grief again to roam,
To lay down our burthen dreary
At the blessed door of Home!

ALARIC A. WATTS.

WHY GERMANY GLORIES IN THE MEMORY OF SCHILLER.

TWO years ago, on the 10th of November, 1859, the German residents in London celebrated the anniversary of Schiller's birthday at the Crystal Palace. The bust of the poet, modelled by Mr. Andreas Gras, was uncovered amidst the strains of a cantata composed by Mr. Pauer, the words to which were written by Ferdinand Freiligrath The commemoration speech was delivered by Dr. Kinkel. The meeting was attended by about 14,000 visitors, amongst whom the heads of the great German firms in the City were seen by the side of processions of German workmen with the three-coloured flags of united Germany; and the whole ceremony concluded with a torchlight procession, the splendour of which, as under a brilliant moonshine it wound its way through the grounds and around the silvery spray of the fountains, will still be remembered by many visitors Nor was the celebration of this jubilee confined to England or to the great poet's own native country. Wherever a German colony has settled throughout the wide world, from the Missouri to the Australian Murray; from Liverpool to Constantinople, Venice and Alexandria, the reports came in quick succession, showing that on the part of the Germans the Schiller festival was not considered as a mere artistic and literary commemoration, but rather in the light of a great national and political demonstration This was shown still more strongly, when one compared the general and spontaneous interest evidenced on this occasion with the signal indifference under which, ten years before, had passed the centenary commemoration of another German star, the great Goethe. It is true, that in the summer of 1849, when this anniversary of Goethe occurred, all the continental nations were in the midst of the violent struggle by which the revolution of 1848 maintained its ground and secured its most important results against the fierce onset of a rising restoration; but had the two festivals borne only a literary or artistic character, the Germans would either have shown a warmer sympathy with the Goethe festival, or a similar want of enthusiasm would have been felt on the occasion of a celebration in honour of Schiller. For there is hardly any German who, when the question solely turns upon the literary point, will not at once declare that as a poet Goethe does certainly not yield the palm to his younger competitor. Thus it was evident that in Schiller, Germany wanted to do homage to something more than the poetical genius. And what this was, we may express at once by the few noble words which Goethe himself spoke of Schiller, when the early death of the latter had severed the strong ties of friendship between the two great men. 'Schiller,' says Goethe, 'was essentially *the poet of Liberty*.'

Indeed, when we consider the early circumstances of the lives of both authors, it is not difficult to find out, why either of them in the general direction and tendency of his authorship should have striven after other aims than his rival. Goethe was born as the son of a distinguished burgher of Frankfort, and although his family had risen from the lower orders, they at the time of his birth were not only well off, but numbered amongst them several men who had held or were still holding the highest municipal honours which the little civic republic had to bestow. During all his life, Goethe was spared the difficulties of a man who has to support himself and family upon his own labour alone Being but twenty-five years of age, he was called to the court, and soon appointed Minister of State by the Duke of Saxe-Weimar, and when he quitted that place, he retained its emoluments. From this position, from his paternal inheritance, and from the sale of his works, he obtained an easy and more than competent income. Want he never knew. And as he never took part in any political or social

controversy, the external peace of his life remained undisturbed. The struggles, then, which he had to go through were internal ones, and such internal struggles he was as little spared as any one of us. The contest between Doubt and Faith, as shown in his 'Faust;' the question whether we may save our welfare by a useful falsehood, or whether it is better to suffer and make others suffer by our truth, as the decision is laid upon us in his 'Iphigenia,' the question whether love can ever be justified in breaking the bond of marriage, or the reverse, as we are asked the question in his novel of the 'Wahlverwandtschaften:' these and other dilemmas, which a character has to solve in his own innermost soul, are the fertile grounds on which his great works grow, and all persons whose struggles are of the same mental character, all the wealthy and independent (and above all women), will select Goethe for a favourite.

Schiller was born in poverty, at a small village in the secluded valley of the Neckar. His mother, an amiable and loving wife, who played the harp and even composed verse, was withal a baker's daughter, and in her youth sold bread over the counter. His father had risen from a private soldier to a surgeon in the army; and, having been dismissed with the title of captain, held a small office in what was then the Duchy of Wurtemberg. Schiller, as a poor boy, must consider it good luck that his duke offered him a free education in the Carolinum, a college newly founded near Stuttgart. But Duke Charles, who had founded the school in order to parade before the world the talents grown from his own country that were to be hatched there, prescribed to every boy the career in which he was expected to shine. Young Frederick wanted to become a clergyman, for at that time there was no place in Germany but the pulpit for addressing an audience; the law was administered in secrecy; no parliament existed; and people were not allowed to hold meetings. So Schiller, with the deep impulse in his soul to influence his fellow-men by the power of eloquence, craved for the pulpit; but there was no faculty of Divinity in the school, and by order of his prince he was to be a surgeon. Like every strong character, Schiller fulfilled his duty, and went through the whole course of tuition *so as to pass his examination*; but he did it much against his heart, for his interests lay all on the mental and moral side of science, and anything physical, either connected with man or inanimate nature, had no charms for him. We may fancy how his mind grew angry when he saw himself thus deprived of his only property, a will of his own; and to him the sting of poverty must have been painfully goading, as it was poverty that made him subservient to the will of another. All around him he saw the world bending to a petty tyrant, and there were, at this time, several hundred similar tyrants, a little better, a little worse, all over Germany. It was in this angry mood that he conceived his first tragedy, 'The Robbers,' in which the iniquity and vice of the ruling families is sketched in such glowing colours that one young nobleman in the play almost appears a hero when he resolves to become the head of a gang of banditti, and thus avenge the sins of the powerful, who cannot be brought to justice before any other tribunal. From his boyhood, Schiller turned his eyes on History, and admired Shakespeare. The political questions then rising in America and throughout Europe were eagerly discussed in the circle of his friends at school, and for all the evils of the time the republic, already looming through the clouded horizon of France, appeared the only means of salvation. His second play, the 'Conspiracy of Fiesco at Genoa,' shows us the republic conquering monarchy; but with the deep look of a true statesman, Schiller, at the age of twenty-three years, and ten years before France turned into a republic, already perceived that a republic cannot stand among a people where the citizens are no republicans. Then returning to his own native German soil, and having meanwhile escaped by voluntary

exile from his tormentor, he gathered all the strength of his love and hatred in the ever-memorable tragedy 'Kabale und Liebe' ('Love and Intrigue). Schiller was the son of the cottage, and his generous heart, knowing the grief and anger of the oppressed, enlisted all its grand and ardent passion in the service of the poor. The play gives a daguerreotype picture of a small German court from the last ten years before the outbreak of the great French Revolution of 1789; and whoever reads this piece will comprehend why, from the shock of that mighty eruption, all the petty thrones of Germany tumbled. The foolish imitation of the luxury and grandezza of Versailles by these besotted dukes, counts, and barons; the subsequent poverty and submission of the people who had to bear the burden of paying for courtiers, courtezans, and plumed soldiers; the omnipotence of the favourites and state ministers; the selling of whole regiments to the English in their wars with Young America; the absolute impossibility for a victim to escape from arbitrary persecution in a country where no law, no press, no public opinion existed—all this is drawn so faithfully, and at the same time illustrated so forcibly in the fate of a young couple, that no friend of freedom should despair, when considering what the continental nations then were, and what they have since become in consequence of the continuous revolutions, which like single earthquakes have followed the gigantic outburst of 1789.

The position of Germany during the violent concussions of the French Revolution was most remarkable. The burning pile at Paris seemed to throw no sparks over Germany; we read of no internal revolution which destroyed any of the smaller or larger states, of which that unwieldy empire was composed. But, in view of the imminent danger, reforms appeared unavoidable: on the left bank of the Rhine the small baronies, earldoms, and ecclesiastical states fell before the conquering armies of the French republic; and east of the Rhine the governments, one after the other, improved the condition of their subjects, for fear that, in the coming contest with their formidable neighbour, the people might range themselves on the side of the enemy. Nor have these good beginnings ever completely stopped; for Germany at this moment, although her position among the nations of the world is still far below her mental, industrial, and mercantile capacity, numbers not one state without a representative and (at least nominally) constitutional government. At such a time it was no longer the task of a great poet to complain of internal evils, the danger now came from without; and Schiller, who, had he not been a great poet, would surely have shone as an eminent statesman, at once perceived that his patriotism had to face another enemy. Germany had fallen under French influence; a large portion of her territory was annexed to France, the smaller courts paid homage to Napoleon; Prussia and Austria were humbled, and circumstances looked as if the country would be dismembered—the people struck out from among the independent nations of Europe, as Poland had been shortly before. It now became the task of a national poet to rally his brethren for a decisive contest, and to show, by the example of the past, that nationalities cannot be lost when they resolve to fight for their own. The principal plays from the last six years of Schiller's life clearly show this tendency. Having been appointed Professor of History at Jena in 1789, he had spent nearly eight years on historical and philosophical reading; and it was only in 1799 that a new tragedy of his, 'Wallenstein,' made its appearance on the stage. These years of quiet study bore their precious fruit, first in the two historical books, the 'Rebellion of the Netherlands' and the 'Thirty Years' War,' but still more in the profound knowledge of modern history, which Schiller now applied to his last dramatic compositions. His plays are so memorable, because from the history of each of the leading nations in Europe he selected one subject, and took that subject just from the peculiar epoch which

was the turning point in the destiny of each of these nations. This has made him a great popular teacher of history, and it is through his plays that the Germans of all classes are so well acquainted with the general events of history in modern Europe. Thus he took his 'Wallenstein' from the period when the old German empire first lost its power of cohesion, and the single princes obtained that sovereignty so detrimental to the welfare and foreign influence of the nation. His 'Don Carlos' (which, indeed, was written before the French Revolution) presents to us a picture of Spain, in what was seemingly her greatness, but at the same time indicates the cause of her rapid decline. 'Fiesco,' in a similar way, paints the period in Italy when that country began to sink from her mediæval liberty. 'Tell' describes the rise of the Swiss republic; 'The Maiden of Orleans,' the union of France in one state; and 'Mary Queen of Scots,' the consolidation of England under Elizabeth But what is even more admirable than this happy choice of subjects, is the political and moral tendency of these works. Take, for instance, 'Wallenstein.' A most powerful man, adored even by his private soldiers, guarded by the blind devotion of his officers, invincible through his silence, his egotism, his genius as a statesman and general—this man of steel commits an act of felony against the emperor who appointed him. The emperor is weak, his tools are mean, his cause is so frail, that he at last feels obliged to descend to assassination; and yet he conquers, and Wallenstein falls in all his power, because his is might only, and right belongs to the other. Fancy this tragedy to have been acted, as it really was, just when the star of Napoleon rose, and you will feel what a powerful advice it gave to the German mind not to despond, but to stand upon right against might. In the 'Maiden of Orleans,' through the mouth of a poor shepherdess, a true child of the people, Schiller proclaims the doctrine that every nation in the defence of its own soil against the stranger becomes unconquerable; and in 'William Tell' a splendid victory is reported, obtained by minor numbers, who are determined not to stand any oppression by the foreigner. The very last play, which Schiller left unfinished, his 'Demetrius of Russia,' is inspired by the same lofty doctrine; for it intends to show how the young nation of Russia, by arousing its spirit of nationality, became master of a sovereign imposed on them by Polish intervention. The very last piece of poetry he wrote (they found the manuscript on his writing-desk), the monologue of Marfa the Czarina, in 'Demetrius,' is a wild outcry of outraged liberty, and a fervid exhortation to all the nations of the wide empire to stand up for revenge on a usurper. Can we deny that Goethe was right, when he called Schiller the poet of Liberty?

Schiller, indeed, closed his eyes before seeing his own nation restored to political independence. Napoleon had made himself emperor in 1804; Schiller departed in 1805; and in 1806 Prussia was struck to the knee, Austria gave up the imperial crown of the German empire, and all the world was cowed under the great shadow of the 'Petit Caporal.' But Schiller's mind survived. The Jews relate a story how, after the unsuccessful rebellion of Barcochbas, under the Emperor Hadrian, their last surviving rabbi, a decrepit old man, flying before the enemy, and feeling exertion and sorrow too strong for his powers, just before death still gave the consecration of the holy office to one of his pupils, and thus through him transmitted the spirit which keeps up Judaism to the end of days. So did Schiller; and his spirit rested upon the following generation of the German youth, but especially upon Theodor Koerner, the son of one of his friends, in whose house at Dresden Schiller frequently lived. Koerner saw the day of deliverance; and, as he had continued Schiller's tendencies in his dramatic works, he now felt bound to offer himself up to his country as a voluntary sacrifice. His fate is known to all English readers: he fell in battle, and thousands of high-minded German youths fell; but Napoleon was destroyed, and Germany once

more became an independent nation.

No nation has ever gained its whole freedom by one effort; and Germany, by that one victorious campaign, has not obtained the fulness of liberty. The endeavours of that country are now again directed to internal freedom, to a common government, and a parliamentary representation of the whole nation. Thus the early aspirations of Schiller's youth have once more become the task of an entire nation. Schiller's spirit is still in full work, and so much is his influence dreaded, that the reading of several of his works at school is prohibited by the Prussian government. Can we wonder that the Germans in London, who breathe the air of a free country, should have assembled by thousands on the anniversary of his birth, to pay homage to the genius of the great Departed?

The English, when they learn German, usually commence with Schiller's dramatic works. No wonder; for, although a paradox, it is true that the two greatest authors of Germany are also the easiest to understand. Of Schiller's lyrical productions and smaller poems, if we are not mistaken, only the 'Lay of the Bell' and most of the ballads are generally known in this country. It is, however, just to them that we should like to draw the attention of German scholars.* They do not, on the whole, recommend themselves to the musical composer, being too weighty in thought for bearing accompaniment; but, besides being marvellously rich in sound by themselves, and full of truly oratorical rhythm, they are, for the most part, tinged with a philosophical vein, elevating the heart and brightening the intellect of the reader. Perhaps no poet has ever circumscribed the whole circle of life, individual and social, so completely in one comparatively short poem, as Schiller did in the 'Lay of the Bell.' Yet with the same completeness is the historical development of our race encompassed in his 'Spatziergang,' the origin of civilization in the 'Festival of Eleusis,' and the idea of humanity, liberating, ennobling, and assisting humankind, in his glorious 'Hymn to Joy.' To Schiller's profound mind even slight things were symbolical of great things. It might be difficult in London to be philosophical and poetical over a glass of punch; yet Schiller was so in his small house at Jena. We have two 'Punch songs' of his, probably written on the occasion of merry Christmas' or jolly New Year's celebrations. One of them bears the title 'A Punch Air, to be sung in a Northern country.' The poet compares the glowing purple wine of the South to nature, the pallid and troubled drink of the North to art; but art, too, is a gift of Heaven, although obliged to borrow an earthly fire; she sends her keel far to the Fortunate Islands for the golden fruit, and with the flame of the hearth imitates the lofty god of the sun in dissolving and combining elements at will. The other Punch song is that to which our illustration belongs, where the four ingredients of which punch is made are used as types of the elements that constitute the world and all that lives in it.

* The poems of Schiller exist in English in two translations: 'Schiller's Poems, complete, attempted in English by E. A. Bowring,' and 'The Poems and Ballads of Schiller, translated by Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton.' The former translation keeps very close to the letter of the original, and besides the poems acknowledged by Schiller, gives also those published by him anonymously in the 'Anthologie' of 1782. The poem from this latter collection, 'The Bad Monarchs,' will be a strong proof of what we said above concerning the revolutionary enthusiasm of Schiller's younger days. But Sir E. B. Lytton's translation, with the author's fine criticism on Schiller's lyrics, is the work of a deep German scholar, combined with all the powers of a poet; and from him we beg to borrow the translation at the close of our essay. There is only one phrase in it, the 'starry juice' of the lemon, which an English reader might misunderstand. The Germans call the network in the lemon, when you cut it through the middle, the 'star of the lemon;' and these four lines might therere run like this—

'From the star of the lemon
The harsh juice pour;
Harsh is life in its
Innermost core.'

On the occasion of the Schiller Jubilee, the great publishing firm of Cotta, at Stuttgart, to whom the copyright of his works belongs, began to issue a splendid edition of the poems, which was to be a specimen as well of typography as of the art of illustration. The illustrations consist of photographs from elaborate drawings, and of elegant marginal decorations. From one of the photographs, made by Von Rauchberg, our woodcut is taken. Behind the table stands Schiller, and to him, in fairness, the 'element of the spirit' is given. This is not the ideal, quiet head of the bust, but the fiery young man of about thirty-one years, shortly after his marriage. We think we see his bushy red hair rise round the bold and defiant face. By his side stands his sweet young wife, Charlotte von Lengefeld. They had married in 1789, and into their bridal feast sounded the thunder of the French Revolution. To her the office of sweetening the bowl is given. The woman in front of the table, and holding the lemons, with the dark hair and sharp cut of the face, is Schiller's sister-in-law, Caroline von Wolzogen, who in her youth attracted Schiller by the charms of her elevated mind and her extensive reading, and after his death wrote the most important and authentic of all his biographies. Opposite to her the fourth element, that of the water, is represented by a friend of the house, in whom even the German critics find it difficult to recognize a distinct person.

The graceful ease of these short lines must needs be lost to the English reader; but even in this punch of a translation, which we offer instead of the bright wine of the original, the strength of thought will not be completely diluted; and many of our readers will believe us right in saying that Schiller, as every true poet, is no less admirable in thus ennobling a little thing, as he is in the finest and grandest speeches of heroes in his tragedies.

Four elements, joined in
An emulous strife,
Build up the world, and
Constitute life.

First from the citron
The starry juice pour;
Acid to life is
The innermost core.

Now, let the sugar
The bitter one meet,
And the strength of the acid
Be tamed with the sweet.

Bright let the water
Flow into the bowl;
For water, in calmness,
Encircles the whole.

Next, shed the drops
Of the spirit within;
Life but its life from
The spirit can win.

Drain quick—no restoring
When cool can it bring;
The wave has but virtue
Drunk hot from the spring.

G. K.



BUYING A HARMONIUM.

'Es sind nicht alle Jäger, die das Horn gut blasen.'
'Hasty climbers have sudden falls.'

CHAPTER I.

TOWN BELLES AND COUNTY BELLES.

IT would be impossible to find a more highly respectable place than Holcroft; respectable in every sense of the word. It was not a large town, scarcely more than a village; but it was a borough, and sent a member to parliament. And in this was seen one feature of its respectability—it always sent a good Tory: Church and State always for Holcroft, and it had done so since it first had the honour of being represented in the imperial parliament. None of your upstart, loose-thinking radicals for Holcroft: we were conservative to the very backbone.

We thanked heaven frequently that we lay far away from any great manufacturing district, farther away still from sea and sea-ports, which bring innovations one after the other, and miscall them improvements. We did not court novelty, save in one point, that of dress; and we ladies were not exempt from the usual folly of our sex in this respect. As 'year after year the cowslips filled the meadows,' we pursued the even tenor of our ways. The rest of the world sped on at its usual speed; we stood still. We led such tranquil lives, and died such tranquil deaths, and kept up old customs and stories, and reverently handed them down to our descendants, to be kept with sacred care, before we left our little world on earth for the greater one above.

Few people who left Holcroft for schools or professions ever returned again to settle and have their home in it. They seemed to like the outer world better, and Holcroft generally pitied their delusion. Ever afterwards, these individuals who had turned their back on us were spoken of with an apologetic wave of the hand, as men now speak of the mistakes in the Crimea or the misgovernment of India,—as a thing of the past, in which a great error had been committed, but which error we now forgave.

We had in Holcroft that inestimable blessing, a rector who loved not changes. 'If they came, they were not of his seeking,' he said, and most people believed him. In such a place he was a man of no little importance, and had the power of giving a tone to society in general.

Not that he ever interfered with any man; for he allowed every one to go his own way in peace and quietness. He took the world what is called 'easy,' and the world, with exceeding great politeness, returned the compliment, and took him easy too.

His daughter, Miss Seeley, was sometimes a little sharp and dictatorial in her manner to those she supposed delinquents; but that was ascribed to her youth, for she had not seen more than fifty summers in Holcroft.

But now a time was coming in which changes were to be; but they came so naturally, so easily, so gracefully, that not one dissentient voice was raised. These changes were, like Argyle's head of old, of which the old woman said, 'No great thing of a head; but a sair loss to him, puir man.'

Ours, however, were not losses, but gains, and great gains, too. They did not subvert the government, they did not even put out a ministry; but they were wonderful changes to us of Holcroft. We had a 'Hall' in our neighbourhood—what place of respectability has not?—but it had been for nearly ten years uninhabited. I was but a child when Uncle Geoffrey, to whom it belonged, went abroad. After his wife's death he took his little girl away, for her education, he said, and they had never lived at Holcroft since.

Laura Holcroft was now grown up, and I dare say they had had

enough of travelling about. Much as people like that rambling existence, a day comes when they long for the quiet and retirement of a home life. Laura's education many people considered but an excuse. 'As if every one does not know,' as Miss Seeley more than once remarked to my mother, 'that the best education in the world can be had at Holcroft—every accomplishment a young lady in the nineteenth century could require.' And when she wound up her remarks by a triumphant appeal to my attainments as a proof, my mother was no mother if she did not fully agree with her. A list of my accomplishments would in no way tend to the elucidation of my history; suffice it to say, that I was no better nor no worse than the usual run of young ladies one meets with in society, and with sufficient sense to conceal my deficiencies when among my superiors in acquirements.

Laura's education being now considered to be completed, Uncle Geoffrey wrote announcing his intended return to take up his abode at Holcroft Hall; and before many weeks had elapsed, the old house had wakened up into new life after its long slumber, with my cousin Laura as its mistress. How charming she was! —such gaiety, such life, such untiring good-humour! No wonder we all fell in love with her before ten days had passed after her arrival.

Nor were the Holcroftians the only worshippers. In due time the county families heard of my uncle's return, and came to welcome him among them, and all with one voice pronounced Miss Holcroft perfection. By-and-by the social civilities were returned at the Hall, and then what a delightful time it was for us! Our life had been hitherto so secluded and uniform, that the change to one or two evening parties a week, with walks and drives in the morning of every day, made for us dissipation, which was almost equal to anything we had ever heard of a London season. Weeks passed on, and still Laura was quite the rage in the county. For miles round Holcroft, men, women, and children raved of her,—how she dressed, how she spoke, how she danced, how she sung, how she played, where she went,—it was nothing but Miss Holcroft of Holcroft, from morning till night.

There is one difference in being a county belle from being a town belle, and I am not sure but it is considerably in favour of the former. The position is in general one slowly reached. It takes many morning visits and many sober dinner parties to spread the news that a belle is domiciled among us. Some gentlemen at the county town on market days exchange opinions; but, then, consider these meetings only take place once a week. How very slow! our town friends will say. Slow, I grant you; but then, how very sure! After the information and opinions are interchanged, if the latter be favourable, her position is then accorded, she becomes *the* belle of her circle; and this height once attained, it is marvellous how long it can be kept. If country people are slow to imbibe an opinion, thank heaven they are slower still to relinquish it. A belle is a belle for long enough, and always spoken of as such for years and years to come. I was about to insert a remark upon the ringing of a bell(e) costing her her position, when I fortunately recollected my cousin, John Theodore Smith, whose papers were indignantly returned by an 'able editor,' for a pun not half so audacious.

I was away from home a few weeks ago, hearing Madame Titiens sing at the Birmingham Festival, and during my absence our horticultural ball took place at Fenbury. I have now before me five letters, all well crossed, and none of them dated (as young ladies are above such absurd trifles); but I have no difficulty in fixing the day on which they were written. They are the letters of my five dearest friends, who pity me from their hearts for having missed the great event of the year at Fenbury. As if the warbling of Adeline Patti, not to speak of the sublime "Elijah," was not far preferable to a horticultural show in the morning, and quadrilles and waltzes in the evening, in the Assembly-rooms at Fenbury! Nevertheless, I thank my

friends, and thank them cordially, too. So vivid are the descriptions, I almost fancy I have been there, and I know no fancy could bring such a dream as—'There is nothing.' How strangely one passage clings to us sometimes!—and such a little one, too!

I lift number one of my five letters. I pass over the regrets at my absence: they are kind, and as sincere, as such things ever are in this world. I read, 'Our cousin, Ethelinda Hobbs, was decidedly the belle, both morning and evening. She wore,' &c. &c. I spare my readers the details, and turn to another, letter number two. 'Sarah Fisher looked beautiful. I felt proud of our town furnishing the belle of the evening, as unquestionably she was; though Blanche Duprey made more show in the morning, owing to her Parisian bonnet.' In the letter Blanche Duprey's flippant sister I read, 'I wish the stewards had provided men to stand at the doors and turn back all the ill-dressed women, as the men in Queen Elizabeth's time prevented those ladies entering the city gates whose ruffs were more than a yard deep. Why must one suffer nausea when they wish to enjoy themselves? The meaning of this is, that Sarah Fisher would have frightened the crows,—such a dress, and such a wreath as could only have come out of Noah's ark.' So on writes Cicely Duprey. How do you like her style? Classical, is it not?

I want you, my good reader, to understand from these extracts something of what constitutes a belle in a country district. It is, in fact, more reputation than reality. Once establish the fact, or rather fiction, as being a fact, and the thing is settled, and settled for life. Every neighbourhood has its belle, and let it; I have no *objection*. I wish to break up no man or woman's delusions, or rather illusions; my private opinion is, that life would be worth very little without them; and if we have each our favourite ones, it is nobody's business.

There is the delusion of poetry, as innocent and harmless a one as can well be imagined. Some of us, sober, middle-aged, prosaic people, can look back upon a time in our lives when we really enjoyed a little poetry, when a book recommended to us by one whose taste we considered unimpeachable was pronounced divine, and, such is the force of our sweet delusions, we believed it too. The same with a picture or a song; and, though the time and the individual may pass away from us, the impression never does. We pass through life, go quietly to our graves, firmly believing Haynes Bayly the first of English poets, and wondering our daughters do not weep over the 'Pleasures of Hope,' or enjoy Thomson's 'Seasons.' I have a friend who considers Henry Russell the only musician in the world, she having a pulse which beats a little faster when some old copy of 'A life on the ocean wave' falls out of the Canterbury, in remembrance of one who used to sing it 'lang syne;' and yet when she went with us the other day to hear 'Un Ballo in Maschera,' she had hardly patience to sit it out. 'Tiresome, monotonous noise,' she called it. The truth was, her musical education began and ended in Henry Russell and 1840. Her soul could reach no farther, poor thing!

In making these unamiable remarks, I do not wish it to be supposed that Laura Holcroft's belledom was a popular delusion. Looking back now, I say, and say with that truth which looking back gives, that I think she deserved all the praises lavished upon her. Even the sober matrons, who criticised severely a young lady who set their sons' hearts a-flame, pronounced her dinner-parties properly given, little thinking how much she owed to my mother's care that no Holcroft prejudice was outraged, nor county code violated.

CHAPTER II.

OUR NEW CURATE AND THE NEW CHOIR.

Holcroft Hall made the first change in our lives, and in course of time brought about the second one also.

Mr. Seeley was old, and well stricken in years. Unfortunately parishes do not become old and well

stricken in years too. There is always young blood coming forward requiring care and attention the poor old rector is unable to give. So saw my uncle, and the result was his offer of giving our good rector a curate. It would be too long to tell of how his offer was accepted, and how the Rev. Horace Mills came, and of the excitement consequent on such an arrival, and how the hearts of ladies clave unto him. It scarcely affects our tale.

Suffice it to say, that the Rev. Horace was a model curate. In appearance tall, slight, and not ill-favoured; in manner quiet, courteous, and unassuming, he won golden opinions on all sides.

As time passed on a great aptitude for his profession developed itself by degrees in his character, and he threw himself heart and soul into his work. Crusades were commenced against every abuse in men and morals which his apathetic rector had allowed to grow on unchecked, and day and night he gave himself to the work. Had his success but equalled his exertions, and could he but have learned the secret of being ubiquitous, our parish would soon have been the fairest Utopia of which sanguine philanthropist ever dreamed.

It is not always that a wish to reform the lives of our neighbours is a course productive of personal popularity; but Mr. Mills was no victim to persecution. Applause followed his least exertions, and old heads in much amazement looked on and cried, like Dominie Sampson, 'Prodigious!' at each fresh outbreak of our curate's energy.

If the gentlemen were inclined to grumble, the ladies put them down, —they were to a woman on the side of Mr. Mills. We went into Mr. Brown's, our grocer's shop, one day, and in course of conversation with Mrs. Brown, who appeared promptly on our entrance, that good woman said—

'Oh! ladies, until Mr. Mills came I never knew that so many things I was in the habit of doing every day were wicked, now I assure you I am awake. Why, I might have slept on for a hundred years.'

Scarcely acknowledging this as a possibility, we left the shop, but we could not but allow he had stirred our parish into a very lively state.

As I said before, the ladies applauded his efforts, and presented small testimonials of their esteem in the form of slippers, band cases, cushions, markers, sermon cases, currant jam for sore throat, pulse warmers, and sponge cake; so with these substantial proofs of public opinion—*i. e.*, feminine—Mr. Mills felt himself nerved to face the most Augean task to be found in Holcroft.

If he had a fault—*if* I say with great respect, for so many people consider the popular opinion the correct one that I may unconsciously be outraging the feelings of my dearest friend—if Mr. Mills had a fault it was the one of being a degree tiresome when we met with him upon this endless theme, 'the parish.'

I dare say it originated in the absorbing nature of his occupation, or it may have been the heavy sense of his responsibilities which made all other themes seem trivial and uninteresting; but really three times a week was as often as one could listen to the same anecdote of Widow Jones over again. No matter what subject we introduced, Mr. Mills was sure in five minutes to have brought the conversation back into his favourite channel.

It was some time after this meek-eyed young man came among us, and just when his popularity had reached its climax, that Laura's birthday fell, and my uncle had collected a number of young people together to celebrate the anniversary. Mr. Mills was of the party. If he ever came out like Boswell on Johnson on his favourite theme, it was on this occasion, until Laura could stand it no longer. In despair she tried to turn the conversation to other subjects, books, music, travelling, pictures, and such nondescript themes as suit English dinner society, for the sake of friends present from other parishes, who could not be expected to be interested in the affairs of ours. All in vain; the indefatigable young man would begin

again about Tibbs's ale-house, Burton's pig, and the dead wall at Robinson's, succeeded by a parish apprentice, Fibbs the saddler, the society for discountenancing vice, and the benighted schoolmistress, until even Uncle Geoffrey's patience showed symptoms of giving way.

He came to his daughter's aid, and appealed to Mr. Mills for an opinion on architecture in Oxford, and on college towers there — no use, boat races on the Cam—worse still; cricket—no response; vacant bishopric — a dead letter. Oxford and Cambridge seemed to be far away, old shadows of something once imagined, never realized; the most discriminating observer could not have told in which university the Reverend Horace had graduated. In these days we might have tried 'Essays and Reviews' with some hope of success, but it was long before the days of these bomb-shells, and Mr Mills had no interest in 'Tracts for the Times'

Our neighbour, Rupert Ansted, sat enjoying Laura's discomfiture. Before the advent of Mr Mills, Rupert had been a small king among us No party was complete without him, no one else preferred before him.

Now, indeed, things were different Mr. Mills was everything, and he nothing. Instead of a quadrille and deux temps when we went out for tea, we covered tracts 'to be lent, read, kept clean, and returned,' or measured flannel for old women's petticoats, or made coarse blouses for destitute boys.

'All very well in its way,' Rupert once magnanimously said, 'but do let us have something like old times instead of these newly-imported customs. Can you not do them in the mornings, or on wet days? I am tired of this man; if I want you to come out to ride with me, it is a club-day, or your turn at the school, or there is a blanket to be bought, or some other light put in a candlestick to give light to the house. You are learning ostentatious benevolence, Honora,' he would say to me in his wrath, and what could I say in return?

On this occasion Rupert was wickedly happy. 'Dear fellow!' he would say aside to me, 'I defy his worst enemy, if he has such a thing, to do more for him.'

Then Rupert would talk to Laura of Paganini, and tell the absurd worn-out old story of the American bird said to have but one leg, and which he finds answers all purposes as well as two, besides gaining a great deal of applause for his agility.

Then he would turn to Miss Seeley, and ask her opinion of the veracious history of Herr Von Wodenblock, who, with his machinery-fitted cork leg is still running through the world, and cannot be stopped.

It was quite a relief to get into the drawing-room, and leave 'the parish' behind us: but matters did not mend when the gentlemen came in. 'The parish' would draw a chair first beside one, and then beside another, and in a monotonous voice, that purled on like a running brook, continue his catalogue of grievances.

At last, by a progression of themes, he hit on one more interesting than the previous ones to most of his listeners, that of 'church psalmody.'

Be it known unto the readers of this chronicle that the musical portion of the church service at Holcroft was at this time, and had been from time immemorial, conducted by four talented individuals — John Smart, who played upon a key-bugle, number one, Ebenezer Smart, his brother, who played another bugle, number two; Felix Trundle, who did immense execution with a tremendous bassoon; and, lastly, Joseph Hickman, who was exceedingly self-important and conceited because of the imposing appearance of his violoncello. The music was in a style fast dying out of rural England; and as well so, for whose risible faculties could stand such an exhibition as we had Sunday after Sunday in Holcroft church? Laura never was able to control herself, and though Uncle Geoffrey lectured her, and professed to set her a good example, I know he sometimes laughed behind his pocket-handkerchief.

Mr. Mills was painfully aware of Miss Holcroft's levity: the manor pew was too near for her to escape his observation; and as he dared not openly rebuke her, he now determined to strike at the root of the matter, cut off the cause, and the effect would take care of itself. He had waited patiently for an auspicious moment to introduce the theme, and such, he believed, was now come.

He began cautiously, by making some strictures on the present state of psalmody in our parish, and finding no opposition to his opinion, expressed a wish that some of those present would co-operate with him, in order to bring about some reform It was just the idea suited to the company present. All the ladies considered themselves musicians, and the gentlemen were at least judges, so everything was ripe for a thorough reformation.

'If,' said our young reformer, 'an instrument could be procured which would be a substitute for the singular accompaniment to the psalms now in use, a more devotional character could be given to the service, and an air of decorum thrown over the congregation.' (Here Laura winced.) The Holcroftians shook their heads. They were sadly behind the times, and had yet to learn that even an Augean stable can be cleansed if people know how to set about it.

'Candidly, my dear sir,' said my uncle, 'if it is an organ you are driving at, I cannot afford it. I have already p t up a new spire, four new windows, and a railing to the chancel; I shall do no more, this year at least.'

He did not say, 'I pay yourself,' but we all knew it.

'No, no, dear sir,' cried Mr. Mills, in horror, 'I meant no such thing. You have been most generous, and far be it from me to endeavour to trade upon your benevolence. I alluded to a harmonium. Have you ever seen a harmonium, ladies?'

said we had not, and Rupert We 'Was it all like a cherubim?' asked.ich I afterwards discovered he by wh a seraphine; but Mr. Mills meant silenced him at once, and proceeded to inoculate us all with the harmonium mania, which has become so prevalent in rural England, and I am told in Ireland, even more so at the present day. He first demonstrated to us what was meant by a harmonium. 'An instrument,' he said, 'played like a piano, but of splendid full tones, resembling an organ, and would take up no more space than an ordinary square pianoforte'

He then drew from his pocket a small thin book, and read to a very attentive audience this passage —

'As an instrument for sacred purposes, the harmonium certainly possesses many important claims upon our notice. In small country churches, where there are no funds to purchase an organ, or where — if a patron be found to present one — an organist could not be paid, the harmonium ably supplies its place. As regards the player, there is no difficulty, the vicar's lady, or the family governess, by the aid of a small guide-book, and a few days' practice, will become perfectly competent to accompany the psalms and chants A few simple chords, that produce no effect on the pianoforte, make a "heavenly sound" upon the harmonium Indeed, the small skill required in its performance is one great charm of this instrument. The musical services in some of our country churches might be greatly improved by the introduction of a harmonium. It would be the means of an "harmonic civilization" in some places, and cause in time the banishment of those "grotesque howlings" which too often mingle with religious service'

'Grotesque howlings!' cried Laura; 'that must mean Holcroft church! What a charming instrument, Mr. Mills! Pray let us have one at once.'

'Not so fast, young lady,' cried Uncle Geoffrey, 'let us hear a little more about these harmoniums. What would one cost?'

'From six pounds to sixty,' said Mr. Mills.

'How absurdly cheap!' Laura broke in. 'Papa, you will get us one immediately?'

'Well,' said my uncle, more mollified by this modest statement, 'it seems agreed on all sides we want such a thing, and I have no objection as far as a small sum would go to assist you; but I would like a little more information first. Who is your authority, Mr. Mills?'

Mr. Mills handed him his little book, which Uncle Geoffrey read quite through, and then said he would consider the matter

'At all risks,' said Mr. Mills, 'we must break up the present choir.'

Everybody agreed that was the first step.

'And we must organize a new one.'

That also was agreed upon.

'And I trust the ladies will assist me?'

Nothing could be more delightful to the ladies than such a proposition Here was a talent which had been cultivated in them at much cost of time and money, lying useless, perfectly useless, now, indeed, their musical powers would have full scope.

'I am not a scientific musician, myself,' Mr. Mills said; 'but I have a capital ear, and though I have not many notes in my voice, I am sure I could hum a fair second'

Rupert Ansted cried softly 'Hear, hear'

'But,' continued our reformer, 'with such a musician as Miss Holcroft at our head, we could have no fears for our ultimate success'

'I am sure there are many good voices in the parish, if they only had a little training,' Laura said, appealing to my mother

My mother did not deny the possibility

'Could we not have a class for practice?' Mr. Mills said

Laura was in ecstacies. For a long time she had had a wish to be of use in the world, though she was not certain how to set about it; but here was an opening, and such an opening! Everything the heart of woman could desire. For half an hour she was flitting round the drawing-room, hearing what every one had to suggest, and laying plans for the organization of a model choir. Already in anticipation she saw the Holcroft services the wonder and admiration of surrounding parishes, and the pride and joy of its own. She heard Te Deums and Jubilates by the first composers sung with taste and correctness, and though she did not confess it, I have no doubt she saw herself as the presiding genius of the whole.

Then an old psalm-book was dragged out, and the rest of the evening was spent in the practice of psalms and chants preparatory to the training of the new choir for Holcroft church. Poor, dear, enthusiastic Laura! she quite forgot the strangers who were present when she mounted her own hobby. A lady's privilege, I dare say, for it certainly was not good manners of Mr Mills to ride his to death in company as he had been doing.

Before we separated my uncle placed a cheque in Mr Mills' hand.

'That,' he said, 'will defray half the expenses. It is such a paltry sum that I would not hesitate to give it all were it not that you desire to revolutionize public opinion. People feel deeply through their purses, and the Quaker's "How much dost thou feel, friend?" was a capital idea. Collect the remainder through the parish, or strive to do so; if people give you their money it is wonderful how much of their approbation follows it.'

'But, papa,' said Laura, who was hanging on her father's arm, 'every one approves of it already.'

'Every one!' cried uncle; 'My daughter and a few of her friends do: what are they to the rest of Holcroft? not one to ten. Oh! Laura, Laura!'

'I shall do my best, sir,' said Mr. Mills

'I do not doubt it; and remember, if funds fall short at the last I will make up the money; but you must not let that be known, or it will draw the purse-strings before you. I wish you all well through your undertaking, young people. You are tumbling a bee-hive.'

'You must not croak, papa,' said Laura, and so the party broke up.

For several weeks nothing was thought of but subscription lists, and lists of voices; and when we met, instead of discussing ordinary

country topics, it was 'Oh, Honora! did you hear the Elliotts have sent half a crown?' or, 'Such an absurd prejudice of the Fieldings, I must tell you of them.'

Laura drove down to the cottage one morning, and insisted on carrying us all up to the Hall for a fortnight. She said she wanted so much help, and the only real aid we could give must be on the spot. So to the Hall we went.

Meanwhile Mr. Mills was busy. In one week he had called on every family in the parish, in some cases being obliged to go several times before he found the heads at home; and yet none of his other parochial duties were neglected. Indefatigable young man! Difficulties seemed only to give him greater energy and ingenuity. Obstacles vanished under his amazing perseverance.

Then each day was ended at the Hall, where he triumphantly displayed his list and detailed his successes, and then we in turn had ours to relate. For we were not idle during this time.

Our great work was now to organize a class, and to this end we made pedestrian excursions round the farm-houses far and near, beginning immediately after breakfast our expedition, and only ending when fatigue and dinner drove us home.

Looking back on our method of doing matters then, it would not surprise me in the least to hear that the ready acquiescence we met with in many instances proceeded from the idea that we were all so many amiable lunatics, who required indulgent treatment to prevent alarming outbreaks. As a woman said to her son standing outside a house in which we were, 'Ye had best humour the ladies, Jock,' and humour us they did with very few exceptions.

This was the plan of our proceedings. Laura, Mr. Mills, and we had agreed that we must proceed with great care, not injudiciously to raise a spirit of opposition to our scheme. We must remember country prejudices. So for several months at least we would adhere to all the old-fashioned tunes in common use, such as Howards, Martyrdom, Dunkirk, and such time-established melodies.

Once Mr. Mills faintly suggested Gregorian music for the chanting, but as none of us understood the notation we put him down as decidedly as possible. I do not myself think he understood what Gregorian tones meant; but he had some dim conceptions of mediæval art, and somehow connected 'Gregorians' with it: but it was all confusion I am sure; the man was innocent as the babe unborn of anything approximating to the real thing. On our expeditions Laura carried a note-book to enter names and qualities of voices, and any other particulars that were thought necessary; and we had each a psalm-book.

As soon as we had opened our mission we begged to see the young people of the family, and Laura in her enthusiasm would have even the rough lads the farm-servants to attend. We thought it necessary to ascertain how many voices, and what Mr. Mills called 'ears' we had to depend on; so we generally made it a part of our visit to ask them to join us in singing a psalm, and the one generally chosen was the fifth, to the well-known tune 'Howards,' and sometimes, but not always, our new pupils joined in. Not unfrequently some old woman with shrill and quivering voice would strike in, and we had cause for thankfulness if she would give any modern rendering of the words, even for Tate and Brady we were extremely grateful.

Rupert Ansted tells a story of having one day looked in at the window of a cottage, and having seen us in the act of trying the voice of an old woman who could not have been less than seventy years of age. She sat on a three-legged stool, he says, put on her spectacles, rested her elbows on her knees, and holding a hymn-book up on a level with her nose, croned and quivered through the old version of the fifth psalm. We all denied the story, upon which he was sure to improve if he had a sympathizing auditor; but if we had but told him other incidents which

really had occurred, we could have furnished him with anecdotes far more ludicrous.

We met with few refusals. A landlord's daughter seldom does; besides Laura had a winning way of making people follow where she led.

We had soon so many names on our list that Rupert did nothing but jest at us for undertaking to train the whole congregation as he said. But it was no laughing matter with us: never were women more serious in any project; and at last even naughty Rupert with mock solemnity sent in his name, and a long letter to say he had a splendid bass voice, many degrees better than Lablache's.

We laughed, and admitted him, and then the other gentlemen in our neighbourhood offered their services, until my mother began to look extremely serious, and say this new movement entailed a sad loss of time for her, as she should be obliged to be present at all the lessons.

We got down a parcel of 'Mercer's Psalmody,' and Laura having had her schoolroom piano carried down to the schoolhouse, we held our first practice there.

CHAPTER III.

MR. MILLS GOES TO TOWN.

Miss Holcroft was considered a great musician. To judge by the teachers she had had, and the money that had been expended, there was nothing more to be learned. She was generally spoken of as Madame Dulcken's pupil, because this lady's great reputation added lustre to the names of those who had been under her, but many teachers might as well have claimed the credit of Laura's music as Madame Dulcken; I am sure they took equal pains to instruct her.

My mother had some old-fashioned German notions upon music, and how it should be learned, and inquired once of Laura if the theory of music had been a part of her studies; but my uncle interposed and answered for her, saying that theoretical people were his abhorrence, and he had always made it a stipulation with Laura's teachers that her music should be pre-eminently practical, and no more.

For some time I have made no mention of our rector, Mr. Seeley; but no one took a livelier interest in our progress than he did, and his daughter was quite a treasure.

Having been in her day something of a musician, she fondly believed she understood theory; why I am sure I cannot tell, but often and often would she say to Laura, 'I am rather out of practice, my dear Miss Holcroft, but you will find few people who understand the thing in theory better.'

So she took Laura, the choir, and me into training, and the instructions she gave us were quite wonderful.

'My dear,' she would say, 'make your chords a little fuller (this was when Laura was playing over her psalms), and if you find the music poor, throw in a few notes yourself; such a musician as you will readily hit on such as will improve the body of sound.'

She also taught us to play in what she termed 'quite organ style,' which was done by playing the chords what is called 'arpeggio,' and rubbing the keys hard, as if you bore them some grudge.

It was quite delightful to see the boys and girls trooping in to our class by twos and threes, with red faces, and an air of curiosity and stupidity mingled that was quite irresistible. No one seemed to have the least idea what had brought them there.

Mr Mills wished the pupils to sit Moravian fashion, the men on one side of the room and the women on the other, but Laura overruled it, and said she was sure they preferred a promiscuous arrangement.

I cannot say the recruits did us much service that first evening. Laura, the Ansteds, one or two other friends, my brother, sister, and myself did all the singing, and we came away saying to each other that the others would fall in by-and-by, when they gained a little confidence. Uncle Geoffrey, however, did not take our view of the matter. He told Laura when we

came home that she might have her friends to sing with her in her own house if she liked, but she should give the ignorant of her class regular instruction, and teach them to be independent,

Laura took her father's view very good-humouredly, and we then set to work in real earnest. Three evenings in the week we met in the school-house, and on the intermediate days we drilled second trebles, tenors, and basses alone; so that really we had nothing from morning till night, from Monday till Saturday, but choir-practising. As to the conversation, it was of nothing but psalms and chants, services and anthems: how Sarah Bell turned that C sharp, or how Margaret Dunfell's voice was flat, or how Adam Jones could go up the scale but never could get down again. So some time passed on. Hitherto we had had no opposition to our schemes, and everything had gone 'merry as a marriage bell.' Messrs. Smart and Company laughed at our ideas of what constituted church music, and wondered much what kind of instrument this harmonium could be which was to come into the church, never dreaming for one moment that it could be such a one as would displace their sublime music, or that the church services could ever go on without their aid.

The money was now almost all collected, and Uncle Geoffroy, who had some of Laura's impatience, could wait no longer. He said it was a sin to grudge money for the service of the sanctuary, and finally wrote another cheque which made up the requisite sum.

It was one evening when Mr. Mills had walked up with us to the hall after the singing class, when he found the necessary sum ready.

'Now, Mr. Mills,' said my uncle, 'this is Monday. Could you start for London to-morrow, make your purchase, and return for Sunday?'

Mr. Mills had no doubt he could, and be in Holcroft again by Friday.

'Very good,' said my uncle; 'we shall expect you for dinner on that day, and I hope all our friends will meet you here to hear your report. My carriage will meet you at the Mile End station at five o'clock. You can easily be here and ready for dinner at six; we must not be later, as it is class evening.'

Mr. Mills acquiesced, and left Holcroft next morning for London, while we exerted ourselves tenfold in his absence to astonish him on his return with our progress.

The next Sunday our good Mr. Seeley was to preach a charity sermon for the benefit of the Church Missionary Society, and he expressed a wish that the inauguration of our instrument should take place on that day.

'Nothing could be easier,' my cousin Laura said; 'the harmonium would be down with Mr. Mills, and our class had made such progress that we were longing for a *début*.'

We sang incessantly all that week. The nearer we drew to Friday, the greater the *furore* became It was well a week was but a week, or we should every one have been worn out, and my sympathizing readers will be glad to hear that on Thursday, Adam Jones not only went twice up the scale correctly, but came down it again with not more than three false notes each time

At last Friday came, and with it Mr Mills back from London. Words fail me to tell how we listened to his narrative, how we hung upon his description of the beautiful instrument he had purchased with twelve stops, the Bourbon and Bassoon being equal to those in any church organ. It had also a most powerful swell which would quite fill our little church. Finally, it was to arrive next day.

We had a grand rehearsal on Saturday afternoon. We had meant to have had it with the harmonium; but as it was not come when the class had assembled we went on as usual with the piano. Nothing now remained to be done. We were in glorious spirits, every one acquitted themselves so well. Never had Laura spread her chords so well, never had her newly-acquired 'organ style' reach such a pitch of correctness, until Miss Seeley was in raptures with her pupil. The

second trebles, tenors, and basses did what we called 'wonderfully,' and the dispassionate reader may draw his or her own conclusion as to our musical attainments. Every moment the harmonium was expected. A cart had been despatched to the Mile End station, and we looked each minute for its return.

The Hall was too far away to go home for dinner, so we dined at my mother's cottage, which was near, and then returned to the schoolhouse to 'wait for the waggon'

It was almost dark, and a heavy rain falling, when we heard the cart stop at the church gate. Out we rushed, regardless of the damp, just in time to see the Hall carriage also draw up. The coachman was the bearer of a line to Laura from her father desiring her to return immediately, as the damp would affect her chest, besides, he thought we had been long enough at the school-house for one day. He was not a man to be disobeyed with impunity, so reluctantly, oh! how very reluctantly Laura summoned us to return home with her. There was a loud outcry at our desertion, every one declaring we should not go until the treasure was disentombed; but Laura shook her head. 'You do not know my father,' she said, and with a sorrowful 'good-night' we went away. Our last looks were at the wooden case just perceptible by the light of the carriage lamps, and the group of fellow-labourers standing in the church porch, and it was almost more than we could bear. I think Laura would have cried with vexation, but that my little sister Ida, not accustomed to control herself, fairly sobbed outright, and Laura seeing how undignified tears were, wisely restrained hers. We were too much disappointed, and, in truth, too fatigued to talk much on our way home, but when we arrived there we found a good deal of talking done for us.

Uncle Geoffrey had begun some days before to tire of the whole business, and this Saturday had brought his impatience to a climax. Never was his dinner hour the same two days running, for the whole household arrangements were upset by the young lady's musical mania. Instead of the comfortable evenings with music, backgammon, or a game of chess as he had been accustomed to, Laura was at the school-house three evenings in the week, and the intermediate ones she had the second trebles in the music-room practising their parts. Instead of a few friends from the neighbourhood to dine with him once or twice a week as was his fancy, when they chatted over the news of the day, he now had to spend his evenings almost alone; and the only conversation he ever heard was the everlasting parish and its choir. No wonder he was getting impatient.

CHAPTER IV.

FINDING OUR LEVEL.

Sunday morning came, and no sooner was breakfast over than we flew to our rooms to get ready for church; every moment seemed an age until we reached the scene of our labours. We ran down stairs, but no carriage was at the door. Laura impatiently rang the bell.

'Why is the carriage not round?'

'My master countermanded it, ma'am,' the man said.

'Yes, Laura,' my uncle said, coming in at this moment, 'I countermanded the carriage because I do not wish you to go until the usual hour for service.' And then, when the servant was out of hearing, he continued, 'I am quite tired of this work. You carry things to extremes. Why not take things moderately, child? No one ever set about training a choir, and gave up home and parent and all other duties for it. The thing is quite preposterous. That silly Mr. Mills has turned all your heads. The next thing will be some of you will want to marry him.'

'Oh! no, papa!' Laura exclaimed.

'I can answer for myself,' I said, deprecatingly.

'You do well, Honora, not to be accountable for others,' uncle said, with a look of exceeding amusement; 'but the end of this work is come now, children. I shall allow it no longer. Even with your aunt's presence, Laura, I do not think it is

the proper thing for you to be doing. If Miss Seeley were the leader, well and good, nothing could be more proper, and you would be bound to assist her; but you are out of your position as my daughter meeting my tenantry and their labourers in such a way. It is *infra dig.*

'But to-day, papa?' pleaded Laura.

'That is another thing I have to speak of. I am told the Smarts and their friends are exceedingly indignant at being superseded, and if you use the harmonium to-day, something unpleasant will be sure to occur. Considering the sanctity of the place, I think it would be much better for you to postpone it until next Sunday, and through the week try and talk them over.'

'Quite impossible, papa,' said Laura, as decidedly as he himself could have spoken.

'Very well, I merely offer a suggestion, but on this point I am decided; you shall not leave this until fifteen minutes before the time for commencing the service.'

'Oh! uncle!' cried Ida, almost in tears. 'I thought it most dreadful to see only the box last night and no more, and to think it would be thirteen hours before we could see it, and now I am sure it will be fourteen.'

'Poor little thing!' said uncle, patting her head, 'I do not see how we are to expect stoicism from you when we have not even common sense from your elders.'

Laura now pleaded hard for permission to go half an hour, fifteen minutes, ten minutes before the time her father had appointed, but he was inexorable. No entreaties could move him, that was his way; if he once took up a position, no power on earth could make him surrender it. His only reply was a dogged silence, as he paced up and down the room, while we with bonnets and cloaks on sat still and watched him. At last, when Laura had desisted, and the silence had been unbroken for some minutes, he remarked to himself, as he walked in a kind of soliloquy—

'An enthusiastic but foolish young woman, who gave her husband a great deal of trouble.'

'Papa,' said Laura, breaking out, 'you know I hate Carlyle; a horrid cynic!'

'I cannot help it, my dear,' was the mild reply.

'And I have no husband, you know, papa.'

'You have your father, my dear.'

'And, finally, I am not Elizabeth of Hungary.'

'I never said you were.'

Laura laughed in spite of herself.

'I tell you this in confidence, papa. If my husband spoils me as you do, I shall give him a great deal of trouble.'

'And if he does not?'

'Why, then I shall give him a great deal more.'

'So he may look out for squalls in either case?' said my uncle, putting Laura on the shoulder as he passed her.

'Precisely!' Laura said. And so they were good friends again; and the moment the carriage came round, uncle being ready, we all sprang in, and in less than our fifteen minutes were standing where we had left our friends the previous evening—in the church porch.

Mr Mills came running out, looking very flurried and nervous.

'Pray come in,' he said; 'all is ready, Miss Holcroft. The singers are assembled, and the church never was known to be so crowded in the memory of the oldest inhabitant.'

About the time when my uncle, infected by Mr Mills' and Laura's enthusiasm, had given the cheque for the harmonium, he had also given the churchwardens leave to take off a queer awkward corner which was a part of the manor pew, and fit it up with a curtain round it for the harmonium. Laura and Mr. Mills had gone into ecstasies over it half a dozen times at least; it seemed made on purpose to accommodate the instrument. My mother and myself always sat in the manor pew, and as the rectory pew, with Miss Seeley in it, was next, so our dear Laura was well supported.

Mr. Mills assisted Laura into her corner, under the admiring eyes of the assembled congregation, and we

all gazed fondly at the object of so many aspirations.

'Tramp well with both feet,' were Mr. Mills' directions to Laura; 'pull out a few stops before you begin. I do not understand the principle of the pump-like handle in front. It is the swell, and I suppose should be worked backwards and forwards in time to the music.'

'And must I keep time with my feet too?' Laura whispered.

'I suppose so. Time is such an important element in part singing. But you should have an assistant to pump the swell; you will never be able to mind so many things at once.'

It was before the days when little girls wore the same prodigious amount of crinoline as their elders, or, indeed, wore any at all, and our little Ida was a child in dress as well as in age, so Miss Holcroft called her in to her aid

'Come here, child. Now as soon as I begin, you must pump as if it were a sinking ship.'

With difficulty Ida got herself wedged into the corner, and promised to work with all her heart. Small as she was, it was a tight fit.

It was the old-fashioned custom in Holcroft church to begin the service with Bishop Ken's morning hymn; it gave the stragglers time to get off the tombstones, on which they sat in the churchyard, Mr. Seeley used to say, and settled them in their pews before the prayers began. In this hymn our grand début was to be made.

Mr. Mills ran to the vestry, and was not a minute in robing, and returning to the reading-desk.

He gave out the hymn, looked at Laura, who boldly struck the first chord, piano fashion. We had agreed to dispense with a symphony until the people were more accustomed to the instrument; so at the first sound off went the singers, I leading the first trebles, and Adelaide Ansted the second. We had reached 'thy daily stage' before we observed we were going on without the instrumental part; but those who were not leaders, and had less to mind, described the sounds emanating from the instrument as unearthly it is true, but far from heavenly, as Rimbault's handbook had led us to expect.

First came something like a cough, followed by a spasmodic species of bray, greatly to Laura's discomfiture and astonishment.

'Pump harder, Ida; it must be you that are in fault.'

Ida did pump with might and main, but still no more air came. Then Laura remembered Mr. Mills' directions about the tramping, did so with great energy, and the result was air enough; but then the discovery availed her little, for when she struck the keys they hung fire; and do as she would, all was confusion, and a medley of sounds ensued which almost threw poor Mr. Mills into convulsions from horror

'Why do you not spread your chords?' said Miss Seeley, lifting the curtain at her side, and peeping in 'Give more organ style, Miss Holcroft.'

'I cannot!' Laura gasped, in a stage whisper.

'Let me then!' said the frantic spinster, throwing down her hymn-book, opening her pew-door, and darting out into the aisle. 'Some one should lead the forlorn hope,' she continued, as she pushed into Laura's sanctum, and stooping over her, grasped the keys.

Laura seeing what she wanted, slipped from her chair, and left it to Miss Seeley; but that energetic female would not spare time for such self-indulgence as a chair, she manfully struck a succession of bold arpeggios on the instrument, but as there was no wind in the valves no sound came. Again and again she struck, but with no better result: of blowing she never thought. 'Bless me,' she cried, 'it is as dumb as Charlotte Elizabeth's boy!'

All this happened in less time than my readers will take to read of it. Every one knows that contre-temps in church seem ages long in comparison to those that take place elsewhere.

While this scene was being enacted round the harmonium, the terrified singers had all ceased except Adelaide and myself, and as we had no intention of making a duet of it, we stopped also.

For a moment there was silence—for a moment only. In the next, oh! horror of horrors! we heard the triumphant scrape and bray of Messrs. Smart and Company in the gallery above our heads, and the quivering voice of old White, the clerk, triumphantly recommenced the ill-fated hymn, the congregation struck in, and 'Awake, my soul,' proceeded just as if our choir had never existed.

It turned out that Smart and his band quite disbelieving in the possibility of service without their aid, had attended with their instruments as usual, and the result proved that for once in their lives these ancient Apollos were in the right. At first, we all listened in dumb amazement at what we termed their audacity, but the next moment Miss Seeley rose majestically, and returning to her own pew, resumed the discarded hymn-book, and struck in 'Shake off dull sloth' as lustily as if nothing had ever occurred to disturb the harmony of the service

By this time my uncle was in a towering passion, and his daughter, a perfect Niobe, behind her curtain. I longed to laugh, as Rupert Austed and others were doing, but my mother looked the personification of sobriety; and then there was my uncle—as the old song says, 'his eye was upon me.' What a rage he was in! He could not wait for the conclusion of the service to give Laura his opinion of the exhibition, but put his head under her curtain, and gave an exceedingly candid if not temperate address on the absurdity of people undertaking what they were incompetent for.

Not that she required any additional reproaches. Poor girl! her own feelings were quite enough for her, but Uncle Geoffrey chose to let off his superfluous steam without any loss of time.

As to poor Mr. Mills, he looked more dead than alive all the remainder of church time, growing white and red by turns, and shaking like an aspen leaf whenever he caught my uncle's eye looking up at him.

Never had the Smarts been so florid in their accompaniments; never had they introduced so many appogiaturas into the tunes, and at every trill and flourish they made, I could see Mr. Mills wince as if under some surgical operation. It was of no use trying to take refuge in the vestry-room after service, for even there he was pursued, and asked sarcastically by my uncle 'What he thought of the new instrument?' The poor fellow was too gallant to blame Miss Holcroft, and could only stammer out a few unintelligible sentences, which but irritated the irascible old gentleman the more. Uncle Geoffrey seemed to have forgotten how much he was at first in favour of it, and how it had really been at one time his own hobby too, before his daughter rode it to death.

On his return to Laura he found her friends round her consoling her, all trying to lay the blame on some one or something, but Laura herself, even Ida, maintained stoutly it was all uncle's fault for preventing us from coming down in proper time in the morning to allow Laura to make acquaintance with her new work. Rupert courageously accused Miss Seeley's 'organ style,' and Uncle Geoffrey coming up just then agreed there might be some truth in Rupert's idea.

'I am sure, Laura,' he said, 'you might have had enough of teachers by this time, without going to Miss Seeley for instructions, who must have had her instructions from the original Jubal who handled the harp and organ—an antediluvian!'

So the harmonium was shut up for a few weeks, but we went once or twice with Miss Seeley to hear her try it in private.

'It is very odd,' she said; 'I would have staked my life on the imposing sound of my "organ style," and I declare to you, Miss Holcroft, it is anything but an improvement here. Well, well, the world is greatly changed since my time of learning, and I question if it is for the better.'

Uncle Geoffrey and Laura went to London for a few months soon after this, and I went with them. We persuaded my uncle to let us have a harmonium and some lessons, and we very soon got into the way of

the instrument, though I believe neither of us made much of the fingering. Strange to say, our master did not approve of Miss Seeley's 'organ style,' and advised us both to have our fingering alone in organ style, and not rub at the chords any more.

A few days after our return, we were walking along the Holcroft Road, and we came on Rupert Anstod looking moodily over a gate on which he leaned.

'What is the matter, Rupert?' I cried out, as we came up, 'has any one stolen your peace of mind?'

'You may answer that yourself, Honora,' he said, vaulting over the gate, and shaking hands with us. 'No, I was moralizing.'

'On what?' said Laura.

'On human nature's delusions,' he said. 'There are some things we all fancy we can do intuitively, and I was trying to balance the question, whether your sex or mine was subject to the greater number of these misconceptions.'

'And the result?'

'All women think they can drive by intuition. Of course they ruin the horses. Against that I balance that all men think they can farm, and so they ruin themselves. Now, which is the worse?'

'I could give you another weight for our scale,' said Laura, slyly; 'we women all think we can play harmoniums.'

'So you do; but against that there is the undoubted fact that we men think we can sing in parts.'

'So we have made mutual confessions of our pretensions,' I said, laughing; 'but still, Rupert, I want to know what these things have to say to your woe-begone face?'

'Did you never hear of my model farm, Honora? Why, I am the laughing-stock of the country! As you are aware, they do not teach farming at Eton, but I thought I knew everything in the world, and I played my harmonium in "organ style," and that is a fact. And my governor wants to know "how I like the new instrument?" I am ruined, and I am going to California.'

'Are you?' said I, very steadily.

'I wonder if they want patent ploughs and outlandish reaping-machines out there?'

'Do not talk nonsense,' said Laura; 'you know you are not going to California.'

'If you two advise me not, of course I would not think of it,' said Rupert, trying to laugh at himself; 'I am an exceeding great fool, and there is no doubt of the truth of that, so I must go back and play my harmonium like other people, I suppose. Good-bye.'

So he vaulted back again over the gate, and Laura and I walked home in silence.

The further annals of Holcroft have nothing whatever to say to a harmonium, they come under another head. There only remains to be told how a mild-faced woman was brought from the Liverpool Blind Asylum, who leads our music very sweetly. Our services are very simply conducted, it is true, but 'decently and in order.'

Uncle Geoffrey, mollified long since, has begun to talk of giving us an organ, and everything is now in proper training to bring our music as near perfection as it ever reaches in a country village. After our own experience of choir-training, we find fewer faults with the singing—we have learned charity; and I only wish, in conclusion, that all the good people who go to church, and come home to abuse the singing that never cost them any labour, had the training and management of a choir for six months: at the end of that time they would make fewer complaints, I can assure them from my own experience.

THE NEW ART OF LOVE.

WE are indeed fallen upon evil days, and the times may be taken to be sadly out of joint. Elderly antediluvians, as they must be now justly considered, are startled at the change. They tell us it was not so in their day, and look on with amazement at the well-iced procedure of the present professors of the new Art of Love. They see the youth of both sexes making advances with about the same impetuosity as molluscs or the oyster tribe, and wooing with all the demonstrative eagerness that colours the courtship of sea-anemones. We go forth into the polite pastures of society where the elegant young of both sexes most do congregate, and see the frigid process going on round about us, regulated by the new languid principles. Our fashionable Trappists have, by a course of spiritual exercises, reached to the perfection of ascetical training. Anchorites of the drawing-room, they have become like those venerables of the desert, whose boast is that for years they have not looked upon the face of a female. Their eyes are under an awful discipline, and are barely equal to the function of faintly winking. Their ears are not open; the labial muscles actually break down under the strain of speech, and compass no more than a feeble murmur. They recline against folding-doors—stony impassibilities, in evening suits. Their thoughts are far away—a chasing of the deer, it might be said, only that such field sports are found too fatiguing. The youth of the town may, indeed, love their loves with an A, but it is with such a strictly private and confidential A, with a capital Roman first letter of the alphabet so impenetrably disguised and shrouded in ineffable mystery that they might as well dispense with that important sign altogether. Beneath their cold, undemonstrative exterior, no searching eye, endowed with whatever penetration, could discover the well-known traditional words which have always rhymed to the conjugated Amo Amas. They are utter strangers to the whole train of blushes, sighs, tears, oppressions, palpitations, and other agreeable sufferings which the robust boy keeps in store for his patrons. Vocally speaking, the Simsreevesian formula of departure, where the young person is taken leave of under the denomination of 'sweetheart,' would appear to be a sort of incomprehensible dead language, or at least to savour of the familiarity which regulates area social life. The exertion of inviting any young lady in cheerful, lusty, sonorous accents to 'Come into the garden,' would be far above their strength; neither would it make much material difference whether they were there at the gate alone, or in company with other parties. Any proposition for deciding (vocally) between 'Who should be fairest' or 'Who should be dearest,' would be received with a cold elevation of the eyebrows, and an invitation to come and look at where a particular love lies dreaming, would be met with a stern negative. No, we are all advanced by a high state of civilization into a state of amatory barbarism. Our endearing arrangements are all based on the simple but business-like arrangements which regulate such dealings among the dark ladies and gentlemen of those islands where scalps, and sometimes prime pieces of the human form, are highly esteemed.

But not to venture so far as Feejee, which has only been introduced by way of parable, and between which and our country there can be, as all the world knows, no possible analogy,—in sober earnest the decay of the elegant and healthful pastime of love is indeed a deplorable thing for reflection. Our Lubins and Phyllises, our Damons and Chloes, who should be, according to all the proprieties, skipping and ambling it at such pastoral festivals as are in repute — have discovered the old delightful exercise to be insipid — and have flung it away. They have been up to town, and grown fine. They have stripped off the pale-blue coat, and the shepherdess's little hat. See us, in the fine old times, on

the china jars, bowing, in our bloom-coloured coats, in the trim gardens, and madame sampering behind her fan. See the laboured homage of the minuet de la cour! See me, your great-grandfather, my dear, approaching your great-grandmother with an overwhelming respect in the laboured windings of that dance—a timid servile adoration, the time being marked, as it were, by profusest bows, see me taking her fingers by the merest tips—shrinking even from that profaning of her sacred person What responsive encouragement — so haughty yet so gracious; what approaches, what flying away with starts; what humbling of oneself in the dirt, as far, at least, as abundant vows and scrapes could typify that prostration! Yet the whole was symbolical — exquisitely and delicately symbolical It testified to her divinity. What abasement! What moral rolling in the dust! What lifting up of her foot and placing it on our head! All this, my dears, in *my* time

To what source is this fatal change to be traced? for it is some feeble consolation speculating over this lost Art of Love, putting it together tenderly, piecing it, as it might be the bones of an extinct elk. Have our damsels (and whisper this ever so softly)— have our damsels themselves been at the bottom of the mischief, and with their own hands sacrificed the chubby boy with the wings? Is there a suspicion —a breath of over-familiarity in their dealings with the swains— a stepping down as it were of the goddess from her tripod? Here is first point, by way of hint for private meditation. Again, when Strephon enters the ranks, and puts on scarlet and becomes Captain Strephon, do you not, I ask you, dearest damsels, again unwittingly sacrifice the little ruddy boy with the wings? Are you not too accessible to that pastoral officer—too much intoxicated with the blaze of his vermilion suit? Military Strephon is no wooer now; but is himself wooed. Not wooed, but in a manner worshipped, like a species of Grand Llama-in-the-Army. Beautiful virgins hang on his lips, which drop foolishness; dancing-pens ring peals of silver welcome to his maunties. No wonder Strephon's light head should give way, and that he should become puffed and inflated upon this homage. The old relation is reversed, and there is a new chivalry and female knighthood, which competes for the smiles of the brave

Third point—for this is still by way of a meditation There is no shutting our eyes to the fact that there is a frightful competition abroad. There is mortal struggle going on—a forcing of transactions—which is shaking the character of all business operations of this nature, and sapping the whole foundation of credit There is a glut of samples. The fair trader, who would be content to bide her time and wait for custom in the steady ordinary course of business, is overborne by the dishonest artifices, the alarming sacrifices, the mock auctions, and the vamped-up wares of the dishonest outsider.

It is within the memory of man that at the matrimonial breakfasts there used to be largesse of kids - whole kids (not the frisking young of goats, but gloves of Paris) used to be given to guests at the nuptial banquet I think they used to be displayed like cakes, upon a china plate. There are misty traditions of what were called 'favours'- furlongs of white satin ribbon, of no practical utility certainly, but still indicating a delicacy of mind and a noble bounty. There was a profuse extravagance in the distribution of the moist, tempting preparation in the centre of the table—the rich indigestibility which was to sit heavy upon us at night Gone now the kids! Gone the favours! By-and-by I expect to see the moist Gunter go by the board One by one will the whole train of delights, the mousseux, the cold preparations, be swept away, and the naked ceremonial left, in all its bare, dry and hungry integrity. So has been abolished that last draught of spiced wine, which waited the convict at a particular time on his way to Tyburn-tree.

Yet, with a marvellous inconsist-

ency are all our novels and romances still based on these old ruins. It is still the breath of their nostrils—if romances may be said to have those organs. With perfect propriety love may be taken to be the soul of a neat novel, as it once was 'the sowl of a nate Irishman.' It is bound up inseparably with the whole machinery, and crosses in and out through its warp and woof.

Eliminate, I say, this sweet nutriment, this delicious revalenta arabica (sold in three-volume packages, at thirty-one and sixpence) from our tales, and there would be left only a heap of dry bones.

Give us back, give us back, I say pathetically, that outrageously wild freshness of love; the old established frenzy, with all its moods and tenses and tensions, the primeval violence and traditional boarding of tyrannical parents, guardians, and what not. Those obstructions would gladly welcome such insubordination, and hail as a refreshing piece of disobedience their child's fervid declaration that she will DIE first, before consenting to give up dear Charles! Alas! for the too filial tone of our days. We want a scene — a good, earnest, startling scene, where the lovely Sophia falls upon the carpet with a loud shriek! where the brutal guardian is told in quiet, resolved accents, 'Sir, you have killed me!' where there is a wish expressed 'to be led to my chamber;' where there is a copious watering of pillows with tears; where there is intercepting of letters; where there are 'high words,' and brutal guardian makes use of low, vulgar language towards the 'spirited young man;' where the 'spirited young man' whispers, 'Let us fly, my beloved!' at the same time insinuating his arm round 'my beloved's' waist. Ah! woe is me, we are too cold for that familiarity now!

We are taught, then, that the proceedings in this delicate matter have been hitherto guided by a crude irregularity and gross disregard of form. The young persons who have played their parts in the business have moved on a desultory, spasmodic principle. They have been creatures of impulse. They have exhibited a looseness of practice and absence of scientific rule discreditable to an age of figures and statistics. It is high time that the whole should be methodized. Could there not be something done in the way of a code, or acts of Parliament—something in the nature of the steps of a mesne process — which will redeem ill-regulated impetuosity from floundering into the gentle passion? All our youths should look back to that steady young man of Mrs Hannah More—the amiable Cœlebs—who set out upon his matrimonial travels, and at last discovered a correct, discreet, coldly-virtuous, and I am sure, very plain young person, who exactly suited him. Alas, that such paragons should be so inaccessible, so difficult of discovery! being reserved, it is to be feared, only for those correct, decent, well-conducted young men who will put themselves to pains to find them out. But for us, poor castaways—we, who blindly follow our wretched fancy, and hanker after this or that set of features, those eyes, that hair, those cheeks, that colour, that figure, and other decorations of this poor mortality, all in the most absurd, irrational way—how shall it be with us? Alas! not a thought for that interior furniture, the jewels of the mind. Not a thought for that hidden gold and silver, which will keep bright and burnished, while that outer tabernacle with all its—baubles shall we call them?—of fine eyes and such-like, will only too surely decay. There is no logic (shame on us!), no reticence in our behaviour in this important matter: no calm selection. Not one of us takes after that great exemplar of the young Cœlebs, sifting society for that pearl of price, a valiant woman. We, indeed, play young Cœlebs so far; but we sift no more than a ball-room or two. Yonder is the face that shall undo us, and presto! the ice has cracked and we are down, and carried away under water. Nay, the thing has been carried yet further; and infatuated men, blinded by their passions, following the dictates of a pure (and absurd) affection, have proceeded to

he last act of all, and crowned their follies by an ill-omened marriage.

Still, I fancy the thing cannot work long in the present fashion. The cheerful world will lose half its colouring, and subside into a sad-coloured gray. The gilding will be rubbed off the gingerbread; in fact, there will be no gingerbread to gild, and no gilding to rub off. It would be no better than those gorgeous set pieces, those revolving stars of effulgence and halls of dazzling light, which close our pantommes, when the electric light has been turned off, and the audience is leaving the house, and they stand out in their cold deformity, as coarse canvas, and rafters and patches of tinsel. A rude, heavy foot has stamped through a fine gossamer web of Queen Mab's own weaving, and left a jagged, gaping rent.

Let us try to suppose a ball when the new system is fairly at work, and the unruly passion has been effectually eradicated. Would there be festivity, dancing, or even company—would there be a ball at all? Setting apart those earthier attractions which do, indeed, draw the more elderly section of our race to such scenes, and who find in a well-laid supper-board a certain gross joy, it may be reasonably doubted if quiet entertainments could draw together the young of both sexes. That undercurrent—the OLD Art of Love—is the basis of all these terpsichorean delights. Young Alfred Corydon, who, under pressure of the mistress of the feast, has been mated temporarily with the faded charms of an elderly partner, finds it but a weary, tedious business, and walks his minuet with a repugnance only too patent. Those clouds of houris in tulle have some small share in drawing the youth of our country to these revels. And they, too—the tulle houris—all bouillone'd and boufonné'd, are not altogether indifferent to these Bayards of the ball—heroes of a hundred quadrilles, who have borne the heats and the dusts of a hundred valsing jousts, and are not faint, whose tongues move lightly, and whose evening armour, constructed by skilful hands, runs in graceful folds. In the abstract, dancing is, so to speak, enjoyment; and yet a measure with some plain and aged charmer, even though some ravishing, dying fall be winding from the music-gallery—some melancholy song of the cornet swan (for are there not valses known as 'chantantes?'), is but an insipid, tasteless business. Extinguish the purple light, and there melts away all airy, fleecy clouds of lace and gauze, the gold and silver sprinkling, the garlands of gay flowers, the fluttering fans, the bouquets—in short, the whole of that little armoury with which Beauty fights her battles.

THE HUMAN SEASONS.

ILLUSTRATED BY J. D. WATSON.

No. I.—Spring Days.

FOUR Seasons fill the measure of the year;
There are four Seasons in the mind of man:
He has his lusty Spring, when fancy clear
Takes in all beauty with an easy span:
He has his Summer, when luxuriously
Spring's honied cud of youthful thought he loves
To ruminate, and by such dreaming nigh
Is nearest unto heaven: quiet coves
His Soul has in its Autumn, when his wings
He furleth close; contented so to look
On mists in idleness—to let fair things
Pass by unheeded as a threshold brook.
He has his Winter too of pale misfeature
Or else he would forego his mortal nature.—KEATS.

THE LITERATURE OF THE BLESSED ISLES.

In Two Parts.—Part I.

THE present thinking, acting London society has been formed to what it is by whatever it has been, and by whatever other societies in the world are and have been. It is the product of ages of primitive wood and savagery; of the Roman toga and law; of the Saxon gaberdine and agriculture, of Norman mail and feudalism, of commerce and refinement; of steam power and the telegraph. More, it is in its daily life very much what its swift and intimate connection with remote quarters of the globe make it. A Maori rebellion in New Zealand, the death of an Emperor of China, the jealousy of Japanese barons, the celebration of a Grand Custom in Dahomey—all influence the pulses of its financial system, affect the safety of some of its outlying members, form or modify its theories, or threaten to make its sword leap sharp and glittering from its scabbard. Although no one of its members can at first hand and in his own person be everything, he can still, by sympathy or otherwise, be whatever any exceptional adventurers are. With mighty hunters he may encounter lions and follow on the spore of elephants; with Du Chaillu he may bloodlessly fraternize with gorillas, or protest against outrage to his national flag with Commander Williams. A man then knows himself in his largest humanity when he infers from the lives of others his own faculties and possibilities under other conditions. It is by incorporating with his own, other men's experiences, that any individual can hope to become approximately the measure of the race.

And our *London Society*, if it would justify its aspirations to reflect London in literary activity, must claim an equally discursive right and fulfil as discursive a duty. As the literary 'heir of all the ages,' it must dutifully accept all their legacies. It is called upon to manifest an interest in all societies, actual, possible, or projected. In this spirit it is that our readers are invited to a friendly excursion to the Blessed Isles, the seats of sunshine and political perfection, amongst whose luminous shadows we have to offer them a banquet long ago provided by a select number, fit and few, of illustrious caterers. It is fitting, for the strong performance of routine duties, that life should be diversified with the unprofessional. It is good to brace ourselves for the commonplace by sportive rambles in the gardens of fiction. We may learn, and from time to time renew the impression, that the pursuits proper to ourselves, are not and should not be all-engrossing, when we discover an enthusiasm as great as our own, exhausting itself in other directions. The immediate cause of such explorations may be the unassuming one of recreation, but modesty and dignity are its fellows in result. We shall, in a few sentences, show how deeply rooted in our dispositions is the tendency to speak and to hear of 'Better Lands,' and how pleasant and healthy it is in a state of society yet confessedly imperfect, to form one of an audience to whom grave dreamers submit their visions of amelioration. We shall find the origin of this kind of literature deeply rooted in the necessities and longings of our nature.

From infinite nothing to infinite nothing—such is the dream-marshalled world-pilgrimage of the devout Djain and Buddhist of Northern India, Ceylon, and the Central Flowery Land. Between past eternal dreams of Brahm, disturbed during a time-interval to a shadowy activity in the creation of illusive forms, and a reabsorption, throughout a coming eternal repose, of all fleeting phenomena, whether of spirit or of matter—such is the position of the life-platform of the contemplative Brahmin. The same divine dissatisfaction with the Present, which, under the colossal forces of a tropical nature, pressed the aspirations of remotest oriental humanity to the deification either of *coma* and impersonality, or of non-existence,

gave to the Persian a dualistic theology, in which Light and Good were the stronger antagonists of Darkness and Evil. Further to the west, where the powers of nature and man were more in equilibrium, or where, having less or more to conquer from the former, the latter became aware of individual virtue, men took refuge from the present in traditions and reminiscences of a bygone dynasty of justice, or in fond dreams of *Astræa redux*, and the instauration of the golden age.

The golden age past, if we may trust the representations of ancient poetry, was one in which men, nourished by the spontaneous productions of the untilled earth, lived a life of truth and unselfish honesty. Law was justice, and not a code, for as yet there was no statute, no judge, no infraction of right, no criminal, and no punishment. A perfect tranquillity possessed all things: there was no travelling by land, no voyaging by sea, no severance of domestic ties or family communion, the military art was unknown; the seasons toyed with each other in the ethereal mildness of a perpetual spring. The future era of happiness, in which by a blessed alchemy the age of iron was to be retransmuted into gold, was to see guilt and fear chased from the glad earth for ever. In the maturity of this age there was to be peace amongst all creatures, commerce was to cease by the production of all fruits in all soils without the pain of cultivation; the arts to be anticipated by a provident nature, and fruition in all things to embrace reception.

We of a later age, to which has been restored the clearer light reflected prismatically in heathen memories and expectations, journey hopefully between two paradises—a former Eden forfeited, and a coming Millennium, before whose brightness the lustre of the age of human infancy shall darken itself in willing eclipse.

Not exclusively, however, by the remembrances of the past and the hopes of the future are we enabled to surmount or elude the exigent difficulties of the present. It is when these are scant of comfort that we have recourse for diversion to the more subtle instruments of imagination, to the airy creations of fancy, to the light, perfect proportions of the ideal. Not continuously do we husband our forces of locomotion to further us on our way from starting-place to goal; but occasionally, fitfully, as circumstances dictate, we open the valve of safety and speculation. We send forth our artificers to build and people palaces any and everywhere within the limits of extension. We charm away an hour of pain with anodynes of the gods; we escape from the jurisdiction of tyrants to broad-lying continents of justice, in which our noblest part is native, we slip the fetters of a galling despotism to lead a grandly protesting colony to the ether and the stars. Our princely minds are the consorts of thought, and in the domains with which thought has dowered us we find brother kings with whom as brother kings to rule fraternally. More soberly, if our fact be a fact of fog and grievance, our romance may yet be that of the Blessed Isles.

It suits our purpose, and violates no propriety, to divide fiction into representative and presentative. The former is a realistic fiction, in which characters, having only a nominal personality, do yet represent and typify others as they appear in nature unadorned and unextenuated. The latter is an ideal fiction — a mirror which, receiving the images of nature as she is, does yet, by a magic beyond the ken of catoptrics, reflect them as they might be—a mirror which receives the commonplace and the actual to give them back as the heroic and the possible of humanity. Of one species of this presentative fiction we propose — first asking the reader to identify its origin with that dissatisfaction and discernment of defect from which sprung the creeds and the fables we have glanced at—to present a little in detail the peculiarities and manifestations.

The elysiums with which the world is familiar are generally islands. Political fairy-land has, perhaps, as much a natural and

necessary as a fanciful determination to insularity. Plato's 'Republic' is the unfixed Delos of a profound dream-ocean, Bacon's 'New Atlantis,' Gonzalo's selection of the realm of Prospero as the site of his projected golden age constitution, and Harrington's 'Oceana,' justify the claim of islands to be considered as the seats of happiness. Remarking this, we have enshrined in our title words which have been long extant as symbols of bliss. The 'Utopia' of Sir Thomas More supplies us with another instance of the operation of this rule, and gives us, at the same time, a name which is often extended from the individual over the entire species, and with which, in some form or other, as noun or adjective, for better or worse, blessing or cursing, every one is familiar.

What, then, is a Utopia? In common parlance every project that has for its end an object too good to be within the possibility of realization is Utopian. But this, although in accordance with a natural tendency and popular usage, is to claim for the word an elasticity and general signification which is not scientifically warranted. Strictly it is a defined, particular symbol, and not a universal one. The fact that its initial letter stands in the place of two letters in Greek, gives to the etymology of the word an anceptal character. By some it is derived from *εὖ*, 'well,' and *τοπος*, 'place,' by others its first letter-syllable is identified with *οὐ*, 'not;' and thus taken in connection with the *τοπος*, which in either of the alternative etymologies is invariable, may be freely represented by the English 'no-such-place,' and analogued by the Weissnichtwo ('know-not-where') of Carlyle's 'Sartor Resartus.' The former derivation would bring the etymology of the name nearer to a definition of the thing. It is too great a liberty to thrust a double duty upon the same member of the word, or we might, by taking both together, get at some such sense as this—that Utopia is a place too good to be true. And this is pretty much the case. Utopia gives a class name to imaginary governments in which everything is perfectly regulated for the welfare of the whole community; in which the good of all is the care of each; as was the case in the fabulous island discovered and described by Sir Thomas More.

Does any one ask *cui bono* with regard to Utopias? We answer that what ideal beauty is to the artist striving after its embodiment; what justice is to law painfully approximating thereto by multiplicity of statute; what a perfect sphere is to the earth ruthlessly whirled and tortured out of shape by manifold motion; what perfect sanctity is to the sin-hating sinner—that is ideal government to the framer and administrator of working-day constitutions. The man without an unapproachable ideal is doomed to be a slave and menial, never a master in his craft. Take ideals from the world, and concerning all good it may be said *actum est*: the bereaved planet has only to set up as a dependency of Limbo and the 'lords of hell.' As the poet and the artist generalize from lovely parts imperfectly adjusted to the symmetrical beauty of the perfect type according to their conception of it, so in politics from the imperfectly assorted members of a constitution *chaque penseur fait son Utopie*. Sir Thomas More above-mentioned discovered his Utopia whilst navigating by charts in which, long before, its bearings had been dimly laid down. It is to an age all but as far back as that of Socrates that we have recourse when we would seek the original, the patriarch, so to speak, of those works which in these latter ages England, and Europe generally, have classified as Utopias. The rivalry between Xenophon and Plato often manifested itself in a kind of competitive selection of the same objects of literary treatment; and has, amongst other things, given us from each a characteristic course of politics. It is difficult to fix the chronological order of their works in this kind as wholes, seeing that with a frigidly polite reticence they almost uniformly forbore allusion to each other. But as parts, at least, of the Republic were introduced to the world before the commencement of the Cyropædia, we shall not do amiss in

allotting the first place of mention to Plato.

We have said generally that the *climamen* to Utopian architecture is born of dissatisfaction with existing edifices. And particular Utopias are so much the protesting contraries of particular abuses and grievances that we may infer the one from the other as naturally as from the growing precision and minuter articulation of consecutive creeds may be inferred the limits within which contemporaneous and slightly antecedent heresy was exercising itself. The fortress and the ark suggest the deluge and the attack. A moment's glance will discover to us the state of society against which the works of Plato and Xenophon were reactionary.

We are so much accustomed to admire the great and noble achievements of a momentarily-united Greece, that we forget, or do not notice, the infinite meanness and jealousies of a hundred microscopic states, always jangling when free from external pressure, and not always at one in the face of perils that threatened the very heart and life of Hellenic independence. Again, we are so dazzled with the splendour of Athens, as a treasury of wisdom to which Europe, Asia, and Africa yielded up their stores of tributary philosophy; as a centre of knowledge, any one-day's conversation of whose people was a *talked* cyclopædia of human science; as a world university and atelier of the beautiful and divine in art;—we are so blinded by these things, and with the contemplation of that city as the theatre of Liberty, that we have no eye for its political licentiousness. We do not see the savagery of that high cultivation; the anthropophagus grinning behind the bust of Pallas; or Pan shambling and leering amongst the Hermæ. Yet is it none the less true that, under the misrule of the terrible Athenian *demos*, it was almost impossible for a substantial, gentlemanlike citizen to live. By means of iniquitous exactions allowed by the law, he might be compelled, for popular amusement, to ring the changes of trierarch, or galley-equipper; of choregus, furnisher of chorus and dramatic spectacle; and, lastly, of beggar or exile. His life, fortune, and honour were at the mercy of *dicasts*—men combining the functions of judge and jury—who rose before daylight to secure their chance of the daily obol (three halfpence) paid for their services; whose palms itched for the paltry sum which represented the value of acquittal or condemnation to the arraigned victims of a spiteful prosecution; who, in default of purses, bestowed their filthy bribe-money where a sailor of modern times bestows his cheek-distending quid; who retired early to a rest which, although undisturbed by conscience, was broken—praised be a discerning Nemesis!—by insect champions of the innocent, ruthlessly demanding blood for blood. These men we do not see, because we have not to confront or jostle them. With Plato and Xenophon the case was different. They had seen their great teacher given over to hemlock, for upholding his own dignity and that of justice, for refusing to humble himself to the worship of Cerberus sitting in the seat of Theseus. Plato, returning from travels which had laid all the available world under contribution, retired to Academe, scorning to take part in public affairs so administered, and Xenophon suffered exile for sympathy with Sparta. To such men—it is not quite a paradox—the only *true* political life was a *feigned* one. The only perfect constitution was one which, as a first condition, must contrast with the one they despised, as a second, must resemble some other that came nearer to their approval; and, as a third, must be purified in their own alembic.

The Republic of Plato is one of a series which seems to be offered as a tetralogy of political and philosophical dramas. It is in the form of a narrative, which Socrates relates in the presence of a select party of friends, who support the rôle of subordinate and occasional interlocutors. It was a grievance of Plato that he could find no existing form of government that suited a philosopher; and that, in consequence, the philosophical character itself was decaying. If the philosophical cha-

racter could but meet with a government whose perfection corresponded to its own, 'then should we see,' he says, 'that it involves in it something essentially divine, and that in all but it—in men, their characters, and pursuits—there is nothing but what is miserably human.' No polity, he contends, would ever be perfect until philosophers became its kings, or its kings philosophers. So that the republic, being a republic of such, was confessedly inapplicable to the ordinary world. 'It is'—to quote the words of the late Archer Butler—'the prophecy of future possibilities when individuals were to carry out, each for himself and for the community, that scheme of perfection which God had shadowed forth in the sensible universe. And so completely identified are the politics of Plato with purely ethical speculation, that many critics have contended that the whole Republic is but an allegorical description of an individual human soul.'

From the exercise and combination of the three faculties—Reason, Spirit, or Will, and Appetite, or Passion—into which Plato analyzes the human mind, result four cardinal virtues: Prudence, or Wisdom, Courage, or Fortitude, Temperance, or Self-control; in which, when fully realized, Virtue itself consists. Developing the analogy between the ideas of the perfect man and the perfect state, Plato insists that in his republic there shall be one part to correspond to the Reason, to whom the sovereignty is to be intrusted, a second part, answering to the Spirit, or Will, is to assist the sovereign; and lastly, a third part, parallel to the Appetite, or Passion, is to minister to the bodily wants of the community. These are the three social classes—the rulers, who are to apply themselves to the contemplation of the eternal ideas of things—truth itself—and, ardently admiring the beauty of virtue, to recommend it to others by the weight of their personal example; the warriors, guardians, or executive, who—as assessors with the rulers, and in the line of promotion, according to virtue and talent, to the highest functions—are to be carefully educated to philosophical prepossessions, and to be of strong will and unflinching determination; and the artisans, or craftsmen, who, as unacquainted with wisdom, are inadmissible to political trust or dignity. Each class contributes a peculiar virtue to the general body. By its ruling class the state becomes sagacious, bold by its warriors, and temperate by the obedience of its artisans. Of the combination of these virtues in the whole community civil justice is the result. The military class are to be carefully disciplined in gymnastics—a term which includes every physical exercise that may tend to the subjection of the will and the passions to reason—and in music, another generic term, which embraces all culture having a tendency to develop a well-balanced mental force. But every science and art is to be counted valuable only, or at least chiefly, as it indicates a moral and religious science beyond itself. Thus even the favourite sciences of Plato—mathematics, music, and astronomy—are given up as handmaids to virtue. Poets are, if not excluded, to be jealously guarded, and placed under the strictest surveillance. Instead of lengthily illustrating or extenuating this apparently churlish decision of Plato, we would simply remark, that the republic is an ideal not of an æsthetical, but of a moral harmony; and that Plato in thus, sternly checking his own recollections of youthful delight and adult taste and feeling in favour of Homer, yielded to the voices of judgment and conscience. The fact is that Homer and the poets, his followers, were the popular priests of a theology which, being, as a theology, gross and immoral, was shocking to the clear-souled hierophant of ideal mysteries.

But perfect harmony, whether of states or individuals, is liable to be disturbed. When reason is on the throne of the human soul we have an analogy with aristocracy, Plato's model government; when ambition results from the dominance of will over reason, we have a parallelism to such timocracies as Crete and Sparta; when the reins are given to appetite, avarice arises, which is analogous to oligarchy; when the passions are

inordinately and recklessly indulged, we have an image of democracy; and, lastly, when any one passion exercises exclusive and overbearing sway, we have an exact picture of absolutism, which is pronounced by Plato the worst possible condition of social union. The modelling of the state upon the individual has circumscribed the speculations of our philosopher. Starting from such a premiss, no logic, no sophism could rescue him from one or two conclusions which have generally appeared monstrous to persons who have considered isolated and random articles of his constitution. As the individual mind is one, there must be unity in the state, coherence, harmony, and as in the mind every faculty and its results belong to every other even of inferior dignity, so in the state, although classes, even in the arrogant form of *castes* be insisted on, there is to be a general and unenvious fraternity—a community of property, of wives, and children. Plato is driven to these conclusions, not by the depravity or unsoundness of his morals, but by the soundness and severity of his dialectics. 'The fault of Plato's ideal of political perfection'—we recur to Archer Butler—'is, that it converts the members of a state into mere machines of the public will, and, annihilating all individuality, endangers the impulse to personal excellence, overpowers the subjects of government with a legislation perhaps too private, officious, and minute; opposes the growth of the natural affections (destroying at a blow all filial and connubial relations), and leaves no room for national expansion or circumstantial alteration. . . . But with all their peculiarities—in many instances in consequence of their peculiarities—these extraordinary works (the 'Republic' and the three others, forming the political tetralogy) maintain their interest beyond all subsequent political essays; for the union, characteristic of Plato, of sublime and comprehensive conceptions of the possibilities of moral advancement with the minutest special observations of human nature, they are still, perhaps, unequalled; nor is the literary education of any statist completed who has not made them his own.'

With the 'Cyropædia' of Xenophon speculations on government assumed a new phase. Plato had invested his commonwealth as a whole with a grand but shadowy royalty—had, in despair of finding his republic realizable under any human conditions, ventured only on an impersonal treatise, a system without a hero. Xenophon ventured, on the contrary, to give his 'Cyropædia' a narrative and historic form, and even—in this more daring than writers of this class generally—grouped the illustrations of his system about a historic name and in a historic country. In doing so it is naturally to be expected that his imagination would be more in check than if he had no scenes or *personæ* to accommodate but those created by himself in his own cloud-land. Introducing this form of literary Utopianism, he became the originator of political romance, at the same time he impressed upon his work so deep a stamp of feasibility as to leave it debatable whether it was intended for a romance or a history. Of course the purely romantic side of the argument has had its supporters; and Cicero, for one, says the 'Cyropædia' was written not to suit historical fidelity, but to exhibit a representation (*effigies*) of an excellent government. In many important respects it fails of the truth of history chronology, for instance, is disregarded, and the sequence of events anticipated by a development not short of the miraculous. Even the manner of the death of Cyrus, who expires in his bed after the utterance of an admirable speech, is utterly at variance with the matter-of-fact version of Herodotus. The artistic demanded an imposing and congruous *finale*; and the Cyrus of the romance avoids, by an imputed end of calm and dignity, a violent death in the heat of battle, and the after scornful treatment of his remains at the hands of the humorous Scythian queen, Tomyris.

Despising the institutions of his native state, the corruption of which we lately glanced at, and admiring

the more aristocratic economy of Sparta, Xenophon has set the idealized institutions of this state to work themselves out in unison with those of Persia in the last country as an arena. Whilst serving under the younger Cyrus he had had an opportunity of gaining an insight into the actual and the possible of the Persian régime, and had assumed, by making the elder Cyrus his hero, to add to that monarch's military glory the more subdued and mellowed hues of justice and moderation. Only the first book of the 'Cyropædia' is strictly Utopian in it are laid down the institutions in and by which Cyrus was formed and educated preparatory to his high career, which career, it is to be remembered, is also worked out in the spirit of these institutions. A few words will satisfy the demands of our present purpose, for, dropping the personal and biographic, which, so far as they are historical, are not the *peculium* of the 'Cyropædia,' we have only to outline the leading principles and social practices of the government. We have to do not so much with Cyrus, the ideal ruler, as with the ideal system of training of which he was the product.

The Persian laws seem to begin with a provident care for the common good; and, by anticipation, forestall the possible bad effects of imperfect training in any particular family, by extending over all education a state control. Within a free agora—not for traffic—are arranged in their several courts the four classes of a representative city—the boys, the youth, the full-grown men, and the elders. To each of these classes belong its appropriate duties of routine and contingency; and each higher or older class has proportional privileges and immunities. The idea of the education generally is military; the boys are overlooked by presidents taken from the elders; the youths are superintended by the full-grown men; and the presidents are themselves regulated by a superior presidency. No individual amongst the Persians is excluded by law from honours and magistracies, but all are at liberty to send their boys to the public schools. Here they pass through a course of practical justice, and learn to acquire self-control, temperance, obedience, and, above all, to detest the *crime* of ingratitude. This vice, as evidencing a profane carelessness with regard to the demands of religion and filial piety, and the calls of patriotism and friendship, is an offence obnoxious to punishment by law. The second class, of young men, pass their time by day and night in a round of duties, of which the armed guardianship of the state is typical. Having discharged all the duties of this class, they pass into that of the full-grown men, upon whom devolves the burden of foreign military service, and who are eligible to honours and magistracies. After passing through this class unexceptionably, they are enrolled amongst the elders, an order which stands composed of approved and excellent men. These, freed from the claims of military service, dispense public and private justice, with them rest the election of all magistrates, and the power of life and death. There is a nicely-graduated reverence of class to class, youth to age, subjects to rulers, and all to law. The Lacomizing attitude of Xenophon is discoverable in the military-like organization of his state, and the gradual working up to honours by means of seniority. Conservatism was pretty well assured, and innovation discouraged by an age standard of admission to the Spartan Gerousia, and of eligibility to the ruling class of the Persians.

THE CHRISTMAS ENTERTAINMENTS.

IF it be true that the Drama is declining among us, it cannot be said that the decadence is owing to the want of public support and patronage. At this Christmas-time there are open in London no less than twenty-three theatres; and all of them, with scarcely a single exception, are doing well. On boxing-night every pit and gallery was crammed to suffocation; and at several of the houses 'money was turned away.' This is the state of theatrical affairs when the field is disputed by a large number of capacious music-halls and other places of amusement which had no existence half a dozen years ago. Whatever, then, may be the quality of the dramatic entertainment presented in these days, it is certain that it is largely patronized and meets with a liberal reward. Nor is this success confined to the managers' harvest season of Christmas-tide. Throughout the whole of the past year the theatres generally enjoyed unusual prosperity. Two West-end houses that for years had been gulfs of ruin to a succession of luckless managers were established in a career of success almost as soon as their doors were opened. At another the manager has netted within twelve months the immense sum of 40,000*l*, and this through the attraction of one piece. This should prove that the drama of the day is at least suited to the public taste. If it has declined then the public taste has declined. The writers who lament the present state of things seem, however, to forget one important fact, viz, that the stage is no longer looked to, or needed, as a teacher. In the old times, when there were no newspapers, and books were scarce, the pulpit and the stage were the only mediums through which lessons on morality and life were presented to the public. It was of high importance then that the dramatist should hold the mirror up to nature, show vice its own image, and virtue her own features. But in these days, when all the learning, the experience, and the philosophy of the greatest minds of all ages are within reach of the humblest in cheap books, and still cheaper newspapers, the stage is no longer regarded as an Instructor. We only look to it for amusement; and so long as that amusement is innocent and healthy, there is little else that we expect from it. We study human nature and morals now in books and in broadsheets, and we go to the theatre for diversion. If the dramatist can instruct while he amuses us, well and good. But we do not absolutely want his teaching.

With this brief apology for things as they are, we shall proceed to give some account of the amusement which has been provided for London Society at the various theatres this Christmas-time. In following out this agreeable task we shall not be guided solely by our own individual opinion, but we shall take into account the reception which the various pieces met with, and also the remarks and commentaries of the playgoers in boxes, pit, and gallery with whom we sat and conversed. In this way we hope to be able to reflect the true opinion of the playgoing public, and to arrive at something like a just estimate of the merits of the various pieces.

The etiquette of theatrical criticism would prescribe that we should begin with a notice of one of the great houses—Drury Lane or Covent Garden, but we will reverse the rule, and begin with one of the small houses—the smallest of them all, indeed, 'the little Strand.' There is a certain fitness in this, indeed; for the little Strand has of late years been a sort of *Alma Mater* to the burlesque and pantomime writers. The new principle of joke-making that was first enunciated at this little house by Messrs. Talfourd and Byron has leavened the whole body of punsters. Mr. Planché contented himself with a pun every dozen lines or so; Mr. Talfourd showed that an ingenious wit could afford a per centage considerably larger. But when Mr. Byron arose

it was speedily demonstrated that puns lurked in the least-suspected places, and that burlesque doggrel might be made to bristle all over with them, as a porcupine bristles with quills, or a garden wall with broken bottles. This system of turning every unconsidered verbal trifle, such as adverbs, pronouns, and conjunctions to pun account is now almost universally followed, and the success which attends the efforts of every one who pursues the method seems to show that the art is not a very difficult one. Let us, then, give to the 'little Strand' the honours due to a discoverer and a propagandist.

Mr. Byron writes the Strand Christmas piece, of course. We expect to see in the bills, some day within the century, that, 'on account of his long and faithful services, this popular writer, though supersannuated, will always be retained on the establishment' He merits the favour which the management shows him. *Puss in a new pair of Boots* is the title of his latest production As the title suggests, it is a new version of the favourite nursery tale. The selection, we think—and the audiences seem to think so too—is not a happy one. Fairy lore is not suited to the taste of the children of large growth who frequent the stalls and boxes of the Strand; nor is the stage large enough for the magical effects of a fairy drama. There is no scope in a bandbox for the realms of fancy. This seems to us to be the chief cause of the indifferent success of the new piece. But there is another. Mr. Byron has carried a certain peculiar method of his to a vicious excess. In his burlesque of *The Lady of Lyons* he discovered that an eccentric comedian coming on in a grotesque dress, and stolidly delivering a long speech full of puns and pointed allusions produced a vast amount of laughter without any aid from the story or action of the piece. This device he has since turned to account in all his pieces; but in the present one the thing is overdone. Nearly every character has a soliloquy of this description; and though they are all more or less mirth-provoking, the result is very damaging to the extravaganza as a whole. The action of the piece is constantly stopped, and the *dénouement* is arrived at without that connection of events which is necessary to sustain the interest of the story in the minds of the audience. Nevertheless there is a good deal of fun in this new version of *Puss in Boots*. You are not greatly interested in the fortunes of the gay *Marquis of Carabas*; and you do not care a pin's point whether the lovely daughter of *King Noodlehead the Ninth* is made happy or not. But at the things which the characters say and do you laugh; and especially at the things said and done by Mr. James Rogers as *King Noodlehead*. What is the power which this comedian employs to make us laugh so much and so heartily? His appearance at this house is always the signal for a roar; and we have known him call forth repeated rounds of applause simply by looking up at the boxes, and saying, 'Well!' Does not the secret of his comicality lie in his assumed appearance of meanness and inferiority? Wright's funny look was a knowing one. Rogers's is the reverse it is an unknowing one. He always seems, in his person and manner, to present us with a burlesque on humanity—something of the kind which a monkey sets before us when it is dressed up as a little old man and plays the fiddle. Mr Rogers seems to say to us, 'Look here, good folks. I'm only a baboon, and yet how like I am to you human people, who pride yourselves upon being men.'

All the parts in this extravaganza are remarkably well acted. Mr. Clarke's Ogre is highly artistic in every respect. As a grotesque actor it appears to us that Mr. Clarke has scarcely an equal on the stage. His make up is always a study, and his action always characteristic. The frequenters of the Strand will remember how his acting of a little old woman (who had positively nothing to say) attracted crowds to the little theatre, and made a fame for a piece which in itself was of a very commonplace and hackneyed

description. Miss Charlotte Saunders as the cat in top-boots never loses sight of her feline character for a moment. From beginning to end the assumption of cat-like manners is sustained with admirable fidelity and ingenuity of device. It was a happy idea to amalgamate the cat and the 'tiger;' but we scarcely liked the cat's head. We should have preferred to see more of Miss Saunders's intelligent face. The audiences miss the arch and lively Miss Marie Wilton from this theatre; but we are bound to say that her place is likely in a little time to be well supplied by Miss Ada Swanborough. This young lady, though a novice, acts well, and, moreover, she looks very handsome. What she chiefly wants is vivacity. She looks charming as the pretended prince, and acts with considerable breadth for a beginner, but she must not look so serious in the midst of her fun. There are a great many verbal jokes and puns in this piece—some good, some indifferent, and some awfully bad, but as the awfully bad ones tell best with the audience, we cannot blame the author, in his own personal interest, for resorting to them. We have not a 'book of the play' by us, but we remember that there was a roar like a little clap of thunder when *King Noodlehead* sat down upon a thistle and then got up and said, 'thistle never do,' and again when some one talked of serenading another like an 'Ethiopian neath an opian window.' We think it was the cat's kissing some one which evoked the cue line 'your lip it is,' and called forth the response 'no hipities young man.' The cat, of course, had more puns in him than lives. He could come up to the 'scratch;' he was not a domestic animal, but 'an-alien' and a 'furrier,' and he lived in 'Catcaton Street,' and was fond of the opera of 'Purr-itani,' and hoped he would never be made into a 'kittney pudding.' We have a recollection, too, that Mr. Rogers said his 'calves were gone for heifer,' and that the ogre's wife, complaining of the selfish voracity of her husband, said that at breakfast he 'drank four cups and made her fork-up hers.' He also gave his horses a 'meal o' corn,' and the injured wife says 'made me look-on.' There, what do you think of that for a pun? We are sorry that Mr. Byron could not resist that venerable joke upon the word 'ogre.' We won't mention what it was because it would require some explanation; the author knows what we mean. It is in three pieces this season, and we think it was not quite brun new last Christmas. The scenery at the Strand is very good and well managed on that little tea-board of a stage; but there is no dazzling splendour, and the smiling landscape at the close makes, we think, rather a dull ending.

Here is the bill of the Theatre Royal Olympic. It looks a promising one, albeit the title of the Christmas novelty excites a good deal of interrogation. *The King of the Merrows.* What is a merrow? Who are the merrows? Where do they come from? Where do they belong to? When we purchase and peruse the 'book of the play,' we learn that Merrows are Mermen, and that they 'come from' the imagination of Mr. Palgrave Simpson, and 'belong to' the bottom of the sea. This Christmas fairy extravaganza is written by Mr. F. C. Burnand—the youngest but not the least capable of the little band of burlesque writers whose productions have recently occupied so much space on the stage—and is founded, we are told, on an original plot constructed by Mr. Palgrave Simpson. We are afraid that the word 'original' has acquired a new signification of late, or at least that it has lost its old one. How else could it be applied to a story which is just *Undine* over again, the monotony of the old proceeding being varied only by a dash of the *Colleen Bawn* with a suspicion of Paddy Miles the fisherman, gay and light-hearted, transformed into a piper? *Ecce signa.* Once upon a time, in the fabulous history of Ireland, there was a certain Danish king called Grumgriffo, who invaded the southern coast of the Emerald Isle, killed the native monarch, and imprisoned his son

and heir Prince Teague O'Connor Grumgriffo has a step-daughter Gorgonina, 'forty and no beauty,' whom he wishes to dispose of, but whose hand no one will accept, not so much from objection to her hand as to her nose, which is 'well red.' In this difficulty Grumgriffo thought of his prisoner Prince Teague. The prince, however, was already in love with a mermaid princess named Sabrina, and declined the honour intended for him. Enraged by this refusal, Grumgriffo caused the prince to be tied up in a sack and thrown into the sea. Down below the prince was caught and became the prisoner of Coomara, the king of the Merrows; but he had the consolation to meet with the lady of his love, the mermaid Princess Sabrina, with whom he wandered among the shrimps and periwinkles. But he sighed for the upper earth and shrimps in their boiled state, accompanied by tea in terrestrial bowers of bliss. The piper of his late father in this emergency comes to the rescue. The fairy Zephyrina pronounces a spell upon Dan's pipes. She confers upon one pipe the power of making every one dance, and upon the other the power of making every one run away. After this spell has been pronounced Dan takes a walk upon the sea-shore and soothes his soul with a tune. Immediately the sea is in commotion, the little fishes rise to the surface and dance, and at length King Coomara appears, and thus he speaks:—

Whence come those strains that charm my every sense?
Dan. Your gracious fiship I meant no offence
Coom. Offence! Oh, not at all; I am delighted;
And for your music you shall be requited.
Come live with me, the Merrow King, and verily
You'll pass your time among the merrows *merrily*.

Hereupon Dan receives a magic hat from Coomara—a hat which will preserve him from all dangers and enable him to perform the double journey—and takes a 'tremendous header' into the ocean. Dan arrives with Coomara at the bottom of the sea and discovers Prince Teague and Sabrina. They concert a plan of escape. Dan plays his pipes and the mermen dance until they fall down exhausted. The opportunity is seized to open Coomara's strong box and abstract two magic caps. Prince Teague and Sabrina put them on and immediately ascend through the sea to the upper world. Dan is left behind, and is transformed to a sea monster; but he eventually secures a magic cap and follows Teague and Sabrina to the regions above, where all are made happy in a grand tableau. This story, though not very new, is by no means a bad one for the purposes of 'legitimate extravaganza;' but the slender thread which binds the few incidents together is terribly spun out, and the jokes which adorn it are few, far between, and singularly poor. Mr. Burnand in former efforts has given proof that he possesses humour and the power of joke-making. It is therefore difficult to account for the unrelieved dullness of his present performance. Certainly the acting did not aid him much.

It is surely a great mistake for Mr. Robson, as the piper *Dan*, to appear among fairies and other lace-and-tissue-clad personages dressed in the conventional corderoy smalls and freize swallow-tailed coat of the music-halls. The coarseness of his appearance completely destroyed the harmony and character of the fairy scenes—and after all he did not look much like an Irishman, nor speak much like an Irishman. Indeed, we have no hesitation in saying that the assumption was a failure—the only failure that Mr. Robson has ever made. The performance of the piece excited very little laughter in the audience, and only one song—the patriotic one with the refrain of 'whole hog or none'—obtained the honour of a round of applause. The songs, however, were not well selected, and this, we suspect, was not the fault of the author. He could not surely fancy that an indifferent lady singer would charm the audience with a vocal performance of the 'Carnival of Venice.' Is it not true—and will not playgoers generally endorse what we say—that the last three or four extra-

vaganzas at this theatre have been comparative failures? And yet they have been written by authors who have been eminently and uniformly successful elsewhere. What can be the cause of this? We think we can solve the problem. The system of the theatre is unfavourable to any piece which requires to be well sustained by a variety of characters. Mr. Robson in his own sole person sustained the fortunes of the theatre while he was in health and his popularity was fresh. He is now out of health and his popularity is on the wane, and still he maintains the old system. The prosperity of the Adelphi and the Lyceum should ere this have taught him that the public will no longer run after a name. The days when playgoers talked of going 'to see Wright,' or 'to see Robson,' are gone by. They go now to see good pieces which are well acted throughout.

Being in the neighbourhood, we may as well look in next at the Lyceum. Nearly ten o'clock, and the *Peep o' Day* not over yet! Don't you think, now, Mr. Falconer, that a little shortening—(you must listen, 'It's no use, Jacob,' as Salem Scudder says)—don't you think that a little lopping would still be an improvement? We have seen the piece several times, and every time on coming out (after the stroke of ten) we have heard the remark on all sides—'It's a good piece, but far too long.' Those provoking carpenters' scenes are as old-fashioned as leather breeches. Bring the story a little closer together. Take note, *The Colleen Bawn* and *The Octoroon* are both played in one night, and the whole performance is over about eleven.

At length the overture. Sprightly and appropriate, we commend, it together with the overtures at Drury Lane, the Princess's, and the Strand, to the notice of certain conductors, who seem to imagine that a burlesque is a grand opera.

There is a sad want of novelty in the subjects of the Christmas pieces this year. We have just been seeing *Puss in Boots* at the Strand, a story which has been 'done to death,' and which, if we are not mistaken, formed the subject of one of the pantomimes last season. And here at the Lyceum we are presented with the well-worn story of *Little Red Riding Hood*. The mines of fairy lore have been overtaxed of late, owing to burlesque having become at certain houses perennial. If we are to have any novelty in future, some one must set to work and turn out an entirely new series of nursery tales. The Lyceum version of *Red Riding Hood* is from the pen of Mr. Leicester Buckingham, a learned, grave, and potent signor of the daily press. And why not? *Nec semper tendit arcum Apollo.* It must be a relief to a writer who is chained to the heavy log of political disquisition all the year round to be set free for a week or so in December to concoct a few playful rhymes. Such an author may enjoy the grateful change; but one certainly does not envy the author who is pun-making from January to December round, and who swelters at doggrel rhymes in the dog-days. Mr. Buckingham's piece is smart, and full of puns; but it is evident that, in the conduct of his story, he has been a martyr to a variety of circumstances over which he had little or no control. In order to allow Miss Lydia Thompson to represent the three nationalities of the United Kingdom, he has to transport his characters from the banks of the Thames to Scotland, and thence to Ireland. The scene-painters, too, have had a special interest in *compelling him to this* change of venue. They had evidently settled it beforehand that they should paint the Falls of Garrawalt, near Balmoral, and the Lakes of Killarney. So Mr. Buckingham must needs carry them to those places at his own expense—that is to say, at the expense of his story and his piece. Mr. Telbin's views of the Irish lakes are triumphs of scene art, and probably nothing equal to them has ever been seen on the stage, but coming in, as they do, in panoramic succession, while the *dénouement* of the story is being worked out, they completely spoil the piece. When did a panorama *not* spoil a piece? Nor do we see why the author should have been

obliged to make a sacrifice to the goddess Terpsichore, in the person of Miss Lydia Thompson. We have had Irish jigs and Highland flings from this clever little lady *ad nauseam*. Miss Thompson is something better now than a mere dancer of quick steps—she is an actress, and a very clever actress too; and we certainly think that her vivacious talent might have been better employed on the author's smart lines. Mr. Buckingham has not had the advantage of a good burlesque company at this house. Miss Thompson as *Red Riding Hood*, and Miss Cicely Nott as *Colin*, are both admirable. Miss Saxon, too, deserves credit for the effective way in which she delivers her lines; but for the rest—well, Mr Warlow is promising, but Mr. Selby, as the squire—is he not phenomenously bad? We say phenomenously, because we know Mr. Selby to be an artist, and it is not easy to understand how he could be so *shockingly* ineffective. His part is distinguished for its badness, because we know it is sustained by a good actor. Mr. Selby is out of place in burlesque, and we advise him not to essay a character of this kind again. Mr. Falconer seems to have undertaken the management of the Lyceum under the ruling influence of a lucky *star*. He has taken the tide at the full, and we wish him *bon voyage*—'on to fortune.' His talent, perseverance, and faith in himself deserve success.

Shall we go to see a pantomime, now that we are in the neighbourhood of them; or shall we exalt burlesque by giving it the precedence? Well, we think burlesque, if not the older form of Christmas entertainment, is, in point of literary claims, entitled to take the *pas*. So let us proceed along the Strand to the—— we were going to say the Adelphi, but we are reminded that there is no Christmas piece at that house, owing to the overwhelming attraction of the 'two great sensation dramas in one night'—so let us make it the St. James's. Oh, that dreary square! We have gone round both sides of it, and we find the one to be just as long and wearisome as the other. This Christmas time, however, the pilgrimage, though long and dreary, will be amply repaid by a sight of Mr. William Brough's elegant extravaganza of *Perseus and Andromeda*. Mr. Brough has in a great measure made his own story from the scraps of information respecting his dramatis personæ which are to be found in Lempriere's Dictionary. Thus we have *Polydectes, King of Seriphos*, enamoured of *Danae*, but strongly objected to by *Danae's* spirited young son *Perseus*. The king gives a banquet to the neighbouring princes, and stipulates that each shall present him with a richly-caparisoned steed, hoping thus to exclude *Perseus*, who is poor, and to incite him to some dangerous enterprise. *Perseus* has no steed to offer, but he engages to make war upon the Gorgon, Medusa, and bring her head to the king. In this task *Minerva* gives the daring youth her assistance, furnishing him with the shield of Pluto to render him invisible, the wings of Mercury to give him speed, the dagger of Vulcan for defence, and her own shield to render him invincible. Meantime *Phineus*, a rich 'swell,' who is betrothed to *Andromeda*, abandons her amid the deluge sent by Juno to avenge a slight passed upon her by *Andromeda's* mother The floods are accompanied by a sea-monster which devours the population, and his depredations can only be stayed by *Andromeda* submitting to be bound to a rock, and left at the mercy of the Gorgon. *Perseus* arrives, slays the Gorgon, and releases her. *Andromeda* rewards him with her affection, and her parents, the king and queen of Ethiopia, sanction their union *Perseus* is resolved that the ceremony shall take place in the presence of his mother, and arrives in time to prevent her being dragged to the altar against her will by the odious tyrant *Polydectes*. The king, hearing of his approach, summons his guards; but *Perseus* shows the Gorgon's head, and turns them all into stone. This story is well adapted for the purposes of extravaganza, and both in the writing and construction of the piece Mr. William Brough has perhaps excelled even

the best of his former efforts. The classical tone and atmosphere of the mythological period are carefully preserved throughout, and the writing is characterized by elegance, neatness, and wit. It has been said that high polish in burlesque writing is unfavourable to fun and breadth of effect. But in *Perseus and Andromeda* it will be found that Mr. Brough has successfully combined both. He shows that he can be as prodigal of puns and verbal jokes as any of his compeers; and he has this superior merit, that he does not jingle words without at the same trying to jingle ideas As an example of his most audacious punning, we might give the speech of *Polydectes* to the princes —

Poly. Gentlemen all, the honours you've conferred on me
Quite overcome, I might say, overburden me.
I thank you for your presence at my table,
And likewise for your presents in my stable.
For you've each given me in your liberality
A noble horse for my poor hospitality
Gold, silver, jewels, each his bridle carries on,
Such trappings, sure, are fine past all caparison;
So richly harnessed thus from head to hoofs,
They of your friendship I deem *hamest* proofs.

As an example of point and neatness, we may take this *Minerva* appears at the end as the *Spirit of Extravaganza*, and *Perseus* remarks on her dress —

Per. What does it mean?
Min. It means you now in me
The Spirit of Extravaganza see
Perseus. For wisdom a strange character
Min Not so
For wisdom is full often found, we know,
Most potent when in garb of folly dressed;
As wholesome truths are oft best told in jest

The extravaganza is admirably acted throughout, and some of the effects are very beautiful and striking. Miss Herbert as *Andromeda*, in a white dress, and with dishevelled golden hair, chained to the rock, presents a charming picture of misfortune. The turning of the guards of *Polydectes* to stone may be called a great 'sensation scene.' We have seldom seen anything of the kind so well managed. Altogether, this extravaganza is characterized by a high degree of literary excellence, and by superior taste and elegance in its appointments.

Pantomime still holds sway at the big houses, and very properly so. The vast stages of Drury Lane and Covent Garden require breadth of effect—large heads, grotesque noses, goggle eyes, and plenty of kicking and slapping. We should be sorry if burlesque were to elbow clown and pantaloon off the stage. A good pantomime is one of the most enjoyable entertainments that we know. Its fun is of the kind which shakes up the diaphragm and makes the sides ache. With the very highest respect for written wit, for humorous expression, for point, and for epigram, we maintain that there is no joke equal to the burning of the pantaloon with the red-hot poker, if the thing be well done. The clown must enjoy the joke without any apparent consciousness of its being cruel, and the pantaloon must accept it with innocence and good faith. A good slap in the face, too—how funny that is! Squashing a baby, is not that good sport always? Something that hurts, or is supposed to hurt, never fails to provoke a hearty laugh. Will some one write an essay and show us how this happens—how mankind should be so ready to laugh at what is cruel?

The Drury Lane pantomime is written, as usual, by Mr. E L. Blanchard He combines two stories—the *House that Jack Built*, and *Mother Hubbard* They have no connection, of course, but the amalgamation serves to introduce to the juveniles a number of familiar characters, and at the same time enables the author to amplify his story. Mother Hubbard and her dog act as the good genius of Jack, and enable him to build his house and become a man of property, in opposition to the tyrannical machinations of the wicked squire. The building of the house is the great effect of the pantomime, and certainly it is both novel and striking. A swarm of little masons and carpenters come on the stage and begin hammering, chipping, and sawing. In a few moments, as if by the work of their hands, a scaffold rises, with the little workmen upon it. You see them all busy with their trowels, and the

scaffold rises higher and higher: they are building the house fast. Now they are finishing off the coping-stones and plastering the walls. The scaffold sinks imperceptibly while they are at this work, and there, on what a few minutes before was a dreary, waste marsh, stands a beautiful cottage. This is one of the prettiest effects we have ever seen, and it is capitally managed. We wish we could speak as highly of the other scenes, which, truth to say, are somewhat dingy. Mr. Blanchard manages his story very neatly and with due regard to its steady dramatic progress; but he seems entirely to eschew verbal jokes. We only discovered one pun in the piece, and here it is. Mother Hubbard *loquitur*—

> If I take this strong tea, I see I shall
> Be getting quite an old *Bohea*-man gal

We think the author might have treated us to a few more. That he can joke with the best of the jokers we know full well; and we think audiences now expect jokes and puns in pieces of this kind. The Bohea-man one above referred to was quickly caught up and relished. In the harlequinade we have two sets of pantomimists, two clowns, two pantaloons, and so on. We scarcely think that the most partial friends of those clowns, &c., would say that they were funny. They were not; and they further aggravated their dullness by being coarse and vulgar to a degree which we should not have expected at this theatre.

We go up Oxford Street to the Princess's with 'great expectations,' mindful of former pantomimic triumphs under Mr. Harris's tasteful management, and we are not disappointed. Mr Byron's pantomime of *Whittington and his Cat* is in every respect a capital one. It is a pantomime calculated to please the old as well as the young folks. The opening, though strictly pantomimic in action, is full of smart puns and jokes, and the masks are so constructed that every word can be distinctly heard all over the house. And what funny masks they are! every one with a different expression, and all highly ludicrous and grotesque. And the actors who wear them—Mr. Garden, Mr. Moreland, Mr. Raymond, and Mr. Hastings—are they not worthy of the name of pantomimists? They speak their lines with excellent effect, and at the same time do not disdain to suit their words with the pantomimic action of kicks and slaps. Mr. Byron, in his opening, to some extent anticipates what is called the 'comic business.' Everybody hits everybody else on the head, and the immovable expression of the grotesque masks invests the proceeding with the most delightful comicality. There is a charming *naïveté* about Miss Harris's assumption of the part of little *Dick Whittington*. Her graceful simplicity gives quite a poetical colouring to the scene on Highgate Hill, where the bells call upon the future lord mayor to turn again. Her childlike manner is in pleasing contrast to the mere pertness which commonly distinguishes the acting of parts of this kind. Miss Howard as the fairy, *Good Humour*, combines elegance with vivacity, and speaks as well as she dances. But what shall we say of little Master Haslem, who plays the *Cat*? Was ever such a human cat seen? This little child is not simply an acrobat—he is an actor, and his waggery betokens either very precocious intellect or a very clever system of training on the part of his instructor. It is but justice to the little man to say that wonderful as were his tumbling and trapeze-vaulting, the comic touches of his walk and action were even more effective. That exit in the style of an old man complacently rubbing his hands exhibited a power of humorous expression far above the capacity of ordinary children. The scenery of this pantomime is exceedingly tasteful and elegant; and the scene where the rats invade the presence-chamber of *King Kollywobble* is very cleverly managed. The graces of the ladies of the ballet are quite overpowering. It does not strike us that any of them can dance very well; but as they are all more or less handsome, and are prettily and richly dressed, they

form a very pleasing element of any piece in which they are engaged. The dance where they open champagne-bottles with a volley of 'pops' is novel and pretty, and is highly creditable to the fancy of the ballet-master, who, by the way, has the advantage of being named Theodore Martin. Ballet-masters seem to be lucky in their names: 'Oscar Byrne' would fit either a poet or a hero But we must not forget the author's portion of the work. Mr. Byron has two cat subjects this season, and we were curious to see how he would diversify his puns so as to give the Strand and the Princess's each its due share of originality He has certainly managed the matter very well At the Strand he puns upon cats, and at the Princess's upon rats Here are some rat-jokes, *King Kollyobble* loquitur:—

Oh dear! I am the wretchedest of kings,
For this is a most fearful state of things;
Rats ravage all, they're worse than the lunatics
They're in each hard *soir'ous*, e'en in our attics,
We've tried each trap and each rat catcher that's here,
And on those vile *rats there* we made a *razzia*

Who would suspect that 'razzia' had a disjunctive or other conjunction with 'rats there?' The extravagance of Mr. Byron's punning and word-twisting is illustrated by the following couplet—

Badlot. Your lip, dear, in derision do not curl.
Prince. O Wichard, Wichard! I'm a wicked girl.

And this—

Don't die, my puss, oh! if he does I'll write
His history, for he deserves it quite
Publish it in 3 vols, I will, if you dies,
There'll be a run upon that book at *Mes-dies*.

The fact that the public 'take' and laugh at such puns as these shows to what a high pitch of perception they have been educated by sitting under the burlesque writers. Truth to say, however, these outrageous puns go better with the public than polished wit and pointed epigram. Here is a very neat bit of writing—

Duck Most mighty potentate, my ship's been wrecked;
And although it was wonderfully decked,
It's now a shabby thing without a bow;
Although its sails did into ribbons go—
It's broke in two, is buried with each shroud;
It's figure-head's gone; it's no longer *proud*.

This is happy, but it does not raise laughter or applause like a bad pun. The harlequinade is really very funny. The clown and pantaloon, Mr. Hildyard and Mr. Paulo, eschew the innovations which have made our pantomimes mere exhibitions of fiddle-playing and acrobatism, and content themselves with the humours of the kick and slap and the good old red-hot poker. Mr. Hildyard has an exceedingly comic manner of ill-treating the personages of pantomime society, and we have to thank him for more than one hearty 'roar.' He is the best clown we have seen for a long time—indeed, since Tom Matthews was promoted to the openings and took to playing fat policemen By the way, has not retribution fallen upon this gentleman at Drury Lane? He who, as clown, took so much delight in bonneting policemen, has now changed characters, and gets back the cuffs he gave. There is dramatic justice in this.

The pantomime of *Gulliver* at Covent Garden, by Mr. J. M. Morton, is chiefly remarkable for its grand transformation scene by Mr. Calcott. This clever artist has amplified the mirror effect which he introduced last year at the Lyceum. The result is undoubtedly one of the most striking scenes of the kind ever witnessed. Scene artists seem to be attaining a pitch of excellence in their art far above the standard of their stage collaborateurs. Mr. Morton's opening will scarcely, we think, tend to 'sustain his reputation' as a dramatist. Mr. Morton is funny at farce dialogue, but he is by no means an adept at the ten-syllable verse of extravaganza. But what with the masks, and the large area of Covent Garden, you don't hear much of what is said in the opening, so it doesn't greatly matter.

We come at last to the 'little theatre in the Haymarket,' where Mr. Buckstone, son., with the aid of his son, presents a pantomimic eclogue, entitled, *Miss Muffit and Little Boy Blue*. We have known little of

Miss Muffit hitherto beyond that she 'sat on a tuffet, eating of curds and whey;' but now we learn, that after undergoing much persecution at the hands (or shall we say the legs?) of a wicked spider-king, named *Tarantula*, she was eventually rescued by a good fairy, and was united to our sleepy friend, *Little Boy Blue*. The opening of this pantomime is somewhat entomological, but the incidents are conceived in the true nursery-tale spirit, and the production is therefore well calculated to please the young folks. The harlequinade is of a superior kind, but we miss Mr. Arthur Leclercq As a fantastic and comic dancer he has no equal on the stage, and we trust he will soon be restored to health and the boards of the Haymarket.

And now, having seen all these burlesques, extravaganzas, and pantomimes, it becomes our duty to pronounce judgment upon their merits. Which is the best? Many persons in London society have already asked us this question, and we are supposing that many more are now repeating it. Well, then, our own opinion is that the best extravaganza is Mr. William Brough's *Perseus and Andromeda* at the St. James's, and the best pantomime Mr. Henry Byron's *Whittington and his Cat* at the Princess's. And we think we are right in saying that this is the opinion of the public who have had the same opportunities of judging as ourselves. To those who have not yet had those opportunities, we say, 'Go and see them all, pay your money, and judge for yourselves.'

MAY AND DECEMBER;

OR,

The Second Prometheus.

FROM THE GERMAN OF HEINE.

I.

OH! brand with foul shame that cold dullard's name—
Posterity's ban be upon him!
Whose soul, dipped in Styx, the first was to fix
The moments that lovers ne'er reckon:
The minutes and hours, passed in trellised bowers,
What wretch was it dared to determine,
By watch or by clock? thus hoping to dock
The wings light and joyous, of Cupid.
Through some bleak winter night sat the old dreary wight,
His nails blue with cold and fear, biting:
Hush'd all, but midnight sound, mice only scamper'd round,
In zig-zag route, stealthily, beetles moved.

II.

With chaplets entwined, full of memories kind,
Be *his* name who kissing invented!
With rich ruby lip, the first glowing sip
Of nectar to mortals bequeathing.
A-Maying he went, the sweet flowers bent,
And nodded, all perfumed, to greet him.
The sun's joyous beam danced over the stream,
Their merriest tunes the birds carolled.
On old mythic fables we've quite turned the tables:
For his theft, from Olympus, by Jove!
Poor Prometheus was driven, nor ever forgiven,
Whilst of kissing the inventor's adored!

A. L. B.



'Go, Valentine, and Tell my Story' P.

LONDON SOCIETY.

MARCH, 1862.

ZOOLOGICAL STUDIES IN COLD WEATHER.

A January Day at Regent's Park.

HAVING always felt a strong interest in the economy of animated nature, I was recently led by a casual conversation to recal a visit paid to the Zoological Gardens in the coldest part of a winter now long passed away, and to reflect with some regret that the only reminiscences of that visit were a dim recollection of a polar bear paddling in some half-frozen water and a general idea of ubiquitous straw. I therefore determined to watch for the first defined frost, and to renew my winter acquaintance with the gardens as soon as the temperature should be sufficiently severe for the purpose.

To the lover of all animated beings the sight could not fail to be most interesting, considering the different elements involved. Within a comparatively narrow space are assembled a variety of living creatures from all parts of the world, forming a collection at present unrivalled, and bidding fair to increase year by year. From the frozen circle of the pole to the burning belt of the equator come representatives of the fauna of every land, gathered together in the grounds of the Zoological Society like the beasts of old in the ark, though happily with more space to move and enjoying better ventilation. Beasts, birds, reptiles, fishes, and even the lowest forms of animal life inhabit these wonderful gardens, which contain very nearly eighteen hundred specimens, to be fed and tended daily, and to be placed as nearly as possible in the same conditions which they would have occupied in their native land.

Some of these creatures inhabit the lofty mountains, while others pass an almost subterranean life in the plains and valleys; some require a warm and moist atmosphere, while others would die unless they could breathe a cold and dry air; one must live almost wholly in water, while another would be seriously injured even by a momentary immersion therein. Some animals, again, are fierce, savage, and powerful, requiring heavy iron bars and resolute keepers, while others are so soft and gentle in their nature that they require to be tended as carefully and watchfully as infants. Some are sullen and morose, others are affectionate and cheerful; some are shy, others are familiar; and, in short, there is hardly a mental phase that does not find a representative in the creatures forming this collection.

In the matter of food, again, there is as great a diversity as in climate or disposition.

The carnivora, whether furred, feathered, or scaled, of course require animal food, which again is varied to suit the particular species that needs it—the lions and tigers [illegible] eating flesh meat; the seals and otters needing fish; and the snakes requiring living prey, such as frogs, birds, rabbits, and similar creatures. As to the variety of vegetable food which is needed to meet the wants of the beasts and birds that live on herbs, leaves, and seeds, it is too complicated for any detailed account. Add to all these elements the individual idiosyncrasies of many valuable specimens, and some idea may be formed

of the labour involved in keeping such an establishment in proper order.

Few persons have the least notion of the intellect, perseverance, and watchfulness that are daily exercised in this place, of the ready invention required to meet sudden and unexpected difficulties, and the resolute courage by which alone they can be overcome. Few of the visitors who stroll leisurely from cage to cage think of the exceeding benefit conferred on science by this collection, and the valuable additions to zoological knowledge that have been made through its means.

Many curious and disputed points in animal physiology have been cleared up which otherwise must have been left to conjecture and theory, and the amount of pains taken about the needful experiments are as surprising as they are generally unknown. In order to ascertain but a single mooted point, a staff of observers has been organized, relieving each other at regular intervals, never quitting their posts for a single instant of day or night, and keeping their ceaseless watch lest at some unguarded moment the golden opportunity might be lost, perhaps never to recur. Any one who wishes to form an idea of the accuracy, perseverance, and watchfulness that are exercised on such occasions need but refer to the celebrated experiments conducted by Professor Owen in order to settle certain difficulties in the development of the kangaroo

In spite of all the care lavished upon this institution, winter is always an anxious period. Bearing, therefore, all these, and many other considerations in my mind, it was with no small interest that I entered the Zoological Gardens on Old Twelfth Day, Saturday the 18th of January, 1862, the thermometer then indicating a temperature of 24° Fahr., and a tolerably sharp breeze blowing.

On casting a comprehensive glance at the various enclosures, the first object that caught my eye was a creature something like a grenadier's cap, or a lady's muff set on end, reared against the bars of the enclosure, and gently swaying its body backwards and forwards. Presently it began to sidle along the bars, still standing or sitting upright, and being rendered so indefinite in shape by intervening twigs, wires, and posts that I could not make it out at all. However, it soon turned its odd, wise-visaged head, and all the beaver sat confessed. As the beaver is a North American animal, accustomed to brave the terrible winters of that climate, and quite familiar with ice, I should not have troubled myself about it, but for its movements and general demeanour partaking so largely of the absurd, and its perfect contentment amid conditions that would seem the very acme of discomfort to a human being. After watching the inquisitive creature for some time, it was easy to appreciate the veneration in which its intellectual powers are, or were once held by the noble savage of North America, who would naturally reverence an animal that could build a house far superior to his wigwam, and was clever enough to dam up a too-shallow stream and to lay by a store of food for the winter—two branches of social economy that the savage mind would not have conceived and far less executed.

Dripping with water, which froze almost immediately on touching the ground, and had already covered the enclosure with spots and paths of ice, the beaver looked as luxuriously comfortable as a cat on a hearth-rug, and was enjoying himself amazingly. Sometimes he would patter round his pond, his flat tail dragging behind him; then he would make for the water, flounce into the half-frozen liquid with a splash that caused the nerves to shudder in misplaced sympathy, make a great turmoil with paws and tail, and then emerge, walk to the bars with the water dropping from every hair, seat himself on end, holding with his feet to the iron fence, and with a calmly-inquisitive air inspect the carriages passing on the road or the visitors that happened to approach his home.

Good store of tree-trunks and branches have been considerately furnished to him, and the grooves on the wood and the chips which strew the enclosure are conclusive proofs that the kindness of his attendants

is not wasted, and that his teeth have been rightly exercised.

Near this animal is another of the same species, not so large, and inhabiting quite a little enclosure with a mere trough of water, transformed by the united exertions of the animal and the frost into an unpleasing compound of water, mud, ice, and chips. The animal was mightily hard at work when I came to its cage, carrying a bundle of straw in its mouth for some time, washing it well, and then rearing the bundle carefully against the angle of its den and tucking it down neatly with its paws. I thought it was playing at building a dam.

It was evident that as far as the beaver was concerned there was no cause for anxiety; and I therefore passed on to see how the inhabitants of Southern Africa comported themselves under the present circumstances.

As usual, the hippopotamus was enjoying his bath, rolling about and wallowing in the familiar element in a lazily contented fashion, over and anon slowly submerging the whole of his unwieldy person below the surface with that remarkable power of adaptability which permits such animals as the hippopotamus and elephant to sink and rise at will, thus making themselves heavier or lighter than an equal bulk of water without needing to expel or inspire air. This is a most interesting performance, especially to a practical swimmer, and is probably achieved by compressing the muscles of the chest so as to reduce the bulk when the creature desires to sink, and allowing itself to expand to its former dimensions when it wants to rise.

The native habits of this great animal are well exhibited by the magnificent male specimen now in the Gardens, and it is curious to see how wonderfully the creature is fitted for an aquatic existence. Heavy, corpulent, and unwieldy as it appears on land, its legs set so widely apart that when it walks in high grass the limbs of each side make a separate path, leaving a ridge of untrodden grass between them, it assumes quite another aspect as soon as it enters the water, and in the easy playfulness and almost grace of its movements affords as great a contrast to its former clumsiness as does the swan proudly sailing on the lake to the same bird uncouthly waddling on the shore.

As the tank in the enclosure was so thickly covered with ice that the animal might have practised sliding, but would have found swimming next to impossible, the hippopotamus was forced to content himself with the small tank within his house, where the water is kept at a moderate temperature by artificial means, and the atmosphere is such as this delicate though monstrous animal can breathe with safety. The attendants are peculiarly careful of so valuable a creature, and have made arrangements for cleansing its house without sending their charge into the outer air during the operation.

The giraffes are nearly, if not quite, as delicate as the hippopotamus, and are obliged to content themselves with gratifying their very inquisitive natures by inspecting the visitors who occasionally pass through their warm house, and would like to feed the graceful and gentle creatures were not all such attempts sternly prohibited by the watchful guardians. It is rather remarkable that within a yard or two of each other are located specimens of animals which inhabit the same land and yet are as strongly contrasted in shape and habit as if they came from opposite portions of the globe.

The elands are well and comfortable, and appear to be tamer than was the case a few months ago. They are able to withstand the cold better than the hippopotamus and the giraffe, being, indeed, mighty mountain climbers in their native land, and therefore accustomed to a low temperature. I may here mention that the healthy condition of these magnificent antelopes, and the comparative ease with which they are bred in this country, afford most gratifying encouragement to the efforts now being made in many quarters to acclimatize in our own land the useful and ornamental inhabitants of other parts of the world, and show in a striking manner the national value of a collection

upon which so much time is spent and to which such stores of knowledge are cheerfully dedicated.

The acquisition of a single new article of food, whether animal or vegetable, is no slight boon to a country, and it is almost impossible to exaggerate the benefits that will accrue to this land if we can fairly establish this splendid antelope as a denizen of our parks or paddocks. When adult and well fed it is as large as a prize ox; its meat is of a peculiarly delicate and piquant flavour; its fat, a handbreadth thick, is thought to surpass that of venison, while the marrow is of such transcendant merit that a South African hunter can hardly trust himself to think about it. There are, of course, many difficulties in the way, inasmuch as the animal has not yet become civilized, and is apt to display an amount of irascibility that is rather terrifying in an animal that wears horns as sharp and powerful as those of the Andalusian bull; that can leap a fence or chasm from which the boldest hunter would recoil, and can charge down a precipitous hill with the speed and certain foot of the chamois. Still it is evident that in successive generations this evil temper may be eliminated by careful management; and it is to be hoped that before the lapse of many years the eland may be as common in our parks as the fallow deer.

Nor is this the only creature which is being bred at the Zoological Gardens with the intention of acclimatizing it. Among quadrupeds the bison of North America and the kangaroo of Australia are among the number of intended denizens of this country, while among the birds we may notice a great number of species belonging to the poultry and the pigeons, such as the splendid curassows of tropical America, and the large wonga-wonga pigeon of Australia. France and England are uniting in the same great object, by means of their respective Societies of Acclimatization, and should Europe be hereafter enriched with the valuable beasts and birds that are now being gradually accustomed to the conditions of a strange land, it is to be hoped that posterity will not forget how deep a debt of gratitude they owe to the Zoological Gardens of London.

Desirous of seeing how the cold weather was borne by the ostriches, I went to look at my old friends, whom I found shut up in their houses, but very glad to see me, and as desirous as ever of eating any object they could snap up The shining top of my pencil-case was a wonderful attraction to these inquisitive and voracious birds, and it was most absurd to see all the heads bobbing up and down, the large brown eyes gleaming with excitement, and the wide mouths opened and shut with impatience just because I was writing with a pencil that had a glittering top.

The temperature was 45° Fahr. in this department, and the ostriches and cassowaries were quite at their ease, as probably was the apteryx; but as the latter bird was hidden, as usual, behind her bundle of straw, and was in all likelihood fast asleep, her exact condition could not be ascertained. There are plenty of odd birds in these Gardens, but the apteryx is without doubt the oddest of all existing feathered bipeds. Wingless, tailless, thick-legged, long-beaked, and brown-coated, she is about as queer a specimen of a bird as can well be imagined; and as a climax to her eccentricities of behaviour persists, though a spinster apteryx living in more than conventual celibacy, in laying enormous eggs, each of which weighs one-fourth as much as the parent bird. Several emus, however, were trotting about in the open air, and were pecking here and there at the grass or poking their long necks over the rails of the enclosure as gaily as in the summer months, though the ground was frozen to a stony hardness, firm ice was at their feet, and the shouts of boys sliding were heard just outside the fence.

There are, of course, far too many beasts and birds in this collection to be separately examined, so I turned my steps towards the tunnel, walking casually through the parrot house, dropping a word or two of recognition to my garrulous acquaintances, and then passing out to pay a visit to the piping crows of Australia, who were chattering away in the

open air, brisk and saucy as ever, and always ready for a conversation. One of them, the white-backed species, was singularly lavish of his conversational powers, and engaged in a contest of strength on the spot. First the bird whistled a few wild notes and then paused, while I did the same. Twisting his head on one side, and looking up knowingly with one eye, he waited for my lead, and imitated my whistle with wonderful fidelity. He got quite excited at last, flew to his perch, thence to the wires on a level with my face, clung firmly with his strong claws, poked his beak through the 'interstices of the intersections,' and fairly screamed with exultation. Meanwhile his companion was making the best of his time by pecking my boots

Pleasant as this amusement was, the hours were passing and the wind was chilly, so I bade farewell to the piping crow and cruelly left him, in spite of his repeated attempts to recall me by screams and whistles.

Mag, in the next compartment, was cheerful enough, and so were the ravens, with whom I exchanged a friendly croak in passing, and allowed them their usual bite at my pencil.

The elephant and the rhinoceros have been too long residents to care much for the vicissitudes of an English climate. The former was swinging itself from side to side in his den with that peculiar movement which seems instinctive to the creature, and may possibly answer as a succedaneum for walking exercise The latter was serenely munching a truss or so of straw, his nose in the air and his lips slapping together with every sidelong movement of his mouth, while from his big lungs issued an occasional grunt of satisfaction, though certainly the substance which he was eating seemed absurdly incapable of affording any nourishment to the system or gratification to the palate. Neither of these animals are allowed to expose themselves to the virulence of so frosty and inclement a day.

The reptile house is always kept at so uniform a temperature that winter's cold or summer's heat makes hardly any perceptible difference. The fine specimen of the North African monitor was in a state of great excitement, endeavouring apparently to climb up the plate-glass front of his cage, and ever and anon falling back ignominiously, only to resume the attempt with renewed vigour. It was astonishing what a noise the creature made by scratching his claws and rubbing his chin against the glass, and to what unexpected attitudes its lithesome body and slender neck could be writhed. The reptile was shedding its epidermis, which hung in shreds and patches from different parts of the body, showing the bright scales beneath as they were freed from their effete covering. The creature was very persevering in his exercise, continually darting out its long and deeply-cleft tongue, looking, indeed, as if it had been furnished by nature with two slender pointed tongues, and affording an admirable opportunity for studying the arrangement of the beautiful spotted scales on the lower surface of its body.

Its near neighbour, the rock snake, or pythoness, as it is just now the fashion to call her, was not visible, being, in fact, 'as well as could be expected under the circumstances,' and lying under her blanket coiled like a shallow cone around her new-born family of eighty or ninety eggs. The chameleons were perched unmovably, as usual, on the branches with which the cage is plentifully furnished, and gave no signs of life except occasionally turning one great green-pea of an eye upwards or downwards as the case might be. The African cobra lay flat upon the floor of its cage, but on seeing a human face, surmounted by a hat, coming close to the glass, became rapidly excited, spread its hood, puffed out its body, and raised itself as if threatening an attack. Not wishing to be the cause of a possible injury to a valuable reptile by letting it strike its nose against the glass, as it was evidently preparing to do, I passed on to the bull frogs and so out of the room.

In the next compartment the creatures were all doing well. A single specimen of the flying fox survives, though the keeper expressed himself as rather anxious

concerning its chance of getting through the winter. That singular creature, the gigantic salamander, lay impassive as usual along the bottom of its tank, and though so remarkable an animal, attracts but little notice from visitors. Hundreds pass through the room daily without seeing it at all; and of those who condescend to cast a glance at it, the greater number express themselves sadly disappointed. The general public has heard great tales of salamanders, and through the medium of a weighty culinary instrument bearing the same title has learned to connect the name with fire and glowing metal. Reading the name of gigantic salamander, they enter the room in a rather nervous and uneasy state of mind, expecting to see it nothing less than fourteen or fifteen feet long, and hoping that the bars are strong enough to prevent it from breaking prison. Great, therefore, is their disappointment on being shown a glass tank of water such as they see in any naturalist's window, and are referred to a creature like a big black tadpole which lies grovelling quietly in one corner. Some decline to believe that the animal is the dreadful creature which they had been led to expect, and others openly aver that the whole affair is a delusion and akin to Barnum's mermaid. Yet the beast is a wonderful beast after all, and in the eyes of naturalists is a very gigantic salamander. For, in sooth, the eft, or newt, is a salamander, and an eft of thirty inches in length is gigantic beyond doubt. Besides, it is very rare even in Japan, whence it comes, and its habits and general economy are very remarkable.

Nearly opposite to this salamander is a creature of unpretending form and dimensions, but even more curious in structure and habits than its black, flat-headed neighbour: this is the lepidosiren, or mud-fish of Africa, remarkable for having long been an object of contention among naturalists. Is it a fish or is it one of the frog tribe? No one exactly knows; and to judge from the opposite opinions expressed by the most accomplished naturalists and dissectors, no one is likely to know. Perhaps it is neither, but represents an intermediate class between the fish and the reptiles, with the heart of the one and the gills of the other. This specimen has lived for about three years in the tank which it now occupies, and has grown, though slightly, in that time; thus affording a singular contrast to the specimen at the Crystal Palace, which attained a length of nearly a yard in the same time, though not nearly so large when first brought to England. But then the Crystal Palace animal got into the large hot-water basin, and there lived a despotic life, feeding *ad libitum* on gold fish until he was captured and his depredations stopped, and on frogs afterwards. Should the reader pay a visit to the Zoological Gardens, as I trust will soon be the case, let him look well at the mud-fish, the Gordian knot of systematic zoology.

On my way to the lions I looked in at the wombat's cage, and there saw to my surprise that the animal, though a native of Australia, was lying curled up in one corner of the enclosure, fast asleep, with the thermometer marking eight degrees below freezing point, and the wind blowing in keen and cutting blasts. The bars of the enclosure being open and of iron afforded no protection whatever, but would rather have the effect of chilling a creature that was pressed against them. The seals were naturally indifferent to the cold, and darted about in the water, or flounced their way over the rim of their bath, as if enjoying the icy coldness of their home. They ran some very good races after fish, driving up the water before them like the bows of two fast steam-boats, and had quite a struggle for the last fish. The otter, too, cared nothing about the temperature of the water, but sat on a heap of wet straw, eating his dinner, with the end of his tail in the water, and the freezing drops glittering around him. To the shivering observer, whose chilled fingers could scarcely hold the pencil, and whose heart yearned for a seat in a warm room and a large cup of hot tea, the choice of locality seemed singularly unfortunate. There, how-

ever, sat the animal, thoroughly contented with his position, holding his flounder tightly between his paws, and crunching and tugging with hearty good will.

The lions, tigers, and the other large carnivora, are carefully defended from the outer cold by means of thick screens rigged from the eaves of the projecting roofs to the bars beyond which visitors are requested not to pass. As, however, the greater number of visitors would be sadly disappointed if they had to go away without seeing these beautiful animals, they are admitted for the nonce into the space between the bars and the cages; and in order to prevent the fierce beasts from thrusting forth a paw and inflicting a wound in sport or anger, a strong wire grating is affixed to the front of the cage, which effectually prevents any such mishap. Notwithstanding all these precautions, and an assured conviction of the absolute security attained, I could not help instinctively starting back when the lion took it into his illogical head that I was going to steal his meat, and flew at me with flaming eyes and a roar that shook the place. I had much respect afterwards for the steady nerve of those who can endure such a charge with a firm hand and unwinking eye, and very much less contempt for the native attendants who in such cases always throw away their guns and run for their lives. The whole of these dens are kept at a comfortable temperature by hot pipes, and the animals seemed as contented as in the summer-time.

Two lions, however, in neighbouring cages became angry with each other, or perhaps jealous; and putting their mouths to the floor just by the wooden partition, began to roar against each other to the utmost of their power. It was a grand exhibition, and would alone have been worth the trouble of the visit. The threatening sounds seemed to reverberate through every nerve, the whole building trembled as if shaken by rolling thunders, and the rest of the beasts sank into respectful silence while the kings of the forest lifted their mighty voices. No wonder that at the sound of the lion's roar the beasts of burden break their halters and flee in terror over the plain; but it is a wonder that the ostrich, the meekest-looking of birds, should roar so exactly like the lion that even the native hunter cannot always distinguish the one from the other.

As if intended to produce a striking contrast to the lions, tigers, and leopards existing in a temporary hothouse, and sheltered from the chilling blasts by a screen erected expressly for the purpose, the polar bears live within ten yards of these heated localities, rejoicing in the cold, and probably thinking of the ice-fields and freezing waters of their proper home. This is one of the few northern animals whose fur retains its white hue throughout its life, experiencing no change in winter or summer. The coat of the ermine and the arctic fox alters from its dark summer tints to its snowy winter's hue; not, I imagine, to aid in concealment by assimilating the colour of the animal with that of the ground, but because the pure white hue is endowed with some wondrous power of resisting the effects of cold.

I wonder whether polar bears when wild are in the habit of taking exercise in the remarkable fashion in which these specimens indulge? Do they always walk forward for six paces and retire backwards over precisely the same ground, with as much accuracy as if they had been volunteer riflemen practising the back-step? It can hardly be too troublesome for them to turn round, and they have ample room for the purpose, being able if they choose to indulge in quite a promenade, unrestricted by the narrow limits in which those unfortunate lions and tigers are confined.

I pity those active and restless creatures with all my heart. I wish they had more appropriate residences, and am sure that if they were only permitted to exercise their limbs, as intended by their Maker, they would be healthier, live longer, and display their wonderful powers in a more perfect manner. There are, of course, some difficulties attendant upon the construction of an enclosure sufficiently large to give

ample room to the agile limbs of the feline race, sufficiently strong to withstand the fiercest assault of the lion, and properly roofed so as to counteract the danger of a leopard or jaguar climbing over its walls. I cannot but think, however, that it would be quite practicable to construct an enclosure that would comply with all these requisitions, and at no very extravagant outlay of space or money. The enclosure might be common to all the feline race, and each species might be allowed to exercise in it in regular rotation. There would be no difficulty in decoying them back to their dens, as a piece of meat would effectually accomplish that design and allow of the door of communication being closed while the animals were engaged upon their food.

The interior of the enclosure should be furnished with artificial rockwork and trees, and I have often pictured to myself the magnificent sight of a pair of lions or tigers careering round their pleasure-ground, exulting in their strength, or a company of leopards disporting among the branches and displaying their lithe forms in all their spotted beauty. Look, for example, at the monkeys, and think how much we should have lost by cooping them up in little boxes, where they could hardly move, instead of giving them spacious apartments fitted with ropes, bars, and boughs, so as to enable them to display their marvellous agility to our wondering eyes. Sure am I that a lion, tiger, or leopard, when permitted to range freely over an ample space, would present as great a contrast to the same creature uneasily deambulating its narrow den, with its head close to the bars, and its paws slipping over the smooth wet boards, as does a monkey in a box to the same animal in a spacious apartment, or a caged squirrel to scuggy in his native woods.

Both species of camel—the dromedary and the double-humped camel of Bactria—were quite at their ease about the weather. The former animal was standing partially in its shed, with its long neck and meek-looking head peering out at the landscape; while the latter was quietly walking about its enclosure, though the ground must have been very uncomfortable to its feet, and the water in its trough had been frozen so hard that the attendant had been obliged to break the ice in order to allow the animal to drink.

The coypu rat seemed rather unwilling to face the cold, though attracted by a large carrot that the keeper had placed within its den. This odd, blunt-nosed, orange-toothed quadruped only emerged at intervals, ate a piece of carrot, and then returned to its warm home. I remarked that the mice are very fond of the coypu's house, and run in and out of the straw with amusing impudence. The creature evidently dislikes the ice, trying in vain to get its usual bath, and feeling sadly disappointed at finding itself arrested by the icy covering of its little pool. The reader is hereby advised to pull up a little tuft of grass by the roots and place it in the coypu's cage, for he cannot fail to be amused by the clever and systematic manner in which the ingenious and cleanly animal picks up the grass, takes it to the water, and washes it carefully before it will condescend to nibble a single blade.

The honey-ratel, with his dark waistcoat and gray coat, was in great force, running about his cage in quite an excited fashion, and even climbing up the wires as if to survey the prospect. In the summer-time of the year this animal has a habit of running continually about its den in an oval-shaped course, which is marked by the continual tread of the feet like the sawdust in a circus. The oddest part of the performance is, that whenever it reaches either extremity of its course it puts its head to the ground, turns a somersault, and recommences its race. The fine specimen of that very fierce animal, called from its evil temper the Tasmanian devil, was occasionally to be seen in the open air, but it preferred the warm retreat of its straw-sheltered shed.

The winter aviary, which is ingeniously constructed so as to admit of glazed casements in addition to the wires, is employed as the home of several valuable and delicately-constituted animals. In the central

compartment is a remarkably fine specimen of that curious animal, called popularly the Tasmanian wolf, but which really is not a wolf at all, but one of the marsupial tribe, related to the opossum and their kin. The beautiful cariamas thrive well; and as they sat on their perch with bent knees, and head sunk so deeply upon the breast that the curious feathery crest that decorates the head was scarcely perceptible, they could hardly be recognized as the same birds which stalk about their cage with long and haughty strides, erect gait, and bold, intelligent gaze. Perhaps, however, the most curious inhabitants of this aviary are the crested eagles, fine, handsome birds, notable for an erect tuft or plume of black feathers upon their heads, not unlike the ostrich plumes of a lady's court dress.

The last animals visited were our volatile friends the monkeys, who seemed none the worse for the comparatively close quarters to which they are confined in severe weather. The house is rather dark just now, because the windows are thickly banked up with straw, a precaution necessary lest the monkeys should be chilled by coming in contact with the cold glass. The temperature of the room is very comfortable, but not unpleasantly warm, and is maintained by a partly open stove, or fireplace, in the centre. I was sorry to miss my dear old friend, Sally the spider-monkey, whose gentle manners and wonderful length of limb I have often admired. Agile as are all the monkey tribe, Sally was certainly the most active I have yet seen in this country, and her performances on the rope would have put the combined efforts of a dozen Leotards or Blondins to shame. I shall never forget her happiness when dancing and swinging about on a clothes-line in a garden near Reading, the curious air with which she contemplated the surrounding objects, and the look of piteous entreaty with which she deprecated the order to leave her rope and return to her seat on the back of a chair near the kitchen fire.

The funny little Capucin monkey was as amusing as ever with his nuts and pebble, using the latter in the light of a hammer and smashing the nutshells with wonderful certainty. The odd little creature has a perfect passion for hammering, and had battered the woodwork of his cage so severely that the keeper was forced to take away the stone, and now lends it only when it is wanted. Even the hard, angular shell of the Brazil nut is broken by this clever little animal, and the keeper told me that he—the monkey, to wit—could hardly have a greater treat than to be given a hammer and a board with a nail partly driven, so that he might take the hammer and finish driving the nail.

The great anubis baboon sat sulky and impassive on his perch, his chin sunk on his breast, his limbs gathered up into marvellously small compass, and his toes holding tightly to the bars. Offerings of nuts and other dainties failed to propitiate his frigid dignity; and it was not until the keeper spoke to him that he would condescend to notice the gifts that were freely proffered. Even after taking the nuts and pieces of cake, he just put them in his mouth, ascended again to his perch, and resumed his former misanthropical attitude. Large store of straw is placed in his cage, and when evening approaches he retires to the farthest corner of the cage, creeps into the heap of straw, and with hands and feet disposes it around him in such a manner that not a vestige of his person can be seen.

In the large cage, where a number of the smaller monkeys are congregated, the ruling power of the establishment was evidently the huge white-and-black cat, who lay calmly dozing among all the restless quadrumana, supremely indifferent to their noisy gambols. Even when a graceless monkey leaped on her back from a perch, and was straightway assaulted by one of his companions, the cat did not even open her eyes, but lay purring, with her paws tucked comfortably under her chin in utter unconcern. Pussy has been used to monkeys for so long a time that she is quite uncomfortable out of their presence, and cannot endure being placed in the open air. The keeper fetched her out of the cage to enable

us to judge of her weight, which is really wonderful for a cat of the gentler sex, and hardly was she fairly on the ground and the door of the cage opened than she leaped through the aperture and resumed her former position.

No sooner did the shades of evening become perceptible than the monkeys made arrangements for the night, ceasing from their sports, and even allowing the armadillo to run about the cage according to its pleasure, without jumping on its back for a ride, or trying to pull it over as it trotted past them. They congregate together in compact bodies, presenting a most absurd effect of parti-coloured fur, intertwined limbs, and long, dangling tails, and were continually struggling for the best and warmest spot, which was, of course, the centre of the group. One individual was totally excluded, but he took the matter in a philosophical light, going carefully over the cage and picking up all the little bits of biscuit and stray nuts which his companions had relinquished when battling for a place on the perch.

Throughout the whole of the visit, it was pleasant to note the demeanour of the attendants, upon whose sympathetic kindness depends so much of the comfort and happiness of the animals under their charge, and the manner in which they accommodate themselves to the individual idiosyncracies of their charges. Should the animal happen to be docile and intelligent, no one is more proud than the keeper, and no visitor can be more interested in seeing the clever performances of any creature than is the keeper in exhibiting them. It was pleasant, for example, to see the two splendid cheetahs' behaviour towards their attendant, and ludicrous enough to watch him coolly sweep either individual out of his way with the broom if they happened to interfere with his movements while cleaning their cage. If they had been a pair of three-months' old kittens there could not have been more confidence on the one side or playfulness on the other. As the keeper left the cage, the gentle and beautiful creatures pressed after him, but were gently put back with one hand while he took down some meat with the other. Even under such exciting circumstances, with their dinners in their sight, they displayed none of the fierce eagerness so common among the feline race when they see or smell their food, and they took the meat with even less haste than my own pet cat exhibits when the food is to his taste and he happens to feel hungry.

Should, however, the animal be of a vicious and unpracticable disposition, the keeper only seems to be amused at the various exhibitions of cross-grained temper, and laughs good-humouredly at every savage growl or attempted assault.

Perhaps the reader may have remarked, in the course of this slight sketch of a very wide subject, the apparent absence of all rule regarding the capability of any animal to resist the effects of cold weather and a strange climate. It is easy enough to understand that the beaver and the polar bear could be quite happy on a frosty day, and that the lions, tigers, and leopards would need protection against the chilling atmosphere. But it was hardly to be expected that the camel, which is essentially the 'ship of the desert,' made to endure long thirst, and to pace for weeks over the burning sands, should walk about quite at its ease upon frozen soil, and drink from a trough in which the ice was thickly gathered. This phenomenon will perhaps give some idea of the difficulties attendant upon acclimatizing the denizen of a strange soil, inasmuch as it is quite impossible to treat one animal on a system derived from the management of another species from the same country and with similar habits. Each new species must be learned by means of repeated and cautious experiments, and to the minds of thoughtful lovers of nature and observers of animal life this very want of uniformity affords a better hope of ultimate success than if it were possible to reduce the management of foreign animals to a rigid system, and treat all creatures of kindred forms and similar countries on the same stereotyped principle.

J. G. W.



DRAWN BY FLORENCE CLAXTON

THE TWO FAIR HERMITS.

A Valentine Story.

THERE is one day in the year on which the postman's knock seems to herald none but pleasant tidings—at least to all the younger and fairer portion of the community; a day on which its sound sends a flutter of anticipation, from the drawing-room mto the very kitchen—and that day is St. Valentine's morn. It is true that in the upper strata of society Betty gets more valentines than her young mistress, and that valentines would be deemed vulgar in Belgravia or Mayfair; still, writing valentines is a time-honoured custom that *will* not be rooted out by modern over-refinement, and in the middle classes, at all events, there still exist timid lovers who pen valentines, and romantic young ladies who receive them, read them, and are pleased with them too, in spite of the frowns of fashion. Be not shocked, therefore, gentle reader, that a missive of this kind should just have been handed by a simpering maid to Miss Anna Matilda Audley, as she sat in her little boudoir, in her uncle's handsome house at Bayswater.

Martha guessed it was a valentine, as she had just received one from her sweetheart, the policeman; and she lingered in the room under pretence of making up the fire, to see whether the effect on her young mistress would be as pleasing as Tom's epistle had proved to herself. But she was doomed to be disappointed; for the young lady, determined on not displaying the least eagerness to open the letter in presence of her maid, waited with an air of the most sublime indifference, until Martha, having no excuse to remain, was reluctantly obliged to quit the room.

Anna Matilda then tore the letter open with undisguised impatience. The haughty bearing that suited her regal style of beauty so well, gave way for the moment to a girlish curiosity that made her look more fascinating still. The address was in an unknown hand, but on unfolding the letter, she started, flushed, and felt a thrill of gratified pride such as she had never before experienced. The letter, though unsigned, was from Harry Clifford, that was obvious, yet hitherto Harry had been supposed to be paying his attentions to her intimate friend Georgiana Fletcher. Had he pledged his troth unthinkingly, and then repented when he beheld Anna Matilda's superior charms? (for that her beauty was superior to her friend's she never for an instant doubted), and had he taken this mode of conveying to her what his real sentiments might be, though honour might forbid his declaring himself more explicitly?

Anna Matilda's heart beat quicker than ever it had done at all the knee-worship and passionate protestations of Frank Blythwood. She cherished a secret admiration for Harry's manly beauty, and had felt piqued that the only being she thought worthy of her should remain insensible to her attractions. Now, after all, it was plain his heart was touched, though prudential reasons relative to 'being off with the old love,' as the song inculcates, induced him to beseech his fair one, in case she took pity on him, to signify as much by wearing a red rose in her hair the next time they were to meet at a party—which mysterious telegraphic sign would have no meaning for the uninitiated. She was still holding the valentine in her hand, and perusing it for the twentieth time, when the door opened, and Georgiana entered, saying 'I would not let your maid announce me, as I knew you would be at home for me; so I ran upstairs, for I have something particular to say to you.'

Georgiana Fletcher was one of those charming, plump little creatures that everybody must love. But so absorbed was Miss Audley by her thoughts, that it was not till Georgiana exclaimed in a merry voice: 'So you have had a valentine, too, Matty!' that the latter awoke her from her reverie.

'I don't know whether I ought to show it to *you*,' said she.

'Oh, do!' said Georgiana; 'I'm so fond of valentines!'

With a deprecatory shrug of the shoulders, as if the fault were none of hers, Anna Matilda proceeded to do what she most longed for, and held out the letter for Georgiana's inspection.

Georgiana looked, started, and then burst into tears, till suddenly checking herself, she exclaimed: 'It cannot be!'

'What cannot be, Georgy?' asked Anna Matilda.

'It's only a joke; I'm sure it is,' said Georgiana.

'A joke, Miss Fletcher?' said Anna Matilda, assuming an air of frigid dignity; 'do you think Mr. Clifford would dare to joke on such a subject?'

'But,' sobbed poor Georgiana, 'Harry Clifford loved me—at least he gave me to understand he did; he always danced with me, and turned over the leaves when I sang; and can he be so wicked now——'

'My dear,' interrupted Miss Audley, 'if after dancing with a young lady and turning over the leaves of her music-book, a gentleman sees another woman whom he prefers, what is he to do?'

'Do?' exclaimed Georgiana; 'he has no business to prefer another, after—after——'

'Dancing and turning leaves,' said Miss Audley. 'Well! I think in such a case he is much to be pitied, and that the young lady ought not——'

Here she paused. Georgiana left off crying for a moment, and looked up expectantly, when, finding her friend did not proceed, she exclaimed eagerly, 'ought not to do what?'

'To endeavour to retain a heart no longer hers,' said Miss Audley, authoritatively.

Georgiana sank back in her chair, and indulged in another long fit of weeping. Miss Audley waited patiently till the storm was over, knowing from experience that her gentle friend's blue eyes were frequently lit up by a ray of sunshine after an April shower, until, finding that this time such a result seemed less likely to follow, she said, in a conciliatory voice: 'What was it you had to say to me, Georgy?'

'Oh, I had forgotten!' replied Georgiana; 'I wanted to show you a valentine I received this morning—I cannot imagine from whom.'

She then drew forth her valentine, and observing they were such beautiful verses, read the following lines—

Go, Valentine, and tell my Story.

'Go, Valentine, and tell that lovely maid,
Whom fancy still will portray to my sight,
How here I linger in this sullen shade,
This dreary gloom of dull monastic night;
Say, that from ev'ry joy of life remote,
At evening's closing hour I quit the throng,
List'ning in solitude the ring-dove's note
Who pours like me her solitary song.
Say, that her absence calls the sorrowing sigh,
Say, that of all her charms I love to speak,
In fancy feel the magic of her eye,
In fancy view the smile illume her cheek,
Court the lone hour when silence stills the grove,
And heave the sigh of memory and of love'

'Are they not pretty?' added she, as she concluded.

'Very,' said Anna Matilda, disdainfully; 'but they have not cost your unknown admirer much trouble, for they are Southey's lines'

'They may be flattering for all that,' said poor Georgiana, whom Harry's desertion had rendered all the more sensible to a compliment; 'and see what a nice hand they are written in!'

Anna Matilda took the proffered letter, but had no sooner cast her eyes upon it, than she turned pale, and appeared violently agitated.

'What is the matter?' asked Georgiana

'Matter!' exclaimed Miss Audley, whose dilated nostrils breathed unutterable indignation, while her fingers unconsciously crumpled the luckless valentine. 'Frank Blythwood is false—that's all.'

'You don't mean to say this is Frank Blythwood's handwriting, do you?' asked the bewilderod Georgiana.

'I should have thought you knew his hand,' said Miss Audley, sarcastically, 'since he writes so very tenderly to you.'

'Oh, Matilda!' cried Georgiana, reproachfully.

'I can't wish you joy of an admirer who, but the day before yesterday, presented me with that nosegay of forget-me-nots,' said Anna Matilda, rising, and snatching the luckless flowers from the vase in which they were placed.

'But I thought you did not care for Frank Blythwood?' said simple Georgiana.

'Whether I cared for him or not, that does not make his conduct less base,' said Miss Audley.

'Not baser than Harry's,' said Georgiana; 'and you said *he* was to be pitied if he had changed his affections; so why is not Frank Blythwood to be pitied?'

Miss Audley could not say why, but somehow what she thought quite natural on Harry Clifford's part, seemed a heinous sin when committed against herself, and by Frank Blythwood too. She therefore wisely held her tongue, but her fingers were busily employed picking the flowers to pieces.

Meantime, Georgiana was as intently occupied twisting her embroidered handkerchief into all manner of shapes, till at length she broke the silence by a deep-drawn sigh, and uttered this oft-repeated truism. 'I'm afraid men are sad deceivers!'

'Men are all wretches, my dear!' said Miss Audley, with flashing eyes. For her thoughts had not been idle during the lull in their conversation, and her anger at Frank Blythwood had been gradually rising to boiling point, and was about to overflow like a lava stream overwhelming all it met on its way. Strange to say, the defection of the admirer she did not love in return, inflicted a wound on her pride which not even Harry Clifford's unhoped-for homage could assuage. Besides, might it not be some scheme concocted between them to back out of what they perhaps considered as mere flirtations? and might not the two unsigned valentines be nothing but a skilful manœuvre in the warfare of love, calculated but to create a diversion, under cover of which they would both desert their colours? 'And if you felt as I do, Georgy,' resumed Anna Matilda, 'I know what we might do.'

'What?' asked Georgiana, eagerly.

'Only you would never have the resolution to adopt such a plan, still less to persevere in carrying it out,' observed Miss Audley. 'You would melt like wax at the first word or look Harry Clifford deigned to bestow on you.'

'I don't think I should,' said Georgiana, 'for I'm very angry with him; and with Frank Blythwood too, for his behaviour to you. But what plan do you mean?'

'I mean that, instead of trusting to the shallow professions of lovers, we should live for ourselves alone—live for friendship instead of love. You have heard of Lady Eleanor Butler and Miss Ponsonby, who lived in a cottage by themselves? Well, let's imitate them, and make ourselves independent of everybody.'

'That would be delightful!' cried Georgiana, who was always led away by anything her more enterprising friend proposed. 'But how can we manage it?'

It was easy enough for Miss Audley to follow all her whims, for not only had she an independent income, but she was of age; and though she had lived under her uncle's roof ever since she became an orphan in early infancy, his guardianship had ceased for the last three years, and she was at perfect liberty to go wherever she pleased. She possessed a pretty cottage in Monmouthshire, close to her uncle's estate, which she thought might serve them as a refuge. But how was Georgiana, who was only nineteen, to claim a similar privilege? True, she was in possession of a small legacy bequeathed her by her mother; but would her father allow her to enter into any such romantic scheme?

Miss Audley had an answer ready for every objection. She assured her friend that her stepmother, having two daughters of her own, of the respective ages of seventeen and sixteen, would be too glad of the removal of a pretty face just at the season when her eldest was to come out, not to prove her best advocate in overruling whatever objections Mr. Fletcher might entertain to the proposed plan. Still, Georgiana de-

cleared she had not the courage to broach the subject to her family.

The imperious Anna Matilda smiled with conscious superiority as she assured her friend she would settle that matter. All that she required of Georgiana was to adhere to her resolution, and not to see Harry Clifford before they left town.

'How soon shall we leave?' asked Georgiana, half mistrustful of herself.

'As soon as we can pack up our things,' said Anna Matilda.

'But,' hesitated Georgiana, 'have you not forgotten that we were to go to a ball on the twenty-eighth?'

'I have not forgotten it,' said Miss Audley, 'any more than I have forgotten that we were to meet Frank and Harry that evening. Are you weak-minded enough to wish to see Mr. Clifford after the insult he has offered you, to try and make it up with him?'

'Oh, no—no—no!' cried Georgiana, who dreaded being thought weak-minded, just because she was of a very yielding disposition. 'I have done with Harry, and as to Frank, I despise him for his conduct to you.'

'That's right, and nobly spoken,' said Anna Matilda, embracing her friend. 'And now I'll put on my bonnet, and go home with you, and speak to your stepmother.'

Miss Audley knew she would not find Mr. Fletcher at that time of day, as his mercantile affairs took him daily to the City, and she thought it a good stroke of diplomacy to prime his better half in the mean time, so that the worthy man should find himself unable to resist the volley of arguments that were to be poured forth by his three assailants. But it turned out that, like many other schemers, she wasted a deal of manœuvring where none was required. Mr. Fletcher, being a man of sense, was well aware that it is by thwarting a project that you give it importance—and that if parents did but understand to what an extent an immediate acquiescence cools down the most enthusiastic aspirations of all sorts, many a trip to Gretna Green, many a foolish match, might have been prevented, by the lovers quarrelling, so soon as they had permission granted to bill and coo at their ease. By the same reason he argued that when two young ladies are determined to spite the world by withdrawing themselves from its admiration, the best thing is to open wide the doors, and say 'Go'—opposition only acting as so much fuel, which tends to keep up a fire that would otherwise burn itself out in a few weeks.

He therefore gave Georgiana full leave to act as she pleased, on one condition, namely, that she was not to enter into any promise until she was of age, and then not without giving him warning.

'For you must be aware, Georgy,' said he, 'that if you prefer perpetual seclusion and celibacy, to living in the world, the sum I have set apart for your marriage portion will go to increase your sisters' portions—for I do not suppose Fanny or Isabella will have any such inclination.'

'Oh, no, papa!' cried sixteen-year-old Isabella—'I mean to go to balls and pic-nics, and to marry.'

'You talk like a child,' said Georgiana.

'It shall go to parties, and it shall have a husband; but all in good time,' said the father, stroking his youngest daughter's hair—adding, 'You little rogue! it is not you who will save me white kid shoes without end, and dozens of Houbigant's gloves, as your thrifty elder sister is about to do!'

No sooner had the point been thus settled, than Georgiana despatched the page with a pink-coloured note, to inform her friend she had been successful; and Miss Audley replied by a yellow-tinted note, requesting her to pack up immediately, and be ready to start on the following day.

Georgiana would have found it more difficult than she had anticipated, to take leave of her sisters, when the parting hour had come, had not the presence of her friend, before whom she would have been ashamed to appear to waver, and the recollection of Harry Clifford's perfidy, nerved her to the task. Still she felt singularly relieved when it was over, and they were seated in the railway

carriage, and whirled away by an express train.

The young ladies were accompanied by Miss Audley's maid, and on reaching the cottage, they found everything put in order for their reception by the housekeeper who always inhabited it, and who had been apprised of her young mistress's intended arrival, by a telegraphic despatch.

The cottage was simply but elegantly fitted up, and most charmingly situated on the banks of the Wye, with a background of wooded hills. It is true that at that season the trees were little better than dried sticks; but it was easy for the imagination to clothe them with verdure, to realize how lovely they would appear in spring. Georgiana was quite in raptures at her friend's retreat. Hitherto she only knew the 'country' in fashionable watering places, where a tree is a rarity—and the genuine rusticity of the scene was a delightful novelty to her.

'We shall be very happy here,' observed Anna Matilda.

'I am sure we shall,' echoed Georgiana, speaking in her usual cheerful tone, for the first time since St. Valentine's morning.

'We'll forget there are any Franks or Harrys in the world,' said Anna Matilda. 'Suppose we were to impose a forfeit on whichever of us shall mention their names?'

'You would lose too many forfeits, Till,' said Georgiana, with unsuspecting raillery, 'for you name them twice or three times to my once.'

Anna Matilda coloured slightly, as she observed—'Perhaps it is better to go on talking about them for a while, that we may the sooner get tired of the subject.'

This motion was carried without dissent. But in order to provide against any possible relenting on the part of the 'weaker vessel,' as Miss Audley deemed her friend to be, she insisted they should decline receiving any letters from town, with the single exception of those coming from their respective families. Word was therefore written that same evening to London, that all letters addressed to them, were to be kept for a year, before being sent to Monmouthshire.

'For at the end of that time,' observed Miss Audley, 'we shall have become so utterly indifferent to our renegade lovers, that even the most passionate letters, if they wrote any such, would fail to cause the slightest emotion.'

In addition to this injunction, the fair recluses entreated to have the secrecy of their retreat kept inviolate, lest any importunate persons should invade their cherished solitude.

'This is just one of Matilda's absurd, romantic plans,' said her uncle, as he flung aside her letter, with an impatient 'Pshaw!'

'There is some love affair under all this,' observed Mrs. Fletcher, with womanly clear-sightedness.

Having now settled that they would henceforth live 'The world forgetting, by the world forgot,' the two fair hermits proceeded to unpack their things, and render their abode as pleasant as need be. The cottage already contained a piano, and a library well stocked with novels; and Miss Audley had brought with her a whole arsenal of implements for drawing, painting, potichomanie, and Berlin wool work, besides the numerous appliances for manufacturing all kinds of useless articles, coming under the denomination of fancy work.

The putting everything in order filled up several days very pleasantly, and though the ground was too wet to allow of their taking a walk, Georgiana could not cease admiring the pretty view to be seen from every window in the house.

'Whatever can Miss Audley have brought so many things for?' asked the housekeeper of Martha. For generally, in her flying visits to the cottage, her young mistress's whole luggage consisted of one portmanteau.

Martha could not tell; but it set her a-wondering, and she determined to try and solve the puzzle. Accordingly she took a favourable opportunity of asking Miss Audley, whether she was to re-trim one of her dresses for the ball on the 28th, or whether she had given her orders

to Madame Marabout, previous to leaving town? Miss Audley merely shook her head by way of denial, leaving Martha as wise as before. After the lapse of several days, Martha renewed the attack, by inquiring when she was to pack up to return to town, hinting that it were well the young ladies should reach London in time to rest from the fatigue of the journey, before the day appointed for the ball. 'We're not going to return to town,' said Miss Audley, curtly.

'Not going to——' began Martha, when she was suddenly checked by a frown from her imperious mistress.

Martha left the room much discomfited, while the young ladies enjoyed a good laugh at her expense.

'Poor Martha has no taste for the picturesque,' said Miss Audley; 'London servants always abhor the country.'

A few fine days succeeded, which enabled the two recluses to walk out, and Anna Matilda showed her friend the garden and the beehives, and expatiated on the future delights of spring and summer, till Georgiana grew as enthusiastic as herself, for the moment. But it happened on the 28th, that there was a heavy fall of rain in the morning, and that the sky was gloomy and overcast all day long. Poor Georgiana's spirits fell to freezing point. Everything seemed to go wrong– the third volume of a novel of 'thrilling' interest was not to be found, and the little dog threw down the glass vase she had half converted into porcelain by the process of potichomanie, and there her work lay in shivers on the floor. To complete the list of petty annoyances, Martha came to inform her mistress that although she was of course 'much attached to her, and *all that*,' still the short and the long of it was, that she had no intention to bury herself in the country, and give Tom the policeman time to make love and get married to the cook in the neighbouring square.

Miss Audley suggested that it was very likely Tom had already done what she feared, when Martha interrupted her with: 'Oh, dear! Miss, you wouldn't say so if you had seen the valentine he sent me!'

Anna Matilda tossed her head disdainfully, telling Martha she was free to leave her when she pleased, since she was fool enough to believe in the promises of a valentine.

It is proverbially the last drop that causes the vase to overflow—the last feather that breaks the camel's back—and perhaps nothing could have better contributed to put poor Georgy's spirits still further out of tune, than Martha's sudden secession, coupled with the pastoral simplicity of her faith in the policeman. It was mortifying to have to own to herself, that the Damons and Phillises of the kitchen kept their troth better than those of the drawing-room. It was in vain Miss Audley put forth all her conversational powers to amuse and enliven her companion—gaiety and raillery were alike unavailing to rouse her, and it seemed quite a relief when candles were at length brought in and the curtains drawn, shutting out the dreary prospect.

When the hissing urn was placed on the table, and they sat by a cheerful fire and took their tea, the room wore such an air of comfort, that Anna Matilda could not help remarking that one might be just as pleasantly off in bad weather in the country as in town.

'Only you can't go out shopping, in a fly, as you can in London,' observed Georgiana. 'You can soon get through a day with that.'

Evidently the day had been an unusually heavy one to get through! When the tea-things were removed, Georgiana requested Matilda to play some of the pianoforte music she had brought with her, and meanwhile she lolled on the sofa to listen.

Matilda was rather a dashing player, and willingly treated her to an elaborate fantasia by one of her favourite composers.

'But that's not amusing,' said Georgiana, peevishly, when she had finished; 'do play me some polkas, there's a dear girl.'

Matilda was nothing loth, and presently launched forth into one of Strauss's most dance-provoking tunes. To this succeeded a bril-

liant waltz, then a mazurka, then a varsovienne—all of the most inspiriting kind—till the fair performer happening to cast her eyes upon a looking-glass that reflected her friend's image, perceived that Georgiana's whole person seemed transformed, and instinct with animation, while her feet were busily tracing steps in the air. Anna Matilda ceased playing abruptly, and turned round on her stool.

'Oh, go on—go on!' said Georgiana, imploringly.

'Why, Georgy,' cried Miss Audley, starting from her seat, 'why are you so excited, my dear girl?'

Georgiana's animation faded in an instant, and she leant her head back on the cushions, while two streams of tears ran down from her eyes. In reply to her friend's anxious questions, she answered, half-weeping half-laughing—'I fancied I was at the ball.'

'True—it is the twenty-eighth,' murmured Anna Matilda.

Then, without chiding her for the weakness she had involuntarily betrayed, she began describing in such sarcastic colours the disappointment their two unworthy lovers would experience at not meeting them, that Georgiana finished by laughing outright, and declaring she was quite glad to be so many miles away from the festive scene, and out of all danger of ever meeting Harry again.

Things went on very smoothly for some time after, and Georgiana recovered a portion of her former spirits, though occasionally she complained that winter was rather dull in the country. But when the spring set in with unusual mildness, she took such interest in watching the blossoms, and inspecting the beehives, and rambling about the garden and the fields, that even when Fanny, now just out, wrote that she pitied her for being buried in the country, while they were all alive with balls and parties in town, she would not own to herself that she felt the least regret for London festivities. The only passage that really interested her in Fanny's gossiping letter, was a passing mention of Harry Clifford, who, she said, had not been seen at any of their acquaintances' houses since the ball on the 28th February, at which he made his appearance but for a moment, and then vanished. Fanny thought he might have danced with her. He did, however, inquire after both Miss Audley and Georgiana. On the cross-writing of Fanny's long letter, she stated that Frank Blythwood was more 'rattling than ever,' and was thought to be courting a rich soap-boiler's daughter.

Georgiana put the letter into her friend's hand, and pointed to the two forbidden names.

'It shows we have done what our dignity required,' said Anna Matilda; 'do let us forget them once for all.'

Summer succeeded to spring. The young ladies received visits from some of their neighbours—but as they only allowed the female portion of the families to enter their cottage, they were nicknamed the 'nuns.' Georgiana thought there would be no harm in admitting gentlemen to the privilege of morning calls; but Miss Audley ruled that until Georgiana was of age, and could take the resolution they intended forming, beyond the power of revocation, it was more suitable to decline male visitors altogether. For it should be observed that Anna Matilda had determined on waiting for her friend's majority, before she bound herself to the celibacy and solitude she was for ever praising.

Georgiana submitted, as she always did, to her imperious friend, but remained unconvinced. She thought, however, there was little use in adorning herself if nobody (of the male gender) was to see her; and accordingly she neglected her dress, and rambled about in her last year's straw hat, and wrapped up in a large shawl that completely concealed her elegant figure.

'I am graduating for becoming a hermit,' would she say whenever Miss Audley remonstrated with her for growing careless of her toilet.

But one day on returning from her morning walk, she picked the old trimming off her hat, and put

on new ribbons, and while so engaged, informed her friend there was an artist sketching in the neighbourhood.

'Is there?' said Miss Audley, in a tone of indifference.

'He is very handsome,' continued Georgiana.

'Is he?' replied her friend, with the same provoking coolness.

'His name is Edgar Tyrrell—a pretty, romantic name—is it not?' persisted Georgiana.

'Surely, Miss Fletcher, you did not ask him his name?' exclaimed Anna Matilda, roused to indignation.

'No, Miss Audley, I did not,' replied Georgiana, laughing; 'I saw it on his colour-box.'

'Then you must have approached him nearer than good manners warranted,' said Matilda.

'He asked me a question about an old castle, being a stranger in this neighbourhood,' said Georgiana, 'and good manners prevented my remaining dumb.'

'But suppose he *is* handsome, and *has* a romantic name,' resumed Matilda, 'what is that to us? Are you still weak-minded enough to pin your faith on handsome men?'

'No; but what harm is there in saying he is handsome?' persisted Georgiana; 'I speak as I should of any picture at the exhibition.'

Still as the handsome picture was sufficiently made up of flesh and blood, for Georgiana not to care to



appear again before it in the negligent style of toilet she had latterly adopted, Anna Matilda felt so alarmed at such rising symptoms of rebellion, that she determined on accompanying her in her morning

rambles, and judging for herself, how dangerous a swain the unknown artist was likely to prove.

Accordingly they sallied forth together on the following morning, and Georgiana led the way, of course by chance, to the spot where he was at work, when politeness required she should bow to him. In a few minutes both young ladies were looking at his sketch, and Miss Audley was presently descanting on colour and *chiar'oscuro* with a fluency that showed her to be deeply conversant with the jargon of the fine arts. Whether Edgar Tyrrell listened very attentively to the meaning of her remarks, is more than doubtful, for the young painter's eyes were so fascinated by the classic beauty of his new acquaintance, that his ears caught nothing beyond the mere sound of her words, which had the effect of sweet music, or of a murmuring stream.

'What do you think of him?' asked Georgiana, the moment they were out of hearing.

'He is very intellectual,' replied Anna Matilda.

'How can you tell that,' said Georgiana laughing, 'when he hardly spoke two words?'

Miss Audley turned away her head with an impatient gesture. She never could brook being made to perceive that she had said a silly thing—and resolved, if she met the young painter again, to give him an opportunity of proving that she had judged him rightly. But he was not to be found on the same spot next morning, nor the day after; and Anna Matilda unconsciously betrayed a degree of irritability during the rest of the day, which would have led any one to suppose that she attached more importance to the meeting than she would have cared to acknowledge to her friend.

About a week afterwards, our fair recluses went to take tea with two widow ladies, sisters, who lived in a pretty cottage, about a mile distant from their home. Mrs. Brown and Mrs. Gilbert were past the prime of life, but cheerful, pleasant women, who liked to see everybody happy around them; and who, though but recent acquaintances, had already taken the privilege of lecturing their youthful visitors on what they termed their unnatural mode of life.

'It is absurd, my dears,' would they say, 'to fancy that two young hearts can live upon friendship for ever.'

On these occasions Miss Audley would invariably adduce the example of her favourite heroines, Lady Eleanor and her friend.

'Ay, that's all very well to write about,' said the sensible matrons; 'and they may have seemed very happy to the tourists who called upon them, and saw them in their sunny hours; but who knows how often they repented their rash resolution?'

On reaching the cottage, the young ladies found the tea-table ready spread for their reception; and presently they sat down to the social meal with their hostesses, one of whom remarked that they need not wait for their friend, as his return was uncertain.

'You must not be angry, you manhater,' said Mrs. Gilbert, gaily tapping Matilda on the shoulder, 'but we have a male friend staying with us—and as after all you are subject to meet these nuisances when you pay visits, we didn't think ourselves obliged to lock him up.'

'Certainly not,' said Miss Audley, disdainfully; 'our hearts are not made of such inflammable materials as to need the precaution of bolts and bars.'

'Bolts and bars may become very wise precautions, my dear, some two years later,' began Mrs. Brown, 'when——'

Here she was interrupted by the entrance of the guest, who had returned sooner than expected, and whom she hastened to introduce as Mr. Edgar Tyrrell, an artist from London, who had come to carry away some of their Monmouthshire views.

'But not to deprive you of them, my dear hostesses,' said he, smiling and taking a hand of each sister affectionately, as he bowed gracefully to the young ladies.

Anna Matilda was provoked at herself on feeling the colour rise to

her cheeks, especially as she perceived a glance exchanged between the sisters. She therefore thought it best to say at once that she had had the pleasure of meeting the gentleman before, and of admiring one of the sketches to which Mrs. Brown alluded. Mr Tyrrell replied suitably, and the conversation soon became animated and agreeable. Anna Matilda recovered her usual composure, and Georgiana was as gay as a lark.

When the tea-things were removed, the artist brought in his portfolio, at Mrs. Gilbert's request, and its contents were exhibited to the young ladies. The sketch near St. Briavel's, the spot where Miss Audley had first met the young painter, was almost finished since then; but she observed a duplicate of the same scene, in an unfinished state, in which it seemed that the figures of herself and her companion had been sketched in, as well as that of the artist taking the view —only before she had time to satisfy her curiosity on this point, Edgar Tyrrell had dexterously concealed it behind some sheets of blank paper which he laid on one side.

The evening passed very pleasantly, and so rapidly, that the young ladies were surprised when their maid came to fetch them in company with the gardener's son. Mrs Gilbert observed, 'Such an escort was superfluous for that night, as their friend was too chivalrous by far not to think it a pleasure to see them safely home.' After declaring they should be perfectly safe, even if Georgiana and herself went home quite alone, Miss Audley made no objection to Edgar Tyrrell's walking by their side during the mile that separated them from home, especially as her London maid was now replaced by a country girl, who had neither Martha's prying propensities, nor sufficient quickness to make comments on her young mistress's conduct.

As they walked along in the soft moonlight, Edgar took occasion to remark that there was one scene he regretted not adding to his collection, namely, a little mountain-stream leaping down amidst rocks; which he described so graphically, that Anna Matilda exclaimed incautiously that she knew it well, as she could see it from her garden.

'And why don't you sketch it?' asked Georgiana, archly.

'For the reason Miss Audley has just given,' said the artist. 'I have no right to trespass on her garden, and the view, such as I once saw it on a former visit to this neighbourhood, can only be obtained in perfection from the elevated part of Miss Audley's garden.'

Thus indirectly appealed to, Miss Audley judged that she would only appear afraid to trust herself in the vicinity of a handsome man, if she carried her prudery to the extent of refusing an artist leave to take a sketch from her garden. Accordingly she said politely, but coldly, that 'she could not think of depriving the world of the fine arts of another gem from his pencil,' and, 'that he was free to come through her garden to obtain the desired *point de vue*.'

Edgar Tyrrell was not slow in availing himself of the permission; and the very next day he came with his portfolio and camp stool, and established himself on a kind of platform commanding the fall, but he had the good taste and discretion not to ask to see the fair inmates of the cottage, merely telling the gardener that Miss Audley had given him permission to sketch on her premises.

'I think it is rather inhuman of us not to give him luncheon,' observed Georgiana, when the young painter had come and gone after the same discreet fashion, for two or three consecutive mornings.

'You seem to take great interest in him,' said Miss Audley, with more irritation than the case seemed to warrant.

Georgiana began humming an air. She did not relish being continually snubbed by her friend, and to avoid quarrelling, she went out into the garden to look at the beehives. In a few minutes Anna Matilda stood at her elbow.

'Really,' said Georgiana, laughing, 'you remind me of Mentor, who used to provoke me, when learning

French at school, with always running after poor Télémaque, for fear he should misbehave himself amongst the girls.'

'May not I come and look at the beehives as well as you, Georgy?' asked Miss Audley, colouring deeply.

'I wish I could make her jealous of me,' thought Georgiana; 'and that jealousy made her fall in love with Edgar Tyrrell——and then!——'

Ay!—in that one little word 'then,' which she did not expound any further, even to herself, how many desiderata lay concealed! freedom—the making up of lovers' quarrels—and a host of possibilities that had hitherto appeared sheer impossibilities.

Just three weeks after the wish she had formed, Georgiana, on coming down to breakfast, found a letter directed to herself, in a hand that might not have disgraced a cat; the contents of which ran as follows:—

'Dear Miss,

'Eckuse liberty, but Mr Clifford is breaking is 'art after you, and i think rite to tell you as i ham very 'appy with the perliceman, as we wer married last sunday, and am your umble servant,

'Mrs. Martha Stammers.'

Georgiana read this curious epistle three times over, and then hiding it in her pocket, fell into deep thought. Was Harry repentant after all? Any way it showed a kind feeling in Martha, to give her this hint; and some penetration, Georgiana thought, to have discovered she once cared for Harry Clifford. She was so completely absorbed in her musings, that she did not perceive how long she had sat waiting for Matilda to join her at the breakfast table, till the maid came in to ask whether she should bring in the urn?

'I'll wait for Miss Audley,' said Georgiana.

'Please, miss,' said the maid, 'I think you'll be hungry if you do.'

'Is she gone out?'

'Yes, miss.'

'What, for long?' said Georgiana.

The maid looked particularly silly at this question, as she replied: 'Well, I suppose so, miss.'

Georgiana ate her breakfast none the worse, perhaps, for Martha's letter, and then rambled out into the garden. In Mentor's absence she thought she would venture to go and look at Mr. Tyrrell's sketch, which must have become a picture by this time. For, working three weeks on the same subject, either he must have been much dissatisfied with his first two or three attempts, or else have arrived at completion by this time.

'Is Mr. Tyrrell at work up there?' asked she of the gardener's son.

'No, miss, he be gone,' said the lad with a broad grin.

'Gone? What! left the neighbourhood?' cried Georgiana. 'But when was he here last?'

'He was here this morning, miss,' replied the lad, 'till Miss Audley came, and they went away together, out by that 'ere gate.' When perceiving Georgiana's look of amazement, he quickly added: 'La! miss, what didn't *you* know? Why they've been a-courting every day as the gent came.'

It now flashed across Georgiana's mind that her friend had somehow contrived daily to occupy her with one thing or another, while she disappeared from the room, evidently to superintend the sketch of the waterfall. Not caring to encourage the lad to talk any more, she went back into the house, scarcely knowing whether to laugh or be angry that her companion had gone away without a word of explanation. Yet she somehow experienced a sense of great relief. Late in the day she received a note from Anna Matilda, informing her that she had met with a sincere heart at last; and was about to be united to Edgar Tyrrell. Why she need have run away to do so, was rather problematical; except, perhaps, that she was ashamed to face her friend after changing her mind so soon—besides, being one of those who prefer cutting the Gordian knot to untying it.

Left to herself, Georgiana lost no time in writing home to her family, explaining what had happened, and begging them to come and fetch her

away as soon as possible. Mr. Fletcher said it would be a good joke to leave Georgiana for a time to enjoy her own company; but Mrs. Fletcher took pity on her, and volunteered to start at once with her daughters to bring her home. Matilda's uncle, who had been called to the family council, offered to escort the ladies, as Mr. Fletcher could not leave town; and invited them to stay at his seat—the cottage not having accommodation for them all. This being gladly accepted, on the evening of the day after the Fletchers had received Georgiana's letter, the three ladies made their appearance at the 'hermitage,' where they found the fair occupant in company with Mrs. Gilbert, who at her request had taken possession of Miss Audley's bedroom.

Mrs. Gilbert, who had been much amused by the *dénouement* of Matilda's romance, was sincerely glad to see Georgiana restored to her family—and while the two elder ladies were talking on the subject, the sisters drew Georgiana aside into the garden.

'I hope you won't be very angry, Georgy, when you hear who accompanied us besides Matilda's uncle?' said Isabella.

'Who?' asked Georgiana, looking little disposed at that moment to be angry with anybody.

'Harry Clifford,' said Fanny.

'Oh! I suppose he is half beside himself at Trill's marriage,' said Georgiana; 'but what does he come here for?'

'That he'll explain himself,' said Bella, as she and her sister hastened back towards the house.

Georgiana would fain have followed them, but on seeing Harry Clifford open the gate and come forward with so sad an air, she felt rooted to the spot.

'How have I offended you?' asked he.

Georgiana tried to restrain her tears, and could only articulate: 'That valentine!'

'Well! Was it so great a crime to entreat you to wear a flower at the ball by way of an answer?'

'But you wrote to *her*, not to me,' objected Georgiana.

And she drew from her pocket the valentine Miss Audley had given her, to remind her constantly of Harry's perfidy.

'Good heavens!' cried Harry, 'I see it all! Frank Blythwood proposed, after our valentines were sealed, that we should have them directed by his solicitor's clerk, in order that no one, in either household, should guess who they came from. The addresses must have been reversed by mistake. I put a mark on mine, as you see here—but Frank is so careless! He little knows the immeasureable pain his carelessness has cost me.'

Georgiana uttered an exclamation of joy, though she hastened to say: 'Poor Frank Blythwood is to be pitied likewise.'

'Don't waste any pity on him,' said Harry, 'since he is already married to another—save it rather for me.'

Georgiana laid her hand in his; but her heart was too full to allow her to utter a word. Meanwhile Harry related how kind her father had been to him, on learning his attachment to his daughter, and how he had told him to have patience as all would come right in the end. Only he had positively forbidden his following Georgiana before she grew tired of her seclusion.

'I am heartily tired of it now,' said Georgiana, amidst tears and laughter.

And no one will be surprised if, under the circumstances, Harry found it easier than he had hoped to obtain her promise, that they should be united on next St. Valentine's day.

'ONLY A WOMAN'S HAIR.'

'ONLY a woman's hair,'
Well, once, I will confess,
Not all the wealth of a millionaire
Could have won from me that tress

It was won, ay, when was it won?
In the days of long ago,
And, of all places under the sun,
At an Agricultural Show

We were gazing, arm in arm,
In a study of love's bright brown,
I think, at the pigeons—a sudden alarm,
Her hair was coming down

We gained a retiring room,
Scarce had I closed the door,
When it fell—in masses of glossy gloom
That half-way reach'd the floor

A rose tint of the June
Her face, as she hurriedly bound
The dishevell'd stray, that her beauty's noon
With wandering arms enwound



And I ask'd—ere a day's escape,
Came a scented note and my suit,
'From those rich ripe clusters one tiny grape
Is not forbidden fruit?'

* * * * * *

I 'assisted'—that's the term—
  Last week, at the very same show,
As a partner in the implement firm
  Of Mangell, Wurzell, and Co.

And I saw—Mrs. Tomkinson,
  With ten darlings, little and big,
A stoutish lady, intent upon
  A remarkably fine prize pig.

I thought of the sweet lang syne,
  And I dare say so did she;
But I merely remark'd that the day was fine,
  And ask'd after Mr. T.



E.

Here Thomas, bring me my boots;
  And fling this rubbish away—
No, hang it, my head is bald as a coot's,
  And her sister locks are grey.

But *this* Time never seres;
  I gaze, and she shines again
The silver star of my youthful years,
  And not the mother of ten.

R. W.

THE WIDOW AND THE FATHERLESS.

'Hoping against Hope.'

'YES, I am waiting here, mother, with no company but my boy's,
I could not sit by the mouth of the pit and hearken the hollow noise
Of the strokes of the pick and the crowbar as they toiled away below
To rescue the men—and my husband—he is living still I know.
It was only last night I saw him as I drowsed away by the fire,
Up there in the engine-house yonder—for at last I began to tire;
And, as I was nodding, I fancied that some one came to the door—
'Twas he—he looked in at me smiling—and passed away—and no more!
But I know by his smile he is happy—do you think he'd be happy, dear,
If he'd left you, little Charlie, and your mother lonely here?
Look up, my child! He'll be coming: God will send him back again,
For how could we two poor things get on, if that our good man was ta'en?

'But I could not sit within sound of the pit—it almost drove me mad;
For I counted—and counted—and counted the blows of the busy pick and the gad;
And as easily could I reckon and sum my best best blood by drops,
As measure his life by those random blows, with the frequent pauses and stops.
When with sullen sound the treacherous ground in the shaft-side fell away,
And the work was all to begin afresh—and 'tis near a week to-day!
Look—tell me! Does any one come from the pit?—for my eyes are weak with tears!
A neighbour has promised to carry to me the first news from the shaft that he hears;
"Yet," he said, "there was little hope for them now!"—but I did not heed what he said;
For they cannot be dead—they cannot be dead—oh, God! *he* cannot be dead!

'There is no one coming? Well, well, we must wait—but oh, 'tis a weary tryst,
And at times there's a doubt that whispers my heart—a doubt I can scarce resist;
But I look into little Charlie's face, and under my breath I pray—
And whisper myself, "The Lord is good—He gives—He takes away!"
But He will not take the father away, and leave only the child and me
To wander the wide-world through alone. It cannot—it will not be!
Oh, mother! it was but few weeks ago we pitied the Queen of the land
For a loss that we now come near to know—for a grief we now understand!
But there's One Friend still Who will listen when the widow and fatherless call—
Oh, wives and children, neighbours of mine, God have mercy on us all!

'Is any one coming—can you see? What, no one—and now so late!
Oh, mother, mother! the heart grows sick that has for so long to wait.
Yet—oh, when I see my husband, and look in his face again—
For he *is* alive—I shall be repaid for this moment's years of pain;
And they'll not be bitter, the plenteous tears that when he comes I shall shed—
For he cannot be dead—he cannot be dead—oh, God! he cannot be dead!

'Is any one coming? Look again—is not some one there by the gate?
I fancied there was. How cold it grows—and it's getting late, ah, late!
Why, mother, you know this very month we've been married ten years long—
We have suffered together, and struggled at times—but it only made love more strong.
And he was as true a husband to me as woman ever has seen—
"He *was*," do I say? He *is* living still! He *is* a true husband, I mean!
And while I was ill, when Charlie was born, how gently he nursed me then—
How strange it is that the strength of love makes such tender nurses of men!
And I used to lie and listen while from out of The Book he read—
Oh, he cannot be dead—he cannot be dead—oh, God, he cannot be dead!

'Surely there's some one coming—look! You can see from where you stand!
At last is there some one coming this way? Little Charlie, give me your hand;
Come close to my side! Can you see, mother—can you see? Is there only one?
Is he hastening, mother, to where we are? Is he hurrying here? Does he run?
What? walking so slow! Ah, well we know 'tis ill news travels apace!
Hush! hush! don't tell me of tears on his cheek, and a grave sad look on his face,
Or else I shall always hear in your voice, till my dying day, the tone
Of the one that first told me I was left alone in the world—alone!

'"Dead!—dead!- dead!" Like molten lead the words burn into my brain,
And into my heart, till every part is wrung with the mighty pain!
Had I only seen him alive once more—only heard his parting breath—
Had he only lain in my arms once more to pass into those of death—
Had I closed his eyes as the life-light died, I had been more reconciled.
Is he dead? Is he dead? Oh, can he be dead? God help me and the child!'

THOMAS HOOD.



THE WIDOW'S WAIL.—THE NEW HARTLEY PIT, JANUARY, 1862

DRAWN BY T MORTEN

THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.

A TALE FOR MAIDENS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS; AND, INCIDENTALLY, FOR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN.

CHAPTER I.

IN WHICH THEY TALK IT OVER.

'SHALL I ring for lights, Rupert?'

'Just as you please, Gussie; I don't care.'

'Not lights yet; do let us be without them a little longer, Gussie,' pleaded, rather imperiously, a third voice, a voice with some of the same notes in it as had the voices of the first two speakers; some of the same, and some that were younger, clearer, more ringing.

'Let us be without them a little longer, and talk it over; we can do so better in the dark.'

A sob here choked her utterance, and she—for the speaker was a female—bent her head down upon her sister's lap, and cried in that convulsive, passionate, violent manner that is so distressing while it lasts, and that generally lasts but a short time.

'My darling Floy; hush, dear Do calm yourself.'

The soothing tones and words had their due effect. The sobs grew less frequent, less deep; and as they presently ceased altogether, she exclaimed quite clearly, and almost brightly: 'What a proof of love and confidence papa has shown to dear mamma, in leaving everything to her! I felt so proud of them both when that clause was read; didn't you, Gussie?'

'My dear Floy,' said her brother—the 'Rupert' who was addressed in the first line—'I don't think you're fonder of them than I am, but I can't go with you heartily in being enthusiastically pleased at our future being so entirely in our mother's hands; at our being so powerless to help ourselves.'

'Rupert! you say this! you, for whom mamma would give her life! In whose hands could our future, as you call our getting on in the world, be safer than in mamma's? I thought you would have been as well pleased to owe everything to mamma, as she will be to give everything to us.'

'Rupert means, dear,' said the eldest sister, quietly, 'that, considering how rich our dear father was, it would have been wiser to settle something definitely upon the sons at least, rather than to leave it all to mamma, who has such a distaste for business and exertion. And I agree with him in doubting the wisdom of the act as cordially as I agree with you in admiring the spirit which dictated it.'

'But Rupert,' said Florence, earnestly, interrupting her speech with sobs, 'everything will be just the same, you know Mamma said so to me when I would go in and speak to her. "Rupert's allowance shall be increased, if he remains away," she said, "and if he likes to live at home altogether, he shall have the management of everything." Will you live at home, Rupert?'

'No, Floy; I think not.'

'Why won't you?'

'I am no lawyer; consequently the management of other people's business is not in my line. But these are early days to talk of such things. Heavens! I can hardly realize that this day week my father sat here, alive and well.'

'And we were all so happy,' moaned Florence; 'and now it's all over for ever.'

'We think so now, Floy,' said her sister, 'and for a long time we shall all feel very sad; but time is healing, and we shall learn to think of our good, kind, dearly-loved father with less poignant grief. I thought poor Gerald would have been here by this time, Rupert, didn't you? Poor Gerald! how he will feel it! Though I long to see him, I dread his coming.'

Rupert bent down to look at his watch by the firelight; and then

rising, said, as he rang the bell, 'The train arrives by half-past six; if he came by it, he'll be here soon, for it's seven now. Let dinner be on the table by half-past seven, Thomas.'

This last sentence was addressed to the servant who brought in the lamp.

It was an argand lamp—one of those whose light falls almost as clearly and purely as moonbeams, instead of with the hot, coarse glare of gas. And as, when he had placed it on the centre table, he proceeded to light the wax candles on the mantelpiece, darkness fled, and the three whose conversation we have been listening to, stood out in full relief.

Sitting in a negligently graceful attitude, in a low lounging chair, on the left-hand side of the fire, was a lady over whose head some three or four-and-twenty summers had passed. The face which rested on the slender white hand, as she sat gazing stedfastly into the fire, was pale, clear, and dark. Her eyes were large and oval, and they had the same steel-blue reflection in them as might be observed in her hair when the light fell upon it. She wore the latter banded back in an apparently careless fashion—just leaving her ears visible—and coiled in a superbly massive roll at the back of her head, where a small jet comb confined it. Apparently careless, I say advisedly, for simple as the arrangement was, not one of the many who would have been glad to copy Augusta Knightly, could ever succeed in bringing about the same result. On some statue that she had seen in one of the art-galleries abroad, the hair had been disposed in this way; and she had gone home and, with what looked like the wave of her arm, she had produced the self-same effect, and liked it, and continued it up to the present day. She had the straight nose that ought to belong to a downcast, modest face; and yet, though hers was generally borne aloft with a proud, imperial air, the straight nose did not seem at all out of place on it. With the delicate, curved beauty of her mouth and chin, no one could find fault. They were perfect in every line.

This queenly head—for such it was—rose on a massive swelling throat, from shoulders low and broad, which sprang in turn from a tiny round waist. She was not a sylph. She was one of those women who, though delicately made, never look of fairy-like proportions, that is, thin; her shoulders were too wide for that, and her bust too full. She had the way of doing everything gracefully—the art of being perfectly natural.

As she sat there with one hand supporting her face, and the other smoothing the bright hair of Florence, her younger sister, her deep mourning garb making her look paler than usual, and the sorrow at her heart softening the proud expression of her eye and lip, something in her appearance—or in connection with her—seemed to touch her brother deeply, for bending down and kissing her brow, he said—

'Dear Gussie, for your sake, even more than the others, I bitterly regret that my poor father should have been taken just now.'

'Nonsense, Rupert,' she replied, looking up and attempting to smile, 'it is on account of you and Gerald that I disapprove of certain arrangements my dear father deemed it right to make. To Floy here and me they will make little difference, but I disapprove of men being dependent.'

'Even on their own mothers? oh, Gussie!' interrupted Florence.

'Even on their own mothers,' responded Miss Knightly, calmly.

'Well, thank heaven, I have no such absurd notions to add to my bitterness at this bitter time,' replied Florence, warmly; and once more there was silence in the room.

The last speaker was a girl about twenty. By common consent, whenever she made her appearance, Florence Knightly was voted the beauty of the occasion. She was taller and slighter than her sister, with a very fair face, and long golden hair and lashes, indeed, rather light than golden. The extraordinary feature in her beauty was that these lashes shaded eyes of the darkest brown. She had irregular features;

a little nose that had a decided inclination to turn up, and a mouth that some people said would have been pretty had it been a size or two smaller. Florence Knightly's face was more and better than beautiful; it was fascinating to an extraordinary degree. It was like her manner—like her way as they called it; it was bewitchingly sympathetic. She was always desperately in earnest in what she said and did and thought; at least she always gave the impression of being so. She had the art of carrying her hearers with her on most occasions, for she had the eloquence of the eye as well as of the lip. Augusta's tones were perhaps better defined than Florence's, the tones more polished and the words more elegantly chosen; but Floy had the voice that lived in your heart the longest. She spoke impulsively, eagerly; and jumped her words into spasmodic sentences. Still it was a strain of purest melody; still you listened and longed for more of those notes, rich, soft, and clear as May dew. There was a difference, too, in the manner of these sisters, who had had the same instructors and advantages, learnt the same lessons, and gone into the same society. Augusta had that calm repose, that perfect self-possession, which is so eminently attractive. Florence, from rarely doing anything like other people, was very generally considered affected, and by her young-lady friends, theatrical. If she had not come of such a very unexceptionable race, there are many who would have called Florence Knightly 'bad style,' and her warmest friends felt in their innermost hearts, that if Floy had not quite so much action, it would perhaps be better.

Rupert Knightly, to whom I come at last, was worthy to be the brother of such very lovely sisters. He was about eight-and-twenty, tall, and slight in figure; with the fair hair and face of his younger sister, and the proud expression of his elder; a reserved face, almost a stern one, and yet one to which you would instinctively turn for protection, if you were in any doubt, or difficulty, or danger. Though he was fair, with strongly marked aquiline features, he bore a very strong resemblance to Augusta; but the brow, which in the woman was low, though broad, was in the man remarkably high, and strikingly intellectual. The long, drooping moustache partially concealed the shape of his mouth, but still it could be seen that he had the short curved lip of his sister. He had her quiet, self-assured manner too; and her polished clear tones, and her undoubted air of being thoroughbred.

He was the head, nominally, of the house now, and in the midst of her deep, deep grief for her father, his sister Augusta had thought, through the last few sad days, thought with pride how worthy he was to be the head of that or any other house. He was so clever; not that she deemed there would be ever any call upon him to distinguish himself. She had only thought of him in one light—as her father's heir; as his successor in the borough he had represented so long, as the head of the house, the rich Rupert Knightly, Esq., M.P. for Warmingston. But on this day, on the evening of which I introduce them to the notice of the reader, on this sad day of their father's funeral, the will had been read, and to everybody's surprise — everybody's expressed surprise, which was worse—to the astonishment of the widow herself, every fraction of the property, both landed and funded, was left at the absolute disposal of the weak, irresolute Mrs. Knightly; and Rupert was indeed the head of the house, but dependent on his mother for his daily bread. The heir of the rich Mr. Knightly—one of the wealthiest commoners in the county—had no profession. He had been brought up to play the part of a rich man, with large landed estates. He had chosen, for the most part, to reside in his own quarters in the Albany, and had been quite content to draw a splendid allowance quarterly from his father, without caring about anything being decidedly settled upon him. But now his father was dead, and things would be quite different;

and so Rupert Knightly felt, and so his sister Augusta felt for him.

And now Rupert Knightly, glancing at the clock on the mantelpiece—a clock on which gilt and enamelled Cupids chased winged and jewelled hours—said,

'By Jove! twenty minutes to eight! Gerald can't be coming by that train; we had better go and dine.'

They went into the long, lofty dining-room, those two sisters and their brother, and choked back their tears, as Rupert said grace as master in that place for the first time—in that room where their father had been genial, happy, and hearty but the other day. His portrait hung on the wall opposite to Florence—the portrait of a fine, hale, handsome old man—and seemed to smile kindly down upon them. The dinner was irreproachable, and Thomas and Burton, the butler, waited as severely as ever; but what a farce that pretence of eating appeared to the grief-stricken children who were mourning a father.

'Will you come back to the drawing-room with us, Rupert?' Augusta asked, as she was leading the way out, when their stately meal was over.

'I shall come to you directly, Gussie. I wish one of you would just run up to my mother. I don't like the idea of her being up there without any one of us, crying and sobbing herself frantic.'

'I'll go up, but I don't think it's much use, Rupert,' answered Augusta, sadly. 'We have tried, both of us, so many times to-day, and it only makes her worse. I do so dread the idea of bringing on hysterics again.'

'For mercy's sake, don't do that, Gussie!—but go up. That maid of my mother's encourages anything of the sort, I know, and whines and howls herself at such a rate that I'm sure she must upset my mother terribly,' he added to Florence, as his eldest sister left the room on her unpromising mission.

'Baines has been a great comfort to mamma all through this trying time, dear Rupert,' said Florence, rather reproachfully. 'Mamma's nerves are weak at any time, and they are so shattered now that no one could have soothed her like Baines.'

'It seems to me that we could have done it better, Floy, if that wretched Baines had not kept the door closed on us. Well, Gussie?'

Miss Knightly had evidently been unsuccessful. 'Mamma says she would rather be alone, Rupert, till Gerald comes. I want her to go to bed early, and not see Gerald till to-morrow morning; but she says she shall sit up all night if he doesn't come. We shall only be too glad to have you, dear, when you are tired of being alone.'

The girls walked away to the drawing-room. Rupert sat alone over his wine, but not drinking it. The desolate widow lay on her couch upstairs. The domestics muttered in the servants' hall about the strangeness of that will, which, as they said, had left Mr. Rupert and Mr Gerald nothing but beggars, and so for many hours there was silence in this stately mansion in Piccadilly. Still the hours went by, and Gerald did not come.

Who Gerald was, and why he had not been there, shall be told in the next chapter. In this I will only state that at about eleven a cab dashed up to the door, there was a violent knock, and a rush of fresh air into the hall. The sisters had only time to exclaim hurriedly, 'It's Gerald!' when he was before them.

CHAPTER II.

SHOWING WHY GERALD WAS NOT THERE.

The golden bowl was broken now, and the silver cord loosed, and the light of the lamp that had burned so brightly was quenched—gone out for ever; and only the other day he had been alive, well, amongst them all, so short a time since; and now the last had come; the handful of earth had been thrown—'dust to dust, ashes to ashes'—and it was all over.

But it had been very sudden. There is no doubt about it: sudden death, though a thing that some few may individually pray for, if we

can hope humbly that it finds us prepared, is very awful to the survivors. That seeing a loved one fade away, slowly and surely, may rend and tear our hearts, and cause our spirits to sink lower, lower every day with the sickening knowledge of what it is all coming to; but in that case there is not the fierce, unexpected pain. We are not cruelly frightened as well as cruelly hurt. Mr. Knightly's death had been sudden—terribly sudden. He had bidden guests to his table; welcomed them there warmly, and died while they were sitting around it. His wife and children had seen him last playing the part of the kind genial host—a part he was ever playing—and soon they were summoned back, by cries of horror, to the room where he lay a ghastly corpse. It had been sudden—awfully sudden. No time to bless either wife or child, but time to clasp Rupert's hand in one loving clasp before the spirit fled. He had time to give that assurance of love to the son who was there, but none to say one loving word about the son who was away—about the son he had parted with in anger. And this was why his sister had said that she dreaded the meeting with poor Gerald.

Gerald Knightly was a younger son, consequently his father had decided that it behoved him to make him something or other, so he put him into the army, a profession entirely after Gerald's heart. But for the last year or two Gerald had got into the habit of despising himself because he was in the —th, quartered at Woolwich, instead of being in the Guards, quartered at Knightsbridge, with occasional duty at Windsor. He told his father, if he would supply the funds, he would himself soon manage the matter. But as Mr. Knightly did not see things in the same light, and refused to advance the necessary funds, after many applications had been made to him, Gerald had grown heated and angry, and had gone off to the Continent, without leaving a proper course of addresses. So it had come to pass that his father had died and been buried without Gerald knowing anything about it. They had that morning received a note from him—or rather Rupert had—directed to him at his own chambers, stating his intention of being home that night; and now this was the news they had to give him. No wonder they said, 'Poor Gerald!' for gay, and dashing, and reckless as he was, Gerald Knightly was a loving, tender, affectionate son. He would be sorry enough now that he had said all that about Woolwich, and made his father think him discontented. To say the truth, Woolwich is not the one spot under the sun that is most desirable. His sisters, in trying to reconcile him to the hard fate of being other than a Guardsman, had said, 'And then, Gerald, there are the Artillery balls and concerts!' But Gerald's position was unassailable. 'I could take you to them just as well without being fastened down there on duty,' he had replied. He had liked Woolwich very well when he had gone there first, a young ensign: this was another grievance—he belonged to an infantry regiment. He had been satisfied with the life at Woolwich, and the soirées at the Royal Hospital, Greenwich—where he invariably played a very prominent part—for a time, until he had stepped over the heads of men who might easily have been his grandfathers, and was hailed by the world at large as Captain Knightly, and pronounced by his sisters to be the handsomest man they ever saw. And then he began to look upon his lot as hard, very hard indeed, and upon himself as entirely thrown away. So his claims had grown more urgent lately, and had resulted in a coolness with the father, who had refused to meet them. And now that father lay cold and dead in his narrow tomb, and poor Gerald was still unconscious of the fact.

He came rushing into the room where his two sisters stood waiting to receive him. Augusta, calm and graceful as ever, but showing in the swelling veins which marbled the back of the little white hand she pressed on the edge of a table, and

in the deeper paleness which overspread her face, how great was the excitement under which she laboured. Florence bent forward in a drooping attitude, clasping and unclasping her hands in a passionate manner.

'What's the matter, Gussie? Burton keeps on shaking his head and saying nothing; what——'

He stopped suddenly. His eyes fell on their black dresses, on their grief-stricken faces; and in a stunned, dazed manner he sat down and looked at them hopelessly, speechlessly.

'Papa! poor papa! Oh, Gerald!' from Florence, and, 'Be calm, dearest Gerald; we have suffered a terrible loss, and we must all help one another to bear it,' from Augusta told him all. Still he sat there, with his face buried in his hands, till Rupert came in and laid his hand on his shoulder.

'My dear boy, my dear Gerald, I would have spared you this shock at any cost; bear up, old fellow, just think of these girls'

Gerald wrung his brother's hand.

'Was it,' he began hoarsely, 'anything that could—am I the cause in any way——?'

He ceased, and Rupert answered with a prompt, sympathising eagerness that went straight to Gerald's heart, 'There was no apparent cause—a spasm of the heart, Holford says; he was well, happy, hearty one minute, the next he was dead'

'Then he—my father—sent no word of forgiving love to me, Rupert?'

'My dear boy, do not be distressed at that; painful as it is, we are all in the same case; he had no time to speak to any of us: and I can assure you any little feeling of annoyance against you had passed away. He spoke of you two or three days before his death to me, and seemed to be looking forward to your return.'

There was consolation in the words; they were intended to be consoling; and Gerald felt it to be due to his brother to acknowledge them as such.

'Thank you, Rupert,' he said simply, and then after kissing his sisters, he went away up to his mother's room.

It was still early in the summer season; but sorrow is always chilly. The suddenly bereft wife lay upon a luxurious couch, wrapped up in cashmeres, in that boudoir which Martin and Graham had fitted up for her afresh, under her thoughtful, loving husband's directions, but a month ago. She lay before a blazing fire; moaning at intervals, and with crimson cheeks and burning hands, complaining of the cold.

She looked too young—she was forty-seven or eight—to be the mother of those men and women down stairs; for hers was a lasting order of beauty Rose was her name, and a rose she was, even now. Her husband had married her for her exceeding loveliness when she was sixteen, and idolized her for it up to the day of his death. She was a sweet woman, gentle and affectionate, and sensitively jealous. Mr Knightly had worshipped and spoilt her with admirable constancy from the moment he first met her and found that her limpid hazel eyes brightened, and her rounded cheeks grew pinky at his approach. I have said that she was sweet, and gentle, and affectionate, but with all these good and charming qualities she was not a perfect woman by any means. She had a great weakness for being consulted on all occasions. Her husband had always found a pleasure in doing so, and it had ever been painful to her that the rest of the world—her world—would not do likewise. Without knowing a note of music she would look pouringly hurt when her daughters would not ask for her suggestions as to turns and flourishes. She would have liked Rupert to consult her about his park hack, and Gerald about his book on the Derby; but they did not think of doing so; and this had been a crease in her rosoleaf. Now—and this had been an alleviation of her woe—she would be of importance to them. They would owe the means of procuring their pleasures to her; so, surely, they would be asking her advice, and telling her all their plans. She adored her children; and

had such a sacrifice been demanded, that plump, fair-haired, limpid-eyed, middle-aged matron would have given her life for them; but for all that she did, even in these moments of her first agony, like the notion of their being utterly dependent upon her It never once occurred to her that the arrangement might not be equally agreeable to them; for they —the sons especially—had always been unanimous in flattering and pleasing their pretty mother.

So now she lay upon her couch, with burning eyes and a racking headache, waiting for Gerald to come and say the same caressingly sympathetic things Rupert had said already For the first time for many, many years she had cause to shed tears, and these unfrequent visitors had made her feverish and ill

She, too, had talked it over with Baines, talked it over in the soul-harrowing way some women love Baines had acted as lay figure, and held up all the crape-covered skirts one after the other, before her weeping mistress, and together they had examined and cried over the length and texture of the 'weepers' Mrs. Knightly truly mourned her husband's death, and she liked outward and visible signs of things. She even had serious thoughts, she told Baines, of leaving this, their old family mansion in Piccadilly, and going to live in Harley Street, because she had often noticed how many dowagers lived in Harley Street, and she thought it due to Baines's dear late master, &c. But Baines refused to fan the flame when it took this direction. Grief in moderation and within bounds was highly proper, and she felt it incumbent upon herself to go with her mistress to very great lengths; but not to such lengths as a removal to Harley Street. Baines had an eye to the future; and there was the steadiest of butlers—not to say the wealthiest—living next door, who had been rather particular in his attentions of late. Baines did not doubt the strength of his attachment, but she felt that it would be as well not to test it too severely. So she said, when Mrs. Knightly spoke of migrating to Harley Street—

'Ah! mum, take my word for it, when we come back from Warmingston next year, 'twill be to this house, and no Harley Streets; 't ain't likely——my gracious me, here's Captain Gerald!'

The son was speedily clasped in the trembling, loving arms of the mother, who had been a silent witness of that last angry meeting with the dead husband and father, there was plenty to think about, and no need for words for a time. But Mrs. Knightly was soon able to speak as coherently as usual, and then she commenced detailing every little item connected with his father's sudden death and funeral, with that minuteness which is so exceedingly painful to men. Holding his hand firmly and tenderly, bedewing it with tears and covering it with kisses, the really loving mother succeeded in lacerating poor Gerald's heart terribly.

'You'll go into the Guards now, my darling boy, won't you?'

'I don't know, mother; I hope so, but I must talk to Rupert about it'

'Talk to Rupert, why can't you talk to me about it as well as to Rupert? and you needn't say, you hope so but don't know, for I say you shall if you like.'

'Well, well, mother darling, all right, and now go to bed, will you? it's wrong to wear yourself out in this way'

'I only waited up to see you, Gerald,' wept the poor lady.

'I know it, mother, and I am only anxious to get you to take rest, because we can't, any of us, bear the thoughts of not having your face amongst us, or of seeing it wan and pale.'

'It's getting an old face, Gerald.'

'Not a bit of it,' he interrupted fondly; 'it's as pretty a face still as either of your pretty daughters can boast. Good night, dear mother.'

Gerald loved his mother; but he felt, as he walked away along the corridor and down stairs, that those were not the attempts at consolation which would have best become him to offer to his widowed mother in these early days of her bereavement; but he also felt the words

and sentiments suited the hearer, if they did not the occasion.

The sisters had retired to their rooms, happier now Gerald was come; and the two young men sat together in Rupert's room late into the night, talking over late events and future prospects.

'When does my mother go down to the Hall, Rupert?'

'To-morrow or the next day, I hope; but nothing has been decidedly settled as yet.'

'I should advise her—in a few months, that is—to look out for a nice box somewhere near Warmingston, so as to be close to you and Georgie when she's out of town; indeed I suppose, as you'll be here, and Gussie will have a town house too, that my mother won't think it worth her while to have any fixed residence in London; she can always be with one of you. You'll stand for Warmingston of course? It's a shame to bother you about money matters, with such an expensive affair as an election before you, but I hope you'll arrange that exchange business for me, Rupert.'

'My mother hasn't told you anything about the disposal of the property then, Gerald?'

'No; what is there to tell?'

Rupert had risen and now stood leaning one shoulder against the mantelpiece, looking down into the handsome animated face of his brother.

'Only that every penny is left to her; that Warmingston is hers, this house hers; and that if Georgie Clifford marries me now, I can give her no position. I am—we all are—dependent on my mother.'

'By George, it's intolerable!' exclaimed the younger brother, starting to his feet; 'I could have stood it for myself—indeed I, as a younger son, always anticipated being dependent on somebody or other—but for you, Rupert! Oh, my mother must see at once—it must be represented to her—that this cannot be. If you are not put in possession of your rights, it will be a positive injustice. I am convinced my mother will see things in a proper light.'

'You surely know her well enough to be convinced that, eager as she is always to please us, it must be in her own way.'

Gerald's brow grew very dark. 'My poor father has made a great mistake, Rupert; but it is a mistake that her motherly and even womanly feelings will induce her at once to rectify. Are the girls' fortunes assured to them, or specified? They were to have thirty thousand: I hope they are, for Tollemache is not a fellow to marry on an uncertainty, or wait on the pleasure of any mother-in-law; and Gussie is very fond of him.'

'No, there's nothing settled on them. I've thought of Gussie too; she's too proud to go to Tollemache under other circumstances than he—and she too—believed to exist when he proposed to her. It's an unfortunate affair altogether.'

'It's the weakest thing my father ever did in his life,' said the young officer, who had been half an hour before heartful of love and reverence for both parents. 'My mother is no more fit to have an atom of power in her hands than that poodle down there' (stirring up as he spoke a curled white French gentleman with pink skin), 'it was weak, very weak, of my father.'

'The only satisfactory thing is,' said Rupert, 'that at all events my mother is far too devoted a mother—has been far too loving and loved a wife, ever to contemplate matrimony again.'

'Heavens! yes!' replied Gerald sternly; 'I never once thought of disgrace in connection with her.' Grown-up sons—and daughters too—are generally inclined to take a very harsh view of their mothers marrying again.

'No, no, Rupert; not so bad as that; we need not fear her ever disgracing herself; and in spite of the doubt you have expressed, I do firmly hope that when it's put before her in a proper light, she will place you in your right position without the least reservation. I understand now why she said just now that I should be a Guardsman if I liked; but till you are all right, old fellow, I shall accept nothing at her hands.'

And then the two brothers shook hands heartily and separated.

'Will Frank go down to Warmingston with us, Gussie, or follow us in a week or two do you think?"

'I don't know, Floy; I have no idea.'

The question was asked and answered as the two girls were parting in their mutual dressing-room, from which the doors of their sleeping-apartments opened at opposite sides.

'Poor Frank!' pursued Florence, meditatively; 'in addition to everything else there's his disappointment, for I suppose you won't be married for some time, Gussie.'

'Not for a year, certainly,' replied Miss Knightly in a decided tone; 'probably longer.'

They went, all of them, to Warmingston in a few days, and time went on, and Rupert was still the head of the house in name alone; and still Gerald refused to have that little affair of the exchange arranged, though his affectionate mother was constantly offering him the money. The days lengthened themselves into weeks and months; the season had come round again, and under the head of fashionable arrivals in the 'Morning Post,' might be read the names of 'Mrs. and the Misses Knightly, at No —, Piccadilly.'

(To be continued.)

SONG.

I.

TELL me you love me; I know it full well,
Though of truths so delightful one can't be too sure,
Doubts will arise that a breath may dispel,
Fears that alone such avowals can cure.
When were those syllables murmured in vain?
Tell me you love me again and again.

II.

Tell me you love me, though often before
You have told me the tale I now bid you repeat;
Outpourings like these from the lips we adore
In their fond iteration grow daily more sweet;
Why from the tender confession refrain?
Tell me you love me again and again.

III.

Tell me you love me, though bent to deceive,
Such delusion were dearer than every-day truth.
We in time learn to look on and cherish as sooth.
Repeat those sweet words, though their fondness you feign,
And tell me you love me again and again.

IV.

Tell me you love me; no sceptic am I,
Who would question the faith of the heart of his choice;
When did Falsehood look forth from so truthful an eye,
Or Deception assume less untrustful a voice?
'Twere treason to doubt thee, so welcome my chain;
But tell me you love me again and again.

CUPID, AUCTIONEER!

THE indispensable child and inevitable Young Pickle, out of the mythology—the little heathen person with the wings, which he keeps covered up under his jacket when he goes into the society of stern purists—is depicted in the accompanying illustration in one of his most agreeable exercises. The carte de visite of Cupid, Auctioneer! Ordinarily, I believe, he prefers this sort of airy, playful no-dress—which would be positively luxurious if only sanctioned by the decencies, or the canons of a sultry climate. And the good-natured indulgence of society has always tolerated a certain latitude of apparel with respect to this amusing child. He may indulge those little odd notions of his with impunity; which, after all, must be set down to the injudicious training of his beautiful mother (a famous toast); and has the entrée to our drawing-rooms and public places, in that particular costume, which, it is to be suspected, he relishes most, —without remark or rebuke

I say nothing of the established tricks of this notorious *enfant terrible* —of his putting peas into the hearts of elderly people; of his slyly setting what is behind the left side of their waistcoats on fire; of his discharging tiny arrows from that little pea-shooter of his, and leaving us sore for months after. These we have learnt to bear with so long that no one dreams of protest; especially as *it* is well known that there is no nurse to take young Master Troublesome to his nursery. But this is only one side of his humours. He is a child of tremendous precocity for his years, and looks shrewdly to business. And he does a very brisk business indeed—being a sort of polite Commission Agent, and elegant but unlicensed auctioneer —a juvenile George Robins, of pronounced heathen tendencies—a sort of undraped little deputy of a celestial Christie and Manson, who have their original sale-rooms up in Olympus. An inimitable miniature auctioneer, ladies and gentlemen! Full of sweet invitations to bid, fascinating tricks, quips, cranks, wit, repartee, jokes; so that reluctant spectators must perforce bid. But they do not always buy, unhappily. At these crowded sale-rooms where Love is 'Auctioneer and Valuator,' the bidding—fast and frantic as it may have been—does not end always in Sales. Often the lot is—in technical phrase—bought in, often withdrawn.

The refined euphuism of society, and nicely-strung nerves of social life, do not tolerate that coarse and brutal calling of a spade, a spade. Your blunt and truthful nomenclator is properly hustled from the fashionable ring. The inquirer, who innocently begs to be directed to these popular Marts, need not be shocked to be told that there are no fixed times or places. Business is done everywhere, and at all hours; but mainly in the hotbeds and thoroughfares of society It thrives and flourishes most in a hot wax-light atmosphere.

Nothing can be pleasanter than what may be called the theatricals of life. Most delightful that fairy jumble of lights, music, gymnastics, flowers, tulle, gold and silver net, ice, champagne, galantine, lobster salad, flirting, and white ties, which go to make up a ball So with that dream of exquisite bonnets and bright days, which form the epic of a flower-show; so with the (incorporate) buckram—the starch, temporarily endued with a languid life and motion—and the solemn baked meats which do so coldly furnish forth the table at state dinners. So with that glorified cell at Covent Garden, somewhat strict and painful to the lower limbs through lack of room, yet a very chamber of enchantment for the seraphic music that floats upwards from the Italian throats below. So with Decomposition Row, where the equipages trundle round and round, and the gallants prance it on their steeds; so with the domestic soirée; so with the file of pianoforte-men, and singing women at one guinea per hour; so with the grand Isthmian Derby games that come, like Christmas, but once a year. All these delights



— this pantomimic action — this dressing and *rougeing* for the masquerade of social life; this singing and dancing aboard the galley of Paphos, 'with Youth at the prow, and Pleasure at the helm;' this scattering of moneys in a *pot pourri* of flowers, lace, ribbons, lobster salad, white ties, and general promiscuous gimcrackery—what does it point to? Ah! there is a deep method in this delightful insanity. In the very thick of the saturnalia there is a serious sober purpose on foot. Call a spade a spade, and let us say out loudly that it is *business*.

To little Harry and Jack, taken to the pantomime at Christmas, the lovely fairy Gloriana (she who transforms the personages by the agency of appropriate rhymes) appears truly celestial, and a sort of divine emanation. How would the little eyes of Master Harry and Jack distend could they be made to believe (for more telling would not suffice) that the lovely fairy Gloriana, and her heavenly sisters, live lives of the most terrible, agricultural pack-horse drudgery!—that under that varnish of spangles, paint, flowers, and insufficient tulle, is a stern, fierce, undercurrent of business! The lovely Gloriana puts on the spangles and that enchanted baby's frock of tulle for thirty shillings a week. For that paltry sum she is content to quit the society of the Immortals. So with the theatricals of ball-room life. Business underlies that surface too; and we smile and smirk upon one another, and ignore politely that ugly purpose that has brought us to the show, and step upon the flowers as if there was no pitfall underneath. Ah! pretty Miss Magenta, who are now being taken to your first festival, —a rosy débutante! Does your little innocence deem all these costly decorations—these lights, flowers, banqueting, and, above all, Madame Hortense's little bills—to be ministering to your pure amusement? You will find what this means later. As your brother Charley was called to the Bar only yesterday, and Frederick recently passed at Sandhurst, so surely have you been this night introduced to *your* profession. We may be pretty sure grumbling old Paterfamilias would never splutter his guineas so cheerfully in what he calls tomfoolery unless he had some suspicion of this wholesome truth.

So that on the night of Lady Twinpecker's grand rout — when the balcony, taken in by the agency of striped canvas, and illuminated from within seems like a huge lantern; and when the sounds of the cheerful horn and loud bassoon are winding their plaintive valse-measure out into the street—and carriages are setting down their ornamented freight, we who have been standing on the steps or in the hall, watching the show, have, in the early portion of the evening, seen arrive our young friend out of the mythology, dressed in his favourite evening dress. He, too, has come with the rest for business; and a follower, of suitable proportions, carries in on his shoulders, much after the manner of a Punch's show, a kind of portable rostrum which he sets up in a conspicuous position on the waxed floor. His function is as clearly established as that of the loud bassoon or melodious horn. Both are indispensable to the entertainment. The attentive host orders his supper, orders his music, his lights, his flowers, and his little mythological auctioneer.

While loud bassoon and melodious horn wind out their sad waltz, and dancers scurry round tumultuously, we see our child (with the wings) busy at his trade, perched high in a spectral rostrum—taking the bids. Though loud the bassoon, though cheerful the horn, though noisy the patter of many twinkling feet, still the bidders' tones reach him with distinctness—still, which is yet more marvellous, bidders hear *him*, and follow the stroke of his little hammer anxiously. Captain Heavyman, panting through his *Cavish* dance, and much frustrated by exertion, still looks towards the amatory auctioneer; and the lovely Miss Bandoline, his partner, whose whole energies would seem absorbed in that lively measure and its attendant exertion, still turns her ear warily from any quarter of the room towards the little winged official, and

listens for the tap of his tiny leprechaun's hammer. And old Lady Hecate Mumbo—shrewd, fashionable, far-seeing witch of society—crooning in her corner while her child is away with Captain Heavyman, takes silent note of what likely bidders may have entered in the interval. It is all business—good, serious, honest work. Every one puts his or her hand to the fashionable plough, only we are too polite to acknowledge it to one another.

Yet our little mythological Robins does not always 'effect sales.' Of these brisk business nights, what crowds of active bidders—what soft speeches—hints in the language of flowers and fans—flirtings—and yet, unhappily, how few buyers! Yet in the end they are not wholly unprofitable. It is found to be a law of such sales that a bidder, by dint of frequent and assiduous bidding, grows at last into a buyer; and there comes round a day when a pretty lot is 'knocked down' to him. So business proceeds.

STANDARDS OF POLITENESS.

FEW Englishmen thoroughly know the French language—fewer still, I imagine, thoroughly know the French character. It is a tradition amongst us that the French are very polite and very false.

'They certainly are uncommonly civil,' says the brisk friend with whom I began this colloquy, a good-humoured, 'managing' English matron, who has just returned from a visit to the city on the Seine, 'but I wouldn't give that for their sincerity'—('that' being an unknown quantity).

'I think you are mistaken in both these views, my dear madam. The French are, I honestly believe, exceedingly discourteous, and exceedingly sincere.'

'Oh, of course every one is mistaken now-a-days, about everybody and everything. Richard III., I have been told lately, was a most humane personage. Henry VIII. would never have had six wives had he not been a paragon amongst husbands. Wallace was a monster of cruelty; and, in short, all moral negroes have been whitewashed, and all moral white men painted black. But I have my opinion still,' continues the lady; 'and all I know about French politeness is, to my mind, quite satisfactory. Many a time have I laughed at French people attempting to speak English, with their "Veal you give you se pain of you sit, madame?" as a shopman said to me, the other day, in a magazine of novelties, a draper's shop, which I was induced to enter upon the strength of the announcement, "English spoken here," ostentatiously paraded in the windows. Why, I laughed at the man outright—I couldn't help it,' adds the speaker, laughing at the remembrance.

'Just so,' I reply.

'Well, sir,' resumes my English friend, 'a Frenchman would never have laughed at my broken French, which is every whit as atrocious.'

'Just so,' I remark again.

'What is the good of your saying "Just so?" You can't contradict me, you know; and I maintain that they are a polite nation. But—as to their friendship—nonsense! Why, I had an introduction to a French countess—Madame de C—— is her name, a Faubourg St. Germain countess—as good as an English countess anywhere. Well, she received me with open arms, kissed me on both cheeks, called me her bonne Madame B——, professed herself charmed, enchanted—I can't tell you what—at making my acquaintance; showed me all kinds of civilities and politenesses, got lodgings for me, took me to the Opera,—and at the end of a few weeks, when I was settling down comfortably, and really getting on very pleasantly, notwithstanding my French, and actually thought, for the sake of the girls, you know, that I would winter in Paris, lo and behold, my countess became almost distant and cool, very polite, and all that kind of thing; but when I called on her, she couldn't see me—it was

not her day—Madame ne reçoit pas aujourd'hui; and actually, when she returned my visit, as I supposed, by finding her card at my house—I learnt that she had sent it by her footman. I've no patience with such professions!'

'Just so,' I say again, with a smile.

Mrs. B—— is so indignant with me for saying 'Just so' a third time, that she merely utters an interjection of extreme impatience, and permits me to speak.

'My dear madam,' I begin, 'I fully believe all you say. I am sure you have stated the facts which have come under your knowledge and experience quite correctly; but I think you misunderstand French manners and French usages altogether.' Mrs. B——'s shoulders rise and fall. 'I am very much of opinion, too, that we may not quite understand one another as to what we mean by politeness and sincerity; but I have lived a great deal in France, and mixed very much amongst French people. I have tested their politeness, and found it exceedingly shallow; I have tested their friendship, and found it exceedingly deep.'

'Oh, of course—just so. Pray go on,' remarks my friend, fanning herself.

'Politeness, to be valuable, must be courtesy—a feeling of consideration for others, and of forgetfulness of self. When you talk in broken, fragmentary French to a Frenchman, you are at his mercy, so to speak: his object at once is to show himself gallant, and both to pity and assist you as much as he can. You ask for "pang" at dinner, and you are agreeably told that it is "pain" you mean, and "pain" you get accordingly, with a bow and a respectful smile to boot. You have shown that you don't know French—it is your misfortune, not your fault, pauvre dame! Now a Frenchman, and, above all, a Parisian, does not look upon the French language as being one of many, any more than he looks upon Paris as being a city amongst many—it is "la grand'ville;" nor upon France as being a nation—it is "la grande nation" (with a great many r's in grande). When he says, La France, un Français (immense roulade of r's), he means—that—that what he means is obvious, and requires no explanation. Qui dit Paris dit la France, and qui dit la France, dit —— well, l'Europe not to say Le monde. French, then, in the eyes of a Frenchman, is the language of the civilized world. For Frenchmen to learn English or German may be an odious obligation; but for English or German people to learn French is clearly a duty, and should be looked upon as a pleasurable privilege. You do not know the French tongue. Then, not only has your education been grossly neglected in this respect, but you are positively uneducated; you are a person to be pitied, not because it puts you to present general inconvenience—for are not the politest people in the world ready to come to your assistance?—but because, *per se*, French is an essential item in education. The Frenchman does not consider his ignorance of your language and your ignorance of his as parallel cases. It may be all very well to know English—c'est très-curieux l'Anglais—but to know French is indispensable. He will not consider that you in London would have the same advantage over him which he has over you in Paris. Ce n'est pas la même chose. Paris is the city of the universe, and French is its language.

'In the matter of arrogant conceit, no human being, in my opinion, beats a Frenchman, unless perchance a Chinese. Hence a French shopman pities you from behind his counter, and envisages you as he would a barbarian. You are "une pauvre insulaire,"—that is, an insulary, my dear madam—and an insulary and a barbarian are convertible terms, France not being an island. Your Frenchman is thinking more of displaying his knowledge of the French tongue in contrast to your ignorance of the same, than of rendering you a service — that you should ask for "ganze" instead of des gants, and for "dongtelze" instead of des dentelles, is simply monstrous — and you are snubbed accordingly, with a good many bows and smiles, and all that sort of thing, but snubbed nevertheless.

The Frenchman is proud of being such, and of speaking his own vernacular, forgetting that it may be all he knows, and that did he not speak French he would probably be dumb. And I am not sure that he does not consider being a Frenchman, even though he were dumb, preferable to being of any other nation—and speaking. The more you allow your ignorance to be perceived—the more your helplessness and insufficiency are apparent—the more plausible, officious, fussy, and polite is your gentleman behind the counter, your coachman, your valet, your waiter at the hotel, your porter at the railway station. If with merely a prononcé English accent you are yet sufficiently "up" in words and idioms to make yourself well understood without having to throw yourself upon any one's mercy, you are looked upon with supreme contempt. You are not a Frenchman and yet you do not require any assistance, you actually get along without an interpreter—you speak French like a Spanish cow—"Comme une vache Espagnole, quoi!" and you are not ashamed of yourself to excoriate (écorcher) the language without reddening (sans rougir)—and then, my dear madam, how they fleece you in those polite French shops, especially when "English is spoken here!" (Mrs. B—— admits that things are quite as dear in Paris as they are in London, even when duty and freight have been added to the original price.) 'In short, agree with them in everything; or, when you do not agree, only let it appear that it is want of taste on your part, that your judgment and your feelings, and your habits and prejudices, being foreign, and English, and insulary, are to blame, and you will be instantly flooded with polite attentions.

'The deity of France has touched your heart; you are made so much of, so caressed, complimented, and fêted, that in a state of utter bewilderment you are fain to escape at any price and to hide your diminished head away from the compassionate, patronizing égards and petits soins of the politest nation in the world.

'Politeness, even when purely superficial, is pleasant enough in its way. It greases the wheels of the social machine, macadamizes the high road of society, and prevents a great deal of unnecessary noise. But this sort of politeness must be unmeaning and harmless. It need never be false, because every one should know and feel that the politeness given and received is just politeness and nothing more. You are quite aware that your carriage is well lined and stuffed, well hung, that the wheels are greased, and that the road is level, gravelled, or, peradventure, paved with wood; you know all these accidents to be artificial, and there is no deception and no treachery in them. Let us have as much of that kind of politeness as is absolutely necessary; let it go hand in hand with the oft-repeated asseveration at the bottom of so many letters wherein you sign yourself "the obedient servant" of a person whom you have not the remotest idea of obeying or of serving; and because you the writer and Smith the reader of the epistle know that obedient servant is merely grease, no one is deceived, no one offended, and the train of social life goes on smoothly and without a "smutre." But as faggots are of two kinds, "Il y a fagots et fagots," so is politeness. There is a kind of politeness which is like the smoothest, softest, greenest, velvetest turf imaginable—and yet harbours a snake beneath—which is not agreeable. French politeness is of this kind more than of any other. The more they hate and dislike and despise you, the more smooth and oily they become; and if, in a moment of simplicity, you presume upon this courtesy to differ from that polished nation about anything, and to do so firmly, you are treading too heavily upon the velvet turf. Up darts the snake and out comes the venom—and a Frenchman who has once thrown off the mask of la politesse française is the most thoroughly coarse, vulgar, abusive individual you can conceive. A Frenchman is taught that when he says rude things he must say them politely. An Englishman thinks it

ungentlemanly to say rude things at all, and when, if he spoke his mind, he must necessarily say unpalatable truths, if possible he cuts the Gordian knot by saying nothing. Hence an English gentleman, however much he may be angered, and however passionate he may be by nature, is seldom if ever vulgar or abusive—there is nothing he shrinks from more completely than the charge of ungentlemanly conduct. The Frenchman, then, may be polite, which is of the surface—the less polished Englishman will be gentlemanly, which is of the heart The former strips himself of his manners when provoked, and becomes vulgarly abusive; the latter bites his lips when angered, and is silent. The former is brought up not to act or to speak discourteously; the latter is taught not to indulge in discourteous feelings. The former regulates his words; the latter his thoughts—and the result is obvious Let a Frenchman and an Englishman be mutually introduced to each other: a looker-on may pronounce the former to be more polite, and smiling, and courteous in his manner—and this may last through an hour's conversation, wherein the Frenchman takes the lead, and has it all his own way. But let them differ thoroughly upon any given topic—and let the Englishman who has yielded all manner of unimportant points be firmly resolved to keep his own opinion on this, and then look at them: the former is violent, vulgar, mean; the latter calm, gentlemanly, and dignified. Of course, my dear madam, I speak generally — of course there are exceptions; and I am sorry to say that while the French pride themselves on their politeness, we often encounter English people who pride themselves upon what they are pleased to call their honest, plain, straightforward way of dealing—to a very alarming extent. This is the kind of thing which in certain slang is called being faithful. These are the people who carry a venomous sting about with them, who own that they do carry it, and are proud of it, and who are ever ready to dart at you on the slightest provocation, and, indeed, without any provocation at all. They up and speak—they give you a bit of their mind, they attack you and—they are faithful. They call this a duty, and the only bit of falseness about it is when they call it a painful duty, whereas, in point of fact it is a positive pleasure. I remember when, years ago, I had just returned from France, where, as you know, I spent a very large proportion of my boyish and youthful days, I was staying at a house where amongst other guests were two Spaniards, who, like myself, had lived a good deal in Paris. A certain elderly lady, a member of the family whose guests we were, belonged to the class of English spinsters who are traditionally supposed to have been soured by what is called a "disappointment" in early life. Not one of those "angels of the household" whom time touches with a gentle hand—whose sad experience has mellowed life and hallowed its actions, but one of those whose mission—self-imposed—seems to be that of making every one uncomfortable.

'Now, both the young Spaniards and I were, naturally enough, much given to the "mille petits soins" which are considered inseparable from the "bonnes manières d'un jeune homme comme il faut." But politeness and even common courtesy were things with which Miss Blunt had no sympathy in theory or in practice. She did not care to receive, and never troubled to bestow it The conversation one evening had turned upon works of marqueterie and papier-mâché, in which the French excel us greatly. One of the Spaniards volunteered to show us a small box, a perfect little marvel of inlaid work, and as smooth and brilliant as glass. It was passed from hand to hand, and greatly admired and praised by all, save Miss Blunt, who, when it was shown to her, would scarcely look at it, and relieved herself of the following sentiment: "Oh! I dare say it's all very well; but for my part I don't see much in it, and never had any admiration for French polish either in men or boxes." This was said so

loudly—with so much meaning, that there ensued "a horrid pause," and every one was disconcerted—always excepting Miss Blunt, who worked away at her knitting spitefully. Presently, however, some one observed, "Well, at all events, French politeness is preferable any day to English rudeness;" and then the tables were turned, and every one felt relieved—still excepting Miss Blunt, who presently disappeared, and who was not seen again until the next morning at breakfast. I must confess that even now I cannot recal the scene without a degree of satisfaction at this timely application of the "lex talionis."

'On some after-occasion I remember asking Miss Blunt, àpropos of something or other, if she had been much in France. With a glance intended to be withering, she remarked that she should think not; that she had never been, and that nothing should ever induce her to go. "But you understand the language?" I opined meekly. Miss Blunt did not know, and did not want to know the language; in fact, she admitted that she hated everything foreign in general, France, its language and its people, in particular. Such was Miss Blunt; whenever Miss Blunt was in society, society went wrong, and there was always a creaking wheel under Miss Blunt's chair, and nothing could induce her to grease that wheel. There are many Misses Blunt in England, and she has male relations. Now there are very few, if any, of the Blunt genus in France, as far as my own personal experience goes. There are French ladies, doubtless, whose horror of England and the English is every whit as great, but they never obtrude their feelings unnecessarily; and when there may be a kind of pretext for saying a rude thing, they do it quietly. They chloroform their victims, as it were, and maim them tenderly. It has been well said, "More flies are caught with treacle than with vinegar." French fly-traps are usually set with treacle. French politeness is more or less a fly-trap. Now I would fain see our English manners improved by the introduction of various articles in the French code; and the honest, truthful character of our countrymen dressed and polished, so that its sterling value may be enhanced by a smooth and comely surface. It is a question of rough or polished granite.'

'Well!' observes my friend, 'there may be a great deal of truth in all you have said about French people not being really as polite as they seem; but you undertook to prove that they were not insincere. Now explain away, if you can, the conduct of my French countess.'

'Just so. The question is simply this: Are the French insincere and deliberately false in their professions of regard and admiration, and in their declarations of *amitié*. I do not say friendship, because a friend, and un ami, friendship and amitié—if you weigh the words in the scales, and with the weights of the nations where those words are respectively used, you will find that they are not convertible terms. "Avoir de l'amitié pour quelqu'un," means little more than "to have a kindly feeling, a sort of liking for a person." And we surely mean something much deeper than this when we speak of having a friendship for a person. Politeness in France is an art, a science, a study—and is studied, learned, and taught accordingly. Before you accuse people of insincerity in their professions, you should analyze those professions, you should endeavour to ascertain what they are *intended* to mean. It must be remembered that when young Monsieur de Bon-Ton, and young Mademoiselle de l'Elégance, are initiated into the mysteries of the freemasonry of politeness, they are perfectly aware that Mademoiselle des Belles-Mamères over the way, and Monsieur des Petits-soins next door, are going through the very same exercises, so that when they meet and proceed to interchange the outward symbols of profound veneration, admiration, gratification, and delight, together with mellifluous assurances of deep affection, there is practically no deception, for no deception is intended, and no one is deceived. Each thinks the other simply and conventionally polite, and that is all. When Ma-

dame de la Mode wears gigot sleeves and steel hoops, Madame du Follet, who also wears gigot sleeves and steel hoops, does not imagine Madame de la Mode to have been born into the world with arms in the shape of a leg of mutton, nor with a metallic decoration four feet in diameter! Each sees that the other is in the fashion of the day, and neither of the ladies is deceived.

'When, therefore, Mrs. Candid (née Blunt, peradventure) visits Paris, surely it is too much to expect that "ces dames" will alter their manners to accommodate English prejudices, any more than to expect (which even the Misses Blunt do not) that the French will alter their fashions to suit English fancies When Madame la Marquise "De ce-qu'il-y-a-de-plus-distingué" meets one of the Misses Blunt "une jeune Anglaise aux cheveux blonds en tire-bouchons," and declares that she, the marchioness, is ravished to have this pleasure; that she was just thinking of her, and hoping she might have the happiness of meeting her, the marchioness means no more than does Lady Belgravia when she meets a Miss Blunt in the Park, and putting up her eye-glass, says, with supercilious nonchalance, "D'do," and passes on. Fancy this Miss Blunt going home and indulging in a diatribe against the depravity and hollowness of the world, because Lady Belgravia, asking her this morning how she did ("D'do," aforesaid), did not even wait for an answer The fact is that Madame "De ce-qu'il-y-a-de-plus-distingué" in the Tuileries, and Lady Belgravia in Hyde Park, mean precisely the same thing. They acknowledge Miss Blunt—the Englishwoman condenses her sentiments on the subject into "D'do," the Frenchwoman uses a periphrasis and makes a speech. "But how," asks my friend, "are we poor Englishwomen to know all this?" You do not know it, and cannot know it but by living long enough amongst the people to find it out by experience. Therefore not knowing their manners and customs, you are wrong in measuring a French phrase by the standard of an English one. No Englishwoman would dream of making the French marchioness's speech unless she meant it; and no Frenchwoman would be content with saying briefly "Bon jour," even to her washerwoman. The French "noblesse" are quite as good and quite as proud as the English nobility, but the French think our aristocracy infinitely more proud; and it would be just as unreasonable in them to accuse Lady Belgravia's "D'do," of being a piece of impertinence, as it is in us to call Madame la Marquise de . . . . . a false hypocritical woman When an English person visits France for the first time, it should be with the unqualified impression that the moral, social, religious, civil, and political manners and customs of the country are as imperfectly understood by English people generally as the French language itself; and one should go to learn and not to judge. That French friendships are as true and as sincere, and as unselfish as our own, I am quite prepared to prove, and should Mrs. B—— and I meet again in "London Society," I hope to do so to her satisfaction.'

F. W. B. B.

THE STORY OF AN OLD ENGLISH MANSION.

Penshurst (Kent)—The Home of the Sidneys.

In Two Chapters.—Chapter II.

The founder of Penshurst, or, at least, the earliest personage of note connected with it, was one Sir Stephen de Pencester, *temp.* Edward I. His mutilated effigy is preserved in the village church. Afterwards, it was in the hands of the Devereuxs—one of whom, Sir John, obtained a license from Richard II. to crenellate and embattle the Place; and from their successors, the De Bohuns, it passed to the great Duke of Bedford, the regent, and to Humphrey, the 'good duke' of Gloucester. It came into the Sidney family in the sixth year of Edward VI.; that monarch having bestowed the mansion and estate upon his faithful councillor, Sir William Sidney, one of the illustrious knights of Flodden Field. His son, Sir Henry, thrice Lord Deputy of Ireland, married Mary, the heiress of that John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, whose ill-regulated ambition resulted in the ruin of himself, his weak son, Lord Guildford, and Lady Jane Grey. Their issue was: the great hero, Sir Philip, of whom I have already spoken—Sir Robert, afterwards Viscount de l'Isle, and Earl of Leicester—and the noble Mary Sidney, Countess of Pembroke, whose praises were epitomized by Ben Jonson in his exquisite epitaph:—

'Underneath this marble hearse
Lies the subject of all verse—
Sidney's sister, Pembroke's mother.
Death, ere thou hast slain another,
Wise, and fair, and good as she,
Time shall throw a dart at thee.
Marble piles let no man raise
To her name; for after days
Some kind woman born as she,
Reading this, like Niobe,
Shall turn marble, and become
Both her mourner and her tomb.'

This was the lady of whom Dr. Donne said that 'she could converse well on all subjects, from predestination to sleeve silk,' and whom Spenser lauded as

'The gentlest shepherdess that lived that day.'*

The third Earl of Leicester was the father of the Lady Dorothy whom Waller sung of as Saccharissa, and of Algernon Sidney, whose judicial murder is one of the foulest deeds of the foul reign of Charles II. The seventh and last earl was Jocelyn, on whose decease the Sidney estates became the sport of the most complicated litigations, resulting in the disposal of Penshurst to a Mr. Perry, whose daughter and heiress conveyed it by marriage to Sir Bysshe Shelley. His descendant, the cousin of the poet Shelley, assumed the name of Sidney, and on his marriage with Lady Sophia Fitzclarence, one of the daughters of William IV. by Mrs. Jordan, was elevated to the revived viscountcy of De l'Isle. Their son and heir is the present proprietor, an accomplished nobleman, who has zealously devoted himself to the careful restoration of the house and park from the pitiful decay into which they had fallen during years of shameful neglect. Penshurst and Leigh churches are also indebted to his taste and liberality.

The principal fronts of 'the Place' are the northern and western; but the southern, with its many gables, towers, and buttresses, is eminently picturesque. The private rooms are mainly in the western front, and overlook a pleasant lawn which occupies the site of the ancient 'President's Court,' so called because erected by Sir Henry Sidney, Lord President of the Welsh Marches.

* She married Henry Herbert, second Earl of Pembroke, and died at her house in Aldersgate Street, Sept. 25, 1621. Their son was the Mr. William Herbert (afterwards third Earl), to whom, as 'Mr. W. H.,' Shakspeare inscribed his *Sonnets*.

These rooms are admirably fitted up, modern comfort having been skilfully combined with a general quaintness of design and mediævalism of character. Their decorations are chiefly borrowed from the family escutcheons.

This west front is of great length, embattled, and two stories in height. In its central division are placed large triple-arched windows, and between the stories armorial shields. The northern portion is somewhat similar in character, but the south end of the façade has smaller mullioned windows, and is of an earlier date. From each end starts out a wing whose towers are very various in dimensions and design, while the entire façade acquires a curious picturesqueness of aspect from its steep roofs, its quaint chimneys, and the tall gable of the banqueting-hall rising above it. The square-sashed windows, of hideous uniformity of design, which Mr Perry introduced into the ancient walls, are being replaced, throughout the house, with windows of an appropriate antiquity of character. The restoration of the west front is not yet complete.

The southern façade is pictorially irregular, and the court on this side is encircled by stout battlemented walls. Through its old square gate-house you pass out into the ancient Pleasaunce—now shorn of its splendour, and modified into a trim grass lawn—but formerly a blooming and gentle slope which stretched down to the sedgy bank of the rippling Medway.

It is to the northern front, facing the park, that our steps, however, must now be directed. With the exception of the gate-house it has been recently rebuilt, and now exhibits a very noble range of buildings, whose projections and turrets and twisted chimneys break up the roof-line in a bold and original manner, and produce a variety of effects of light and shade singularly attractive to the artist-eye. We enter here by the old gateway-tower, pausing to decipher the inscribed tablet fixed above the entrance—

'The most religious and renowned Prince Edward the Sixth Kinge of England Fraunce and Ireland gave this house of Penecester with the mannors lands and appurtenances ther unto belonginge unto his trustye and wel-beloved servant Syr William Sydny Knight Banneret servinge hym from the tyme of his birth unto his coronation in the offices of Chamberlayne and Stuarde of his houshold in commemoration of which most worthie and famous Kinge Sir Henrie Sydny Knight of the Most Noble Order of the Garter Lord President of the Council established in the Marches of Wales, sonne and heyre of the afore named Syr William caused this tower to be buylded and that 'most excellent Princes armes to be erected Anno Domini 1585.'

We pass into the first court, the most interesting architectural combination at Penshurst, and after a glance at its variety of outline, enter the banqueting-hall—a lofty, red-roofed, high-gabled building, erected by Sir John Devereux, about 1345 to 1350. The interior, 54 ft by 40, is one of the finest of its kind in England, and has so true a mediæval air about it, that the spectator, for the nonce, feels transformed into 'an old courtier of the queen's;' and his lips instinctively mutter 'Gramercy,' and 'By my haldame,' while his limbs assume the proportions suitable for hose, doublets, and trunks. In very truth, the hall has a noble, baronial character. At the west end a raised dais—consecrated to the lord and lady of the house, and their noblest guests,—

'And at the feaste sitteth he and she,
With other worthy folk upon the deis,'
(CHAUCER),—

projects about 16 ft. into the room; and in the centre, within an octagonal stone-bound area, stands a massive brand-iron or fire-dog, some 4 ft. 6 in. in width. The outer sides of the two uprights are marked with the double broad arrow of the Sidney escutcheon.

The timbered roof is lofty, open, and of good design; and the tracery of the windows sufficiently curious. The large window is partially concealed by the music gallery, and its rude old wainscot screen. The oaken tables, whereat kings and princes, and lords and poets, have in their time feasted and made merry, are ranged on either side of the hall.

Of these, the lord's table, 6 yds. long by 1 yd. wide, is superior in construction to the substantial boards which were wont to 'groan' under the burthen of the retainers' dishes. Numerous suits of armour decorate the walls; the remains of a large and splendid collection which (with a portion of the Sidney papers) long ago found its way, through some mysterious agency, to the galleries of London virtuosos, and the stores of Wardour Street dealers. Here, too, are rusty matchlocks, and mouldering breastplates, and a few tarnished casques—one of which was worn (it is said) by the hero of Zutphen. Alas, for the age of chivalry!

> 'The good knights are dust,
> Their swords are rust,
> Their souls are with the saints, I trust.'
> COLERIDGE.

From each side of the dais ascends a flight of two stairs—one to the old apartments, the other to the balcony whence the lord of the hall could look down upon the revellers below, and check them if they waxed too boisterous. A door on the right hand leads to the arched and vaulted cellar, a building apparently of the twelfth century; while through the screen are gained the entrances to the kitchen and buttery, and the passage which connects the first and second (or inner) courts.

Ascending the two stairs left of the dais we pass into the main suite of apartments, six in number, viz.: the hall-room, the pages' room, Queen Elizabeth's room, the tapestry-room, the picture-closet, and the gallery. All these chambers are undergoing a thorough restoration, and I found them, on a recent visit, in 'most admired disorder.' They are spacious and well proportioned, but very plain and unadorned in character. Not so much interesting in themselves as in the treasures of which they are the usual receptacles. But of these treasures I must, alas! be content to discourse in very desultory fashion, and, my limits compel it, with the utmost possible brevity. Many of the paintings having suffered from damp and neglect are, at present, in London, undergoing a careful reparation, and it is impossible to indicate to my readers the arrangement they may hereafter assume. It must, then, be understood that I speak of them in the order in which they were formerly disposed.

The hall-room retains much of the furniture and fittings with which it was decorated on the occasion of Queen Elizabeth's visit to Penshurst and its then lord, Sir Henry Sidney. Its two curious glass chandeliers, surmounted with the crown royal, are reputed to have been the queen's gift to her host, and the first made in England. The portraits here are of little merit; but there are two good sketches of Lord and Lady Fitzclarence (William IV.'s children by Mrs Jordan); four frescoes, somewhat faint in colour, but luxuriating in bold nudity of figure, by Vanderbrecht—The Triumph of Cupid, Europa and the Bull, Cupid trying his Bow, and Venus rising from the Sea, columns of giallo and verde-antique; ancient cinerary urns; old tables of marble mosaic, and curiously inlaid cabinets, mostly brought from Italy by the late Mr Perry. The attendant also points out to you a rude, rough picture as the handiwork of no less significant a personage than Queen Elizabeth's (and sweet Amy Robsart's) Earl of Leicester.

In the pages' room are 'really four very great curiosities,' writes Horace Walpole,* 'I believe as old portraits as any extant in England. They are, Fitzallen, Archbishop of Canterbury; Humphrey Stafford, first Duke of Buckingham; T. Wentworth, and John Foxle; all four with the dates of their commissions as constables of Queenborough Castle, from whence I suppose they were brought. The last is actually receiving his investiture from Edward III; and Wentworth is in the dress of Richard III's time. They are really not very ill done. There are six more, only heads; and we have found, since we came home, that Penshurst belonged for a time to that [the first] Duke of Buckingham.' Here, too, is a head, by Holbein, of John Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, executed on Tower Hill in 1545; a portrait of Nell

* Horace Walpole's Letters. To Mr. Bentley, August 5, 1752.

Gwynne's son, the young Charles Beauclerk, Duke of St. Albans—a lad about eleven years old, in a fine murrey-coloured doublet and trunks, his knees and shoes very gay with rosettes. The duke was born in Lincoln's Inn Fields in 1670, and died in 1726. Macky says of him: 'He is a gentleman every way *de bon naturel*, well-bred, doth not love business; is well-affected to the constitution of his country [which he might reasonably be, considering all it had done for him] He is of a black complexion, not so tall as the Duke of Northumberland [Charles's son by the famous Lady Castlemaine], yet very like King Charles.' There are also portraits, few of any artistic merit, of the fair and frail Louise de Querouailles, whom Charles II. created Duchess of Portsmouth; Algernon Percy, Earl of Northumberland; Old Parr, who lived to the age of 152, and the learned pundit, Duns Scotus. A relic of some interest is the bridle of the handsome George Villiers, first Duke of Buckingham of that family, and the victim of Felton's knife.

Queen Elizabeth's Room is said to have been furnished by that most haughty of royal virgins, on her visit to Sir Henry Sidney, and its chairs and couches are decked with richly embroidered, but somewhat faded, yellow and crimson damask, supposed to have been wrought by the skilful needles of the queen herself, and her bevy of court ladies. The chairs are tall and capacious, and the draperies imposingly venerable. The portraits here are of special interest. First, we note that of Sir Philip Sidney, taken when he was about twenty-three, and representing him reading, with his staff of office in his hand and his armour near him. He wears a laced doublet of crimson; a ruff and mantle of scarlet velvet depending from his shoulder. The forehead is grave and lofty; the eyes beam with earnest intelligence; both the hair and complexion have a touch of warm colouring—not red, perhaps, but approaching to red—a tint which is observable in many of the Sidney portraits. Altogether, he looks a well-knit personable man, distinguished by a marked air of intellectual superiority. His beloved sister, Mary Countess of Pembroke (an original by Mark Gerrard, engraved in Lodge's Collection), is celebrated by Spenser, as

> 'Urania, sister unto Astrophel,
> In whose brave mind as in a golden coffer
> All heavenly gifts and riches locked are,
> More rich than pearls of Ind, or gold of Ophir,
> And in her sex most wonderful and rare'

Algernon Sidney, born in 1617, was the son of Sir Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester. He is here shown standing by a column, and leaning on a folio, which is significantly labelled 'Libertas.' He wears an embroidered buff coat, and a cuirass of steel. From the accessories—a view of the Tower, and the headsman's axe—we may conjecture that the picture was finished soon after the hero's death. His face has a look of singular sternness and resolution; the lips are firm and decided; the brow is eminently intellectual. Still there is the indication of that impetuosity of temper which would fain accomplish its object at one sudden leap; and gazing upon this grave and moody face, you can understand how the lofty-minded patriot, in his anxiety to rid England of a profligate king and licentious court, could stoop to accept a bribe of French gold. Well, too, may you understand how such a man could breathe, in the face of death, this noble adjuration. 'Lord, defend thine own cause, and defend those who defend it! Stir up such as are faint, direct those that are willing; confirm those that waver; give wisdom and integrity to all; order all things so as may most redound to thine own glory! Grant that I may die glorifying thee for all thy mercies, and that at the last Thou hast permitted me to be singled out as a witness of thy truth, and even by the confession of my opposers for that Old Cause, in which I was from my youth engaged, and for which thou hast often and wonderfully declared thyself.'

There is a good portrait of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, date 1632, by Vandyck, and another, date 1618, by Mark Gerrard, of Queen Elizabeth's Earl. Another noteworthy Vandyck, is Henry Rich, Earl of

Holland; and the visitor should also remark the curious family tableau (date 1596) of Barbara Gamage, Countess of Leicester, and her six children, all in the fullest and stiffest Elizabethan costume. Observe George III. and Queen Charlotte, by Gainsborough; and the admirable Vandyck—Philip, Lord Lisle, as a boy with a hunting-pole on his shoulder, and a dog at his feet, pressing through a leafy copse, where his gaze is suddenly attracted by some object in the neighbouring trees. The countenance sparkles with light and life, and the figure seems full of youthful elasticity. A Sleeping Venus, by Titian; a Charity, by Guido; and various family portraits are among the remaining decorations of this noble apartment.

Passing into the Tapestry Room—so called from its sumptuous Gobelin hangings—we first pause before the fine countenance of Sir Philip Sidney's mother, Lady Mary Dudley. A strange contrast to this chaste and high-born dame is afforded by the meretricious charms of Nell Gwynne, depicted with more than the painter's usual warmth of colouring, and assuredly suggesting the idea of—

'a beauty of Sir Peter Lely,
Whose drapery hints we may admire her freely'

Of much interest are the portrait-pictures of two remarkable sisters, Lady Dorothy Percy, Countess of Leicester, and Lady Lucy Percy, Countess of Carlisle, the daughters of the Duke of Northumberland. It is the glory of the former that she was the mother of Algernon Sidney, who probably derived from her his unquailing resolution and impetuous temper. Of the latter it is enough to say that she inspired the muse of Edmund Waller, Sir Wm. Davenant, Thomas Carew, Voiture, and Sir John Suckling. Carew writes of her with glowing fancies. 'Didst thou not,' he addresses his friend and brother poet—

'Didst thou not find the place inspired?
And flowers, as if they had desired
No other sun, start from their beds,
And for a sight steal out their heads?
Heardst thou not music when she talked?
And didst not find that as she walked
She threw rare perfumes all about?'

Waller's felicitous couplet on the fair lady's bedchamber is generally known—

'They taste of death that do at heaven arrive,
But we this paradise approach alive.'

Bishop Warburton styled her the 'Erinnys of her time;' and she is said to have enslaved, by the charms of her person and the fascination of her address, both the haughty Strafford and the puritan Pym, to the latter of whom she revealed Charles I.'s design upon the liberty of the Five Members. She died in 1660, and was buried at Petworth.

The spectator will remark—Edward VI., by Holbein; a fine Female Head by Giorgione (?); and a Sea Piece, by Tennant. The card-table in the centre of the room is adorned with a piece of embroidery worked it is (said) by Queen Elizabeth.

In the Picture Closet is Titian's Mistress, by himself; a Madonna, by Guido; a Head of a Saint, by Giorgione, and other pictures of various degrees of merit.

To the contents of the Gallery the visitor will find himself constrained to devote considerable attention. There is a remarkably interesting picture of Sir Philip Sidney and his brother Robert, presenting them as two lads of sixteen and thirteen, standing arm-in-arm, and dressed in French grey doublets, laced collars, crimson satin hose, and thin shoes adorned with pink rosettes. Observe, too, the portrait of Lady Mary Dudley, the mother of these two brothers; the fair but 'soulless' face of Lady Dorothy Sidney, Waller's 'Saccharissa,' whose charms, as painted by Vandyck, are hardly such as the poet's enthusiasm would have us imagine them; the same immortal beauty, by Hoskins, taken after her marriage with the Earl of Sunderland; and Sir William Sidney, upon whom Penshurst was bestowed by Edward VI., by Lucas de Heere. Not unworthy of notice is a fine Wouvermanns, one of his favourite subjects—a Halt of Cavaliers—full of grace, spirit, and vigorous drawing; a Madonna and Christ, by Simone Memmi, *circà* 1330-40; an admirable copy of a fine Raffaelle, the

Virgin, Child Jesus, and St. John; N. Poussin, the Bacchanals,

> 'With faces all a-flame in the merry vintage time.'

James Stuart, Duke of Richmond, by Vandyck, and a Procession, by Rubens, very rich in colouring and of a certain luxurious splendour. Of the other paintings, many appear to be copies, but a few of the portraits are interesting.

We have not yet exhausted all the treasures of Penshurst. The Sidney MSS. (many of which, however, have been published) are here preserved, a curious 'Inventorie of Houshold Furniture at Kenilworth Castle,' belonging to Robert Dudley, Earl of Leicester, and dated 1583; and two vols. of the 'Household Book' of the Sidneys, whose contents abundantly prove that at Penshurst was steadily maintained a very bountiful hospitality. In the Inner Court, opposite the door of the banqueting-hall, hangs a large bell on a rude frame of wood. It bears the inscription, in raised letters, 'Robert (Sidney), Earl of Leicester, at Penshurst, 1649.' It was, therefore, erected about the time that the Princess Elizabeth and the young Duke of Gloucester—the hapless children of Charles I.—were here confined in the custody of the Countess of Leicester. That noble lady treated them with a degree of considerate attention displeasing to the Parliament, and in the following year they were removed to Carisbrooke Castle

We have dwelt so much upon Penshurst Place and the Sidneys—and, indeed, the theme is one which it is difficult to exhaust—that our notice of Penshurst Church must necessarily be of the briefest. But, assuredly, our pilgrimage would be incomplete without it. There the Sidneys worshipped, and there lie many of them interred. Often while Sir Philip dreamed of Arcady, and rambled in the beechen shadows of 'the groves of Penshurst,' the mellow chimes of the church bells must have stirred the music of his soul, and awakened the purest and noblest sympathies of his heart; and still the strain floats across the old Pleasaunce and glides adown the stream of the gentle Medway, as in the grave youth of the patriot Algernon. Penshurst Church is a fine old pile, which has recently been restored. It comprises chancel and nave, north and south aisles, north and south chapels, and tower The general character of its architecture is Early English, but some portions are of a later and coarser style. The Sidney (or south chapel) has a fine roof, blazoned with gold and colours, and among its interesting memorials is a beautiful figure of the late Lady De L'Isle, by Theed. The brasses commemorate the two wives of Walter Draynocott, and their seven children, *circà* 1507; Pancole Iden, d. 1564; and Margaret Sidney, the sister of Sir Philip, who died while yet an infant, in 1558. A small brass cross is inscribed to Thomas Bullayen, the brother of Anne Boleyn. Two curious and very old coffin lids of stone—one with a floriated Greek, and the other with a floriated Latin, cross, are let into the inner walls of the tower (which is now thrown open to the body of the church). The effigy of Sir Stephen de Pencester, of the time of Edward I., is much mutilated. Among the Sidney memorials are those of Robert Sidney, Earl of Leicester, d. 1702, and his Countess Elizabeth, d. 1709; Sir William Sidney; and Sir Philip Sidney, the fifth Earl. A brass on the altar steps commemorates the 'Rev. John Bret, God's painfull minister,' and a brass tablet, surmounted by a richly decorated arch, is dedicated to a modern hero—the late Lord Hardinge, who died on the 23rd September, 1856. The Hardinge and De L'Isle pews face one another, from opposite sides of the chancel. South Park the seat of the Hardinges, is about half a mile south of Penshurst.

On quitting the well-kept churchyard, the pilgrim will descend into the village by way of a narrow passage, through a singular old timbered house which would seem to have been coeval with Queen Elizabeth. Remark the quaintly lettered inscription above the archway: 'My Flesh is in Hope.' The village lies on the main road from Eden-

bridge to Tunbridge, and contains some noticeable houses. All around and about it spreads pleasant scenery of the true Kentish flavour.

With yet one other association of interest to the man of letters, I take my leave of this 'sequestered nook.'

From 1633 to 1643, the rectory was held by the 'learned and pious divine,' Dr. Henry Hammond, who during that decade resided in the rectory house. The doctor's sister married Sir John Temple, Master of the Rolls in Ireland, and therefore it came to pass that the doctor's nephew, William Temple, was educated in the quiet parsonage of Penshurst. Familiar to our ears is Sir William Temple's name as that of Swift's patron, an experienced diplomatist, a statesman of clear judgment and liberal views, and an essayist of remarkable elegance. 'Dr. Hammond,' says Lord Macaulay, 'took the side of the king with very conspicuous zeal during the Civil War, and was deprived of his preferment in the church after the victory of the Parliament.' Another of the doctor's nephews, Colonel Robert Hammond, was as zealous a Roundhead as his uncle was an earnest loyalist, and held the captaincy of Carisbrooke Castle during King Charles's imprisonment therein.

And this is the Story of an Old English Mansion and 'its belongings,' as recited in simple fashion by an unlettered chronicler. *Plaudite et valete, O carissimi lectores!*

W. H. D. A.

THE LITERATURE OF THE BLESSED ISLES.

In Two Parts.—Part II.

An interval of more than eighteen centuries separates the era of the 'Republic' and the 'Cyropædia' from the age in which appeared the work which may almost be regarded as eponymous of our series—an interval for which we do not seek to account by a review of even the most sketchy character. Rather like philosophized Rip Van Winkles—upon whom during the trance of ages has fallen no inspiration, save that of the *nil admirari*—we accept without cavil the world to whose changed, sixteenth-century conditions we are bound, on waking, in some outward and practical manner to conform. Any dissatisfaction we may feel with the state of affairs in the Old World, we may indulge in a theoretical refuge offered to us by Sir Thomas More in a more perfect Utopia, which is an insular appanage of the New. The dimensions and physical description of this island; the size, defences, and topographical relations of its capital; the course, affluents, and tidal phenomena of its principal river; the identity of its position, as regards the American, with that of our own country as regards the European continent, sufficiently indicate the fact that Utopia is England in beatific masquerade.

Sir Thomas was the son of Sir John More, and born in 1480. As a youth of prodigious promise he was received into the family of Cardinal Morton, where he remained until he was of age to proceed to Oxford. Studying law, he soon made a figure in his profession, and, by favour of Henry VIII., was raised to the chancellorship, *vice* Wolsey, disgraced. He closed his life upon the scaffold, in 1535, as a martyr for the supremacy of the pope.

More feigns that whilst at Antwerp he had met with a philosophic traveller, named Raphael Hythlodæus, a Portuguese, who in his time had sojourned in England, and been entertained by Cardinal Morton, to whose perfect character and genius he pays a fitting tribute. Raphael complains that the England of his visit was impoverished by wholesale evictions of labourers in husbandry to make room for sheep; that large numbers of idle retainers were kept by the nobles, to the detriment of



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the nation; that the class of thieves —constantly recruited from the peasants who *could* not, and the discharged serving-men who *would* not work—in spite of gibbets, from which a string of twenty often swung in the wind, was on an alarming increase. Raphael contends that theft does not deserve capital punishment, and that government ought to concern itself for the moral education of its subjects rather than for their death. He revolts from the hideous chiaroscuro resulting from the juxtaposition of the pampered luxury of the noble, and the gaunt, greedy misery of the clown.* It is thus that we understand how it is that the two chief objects of More throughout the Utopia are to demonstrate the precedence of agriculture over pasturage, and to establish the sanctity of human life hitherto outraged by an undiscriminating code, which to unequal crimes adjudged a sanguinary equality of punishment. If a third co-ordinate object were to be named, it would be the bringing about of a more equitable division of labour amongst all ranks.

Our mythic friend Hythlodæus proceeds to exhibit to the author the institutions of a happier state which he had visited whilst accompanying Amerigo Vespucci on a voyage to the New World. This happier state is the crescent-shaped island of Utopia, which contains fifty-four cities of equal importance, and of so great similarity with regard to size, general plan, and the laying out of their houses and gardens, that to know one is to be acquainted with all. Amaurot, the legislative capital, is built upon both sides of the river Anider, and is about sixty miles distant from the sea. All over the island are distributed commodious houses for husbandmen, and well fitted with every necessary of agricultural labour. A country family consists of not fewer than forty persons, besides two slaves; a master and mistress superintend the affairs of the family, and over thirty families a magistrate presides. There is a constant rotation of town and country life. Every year twenty members of a family return to their town, after a sojourn of two years in the country, and to supply their places twenty others from the town enter upon a course of rustication. Every man, woman, and child is thus exercised in agriculture, a knowledge of which seems to be to Utopian society what consciousness is to the mental faculties generally. Whatever other trade may be followed—and every handicraft is held in esteem—is a matter of accident or of taste; but some knowledge of agriculture and a proportional experience of it practically is compulsory on every member of the community. When the country people want anything they fetch it from their town without offering any price or compensation, and it is the duty of the magistrates to see that their wants are supplied on these liberal terms. In Amaurot and the other towns, which are beautified by many and well-ordered gardens, the inhabitants observe an analogous rotation of houses, which they shift by lot every ten years. The archives of the capital go back for seventeen hundred and sixty years, and reach to a time when the houses were mere huts, thatched with straw and walled with mud. Now they are structures of three stories, covered with flat roofs, and having windows commodiously *glazed* with oiled linen, which, although perfectly translucent, are yet impervious to the atmosphere.

The magistrate who presides over the affairs of each group of thirty families, and who is by them elected annually to that office, was anciently called a *Syphogrant*, but is now entitled a philarch. Over every ten

* 'Enclosures at that time began to be more frequent, whereby arable land, which could not be manured without people and families, was turned into pasture, which was easily rid by a few herdsmen; and tenances for years, lives, and at will, whereupon much of the yeomanry lived, were turned into demesnes. This bred a decay of people, and, by consequence, a decay of towns, churches, tithes, and the like. There ensued withal, upon this, a decay and diminution of subsidies and taxes; for the more gentleman, ever the lower books of subsidies.'—Lord Bacon's *History of the Reign of King Henry VII.*

syphogrants and their jurisdiction is placed an archphilarch, who was formerly called a *Tranibore*. The election of the prince rests with the syphogrants, who are two hundred in number; the people enjoying a franchise which consists in the nomination of four persons—not *candidates*—from whom the prince is eligible. Votes are given secretly, and an oath is exacted from each voter in attestation of his honesty in the exercise of his electoral privileges. The *Tranibores* meet every third day to consult with the prince, and two syphogrants are always present in the council-chamber, being called in by twos according to rotation. (The reader will observe the extreme jealousy with which More, by his ever-recurring rotations, guards against the possibility of any one *living, i. e.*, abiding anywhere, or of thoroughly knowing anything about anything.)

The Utopians work, with intervals for meals and recreation, for six hours a day. None are allowed to be idle, except the syphogrants, and even these virtuous censors, whose duty it is to see that other men are industrious, forego their immunity that they may offer an example of self-imposed manual labour. Within their own country, and between themselves, traffic is rendered impossible and unnecessary by an absolute community of goods. They seek customers abroad, however, for the surplus of their produce, and devoting a seventh part of the price to the poor of the country in which they find a sale, they bring home the remainder, and store it in a general treasury. This fund is useful only as a precaution and reserve against the breaking out of war, in which event they buy with the money the services of mercenaries; for although prodigiously brave, they hate the spilling of blood, and are especially tender of that of their brethren and fellow-citizens. Every house is a home to the traveller, who, a gleeful *emtus viator*, burdens himself with no gold or silver. Diamonds and precious stones are held in light estimation by the people of Utopia; and when they do condescend to pick up any of the jewels which their beach and their hills afford, it is that they may be promoted to become nursery playthings or ornaments for children. Throughout the island, dress is uniform, suffering no variation from caprice or fashion: only so much diversity is observed as suffices to indicate the sex, and the married or single condition of the wearer. The learning of the Utopians is all in their own tongue. By the shipwreck of a mixed crew of Romans and Egyptians, twelve hundred years before the visit of Raphael, they had become acquainted with elegant literature and with many valuable arts. Improving upon instructions then received, their culture of every kind, in art, science, and philosophy, is at the present time equal to that of any nation of the ancient or the modern world.

There are few laws, and no lawyers. If a man *seek* for office he is sure not to compass it. The Utopians take extraordinary precautions to insure congruity in marriage; they forbid polygamy, and so disfavour divorce that the separation of married persons is extremely exceptional. Their slaves are captives taken in war. They delight in the pleasantries of fools and jesters. Believing that God is a benevolent being, and first qualifying the virtuous, the good, and the reasonable as the only pleasurable, in the original, uncorrupted sense of Epicurus, they seek after pleasure. They detest war, and are much more ready to have recourse to the sword in behalf of their friends than on their own account. Skill, stratagem, and everything that is calculated to diminish their sanguinary character, is prized in military operations. In war time, the priests publicly pray for the smallest possible effusion of blood; and, purely with the same benevolent purpose, the Utopians offer rewards for the assassination of the princes of the country with whom they are at strife; and further, in every possible manner endeavour to sow distrust and suspicion of each other amongst their enemies. Notwithstanding that they make a principle of *corrupting* their foes, they are rigid respecters of

truces; and when war is over, they make their conquered enemies, and not their own succoured allies, to bear the expenses. Their mercenaries are a wild hardy race of mountaineers, called Zapolets. In the same spirit of reducing human suffering to a *minimum*, which we see investing life with a peculiar sanctity, the Utopians allow a man to commit suicide in the case of an illness that promises to be of long and painful duration, and the recovery from which is hopeless. Before proceeding to this somewhat extreme step, it is necessary to procure the advice and permission of the priests.

Dogmatic religion is different in different parts of the island. Some worship the sun, some any other of the host of heaven, and some pay divine honours to heroes and great men, yet the greater and wiser part adore one eternal, invisible, infinite, and incomprehensible Deity. But all agree in this—that one Supreme Being made and governs the world, whom they call, in the language of their country, *Mithras*. The completest toleration is allowed, an exception being made to the disadvantage of those persons who so insult and degrade their own nature as to deny the immortality of the soul. The temples are magnificent, nobly built, and spacious; the priests are clad in gorgeous, parti-coloured vestments; and all the people, whatever their private differences of creed, can conscientiously attend the same service and join in the same public liturgy. At worship, they thank God for having bestowed upon them the best government in the world, and ask, if there be a better, that it may be revealed to them.

Although the foregoing outline be necessarily hard, the 'Utopia' itself was a work so fresh and graphic, and its descriptions so informed with life-like detail and reality, that many contemporaries of Sir Thomas More, much to his chuckling delight, mistook it for veritable and sober truth. The success of the author was even greater than that of Swift, who, by some inadvertencies, raised a suspicion in the mind of an Irish prelate that Gulliver had narrated some things barely within the range of credibility. Several learned men and pious divines, as Budæus, and Johannes Paludanus, in the spirit of the punning and apostolic Gregory, '*non Utopi, sed angeli*,' &c., earnestly longed for the evangelization of the interesting island. And others wished to obtain the authority of the pope to establish there a mission and episcopate for the propagation of the Christian faith.

We have noticed Plato's grandly impossible republic; we have seen Xenophon's 'Cyropædia' essaying to compose a tableau, the foremost figure of which assumed to be historic, and the others to be living in conditions that had a basis in existing institutions; and lastly, we have discussed More's Utopia, which in great part is satirical of contemporaneous abuses. In so doing, we have exhausted the types, included the first rise and the culmination of this class of literature: our remaining notices can afford to be, and ought to be, less extended. The father of the inductive philosophy has left us a fragmentary work, called the 'New Atlantis,' which resembles in some features of interest both the Republic of Plato, and the Utopia of Sir Thomas More. Like Plato, Bacon makes science and philosophy, and the culture of these, the conditions of government and state existence. Like More, who took the hint from the late romantic discovery of a New World to give his state a local habitation and a name, Lord Bacon ventured upon the lusthood of maritime adventure in his day to fix his New Atlantis in 'the midst of the greatest wilderness of waters in the world,' in the far, fair solitudes of the deep-bosomed Pacific. 'This fable,' says Dr. William Rawley, friend of Lord Bacon, and editor of his works, 'my lord devised, to the end that he might exhibit therein a model or description of a college, instituted for the interpreting of nature, and the producing of great and marvellous works for the benefit of man, under the name of Solomon's House, or the College of the six-days' works. And even so far his

lordship hath proceeded as to finish that part. Certainly the model is more vast and high than can possibly be imitated in all things, notwithstanding most things therein are within men's power to effect. His lordship thought also in this present fable to have composed a frame of laws, or of the best state or model of a commonwealth; but foreseeing that it would be a long work, his desire of collecting the natural history diverted him, which he preferred many degrees before it.'

This Solomon's House is a university which in its ramifications embraces state and people. Here society is based as upon Plato's unhopeful aspiration. The rulers *are* philosophers. 'God bless thee, my son,' is the greeting of the father of Solomon's House to the narrator; 'I will give thee the greatest jewel I have, for I will impart to thee, for the love of God and men, a relation of the true state of Solomon's House. Son, to make you know the true state of Solomon's House, I will keep this order: first, I will set forth unto you the end of our foundation; secondly, the preparations and instruments we have for our works; thirdly, the several employments and functions whereto our fellows are assigned, and lastly, the ordinances and rites which we observe. *The end of our foundation is the knowledge of causes and secret motions of things, and the enlarging of the bounds of human empire, to the effecting of all things possible.*' Golden words these, and of unsurpassed nobleness as watchwords for liberal investigators of nature. The fellows of the college are employed severally —and those familiar with Lord Bacon's felicitous quaintness will recognize smilingly his present suggestive piquancy—as travelling fellows, called merchants of light; as depredators; mystery men; pioneers or miners; compilers; downy men or benefactors; lamps; inoculators, and interpreters of nature. A quiet, yet sportive dignity informs the incidents with which the author introduces and prosecutes his narrative.

The medical, the legal, the classical, and other professional learning of Shakespeare have been estimated. We have the honour, rare in these days, of introducing our gentle Will in a new character. In the Tempest he has incidentally left us a sketch of an Utopia, the happiness of which would rival that of the golden age. When Alonso, King of Naples, is wrecked upon the island of Prospero, and refuses to listen to comfort for the loss of his son Ferdinand, who has, however, been saved apart from his father and suite, the good and noble Gonzalo thus endeavours, by an enforced playfulness, to wile the king from his sorrow—

'Had I plantation of this isle, my lord,
And were the king of it, what would I do?
I' the commonwealth I would by contraries
Execute all things; for no kind of traffic
Would I admit; no name of magistrate;
Letters should not be known; riches, poverty,
And use of service none; contract, succession,
Bourn, bound of land, tilth, vineyard, none:
No use of metal, corn, or wine, or oil,
No occupation; all men idle, all;
And women too, but innocent and pure:
No sovereignty —
All things in common, nature should produce
Without sweat or endeavour treason, felony,
Sword, pike, knife, gun, or need of any engine,
Would I not have, but nature should bring forth,
Of its own kind, all foison, all abundance,
To feed my innocent people.
I would with such perfection govern, Sir,
To excel the golden age.'

And presently Gonzalo proceeds to dismiss the conceit with a guffaw that must be anything but reassuring to professed constitutionmongers.

During a series of years of national unsettlement, which may with sufficient exactness for our purpose be accounted as measurable by the lifetime of Algernon Sidney (1617-83), the pens of many men, and the thoughts of more, were busy in devising political panaceas; every possible kind of institution was put on speculative trial. James Harrington, the scion of a noble stock, fruitful in dignified and titled branches, was born in 1611. Whilst residing at the Hague, and subsequently at Venice, he imbibed or fostered republican predilections. In 1656 he published his 'Oceana,' and, by courtier-like management, procured through Mrs. Claypole, the dedication of his work to the Protector, her father—and this, not-

withstanding that he showed a commonwealth to be a government of laws and not of the sword, and so detected 'the violent administration of the Protector by his bashaws, intendants, or majors-general.' For him the great discovery is arrogated 'that empire follows the balance of property, whether lodged in one or in a few, or in many hands.' He was of opinion that in a well-constituted commonwealth, there could be no distinction of parties; that the passage to preferment should be open to merit in all persons; and that no honest man could be uneasy.

Although a republican, he seems to have held strongly the notion that 'blood will tell.' 'There is something,' he says, 'first in the making of a commonwealth, then in the governing of it, and last of all in the leading of its armies, which (though there be great divines, great lawyers, great men in all professions) seems to be peculiar only to the genius of a gentleman; for it is plain in the universal series of story, that if any man founded a commonwealth, he was first a gentleman.' He was no leveller. 'An army may as well consist of soldiers without officers, or of officers without soldiers, as a commonwealth (especially such an one as is capable of greatness) consist of a people without a gentry, or of a gentry without a people' 'Oceana' is a name under which he intends to represent England, as being the noblest island of the Northern Ocean. Using allegorical names, he learnedly reviews all preceding codes and lawgivers; and gives a comparative survey of all governments. Hume, who pronounces 'Oceana,' although it be the model of a perfect republic, the most rational of all similar productions, further observes that 'it was well adapted to that age, when the plans of imaginary republics were the daily subjects of debate and conversation; and even in our time, it is justly admired as a work of genius and invention.' Now and here it is unsusceptible of condensation or analysis. This is the less unfortunate on account of its very feasibility, which, in spite of its form, brings its author nearer to the position of the men of treatises, as Aristotle, Machiavelli, and Hobbes. It was intended as a representation of a *bonâ-fide* plan of government, to be ready in case of the nation resolving itself into a genuine commonwealth.

In proportion to its potentiality of immediate and practical application, the 'Oceana' fades and drifts away beyond our limits. We dismiss it, therefore, with the observation that it was against the 'Heathenish Commonwealth' of Harrington, that Richard Baxter published his 'Holy Commonwealth,' intended to assert the superiority of a monarchy over either an aristocracy or a democracy.

There are many works that hover about the confines and marches of our subject, but which owe a more definite allegiance to the powers of political romance. Of these Barclay's 'Argenis' may be mentioned, the incidents of which have an allusion to the transactions which took place in France during the war of the League. In its political disquisitions, which recur at intervals, as a kind of impersonal episode, Barclay fortifies the cause of monarchy and absolutism. Argenis is represented as the daughter and heiress of Meleander, King of Sicily, and the romance chiefly consists of the war carried on to obtain her hand, by two rivals—Lycogenes, a rebellious subject of Meleander's, and Poliarchus, Prince of Gaul

His book, severally for its politics and its story, met with an almost unbounded favour. For the former, it was promoted into a text-book of the astute Cardinal Richelieu, to whom it is said to have suggested many of his political expedients. For its literary ability it enjoyed the honour of translation into many languages, and of publication in most of the distinguished foreign presses of the day. The poet Cowper recommends it as 'interesting in a high degree—richer in incident than can be imagined—full of surprises which the reader never forestalls, and yet free from all entanglement and confusion.'

Of this class of fiction, two works

more formally followed the 'Cyropædia,' the great patriarch of political romance: 'Les Voyages de Cyrus,' and 'Le Répos de Cyrus,' both of which are conversant about that interval between the sixteenth and fortieth years of the life of Cyrus, of which Xenophon does not give any narration. The former is by the Chevalier Ramsay, the friend of Fénélon, and tutor to the sons of the Pretender; and both appeared in France early in the eighteenth century. Kindred to these, as showing men living and having their being in institutions of an unrealized excellence may be mentioned the 'Sethos' of the Abbé Terrasson, whilst the universally admired 'Telemachus' of Fénélon will scarcely need suggestion.

The age of Utopias is, we fancy, for the present, pretty well over. With improving and more paternal governments, with the practical associations and pursuits of a busy and rapid time, men now-a-days rather criticise and volunteer amendments of existing codes, than project fancy constitutions. But if, in the cycles of the world, it should ever again reach a point analogous to any former Utopia-producing station, we may prophesy that it will be a station resembling that of the ancient projectors rather than like that of the modern ones. Plato and Xenophon protected the rights of the few against the rough-shod, hundred-handed spoliations of the many. More and his English followers gave prominent assertion to the claims of the many against the grinding tyranny of the few. The next Utopia, which is dimly discoverable in the possibilities of the future, will be reactionary against a galling and despotic democracy. Meanwhile we console ourselves with the omens of a time, which happily is already half present with us, when, as a best-possible government, the few shall patriotically and philanthropically legislate in the interests of the many. In this faith and hope we pass on with eyes unaverted to the practical trials and failures of hole-and-corner Utopianism, and leave the Phalanstery and the Pantisocracy to the worship of the *umbilicani*, their creators and patrons. A. H. G.

TWO CHARADES,

By the late T. K. Hervey.

(*The Answers will be given in the April Number.*)

I.

THE merry days! when through the air
Of each bright summer's morn,
To my First rode knight and lady fair,
With hawk and hound and horn:—
When on the horseman's brow was pride,
And in his heart a sigh,
For his lady-love was by his side,
And my Whole was the boundless sky!

Through paths that led by pleasant streams,
Which made their pathway sweet,
As they kissed, with murmurs dim as dreams,
My Second's flowery feet,
The silver bells rang soft and clear,
Like low, sweet-spoken spells,—
But sounds were in the lover's ear,
Oh! sweeter far than bells!

A merry sport! that lighted well
The sunshine of the skies!
He only felt where sunshine fell
Within his lady's eyes!
As he touched the rein of her palfrey fleet,
And bent to see her part
The jesses from her falcon's feet,
She tied them round his heart.

Away—away, the gallant bird,
As by some tempest driven,
Shot, at his gentle lady's word,
To hunt the fields of heaven!
Along its plains, with sparkling eye,
She watched her falcon ride;
But her lover could not see the sky,—
His heaven was by his side!

Did, then, that gentle lady see
No light but heaven's there?
Did heart and hawk *both* wander free
Through all the fields of air?
Did *she*, in spirit, set apart
No low and pleading tone
From all those sounds?—and had her heart
No quarry of its own?

Ah, me!—the fancies sent on high,
Turn earthward, oft,—how soon!
And looks that seem to search the sky
Fall far beneath the moon.
'Twas up to the cloud-land far away
That my First, in the old time, beckoned,
When the real chase of the summer's day
For its field had oft my Second!

Well! those, in sooth, *were* pleasant days!
When love, that went to roam
Along the sportsman's sun-bright ways,
Yet, left not love at home.
For all man's peaceful sports and sweet
His gentle mate was given,—
And *angels*, sure, are hunters meet
Wherever my Whole is heaven!

II.

A DIADEM for the mountain's brow:—
At the mountain's foot a shroud,
Which unseen hands in the air have spun
From the heart of the cold grey cloud,
When the streams have stopped, and the flowers are dead:—
If you name me these, my First is said.
When the winds are at war about my First,
For the south wind slays what the north has nurst,
At the poles of the earth it never dies:
On the line it has never been born;
And it takes the life from the cold night skies
Denied by the warm bright morn,—
Of all earth's creature forms, the one
That gets no blessing from the sun.

But the solemn stars on its state look bright,
And its face is beloved by the northern light;
Though the meadow-stars in its fold are lost,
And the trees look, each like its own white ghost.
A thing that dies of nature's life,
And lives by nature's death,—
That the run of the rill refreshes not,
Nor Spring's renewing breath,—
That cloud makes clear, and dense makes light,—
That even in youth is hoary white,—
That sunshine sickens,—falling, forms,—
And God and nature feed on storms.

My First is the child of my Second,
And my Second the child of my First,—
Though the spirits are foes who brod the twain,
And the fays are at war who nursed.
Of my Second my spectral First was born,
With the winter wind for a sire,—
And my First to my Second, in turn, gives birth,
At the kiss of the sunbeam's fire.
My tiny Second!—without a sound,
A thousand will dance in a goblet's round;
Yet the fathomless sea, in its calms or storms,
Is made of my Second's tiny forms,—
And a truth as large in its sphere has furled
As fills the sphere of a planet world.
So frail is the build of its crystal walls,
That the orb is shattered wherever it falls;
Yet the silent tooth of its ceaseless shock
Will eat to the heart of the iron rock,—
And its prisoned strength through the hills will pass,
Though it rend the stone like a globe of glass
—In the form of my Second the cloud must burst,
Ere the web can be wove of my shroud-like First;
In my Second's form shall the shroud be rent,
When an angel sounds from the firmament!
And lo!—where my Whole hath its cerements burst,
In shape my Second, in shade my First!
The angel sounds, and the trumpet call
Hath wakened its heart in the clod-like earth;
It lifts up a fold of the winter pall,
And—white as a saint that the grave gives forth—
Peers through the ruin around it spread,
And sees the sunshine overhead!
Type of the Promise!—Stoop, my soul!
And read the riddle of my Whole!
—When the rock which my prisoned Second tears,
Shall be eaten away by the hunger of years,—
When the restless seas my Second forms
Shall perish of their own wild storms,—
When the cloud hath ceased to form, or fall,
Or yield my First for a winter's pall,—
Thou, *like* my Whole, shalt break thy tomb;
Safe 'mid the ruin round thee hurled,
And, white in thine immortal bloom,
Fling off the shroud that wraps a world!

THE STORY OF A DISHONOURED BILL:

A London Narrative.

In Three Chapters.—Chapter I.

'JUST FOR FORM'S SAKE—PERFECTLY NOMINAL.'

'IF you grow so confoundedly shabby and down in the mouth about such a trifle as forty pounds, I'll never have any more business transactions with you.'

'I shall be very glad if you keep to that resolution, Findlater; it's rather good to talk of business transactions with me.'

'Don't be sulky, Woods, or I shall think you a fool, even if I don't call you one. Be thankful to have been reclaimed from milksopism. Why, a fellow's twice the man he was after he's done a bill. It's a part of life, man—*life*, that you're always talking about and longing for liberty in.'

'I wonder what my father would say?' said poor Woods, dismally.

He was a good-looking young fellow, with blue eyes and curly hair, and a face that certainly ought to have been a merry one.

His companion, Mr Findlater, an older man, was tall and pale, with small cunning black eyes, and an expression that seemed to be telling his features he was quite satisfied with them.

He took Woods' arm, and a contemptuous smile curled his thin lips.

'Oh, I forgot, you are the good boy of your family, are you not?—the industrious clerk who is going to be Lord Mayor of London, and you don't like to lose your character.'

'I wish you could be serious, Findlater.'

'I was just going to be quite sedate, and to inform you that although your respected father may, as in duty bound, look a little grave when you ask him to stump up—if such a very improbable event should occur—I take him to be too much a man of the world not to be aware that no fellow ever made his way in life without bills. It's so humdrum to pay the "ready" for everything you have—to say nothing of the excitement of a bill when the day comes round.'

'I can't help it, Findlater; you may think me a fool or not, as you please. I was a cursed idiot—when I have kept pretty free from debt myself—to put my hand to another man's bit of paper, even for such a friend as you are.'

'You'll get used to it, Jack: besides, my risk is sixty pounds, and my Ascot book's a fearfully heavy one, so I ought to feel more nervous than you do, but I tell you there's no risk at all. If the worst comes to the worst, we'll renew on the 1st of July for three months.'

'You told me you'd renewed already.'

'Well, and if I have, old Franklyn trusts me implicitly. I might renew to the end of time, if I chose.'

'And that tremendous interest going on accumulating. No, thank you; I may be a fool, as I said before, but you must promise me to take this up on the 1st of July; there's nearly three weeks,' he said, with a sigh of relief.

The friends soon parted. John Woods went home to his chambers in the amiable temper that always possesses a man when he is conscious of having of his own free act and deed committed a great folly.

He was the younger son of a country clergyman, of small means, and had only been about a year in London as one of the junior clerks among the hive of hard-worked bees that inhabit, or rather *labour*, six hours a day in our government offices.

Mr. Findlater—one of his official companions—had spoken the truth when he said John Woods was the hope of his family; his elder brother Richard (there were only these two brothers and a sister) had been a great sorrow to his parents. He had no actual vicious propensity,

but an amount of daring and self-will that made him quite unmanageable. He ran away from his first school because he did not like strict rules; he was expelled from the next on account of his wild pranks and complete insubordination to superiors.

His uncle, on the mother's side, Mr. Barron, liked the boy, and had at one time thought of making him his heir; but this public expulsion stirred the old man's pride.

'Send him to sea, Woods,' he wrote to his brother-in-law, in answer to the sad news the latter had communicated; 'it is the only chance for such a wild young scamp, it will at any rate rid our family of the disgrace he may bring upon us here. I fear, with yours and Theresa's gentle notions, he has been brought up on the "Spare the rod and spoil the child" system, look to Master Jack in time, and let him at least be a credit to us.'

Perhaps the parents took uncle Barron's advice; at any rate Master Jack grew up a very steady youth, without his brother Richard's ready wit, and facility for getting out of a scrape, but with the far more valuable equivalent—of showing no aptitude to fall into one.

In sending him to London, his father had given him two cautions: 'Keep out of debt; and be careful in your choice of friends.'

The first he had hitherto obeyed; but now, in the solitude of his dingy London lodgings, he asked himself what he knew about Findlater, and the answer did not make him feel more satisfied with his rashness.

He was agreeable and gentlemanlike, much quieter than many of the others; he had been very kind, too, in offering to lend him money; and although the offer had never been accepted, still, one day when Findlater had treated him to a luxurious dinner and much better wine than he was accustomed to drink, Jack had found it impossible to say no, when his friend asked him, just for form's sake, to put his name to a bit of paper. He had the sense to ask its object, and was told it was perfectly nominal—that there was no risk unless he considered him, Findlater, a pickpocket; in that case he had made himself responsible for forty pounds.

At first he had not thought much about it; but a week or so before the conversation just detailed, he had been reading a novel by a popular author, in which all the misfortunes of the principal character arose from his having incautiously signed his name to another man's bill.

Forty pounds, he knew, was a trifling sum to many people, but he had promised his father and himself that he would not spend more than his allowance during his first year in London, and this was exactly one hundred pounds. His sister Fanny was to be married in September, and he had calculated on making her a handsome present. Oh! it was absurd folly to worry himself. Findlater was not a pickpocket; still, it would be pleasanter to have an explanation

We know how unsatisfactory the explanation had proved.

A week afterwards, Findlater was summoned into the country by the illness of an uncle who had appointed him his heir: the last time Woods met him he nodded, and passed on, but told him, in answer to his inquiry about the length of his visit, that he should be back on the 29th of June

He was in another department of the office to Woods, so that they did not often meet.

On the morning of the 30th of June, Jack called on his friend long before office hours: he inhabited a luxurious set of rooms at the West End.

The porter said Mr. Findlater had returned from the country about a week previously, and now, having got his holidays, was gone abroad.

'But he must have left a message of some kind or other for me.'

'No, sir. He said, tell any one who may call, that I'm gone abroad for some weeks, and that Mr. Cartland has recovered.'

Woods stared at the man as if he did not understand him. Good heavens! what was he to do? Forty pounds! Why, he had not ten pounds in ready money, and the

idea of applying to his father for help was impossible—utterly impossible. Why, he knew that for months they had been denying themselves in every way to meet the expenses of dear little Fanny's wedding outfit: he would sell his watch, his books—everything he possessed, sooner than that they should know it.

He walked up and down Pall Mall, with his hands in his pockets, till it became time to turn towards the Strand. Any one who looked in his face would have judged him guilty of some punishable offence, so conscience-stricken and miserable was his appearance.

His fellow-clerks rallied him, and declared he had been jilted; but he could not laugh at their jokes. He knew nothing of money matters, his only idea being that if he could not pay the money, he should be sent to prison, and break his mother's heart.

Just as he reached his lodging, a bright thought flashed through the leaden mist that seemed closing round him.

Findlater was a thorough man of business, he should get a letter from him to-morrow to explain everything, and tell him what to do.

So the poor boy got some sleep, which he would not have done without this happy thought—true or false, it does not matter. Pandora was a wise woman to keep the elixir of life in her box: there is meat, drink, sleep, and happiness in Hope, be it ever so delusive.

But no letter came.

Woods sat and dawdled over his breakfast: he tried to fancy that was not the postman whose gay scarlet coat he had distinctly seen pass the window; then he recollected how a few months ago the postman had returned after he had gone by, having overlooked a letter he had to deliver: so he still sat and waited.

What was the form in these cases, he wondered? Would the bill-holder apply to him, or should he go himself and explain it all, and say he felt sure Mr. Findlater would be home in a few days? What a miserable baby he felt himself in this world's knowledge! Why had not he asked one of his fellow-clerks?

In his secret heart he felt he had done something so very 'young' and what Shakspeare calls 'green,' in putting his name to this bill, that he had not courage to expose his folly; besides, to ask now, would seem like a request for money, and that he could not be suspected of.

'I'm sure I cannot get through another day like yesterday, though. I'll go to old Franklyn and learn the worst, even if it does make me late at office.'

Franklyn was' Mr. Findlater's tailor.

He bowed obsequiously to Mr. Woods when the latter entered his fashionable establishment.

Jack soon explained that he did not come to order a suit of clothes, but to have a little conversation.

'Certainly, sir,' said the ever-polite tailor, bowing and smiling; 'I am happy to serve you in any way'

As soon as they were in a private room, Woods explained his business.

'Now, Mr. Franklyn, I have never touched a farthing of this forty pounds; it seems rather hard I should have to pay it.'

The tailor went to a row of lettered pigeon-holes on the other side of the room He drew some papers out of one of the F's.

'You are mistaken in the sum, sir; your name appears jointly with Mr. Findlater's to a little bill for one hundred pounds.'

'A hundred! That's quite impossible Mr. Findlater told me forty pounds was the outside of my risk.'

'I can explain that, sir; the original bill was for sixty pounds; Mr. Findlater wished to increase the amount to one hundred pounds, and I said I should—just for form's sake, you understand—like another name on the bill, and he brought me yours. I have the honour to be acquainted with your uncle, sir—Mr. Barron, and I felt that my bill was as safe as the bank when I saw your name.'

Woods groaned.

'Mr. Franklyn, you don't mean to say I've made myself answerable for a hundred pounds?'

'Only as a matter of form, sir: dear me—such a trifle, and if it doesn't quite suit you to settle it

this morning—why not renew for a couple of months?

'And then there'll be ever so much more interest to pay, won't there?'

'My dear sir, such a trifle to a young gentleman with your connections.'

'But, Mr. Franklyn, I don't understand you: you seem to expect me to pay it, when I tell you I positively can't, and that I've never had the money at all. Do you mean to say Mr. Findlater won't pay any of it? He can't be such a——'

'My dear sir, consider a little,' interposed the bland tailor, deprecatingly—for Woods was pacing up and down the room in an extremely wrathful manner—'Mr Findlater may perhaps stay abroad for some time longer. You see there are so many chances in the matter.'

The tailor's suave tones calmed the victim, and he said, more quietly, 'Do you mean to say he won't be back in time to meet this bill?'

'I should be very sorry, sir, to say anything of the sort; but how can one tell what may happen?'

'But if his uncle dies, he must come back, and then he'll have enough to pay every one.'

Mr. Franklyn smiled, and shrugged his shoulders.

'I should not think that would hurry Mr. Findlater's return: and—and—to tell you the truth, so many others are interested in Mr. Cartland's decease, that perhaps his heir may find it difficult to satisfy *everybody* out of what he has been——expecting for so long beforehand.'

Ignorant as Woods was, he could not misunderstand the tailor's meaning. He evidently did not expect Findlater to meet the bill. Despair made him desperate.

'Very well, Mr. Franklyn, I see there's no help for it—I shall be glad to renew for two months; but I tell you plainly, that if Mr. Findlater is not forthcoming at the end of that time, you must not think of applying to my uncle Mr. Barron; you would ruin me entirely.'

'My dear sir,' said the tailor, soothingly, 'you take this matter too seriously; these little bills are every-day occurrences with gentlemen of fashion. To-day you are responsible for Mr. Findlater, next time, another friend will be so for you: you will soon get used to it. Good morning, sir, I am so pleased to settle this pleasantly for you.'

And he smiled and bowed his visitor out.

CHAPTER II.

THE BROTHERS.

It was towards the end of August: London was of course a desert, and the heat of the weather gave it almost the arid, scorched-up look of a real one: the Parks were brown and withered: there was nothing to refresh the eye or the senses but the bright blue sky, and its glare was almost insupportable.

Our friend Jack Woods was still in town; he could have taken his holiday had he chosen, but he felt this would have involved expense. He had heard nothing of Findlater; the same stereotyped answer was given him whenever he called at his rooms. He had written to him repeatedly at all the 'Poste Restantes' he could think of, he was losing all hope, and had grown pale, and thin, and ill—so ill, that on the previous evening he sent a note round to the head of his office, saying he really must beg for a couple of days' leave.

And now he had them he did not well know what to do with them; it was too hot to keep his bed; he could not afford to call in a doctor; and to venture out of doors in the heat of the sun was madness, and yet he longed for air. he longed to be in the garden at home with his mother and tell her his folly and its punishment; but he did not dare to think of home till after the 1st of September; perhaps he should never see any of them again, certainly he could not if he disgraced them.

'But what a fool I am!' he thought. 'I asked for leave that I might go about and divert my thoughts from dwelling on this wretchedness which I feel is driving me mad, and here I sit in a cheerless room duller even than the office.'

He knew there was no shade to be found in the Parks, so he did not

turn westward, and was going into the old Temple Gardens, when he bethought himself suddenly of the Docks. He had only been there once, on his first arrival in town, and had been greatly struck with the bustle and activity going on. Surely he must see something to think about and distract his mind. Just as he reached London Bridge, and was looking at the busy scene below, he saw a Greenwich steamer landing its passengers, and among them a party of young men, evidently naval officers. They sprang up the landing steps amid much noise and laughter, one of them calling out—

'Let's go for a minute on the jolly old bridge.'

They came up to where Woods was standing, seeing, but scarcely noticing what was going on around him, and went on to the middle of the bridge. One of them stared hard at Jack as he passed, and again as he returned. When he reached the foot of the bridge, he turned round, and looked so fixedly at him that Jack's attention was aroused.

In an instant they were shaking hands heartily, and in another, Richard Woods had dragged his brother on and introduced him to his friends, who were all going to dine together to celebrate their return.

Jack tried to decline joining them, but he was not listened to, while Richard kept on asking question after question, scarcely waiting for an answer after he had learned all were well at home, rattling on in the wild excitement of happiness about his prize money—for they had just returned from China—and the wonderful curiosities he had brought for Jack and Fanny.

His brother walked on pale and silent, with a strange jealous feeling at his heart. For the first time in their lives he felt himself inferior to Richard. From babyhood he had always been his wild brother's good genius; now here he was, after all sorts of extravagant and even blameable conduct, rich and happy, and would, of course, be for some time to come the idol of those at home; while he who had been so steady, just for one little rashness was to bring lasting sorrow on himself and on them.

He felt more dissatisfied with himself than with Richard, because he knew it was not so much rashness that had made him sign the bill, as want of moral courage.

He had thought Findlater would despise him and call him 'a muff' if he shrank from doing what he told him was so very simple and customary an action. Generally he could withstand raillery; but he had felt greatly flattered by the marked notice of a man so much older, and in such a good position, and he longed to show him that the covert sneer he often indulged in against the want of life in home-bred youths was misplaced in his instance.

Richard noticed his paleness, and presently asked if he had been ill.

'I am ill now; but take no notice till we're alone'

The dinner was a very jovial affair, but poor Jack felt quite out of his place among the merry sailors, whose whole conversation was a series of jokes.

His head ached and throbbed painfully: his brother looked at him very often, and evidently noticed his paleness; for he took leave of his friends early, spite of their remonstrances.

When they reached the street, he told Jack to take his arm and lean on it

'Now, my boy, I'll see you home. I wonder if there's a spare bed to be had, if not, never mind, I'll send my bag to the nearest hotel, and sit in your room to-night.'

'There is a room, I know, and on the same floor as mine, if it has not been let since this morning,' said Jack, faintly.

'Now hold your tongue, sir; the less talk we have to-night the better,' said the kind-hearted sailor, who, accustomed to the bronzed faces of his companions, was alarmed at Jack's pale, haggard appearance.

More than once during the night he entered the room to see if his charge were sleeping quietly, for Jack protested entirely against his sitting up in his room; but the revulsion of feeling their sudden meeting had created, had broken the

spell of his misery, and for the first time for several weeks he slept soundly till morning.

He was so glad he had taken a holiday now—he could tell Richard everything and ask his advice. Richard had grown much older, or he had grown younger. He seemed to feel he had an elder brother for the first time in his life

He had not finished dressing, before the sailor entered his room rubbing his eyes, only half awake.

'What! you don't mean to say you are up, Jack? I'd booked you for a week's illness at least; surely you're not well, man, all in a hurry.'

'I'm sorry to disappoint you, if you really had set your mind on nursing me; but I believe the sight of a home face was my best cure, Richard.'

'Come, let's have some breakfast, and don't stand palavering there, looking about as white as your shirt collar.'

But after breakfast, Richard insisted on hearing his brother's story; for his two years' absence from home had entailed a good deal of the world's hard usage upon him, and this, as it always does where there is a really good foundation, had opened his eyes to the trials of others and taught him sympathy.

He sat thinking for some time after Jack had finished.

'Supposing I pay the hundred pounds for you and leave you quite clear, have you any objection to my repaying myself in any way I choose?'

'Of course not; but you mystify me, and, Richard, I could not take your money.'

'I'm not going to lose a penny of it; I'm not such a flat. Now I'm off to smoke my pipe and arrange my ideas; but mind, old chap, you're not to worry any more; the money shall be paid punctually, and all you've got to do is to hold your tongue;' and before Jack could say a word of thanks, he had snatched up his hat and departed.

He did not appear again till evening, and then he put Jack through a regular catechism as to Mr. Findlater's appearance, habits, pursuits, friends, and places of resort; but directly his brother began to question in return, he told him that was a part of the bargain he could not have infringed, and went off to bed.

CHAPTER III.

A PULL ON THE RIVER.

Mr. Findlater found it more convenient to spend his leave of absence abroad, till two or three 'little bill' affairs had blown over, for Jack was not by any means the only friend he honoured with such a mark of favour; but he had promised the young Viscount —— to meet him in Warwickshire, for the 1st September. His leave would expire on the eighth, and he was too keen a sportsman to give up a day's shooting easily. Although he thought it most probable Mr. Franklyn had allowed Jack to renew for a couple of months, he did not care about being seen in town before settling day.

There was money also to be received at his banker's, and as he had good reasons for keeping this fact secret, he preferred receiving it himself, besides, he must have a new sporting rig: he could not be exposed to the remarks of his friend's gamekeeper as to the want of completeness in his accoutrements.

One day would do it all; and he must be a bungler, indeed, if he could not contrive to spend one day in London *incog.*

He was determined not to sleep in town, that would double the risk of detection, for he did not intend to visit his own rooms.

So he travelled all night and arrived in the grey of early morning, before the shops were open.

This was provoking; however, he must breakfast, and the quickest way to do this was at the Railway Hotel adjoining the station.

At eight o'clock he sent for a cab, paid his bill at the hotel, and jumped into the vehicle with his portmanteau, feeling that risk was over now. He should keep that cab until it deposited him at the railway station on his way to D——.

As he drew up the window he noticed a young man with his hat

pulled down over his eyes, lounging against the portico of the hotel, and attentively watching him. For a moment he felt anxious; but the next, he laughed, and told himself the air of England was, as foreigners say, full of worry.

He drove first to the banker's and drew the two hundred pounds he expected, for Mr. Cartland had been so touched by his nephew's devotion to him during his illness, that (I suppose, too, to make up to him for having recovered) he had this quarter doubled the handsome allowance he made him, an allowance of which Mr. Findlater had hitherto succeeded in keeping the world in ignorance.

As he came out of the banker's he again saw the same young man standing as if about to get into a Hansom cab.

It might be a chance coincidence; but it was an unpleasant one.

His resolution was soon taken; he finished his equipment as speedily as possible, and then drove on to the station. Here he looked round for his unknown tormentor, but he could not see him; however, it was best to be on the safe side. He took his ticket to D——, but he left the train at a little fishing village a few miles from London, as quietly and unobtrusively as possible.

He had managed matters so rapidly that it was not much past noon when he strolled up to the door of the pretty village inn.

The 'Crowing Cock' was a favourite haunt for anglers, artists, and refined idlers of all sorts—but on this day it was very still and deserted. Either the eve of the 1st September is not a favourable day for anglers, or some other reason, had almost cleared the little coffee-room of guests. Only one remained, a severe-looking old gentleman, intent on the 'Times,' who evidently, by a restless movement of his eyebrows, considered Mr. Findlater's entrance an intrusion. There was a large French window in the room opening on to a smooth, well-kept grass plot, large enough to be called a lawn, which sloped gradually down to the river.

Mr. Findlater rang for the waiter and ordered his dinner—he would dine at a little table in the large window recess.

But as he had ordered a roast chicken the waiter humbly suggested it could not be ready much before three o'clock. They had not expected company that morning and were quite out of poultry—of course it could soon be procured if the gentleman did not mind waiting.

The gentleman looked annoyed; but he was a thorough Londoner, and could not digest even the notion of an ill-cooked, probably tough chop or steak, so he said he would wait.

'I suppose I can have a bed here if I don't feel inclined to go on after dinner?'

The waiter bowed, flourished his napkin, and said they had the best sleeping accommodation possible; would the gentleman choose his room and have his luggage carried there?

'If there's a large bed-room over this with a river view, I'll have that.'

'Certainly, sir.'

Mr. Findlater stepped out on the grass-plot. The stillness and repose of the whole scene was delightful after the rapid motion he had been undergoing for four-and-twenty hours. He stretched himself full length on the grassy slope and lit a cigar. White and yellow water-lilies formed a gold and silver border along the river; they seemed to sit like water nymphs in their broad green leaves, as if meditating a voyage when their coiling, snake-like stems should release them from anchorage.

You need not fancy that Mr. Findlater bestowed any attention on the water-lilies, unless their gold and silver appearance might have given him an idea, or he might think how impossible it would be to extricate a drowning man from their entangling masses — drowning was an evil dreaded by him, as he had never been able to learn to swim.

He lay there smoking and thinking over his lucky escape. Franklyn would not renew again—*that* he was sure of: poor Woods! He wondered how he would manage; it would teach him a little life and business, and his uncle, Mr. Barron, ought to do something for the lad; it was

only kind to give him the opportunity.

He turned to pleasanter thoughts: there would most likely be some *very* young men at D——: one he knew —the son of a *nouveau riche*—who would of course be delighted to be noticed by a friend of the Viscount's and learn a few of the secrets of life.

'And as my uncle can't live for ever, it's as well to have some one else to fall back upon,' said Mr. Findlater to himself, as he ran his ringed fingers through his long, attenuated whiskers.

He had nearly fallen asleep in the midst of his financial calculations when the waiter came to announce dinner.

There had been another arrival, for a table was set not far from his own, and at it a sunburned, bronzed-looking young man, with a very broad pair of shoulders, was vigorously attacking a cold-meat pie.

Mr Findlater was secretly disgusted to find his solitude disturbed, for the old gentleman had retired. However, the new comer kept his back turned towards him till he had finished eating. He then suddenly faced round and told the waiter to bring him some rum and a fresh bottle of cold water, and to wheel his table nearer the window.

The waiter looked puzzled, for the table was a heavy one, and I am not sure that it was not fixed to the floor.

'Oh, never mind,' said the stranger, 'I dare say the gentleman in the window there won't object to your putting my grog and glass on the corner of his table; I won't disturb him.'

Mr Findlater was surprised, but he had just made an excellent dinner and felt well disposed towards mankind in general, and he soon found himself listening to the seafaring stories of his companion.

'Are you fond of the water?' said the latter

'Very, if I can get any one to row me.'

'Oh, that's slow work; the whole of the fun's in the pulling.'

'Ah! I suppose you're an experienced hand; now, were you ever upset?'

'Often; I can't say I ever upset myself, but if I did I shouldn't care. I'm fond of the water any way.'

'Ah! You can swim, I suppose?'

'Like a duck or a cork. I believe the water's my natural element.'

'I envy you. I never could swim, and I don't believe I shall ever learn how.'

They talked on for nearly an hour, Findlater becoming more and more interested in his companion, who hinted that he had just returned from China with 'lots of prize-money.' Mr. Findlater hated spirits; but to humour his new acquaintance he drank rather freely of rum and water, having already taken a good deal of wine.

At length, flushed and excited, he proposed a stroll along the river-side, and when the stranger offered to row him up and down while he smoked, he hailed the idea as delightful.

'Have you any light wherry here?'

'Yes, sir; plenty, sir, if you'll step down and look at 'em'

'Well, you go down and choose one,' said Findlater 'I'll be with you in a minute'

He found his new friend waiting for him impatiently in one of those cockle-shell skiffs that look scarcely made to hold one person, much less two

Mr. Findlater, like all men who can't swim, always felt nervous at getting into a boat, but he was ashamed to let his nautical friend see that he had any fears

They rowed about half a mile down the river in perfect silence, when the sailor suddenly drew in his sculls and looked round him.

The stream was much broader here—the banks fringed with huge sedges several feet in height. There were no grassy slopes, no sign of human habitation, it was all desolate and gloomy. When they started, the sun was one blaze of glory; it was setting now behind a bank of leaden clouds which rapidly overspread the sky.

'What are you looking for?' said Mr. Findlater, as the boat remained stationary.

'I was looking for an old land-

mark. Yes, there it is; that old pollard stump among the sedges. Yes, I was right; we are in the very deepest part of the river.'

He spoke very slowly and deliberately, and in quite a different tone. His face even had undergone a change: his brows were knit, his lips tightly pressed together as he raised his head abruptly and looked sternly and searchingly at his companion.

'Now, Mr Findlater; I know your name, you see, although you have not cared to ask me for mine. I will spare you the question—I am Richard Woods, and I will trouble you to hand me over one hundred pounds on account of my brother, Jack Woods' -and he drew from his pocket and held before his companion's eyes a copy of the bill in his brother's handwriting

'Good God!' cried the startled man; 'what can you mean by such extraordinary conduct? row me to land at once'

The sailor smiled contemptuously and crossed his arms firmly over his broad chest

'Once more, Mr. Findlater, we are in the deepest part of the river, there is no human being near us. Will you give me the money?'

Findlater hesitated, he began to swear and bully, but his voice died away as he saw no hesitation in his determined companion

'Set me ashore and then I will talk to you.'

The sailor bent down and removed the bottom plank of the boat, and before the other could interfere, pulled out the cork.

In bubbled the water with a fierce gurgle as if hungry for its prey.

'Look here, in two minutes this boat will fill and sink, and you with her; take your choice of that or pay me the money.'

Findlater's face was ghastly; he looked around in despair; there was nothing to be seen but the tall sedges shaking their heads as if in mockery of help.

He tried to speak, but he could not; his wide-opened eyes and fixed mouth were like those of a corpse: the fear of a horrible and present death paralyzed him.

But the bubbling water soon roused him.

He darted his hand into his breast pocket and drew out a small leather case, which he handed to the sailor.

'Ah!' said the latter, drawing a long breath as he replaced the cork, 'I thought you would turn out a reasonable being after all,' and he proceeded coolly to bale out the water with Mr Findlater's hat.

Jack Woods has never signed his name to a friend's bill again, and I am happy to say that Richard has become a respectable member of society.

How the shrewd, resolute sailor managed to get a clue to Findlater's movements is not material to our story. We have seen how Richard kept his man well in view, prepared to use, as he best could, the first opportunity when thoroughly alone. The plan of getting the scoundrel on the river was a bright idea which flashed across the ready-witted youth as soon as he learned Findlater's fear of the water. We need not stop to inquire whether, in the heat of passion, a clever device might not have become deadly earnest. Enough that the tale I have been telling is a true one. I am ignorant of Mr. Findlater's fate. Possibly he may yet fulfil the higher destiny promised by the hackneyed proverb to a man 'not born to be drowned.'

G. P.

MYSTERIES OF THE PANTOMIME.

A PEEP behind the scenes of a theatre, at the most ordinary times, affords a strange and curious spectacle. Nothing strikes the stranger so much as the quaint and dingy look of everything around him. The boarding of the stage, which, from the front, appears so well calculated for the delicate satin shoes of the dancer, is found, on near inspection, to be rugged and worn, and intersected on every hand by the projecting edges of traps. Right and left, and at the back, when the stage is clear of scenery, you see the rough, unplastered walls, blotched with dark greasy spots, where painters and carpenters have been accustomed to squeeze through behind close sets and drawn-off flats. Looking up among the jointed grooves projecting in all sorts of fantastic attitudes from the 'flies,' you conceive the notion of being in an unfinished house before the floors are laid, in which a large number of the old wooden telegraphs have been stored. The ropes and pulleys are suggestive of a ship, and the sky borders of a dyer's loft. The Bowers of Bliss and Palaces of Delight, which look so dazzling at night, are incomprehensible smudges at close quarters by day. Daylight takes all the romance out of the theatre. When the lamps have gone out and the grey dawn streams in through the dingy panes in the roof, the royal palace down below becomes a barn. The sun makes everything bright and gay—everything but the theatre. Thalia and Melpomene hold their license from Diana.

A rehearsal! what a strange affair is that! Here the envious daylight takes the romance, too, out of the actors. Your Divinity of the footlights comes in draggled from a long walk in the rain, and gets 'blown up' by the uncouth stage-manager — stage-managers are always uncouth, on principle—for being late. 'Now then, Miss Divinity, how much longer are we to be kept waiting for you?' Miss Divinity is carefully putting by her dripping umbrella and muddy goloshes in the prompter's box. Your comic favourite comes on with a comforter and a cough, grumbling at his part, for which he shows his contempt by blundering at every second word, and going up to the author and asking what it means. The piece is *intended to be a comic one*—'a regular screamer.' It sounds, as the words are mumbled over, as serious as a sermon. The comic man looks as gloomy as a vampire. The draggled divinity wears an aspect positively repulsive. The first old man is the embodiment of injury and insult combined. The second chambermaid is a walking effigy of disgust. The first young man, contemplating 'half a length,' is satisfied that a piece in which he has so little to say must prove a dead failure; the author begins to think so too. He thought his piece funny once; but not now. Daylight and rehearsal have taken all the fun out of it, and it will not be restored until Miss Divinity has put on her pretty dress, and the comic man has reddened his nose, and the lamps are lit. A stage rehearsal is at all times a sternly practical and business-like proceeding, and most particularly and peculiarly so when the business in hand is the harlequinade—the *comic scenes*, as they are called—of a pantomime.

The young people, ay, and the old people no less, who sit in the boxes and roar until the tears run down their cheeks at the frolicsome waggeries of the Clown, and the amusing discomfiture which he visits upon Pantaloon and the other destined martyrs of the drama, are little accustomed to reflect that all this extravagant nonsense has first of all to do with tears, not of laughter, but of pain and grief, and wearing toil. All this kicking, and slapping, and burning with imaginary red-hot pokers, has been a very serious and painful business for a fortnight or more before the opening night. The Clown looks a merry wag, does he not? A fellow of infinite jest—always ready for a mad prank. You should see him in his canvas trousers and slippers at rehearsal, practising the slap with Pantaloon, or

trying his back for a summersault. It is a long time since he has turned head over heels, and he is not without fears for his neck or some of his bones. Pantaloon and Harlequin are as nervous as he is, and the pyramid at the end of the 'rally' is a failure. They have not yet warmed to their work. They try and try again, and fail and fail again. Roused at length by the reproachful looks, if not words of the manager, they rush at it desperately—neck or nothing—and at last the dangerous feat is accomplished. What follows is easy after this point; since now the pantomimists have thrown all care for their bones behind them. Seeing that a Clown nightly runs the risk of maiming himself for life, it is somewhat astonishing that the character should be so much coveted. The market, however, is always overstocked with Clowns, and the overflow runs to Pantaloons. Don't imagine, for a moment, that the Pantaloon is always, or even occasionally, the old man he looks. He is generally a very young man, not unfrequently a mere youth of eighteen or twenty. He does not choose to be Pantaloon, you may be sure of that. Does the aspirant after histrionic honours take to the profession that he may play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern? No; Hamlet is his mark. But as we cannot all be Hamlets, some of us must play Rosencrantz and Guildenstern. So with pantomimists. They cannot all be Clowns. Some one must be Pantaloon and have his fingers pinched. But these *dii minores* will have their consolation some day. When Rosencrantz goes into the country he will be nothing short of Prince of Denmark, and Pantaloon—why, he will be Clown.

Pantomimists appear under so many different aspects that it is not easy to fix their identity and determine their normal condition. What Clowns and Pantaloons do in the summer, is, we believe, a mystery as profound as the authorship of Junius. All that is known about them is that they come out of their holes in a very dingy and dilapidated condition about the beginning of December, and, reversing the order of all floral things, burst into full bloom amid the frost and snow of January. A Clown is a sort of human crocus, and his full bloom takes the magnificent form of a light-coloured, fluffy greatcoat, combined with a glossy hat with a broadly-braided and turned-in brim, a splendid waistcoat, and studs, rings, and chains designed and executed on the largest scale known to the jeweller's art. His diamonds, if valued according to their size, should be worth a king's ransom, or, shall we say, a Colleen-Bawn fortune? It is the idiosyncrasy of the Clown in private life, always to make up for the heavy swell. Perhaps this may be only the natural rebound from the fool's dress, and the bumpkin's grin, and the knock-kneed walk of his footlight existence. View him in the street in all his glory. Does he look like a personage who could condescend to squash a baby or pocket a string of sausages? Can you imagine that magnificent personage turning heels overhead? Can you conceive a grand seigneur like this being troubled in his mind by the loss of a fourpenny bit? Can you imagine him stretching his mouth from ear to ear, and asking you 'how's your mother?' If he were to sing, would you expect 'Tippetywitchet' or 'Hot Codlings' from him? No: *Piff-paff*, or *Suon la Tromba*. Nor does the Clown forgot his dignity even when he wears the paint. Though the fluffy greatcoat, and the braided hat, and the Brobdignagian jewellery are stowed away in the dressing-room, the self-importance is all here, asserting itself royally through the thick coat of bismuth, the moment he makes his exit and reaches the wing. See him come off from bonneting a policeman, stealing a leg of mutton, or tripping-up a baker. He is no longer Clown, but *Mr.* Grimaldi Jones; and the subordinates at the wing say, 'Sir,' to him; and his dresser obsequiously asks him if he would *please* to change; and to all these respectful addresses he replies in the lofty style of a Don Magnifico. No eminent tragedian is more exacting

of respect than the favourite Clown. And sometimes in these days he gets as high pay as the eminent tragedian. Pretty actresses, we know, are apt to crush the hearts of young gallants in the stalls. But did it ever enter any one's mind to conceive that a knock-kneed, wide-mouthed clown was, in any point of view, adapted to crush the hearts of ladies in the boxes? We should say, never. But still it is a fact, that Clown graces have an attraction for the fair sex. We once knew a Clown who was taken a fancy to by a lady —a real lady, of property, too. She married him, and next boxing-night the Clown came to the theatre in his own carriage. He had now money enough for his support without acting, but his wife liked to see him play Clown, and it was part of the matrimonial compact that he should continue his profession.

Pantaloons, when they have given up all hope of becoming Clowns and have settled down into the lean and slippered existence, exhibit an idiosyncrasy of an opposite kind. They do not aspire to be swells On the contrary, they affect extreme plainness of dress, and sometimes even seediness This latter, however, may not always be an affectation. The Pantaloon carries into private life the passive characteristics which distinguish him on the stage. His demeanour, both in the street and in society, is that of one who feels conscious that his destiny is to suffer discomfiture and be put upon He appears prepared on all occasions to take and give the slap, and to suffer any accident that may happen to him with an equal mind The force of habit remains strong within him long after he has retired from the boards. It was once our high privilege to be on intimate terms with a Pantaloon— one of the old school. On a certain occasion when we took tea with him, a clothes-horse fell against him as he was in the act of buttering his muffin. In an instant he dropped the knife, gave the slap, and slued his muffin across the table at his son and heir (aged twelve), who, receiving it in the eye, returned the slap with a promptitude which clearly showed the direction of his ambition. We shall never forget the meeting which took place between our Pantaloon and a retired Clown of his former acquaintance The Clown had become a master chimney-sweep, and had grown stout, and wore broad cloth. Pantaloon (also in his Sunday clothes), viewing him from the door of a hostelry, cried out in a joyful voice, 'What, Tommy, is that you?' 'What, Joey!' cried the former Clown—rushing to embrace his old *collaborateur*—'Tip us the slap, old boy' And then and there on the muddy pavement, and in their suits of broad cloth, the habit of old days came back upon them, and they flapped and slapped and turned head over heels, and then grasped each other by the hand with a warmth of friendliness that was quite refreshing to witness.

It perhaps never occurred to you, Materfamilias, sitting smiling in the dress circle, with your olive branches around you, that Columbine, who is frisking and pirouetting before you, is herself a materfamilias, and that while she is tripping about here in short gauze petticoats, she has little ones of her own tossing about in their beds in some cheerless lodging, anxiously waiting for mother's step on the stairs She and Harlequin play the lovers well, do they not? They are all youth and grace, and smiles and airiness Yes, and they have been man and wife these dozen years, and have had their cares and their joys, their gladness and their sorrow, like the real people who sit around you. It is well to look at them as real people. We can the better appreciate the praiseworthy efforts which they make—in the only way they can—to do their duty And what a strange sphere it is from our point of view! The eldest of Harlequin and Columbine—a youth of fourteen—is now standing at the wing—he is call-boy — witnessing his father and his mother dancing. Fancy yourself, Materfamilias, with Paterfamilias in those clothes, you in the short gauze petticoats, and he in the spangles, doing a cracovienne in the presence of your son! Thank your stars that you have better

work to do; but it is not stormer nor harder work than this.

The individualities of pantomimists are exhibited in a striking light at a morning rehearsal, when the unromantic daylight streams down upon them. One thing perplexes you very much, and that is, among the motley crowd at the wing to determine who is who. Two men in canvas trousers with white skull-caps on their heads are busying themselves in front. Who are they? Clown and Pantaloon. But which is which? It would be difficult to guess from their present appearance, for they have left off the clothes of the outer world, and have not yet endued themselves in the distinguishing garments of the pantomime. And this crowd of men, women, and children of all ages, sizes, and apparent conditions—who are they? Some of the men are of clerical aspect and wear black, somewhat rusty, and shiny hats of the respectable chimney-pot order. A good many of them are grizzled with age, and bear the stamp of care upon their brows. The women are a thin, poorly-clad, anxious-looking set, most of them with children in their charge—some of them little mites of things, not more than three or four years old. There is an air of combined poverty and respectability about this motley crowd which sadly puzzles the stranger. He would scarcely guess that they are there to represent shopkeepers, and policemen, and butchers, and bakers, and the other personages of the pantomime, whom it is the business of the Clown to buffet and ill use. They have had an anxious time of it for a week past for fear they should not be engaged. You may have seen them in a crowd, waiting round the stage door in the cold, day after day. So anxious have they been for an engagement at a shilling a night, or perhaps less, to be tripped up, and bonneted, and burned with pokers, and banged with shutters! The moment it got wind that there was a frog scene in the piece, the manager was inundated with offers of children. The mothers of the neighbourhood went from one to another, and spread the report of frogs, and the would-be representatives of frogs came upon the manager like a plague of Egypt. And when, at length, the order went forth, 'no more frogs,' there was wailing and lamentation outside the stage door in the cold. It is curious, almost pitiful, to see little children, who can barely speak, sent on to the stage to amuse others—they who have never had a toy to amuse themselves. We have seen little human frogs and human rats hushed to sleep in the corner of a dressing-room until it was time to put them into their pasteboard skins.

Fancy that, Materfamilias—a babe just weaned carning its mother's Sunday dinner! We know two little, chubby, black-eyed things, a boy and a girl, whose heads scarcely reach above our knee, who have been earning the Sunday dinner of a whole family for three months past. The independence of their behaviour in the theatre, owing to their childish unconsciousness of any authority, forms a striking contrast to the obsequiousness of the grown-up employés. One day we saw the manager passing through behind the scenes, and carpenters and scene-shifters made way for him, and high-placed officials and leading gentlemen and ladies bowed and kotowed with respectful awe. So far the progress of the manager was that of a terrible potentate through the ranks of his subjects. But presently the great man entered the green-room, and there our two little, chubby, black-eyed friends were engaged in boisterous play, jumping on and off the sofas and chairs. Did they stop their play and sneak away into a corner with scared looks? Not they. They continued their romping and jumping quite unconcerned, and when the manager told them in awful tones to be quiet, the little black-eyed boy said 'Shan't!' and the little black-eyed girl ran against the great man, and slapping him in a child's wayward manner, plainly told him this bit of her little innocent mind—'I don't like you!' Bless their little hearts, they had no idea of a great Bashaw of a manager who held engagements in his hands and paid salaries on Saturday. They

only knew that mother brought them there, that they played little frogs, and that somehow or other—through mother—money came of it, and a nice baked dinner on Sunday.

It is proverbial that one half the world does not know how the other half lives. The rehearsal of a pantomime sometimes helps One-half-the-world's ignorance. Among that motley, mouldy throng of supernumeraries waiting at the wing there are men who have been educated and brought up as gentlemen; there are decayed tradesmen; there are clerks and shopmen out of employment; there are poor artisans of the superior class; there are faded coryphées who once upon a time were pets of the ballet and the admired divinities of the stalls. Most of them have had a theatrical connection all their lives. The decayed tradesman has served the theatre perhaps; or he has had customers among actors. The clerk may have dabbled in theatrical copying. These are all thoroughly up in their business, and take their kicks and slaps and trippings-up with methodical and unruffled precision. For a new comer, however, the ordeal is a painful one, and if he be a superior person, it is rarely that he passes through it with success; neither his will nor his poverty will make him consent to shake his leg when a red-hot poker is put in his pocket. A case in point rises in our memory. The usual front scene of shops was set, and a pale anxious-looking young man, who stood in the front of the crowd at the wing, was ordered by the Clown to 'go on.' The young man advanced nervously and the Clown followed and put the painted poker in his pocket. The youth walked on placidly and made his exit, at the opposite side, as if nothing had happened. Of course the Clown was disgusted. 'That will never do; come back.' The young man came back, rather sulkily, and went through the business again, but without expressing the desired amount of comic pain—indeed, without expressing any at all. The Clown was now losing his temper, and he roared out—'Now, would you walk off as quietly as that if you had a red-hot poker in your pocket? That's a red-hot poker, young man; look at me.' Here the Pantaloon practised on the clown, and the Clown went into the most exquisite contortions. 'Now then, try again;' and the Clown roughly took the young man by the collar to bring him back to his place, but he had scarcely touched him before the young man, whose face was scarlet with indignation, first 'squared up' at Clown, and then bursting away from him, rushed precipitately off the stage and out of the theatre. 'Ah!' said Clown, 'he's too much of a gentleman for the work.' Which was just the truth.

A prime minister during the time of a great international difficulty is the popular *beau-idéal* of a harassed man, but we question if any prime minister, at such a time, ever worked harder, or suffered more anxiety, than does the property-man, or the stage-manager of a theatre during the production of a pantomime. For the information of such as are not versed in theatrical affairs, we may explain that 'properties' is the name given to all the articles used in the business of a scene. Tables, chairs, bedsteads, trick-boxes, carrots, snowballs, fairy wands, seaweed, locomotive engines, tobacco pipes, babies, thunder and lightning, and a thousand other things too numerous to mention, are included under the denomination. All these things have to be made and got ready, sometimes on the shortest notice. It is rarely, indeed, that they are all finished until some days after the opening night. We once heard an author complimenting a property-man for having done his work so well and in so short a time. 'You must have had hard work over it.' 'Hard work! Why, sir, I call this nothing; when I was getting up the pantomime at the —— Theatre I never had my clothes off for four days and nights before it was produced, nor for four days and nights after it was produced—except to play Harlequin.' That was his only refreshment. Nor does the property-man's anxiety cease when the work of manufacture is

over. Every night, when we are shaking our sides at the mad pranks which the Clown plays with his canvas turnips and calico sausages, he is toiling and sweating behind, getting all these things ready. Each scene requires its own particular set of properties, and when one set is taken away another must immediately be brought in to supply its place. The red herrings and the ducks, and the quartern loaves which fly about so miscellaneously in front, must all be in their proper places at the wing. Then there are innumerable trick-boxes to drag out and prepare, one little boy has to be put into one, and another little boy into another, and great care must be taken that all the strings and flaps are in proper working order. A vast amount of strong language is required to help these multifarious arrangements to their due consummation. A stage manager will tell you that it is as impossible to do without strong language during the performance of a pantomime, as it is to command a man-of-war without it, in a gale of wind. Speak 'genteelly' to your scene-shifter or your foremast-man, and a trap sticks, or away go your topsails But the stage-manager and the prompter have plenty of work of their own to do besides the 'ungenteel' urging of others. Look at that elaborate business plot which the prompter has spread out before him in his box. Every leap, every flap change, every trap trick is there marked down; and the prompter must be ready on the instant to give the signal to those working them behind the flats, on the flies above, and in the galleries under the stage. A second too late with a signal and the trick is spoiled, or, worse still, some one is hurt by being shot against a shored trap or a buttoned door The dangers to which pantommists are exposed are more serious and more constantly imminent than the public have any idea of. Supposing, when the Harlequin leaps through the trap in the flat, that the four men appointed to catch him are not at their posts. Why, poor Harlequin comes down with a crash on the hard boards, and perhaps maims himself for life. It is one of the great grievances of pantomimists that they cannot get these men to attend to their duties, unless by constantly feeing them, or treating them to beer. There have been many instances where these men have absented themselves on purpose to 'serve out' a Clown or Pantaloon who has refused or neglected to comply with their exactions. It is a pity that the law does not provide a special punishment—and it could not be too severe—for such criminal neglect and wilful malice.

Having attempted to give some idea of the vast resources which are called into play, of the anxious and heavy labour which is gone through, and of the serious dangers which are encountered, during the performance of a pantomime, it only remains for us to speak of the great mystery which is involved in the concoction and designing of the so-called comic business. We know all about the opening. We are informed a month beforehand that such and such a popular author will write the introduction, and in due time it is presented to us—in return for sixpence—in the form of a book, with the author's name and a record of his dramatic triumphs on the title-page. But who is the author of the comic business?—the opening is not regarded as comic—who arranges those sometimes smart hits at the passing events of the day which are pantomimically carried out by Clown and Pantaloon? From what fertile and facetious brain proceeds the notion of turning a sack of alum into quartern loaves, Mr. Spurgeon into a gorilla, and transforming the label on a box of American pills, into 'National Debt 1,000,000,000 dollars?' Does any one imagine that these are impromptu funniments; or that their design is left to Clown and Pantaloon? Perhaps the matter never occupies a thought. Be it known, however, that there are authors of the harlequinade, as well as of the burlesque opening, and that all the business is written down on paper with equal minuteness and care, though the production is never printed in a book, and the name of

the author is never glorified in the newspapers. We have, at this moment, two or three MS. scenes before us; and we are about to break through an envious silence which has hitherto been preserved with regard to such important work. We have no space to review these clever productions at length, but some extracts may serve as curiosities of dramatic literature. Scene number 2, manufactory, &c., is illustrated by a pen and ink sketch in the MS.:

'Enter Clown and Pant. Man × with boards,' (× be it understood, means 'crosses') 'written on, "Just arrived, the New American Anticipating Machine." C. purchases it, and they place it against door of warehouse and exit' (*sic*). 'An old gentleman enters with little dog. Pant. gives him bill. Clown steals dog. Old gent. exits. Clown pops dog into machine, turns handle, and pulls out from other side long row of sausages. Gent. returns, calls and whistles for dog. The sausages commence wagging, à la dog's tail. Gent. frightened, and runs off. Baker's man places board at door, "Bakings carefully done." A boy brings on dish and cover. Clown says, "All right," and places it on c. of stage. Calls Pant. He takes off cover, and discovers a sheep's head and potatoes. He is about to steal one when the sheep's eyes become illuminated and work. C., frightened, pops on cover and runs off.'

Here is a hit at the faculty:—

'Clown enters with a shabby hat, old coat, and bludgeon (à la burglar) from chemist's shop. A gent comes out of door. Clown walks behind him, steals book from pocket—at same time policeman enters—secures him. Clown begs for mercy—takes out a scroll, written on, "*I'm a victim to kleptomania.*" Policeman holds up another scroll—"*I'm the cure for that.*" Har. waves: Clown's scroll changes to '*Twelve months' hard labour.*"'

The next scene may be described as Ethnological, Zoological, and Theological. We quote again from our cherished MS.:—

'Man from curiosity shop brings on large book which masks in bale. On the outside, "*History of Gorilla.*" He opens book, and shows picture of the animal. Ladies and gents. come on at different wings, and form a half circle. From shop a gent. enters dressed à la Spurgeon. He commences, "Ladies and gentlemen, this is the gorilla, an animal that so closely resembles the human species"—the roar of the animal is heard behind the book: they all start, ladies scream, man drops the book. The bale has dropped—discovers the Clown made up as a gorilla—they are all going to exit—gent. holds up scroll—"*Don't be alarmed; I'm the Perfect Cure.*" Band play the tune—Spurgeon and Gorilla dance in front—the rest form a line and dance to the music. At the end Clown lifts up the mask—all pitch into Spurgeon, and exit.'*

Too bad of you, Mr. Comic-scene-writer. Why 'pitch into' Mr. Spurgeon?

And now we will conclude with the statement of a fact which we suspect is 'not generally known,' viz., that the pantomime which finds so many people in bread at Christmas-time is in many instances the sole sustaining prop of the House. At some theatres there is no profit made except at pantomime-time. All the rest of the year it is hard struggle to make both ends meet until Boxing Night comes again. And when the curtain comes down for the last time on the concluding glories of the pantomime of this Christmas, the manager will send for the property-man and the scene painter, and will instruct them to begin without a day's delay to prepare for the next, which will be performed for the first time on the 26th of December, 1862.

H.

* These scenes are the composition of Mr. William Smith of the Royal Adelphi Theatre.

THE ROMANCE OF THE WIRY-HAIRED TERRIER.

A Tale of Village Society.

CHAPTER I.

SAINT FRANCIS of Assisi, that most loving of men, when walking in the forests, used sometimes (out of the very exuberance of his admiration of God for all the signs of an infinite goodness and beauty which he discerned about him) to apostrophize the birds, beasts, and insects as 'his brethren.' I was mentioning this one day to a neighbouring parson — a stanch Protestant who only just allows the title of saint to the apostles themselves. We two were walking, like St. Francis, in a wood: it was the shortest cut from my village to the railway. I was astonished to find my somewhat thin arm suddenly in the tight clutch of brother Westman's iron-like and massive hand. It was a clutch that arrested me whether I would or not: I was compelled to stand still.

'Then,' said he, striking the stem of a young beech with his knotty thorn-stick, and bringing down a shower of bright drops upon us both —'Then Francis of Assisi redeems a thousand of them. They *are* our brethren: at least, *one* lot of beasts, dogs are: of that I'm sure.'

'Well,' said I, laughing, 'I know a good many heresies are delivered Sunday after Sunday from Beesham pulpit, but I never guessed that this —what shall I call it?—Franciscan Pantheism?—was among them.'

'I believe,' answered he, 'to your disgrace, there is only one dog on your premises, and he is the gardener's, and not yours.'

'Report says that there are twenty on your premises. In keeping such a kennel, you no doubt delude yourself that you are ministering to the necessities of *the brethren*. The next time you fulminate against candles on the altar, I shall repay you by taking for my text St. Paul's excellent advice in Philippians iii. 2, "Beware of dogs."'

'Report is an awful liar. Report actually says that a whole series of young ladies have been engaged to me, and have broken the engagement, one and all, solely because they could not stand the test, "Love me, love my dogs."'

'May some one quickly come,' said I, 'with whom the fatness of your benefice will outweigh the noise and plague of your kennel.' After we had continued such banter for some distance, Westman stopped it by crying—

'Well, well—all that I say of dogs I will substantiate. I have seen a dog express feelings which most of us think solely and peculiarly human.'

'Tell me when and where.'

'I was walking one day from Beesham to the station. It was too wet to go through the woods, so I went by Euston Hill. When I had reached the top of the hill, I heard the melancholy howling of a dog in pain; and to a dog lover, let me tell you, that is one of the most grievous sounds in creation, what you might call, in your Gregorian jargon, the *tonus miserabilissimus*. I saw at the bottom of the hill one of Farmer Joyce's olive waggons, standing still. The carter and his boy were stooping to the ground, looking at something very intently. So I saw at once that some poor creature had been run over by them. When I came up to them I found that the carter was old Sam Evans, the Ranter preacher. Sam always remembers his profession in the midst of his business. So, touching his hat to me, he said—

'"It's a mercy it hav'n't a soul, sir, to go out of the world so sudden with all its sins on its head."

'At this speech, the boy gave me a sort of wink and shrug. On the strength of his coming to the Sunday school and being regularly at church, he supposed there was a fellowship of sentiment between myself and him, to which Sam, as a Methodist, was an alien.

'The dog was nearly at its last

gasp. I made no answer to Sam's sermon, or the lad's criticism of it, but stood by silently and watched the poor creature die. It was a little wiry-haired Scotch terrier. I shall never forget its last look. No soul, indeed? It was full of nothing but soul. It expressed the most deeply-felt remorse at thus dying and leaving its duty undone. It seemed to say, "If I could but live, only just long enough to fulfil the task I am sent to do!" '

'Stop, stop!' I cried. 'Give me time to breathe. What man but you ever read such a complaint in the face of a dog? And pray, how do you know that his eyes expressed *that*, and nothing else? What duty had this wise dog left undone?'

'If you had been patient, you would have heard. When the poor creature had given its last move, and lay quite still, I lifted it up—tenderly, as we ought to touch everything that is dead. Turning over its head, I saw a folded piece of paper tucked into its collar, just under the neck I opened it. There were these seven words in a girl's handwriting—"*My own dear—I will, I will*" These few words, telling so little, yet so much; the hiding of them under the dog's collar; the unreckoned death of the faithful messenger; the extraordinary look which I saw in the dog's eyes,—all affected me strangely, and I said to old Sam—

'"Perhaps, Sam, he had as much soul as you hav ." '

'Which heresy Sam no doubt disproved in his next sermon. If so, the schismatic for once was a truer teacher than the orthodox. How long ago was this?'

'About nine months. But I must run. See, there is the steam shooting upward behind Barker's Wood: the train is only a mile from the station. Good-bye.'

I walked on alone until I came to the Croft Farm. There, in the doorway, knelt Mrs. Dawes, a woman who is always neat, and nearly always cross, scrubbing vigorously: she was most likely re-cleaning what her servant had already cleaned.

'Good afternoon, Mrs. Dawes,' said I. 'Did I see you at church last Sunday?'

'No, sir, I believe not,' she answered, rising; and wiping her hands in her apron, she gave me three half-dried fingers. 'There's so much vexation and trouble, sir, one can't go out as one'd wish. There was one of Sir Walter's foxes comeon Saturday night and took off my gander.'

'Indeed; I am sorry to hear it.' I could not exactly see, however, why this should have kept the farmer's wife from church, both morning and afternoon. But she gave me no time to say so. 'Then there's our James, sir,' she went on; 'he as once used to be so much help to us, and was always more cheerful than me or the master, he's so down about something or other he never opens his mouth. "Yes an' no," "please an' thank ye," is a'most all the words my son has spoke in this house these nine months.'

'Nine months?' said I to myself, almost unconsciously; 'surely James Dawes has nothing to do with the letter on the dog'

Mrs. Dawes seemed to catch the last word, 'dog.' 'Yes, he did lose a dog about that time, sir, but he frets about more than that.'

'Well, there is no one like a mother, I am sure, Mrs Dawes, for getting a secret out of her son. You must find out what makes him so miserable. I came to ask him to help me again in the night school in the coming winter He used to be so interested in the boys there.'

'Ah, he had cause to be interested last winter; I doubt if he'll be this.'

This was a mystery to me. However, I thought I had better ask James himself to solve it. So I merely said, 'Can I see James? Where is he?'

'I expect he's with the master down by the wood-side. There's a timber sale on Friday, and they're seeing to the trees.' And Mrs. Dawes dropped again upon her knees, impatient of losing a minute too much from her work.

'Good day, Mrs. Dawes,' said I. 'See if you can't find out what troubles your son, and help him.'

'Bless you, sir,' she answered; 'we know as well as he do. He'd take it from you, perhaps, sir, if

you'd be so good as to tell him the folly of it. I'm sure I've scolded and angered with him till I thought I should drop; and so has his father.'

I shrugged my shoulders at this method of helping one in distress, and turning away, walked back through the wood. I had not gone very far before I met James and his father coming slowly along. Dawes himself, a tall bony man, walked first—his head erect, his hands in his pocket—whistling. James was lagging behind, his eyes bent to the ground.

'Ay, Jim, here's the parson,' said Dawes, stopping short, and turning round to his son. 'This country hav'n't made you fat yet, sir. I told you it wouldn't. There's only one fat man hereabouts, and he was fat before he come'

The farmer meant this for dry pleasantry, so I smiled at it, perhaps somewhat forcedly; and then I said, 'You have not paid in your subscription to the schools yet, Mr. Dawes.'

'No, sir, I really can't afford it any more. Jim's help must be my subscription for time to come' Every one in the neighbourhood, except Dawes himself, confesses him to be the richest farmer for miles round. And he is adding in no sparing measure to his profits every year. Fearful, I suppose, that I might recur to the money subject, he at once resumed his whistle, and trudged on.

'I'm afraid, sir, I can't pay my part, the more help, this winter,' said James. 'I expect you have been to the house to look me up about it.'

'Yes,' I answered. 'You may as well walk a little way with me, and talk it over.'

James Dawes turned without a word, and strode silently by my side. At last I said, 'I *did* come to talk about the night school, James; but I have something else to say now. Your mother tells me you are very wretched about something you have been doing. May I ask you what it is? Can I give you any advice or help?'

'It's past your help, sir.' And James stopped short, and seizing up a large clod of dry clay, threw it with all his force against an elm trunk. It fell into a hundred pieces. 'It's as finished, sir, and as broken up to nothing as that lump of clay.'

I have always valued myself a little too much upon my intuition. I suppose all of us like to think that we can see into the inner connection of things outwardly unconnected. So now, putting together that nine months' time and death of a dog of which friend Westman had told me, with that nine months' space and loss of a dog of which Mr. Dawes had told me, I very naturally concluded that the dead dog was James Dawes's, and was in some way connected with James's present misery. Boldly taking the connection for granted, I rushed without preface *in medias res*.

'James,' said I, 'a little wiry-haired terrier of yours was killed about nine months ago.'

James started, and looked at me, his fine face as white as wood ashes. But I was prepared for that; and so, drawing fresh conviction from his sudden pallor and his strange glance of inquiry, I held my peace, and waited for him to speak.

'Not exactly that, sir,' he said, after some pause. 'I had a dog about nine months ago, and I hav'n't the dog now. It *was* a little wiry-haired terrier. He was not killed, sir; but he *is* far from here by this time. He'll never run along this wood path again.'

'That dog *is* dead,' I answered. 'Mr. Westman saw it die It was run over at the bottom of Easton Hill by Farmer Joyce's waggoner, old Sam the Ranter.'

I shall not readily forget the sudden change of James's face when he heard this. The stolid and dull look, as of misery grudgingly but necessarily acquiesced in, which had possessed his countenance before, quite passed away; and in its stead there came a look of most pitiable bewilderment, and of quick and lively pain.

'*Then*,' cried he, striking his closed fists together, '*she has never had it*. Here it has been my only comfort all these months to think

something I loved was with her, following her and going before her in her walks, taking care of her for me; sitting by her in her room, and licking her hand; turning her heart to think of me in her lonely moments; and sometimes, perhaps, speaking *for* me too.'

'James,' I said, 'I do not know who *she* is; but I do know that the dog had a message from her to you, when it was run over.'

'Ah, sir,' he answered, with a forced smile, 'what message could the poor dumb thing bring me which I did not know already?'

I could not any longer play—for so I seemed to be doing—with the poor fellow's wretchedness and love, so I told him of the paper, and the message of love written upon it. 'It was certainly an invitation,' said I, 'an invitation, I am sure, which, by your present unhappiness, if you had only received, you would have obeyed. It is therefore, you see, a most hopeful case. Whoever *she* is, she loves you, it is plain. Your failing to answer her call must have cost her as much misery as it has you. Cheer up, James! Your duty and your inclination go together, you see.'

James, if anything, however, looked duller than before. 'Why, sir, by this time,' said he, 'she is in some island in the Pacific.'

'Island in the Pacific! What! Is it Ellen Knight?'

James silently nodded affirmation.

CHAPTER II.

Ellen Knight had been the teacher in my girls' school—the best teacher I had ever known. She always seemed to delight in this place, and in her charge here, whom she loved more like a young mother, or an elder sister, than a schoolmistress. All her views and talk of her future life were connected with this parish. I should as soon have believed that Farmer Dawes would leave his profitable and paying farm as that Ellen would leave her girls and infants. I was, therefore, all the more surprised when she one day asked me for a letter to the new missionary bishop of the Raleigh Islands, who had advertised for such a person as herself to sail out with him and his priests. I argued against her new choice in several long talks. But it was all fruitless; her firm mind was set upon it. She would never tell me *why* she chose it. To this hour of my walk with James, it had been a mystery to me, and had often risen to my mind amongst other difficult problems in meditative hours. I had never in the least suspected that James Dawes had anything to do with it.

'And you love her, James?' I need not have asked; nor did James give me any answer. 'That she also loves you,' I went on, 'I see there is no doubt.'

'She did *then*, sir,' answered he.

'She is not the girl to change James, or she would never have made such a sacrifice. Why ever did she go? What wilful, witless babes both of you were not to have told me I never saw a sign of love between you.'

'I thought everybody saw it, sir I felt most convinced that you did.'

'I am very blind, I fear, in such matters,' I answered. 'I begin to see, I think, part of the reason why you separated. Your mother——'

'Father and mother, too, sir, did all they could to break it off. But if you'll pardon me, I'll tell you how it was. When you first asked me to help in the night-school, I managed well enough with the reading and writing, but I was so backward in summing that I found some of the lads themselves understood a deal more about it. You see, sir father likes to manage all the money matters by himself, so that I lost all practice in that way. I really couldn't correct the sums. I knew it was little good to go on teaching while it was so; for as soon as ever they had found out that they knew more than myself in one thing, they wouldn't have learnt much from me in other things. So I determined to get a few lessons in arithmetic. I daren't go to the schoolmaster, for he has never much liked me since you asked him to sit with the school a service-time, and put me in his ol

place in the choir. And so one evening I asked Ellen if she would mind helping me; and, begging her to keep it secret, I offered to pay her for the trouble. She promised to let no one know of it; but she wouldn't take any pay.

'I used to go to the school-house two evenings every week. My little dog was always my companion; and Ellen used to have one or two of the school girls with her when I got there. I admired her somehow for that at once, there was something so self-respectful and womanlike in it.

'But I could not stop long at admiring Ellen, sir. I soon began almost to forget what I went for—the arithmetic—though, indeed, we never spent a minute in anything else, and I always left as soon as ever my exercises were looked over, and fresh lessons set me. After I had been very few times, I found myself looking forward to it all the other days of the week as the time of seeing Ellen. At the plough, in the farm-yard or the barn, at market and sales—wherever I was, there was always the thought of Ellen, like sunshine, with me, making me happy and cheerful to every one; till I began to be miserable lest any one else should also find out what she was, and love her, and be loved by her, and take her from me. I never thought of her loving me; for she seemed to know so much more than I do, and to speak so well, and more like a lady to my view, sir, than fit for us farmers of these parts to think of as a wife. It was the greatest joy to me to set a chair for her, or to open the door and let her pass out first, or to put by her books, or to pay her any such little duties. I used so much to long that she would some day touch my hand with hers when we were at work; and one evening, when she did it by chance, and quite unexpectedly, I almost thought I should faint. My fingers were over the slate, and she just pushed them away gently to look at the figures. After that, many a time, sir, I put them so on the purpose that she might touch them, till I was afraid she would know it. But those dear touches, when they came, only made me long for something more. All day long I used to be seeing that hand of hers, in my fancy, before me—for I never dared look at her face hardly for fear she should find me out.

'She *had* found you out, my good James,' said I, 'long before you thought, I am sure.'

'Yes, sir. She told me so afterwards. Many a night as I lay in bed I've thought I saw that hand before me over the slate, and I've longed to kiss it; and I've said to myself, "Some day I'm sure I shall kiss it, before I know what I'm doing." And just so it fell out, sir. I was sitting down one evening, and she was standing behind me, leaning over me, with one hand resting upon the slate-frame. She was explaining some mistake to me; but I was not thinking at all of what she was saying, but only of that dear hand I saw before me, and whose hand it was, and what a great joy it would be to me to give it only just one kiss. Then suddenly, sir, hardly knowing what I did, I stooped down, and gave it one kiss. In an instant I was trembling all over; for I thought, "Now I have ruined myself, and I must rush away at once." Oh what a surprise it was, sir, when Ellen burst out crying, and, drawing her hands to her face, fell on my shoulder. I went on speaking as fast as words would come. I don't know at all what I said. It was all like a wonderful dream to me; I hardly believed it was really happening. All the while her face lay on my shoulder, and she was sobbing, till I raised her head and looked into her eyes. I was roused up by my little terrier licking my hand; and then I saw, too, the little girl who had come into the room with Ellen standing with her back to the fire, and her doll hanging head downwards, and she herself staring at us with wide open eyes full of wonder.

'Ellen sprang up, and ran to the fireplace and kissed the child. I followed her, and we stood there side by side, and talked a long while. That evening we engaged—and yet no, sir—it came so unexpected, and without our preparation, that we felt rather as if *Some One* engaged us

to each other. Of fathers, mothers, or schools we never thought. When I left, we appointed to meet each other the next day after morning school.

'When I got home that night I *was* surprised. Father and mother told me everything about it; at least they told me all that they knew—that I used to go at nights to see the schoolmistress; and they added to it their own guess—that she, as they said, had been a long time setting her cap at me. I was angry to have such a thing said of that modest creature; I could hardly bear it; and I was going up to bed to get out of the way of using bitter words about it, when father shouted after me, "It's no use, you know, for you to think of marrying her: neither of you has a penny. I'm as poor as a church mouse, and so is she. You know who you might have, if you'd only try, and better this farm when I'm gone." I only wished them good night, and said that I hadn't thought as yet about marrying.

'When I went to the school-house the next day at twelve o'clock, I found Ellen crying. Mother had not lost a moment; she had been there before school began, and rated Ellen fearfully, and told her she should not have her son Mother made quite a different story to father's, as she always does about our money. She said that father had been doing more than well many a long year, and that there was a deal stored up for me, and that I was like to be a rich man some day if I had my senses, and that it wasn't fit I should marry any one with nothing—(she meant with no money)—to bring me.

'Ellen was as surprised at any talk of marrying as I had been. We had only thought of our love. If I did marry her, mother said, father had made up his mind to turn me adrift.

'I said I would gladly bear that for her sake. But she took it quite differently. She said she daren't break our family in pieces; and told me about her own brother, who married against his father's and mother's will, and had got into bad ways, and was at last transported; and that her father died of shame and grief, and her mother had never known a happy hour since. She would not be persuaded by any of my reasons: she would speak of nothing but my obedience to father and mother; and all I could get her to do was to let me come that day week and see if she would change, after thinking it over in all its length and breadth.

'At last, when that day came, I called upon her for the last time, without any hope. The first thing she told me was, that she had engaged herself to go out with the Missionary Bishop of Raleigh's Island. She refused to see me any more. She said that she could not bear another meeting, that God had given her her duty now, and would punish her if she shrank from it. She told me that she would never cease to love me; and I made her promise—for I was almost mad, sir—that if she repented what she was now doing, soon or late,—in a day, or in ten, or twenty, or thirty years even,—that she was to write to me, and tell me to come; and that, if I was alive, I should be waiting for her.

'I wanted to give her something for a remembrance, but she wouldn't take anything I could think of. At last, after I had gone on begging her a long time to choose something or other, she said—

'"I should like that dog of yours better than anything, James, if I may have it. It will make me think so of you, and it will take care of me for you." She would pretend to the last, sir, that it would come all right between us some day.'

Here James was forced to stop, for the noble fellow had half sobbed and half spoken the last words. I waited for some time in respectful silence, and then said—

'By God's special appointing, I have little doubt, she chose the dog. The dog will yet unite you again.'

'But it is dead, sir.'

'Yes, but its message is alive. She is still saying to you the words on the dog's paper,—"*My own dear.*" She is still answering to all your questions and doubts,—"*I will, I will.*" You see that if the dog had

lived—but I wound you to say this —she would be your wife.'

'Ah, sir, she meant that when she wrote it perhaps, just at the moment of going away, when the misery was all fresh. But I'm afraid, sir, she now thinks it was excitement, and has settled down quietly to her duty before her where she is.'

We had reached the parsonage gate by this time, and James had said the last words while my hands were on the latch. I had immediate business of another sort, so I could not ask him to come in. I appointed a time for him, however, in the evening, and promised to think over the course to be adopted, probably, I said, a letter from myself to the Bishop, and another to Ellen.

James Dawes then left me. Catching wildly at the hope I had put before him, a little of his old cheer came back into his face. I, for my part, began to be ashamed somewhat of my vaunted intuition, in not having caught at the nine months since Ellen's departure, nor put that with the nine months of my friend's. I was somewhat less hopeful about the effect of a letter to the Bishop than I had feigned to be. I was at college with Bishop Burke. He was there known as a thorough Roman; (not for his doctrinal or ritual bent, but) for his fearful love of law, order, strictness, his resolute preaching of obedience, of the immutability of covenants, and the like. I began to apprehend that the main light in which he would regard the whole matter would be this,—that Ellen had sacredly devoted herself to a certain work for a certain term of years, and that no repentance could dissolve the obligation.

CHAPTER III.

You may guess my surprise, good reader, when on asking for my letters, the maid brought me only one, and that sealed with his lordship's well-known seal. I soon had it open, and read as follows:—

'Tongta-busta, Raleigh's Islands,
August 28, 1860.

'REV. SIR,

'We arrived here a week ago. The carpenter, the three clergy and myself have spent the whole of our time, as yet, in putting up our little wooden cathedral-hut.

'I have been exceedingly disappointed with the young woman who was lately the mistress of your girls' school, and whom I accepted chiefly on your testimonial. To do her justice, she is in character and fitness everything we could desire for our urgent and difficult work; she has mastered two of our languages on the long voyage out. But it seems that she had a lover in your village, a most estimable young man, whom she foolishly, and on quite insufficient grounds, rejected. To him, it seems, she is under engagement, on the first motion of repentance, to signify the same to him. This she is now doing by a letter which will arrive in England, I trust, with this. But she is in great distress, because, she had already done so—in a strange manner—in a previous letter, to which she has had no answer. The young man presented her at parting with a favourite dog of his. She placed a letter within the collar of this dog, and sent him from London by train, with orders that he should be put out at Glisthorpe station. We none of us knew anything of this romance until we had crossed the line. The dog, I suppose, was stolen; for the young man never appeared on the ship.

'My own impression is that the girl ought to remain for a year or two, at the very least. They might settle everything happily in letters. Mrs. Burke, however, *insists*, with pardonable womanly weakness, that she shall be returned the moment we have an assurance that the young man desires it. To this I agree most gladly; merely adding the condition, that the day of her return must be put off until the day of the arrival of a really fit substitute. I have written by this post to my commissary, asking him to advertise for such a person. If you can help him in any way I shall be most thankful.

'Believe me to be, Rev. Sir,
'Yours faithfully in Christ,
'JAMES EDWARD RALEIGH'S ISLAND.'

I answered the bishop's letter at once, telling him the whole story which Mr. Westman and James had that day unfolded before me. My joy made me generous, and I undertook of my free will to preach a sermon annually for the special benefit of his lordship's mission. I then began a pastoral letter to Ellen herself. I had not, however, written many lines before I was interrupted by the arrival of James.

He came into the study with a most happy face, holding an open letter in his hand.

'Ah! it is from Ellen,' I said; 'I understand she has written to you.'

James handed me the letter. I read a little of it—modest and tender words—and then handed it back to James, asking him to give me its substance. 'She meant it for your eyes only, James,' said I, 'so I will not read it.' If I must speak the truth, I did not care about toiling through twelve closely-written pages of lovers' talk.

The substance of it was, that she thought she had been very silly and cruel; that she now saw her duty in a different light; that she felt that James could not change, and must still love her, unworthy as she was; that she hoped James would write to her. She had not, of course, been bold enough to give the slightest hint of coming home.

I am sure, reader, you will not endure the detail of those months which passed between this restoration of hope to the good James, and its fulfilment in the arrival of Ellen Knight. I can tell you that I sometimes got very tired of it, and had to exclaim, 'What endless work these lovers give one!' Every day James came to me with a fresh fear or a fresh hope. What terrible work, too, I had with Farmer Dawes and his wife. How steadily they refused ever to give their sanction to James's marriage with a schoolmistress (Mrs. Dawes, I understand, cannot write her own name). What an extraordinary effect upon them at last had my strategetic declaration that I meant to consult Sir Walter, their landlord, about the best course for James to take. The very next day they said that 'as the match couldn't be well helped' they would give their sanction to it.

Of course I married Mr. and Mrs. James Dawes. Brother Westman asserted his right to assist me; and he came over from Beesham with three of his dogs, one of which James was to choose for a wedding present. They were tied to the lych-gate, and were howling piteously all the while the service was going on in the church.

At the wedding breakfast, Mr. Westman could think of nothing but the sagacity and virtue of the wiry-haired terrier. He actually asked every mother present, 'Whether she would not cry more at the death of such a dog as that than at the death of a baby?' And when he wished good-bye to the bride and bridegroom, his last words were:—

'Don't forget the dog. You owe a handsome tomb to the dog, James Dawes.'



THE SILENT LOVER P. 18

Pictures drawn by the Poets.

THE SILENT LOVER.

ILLUSTRATED BY JAMES GODWIN.

I WOULD tell her I love her,
  Did I know but the way;
Could my lips but discover
  What a lover should say.
Though I swear to adore her
  Every morning I rise,
Yet when once I'm before her
  All my eloquence flies.

  Oh, ye gods! did you ever
    Such a simpleton know?
  I'm in love, and yet never
    Have the heart to say so.

Having plucked up a spirit
  One moonshining night,
Then, thought I, I'll defer it
  Till to-morrow's daylight.
But alas! the pale moon-beam
  Could not frighten me more,
For I found by the noon-beam
  I was dumb as before.

  Oh, ye gods! did you ever
    Such a simpleton know?
  I'm in love, and yet never
    Have the heart to say so.

THOMAS MOORE.

ON THE ROAD TO ROME.

CHAPTER I.

CLEOPATRA'S GALLEY.

THE gallant steam argosy which sails under the flag of the famous association, whose style and titles ring out so sonorously as the noble company of Messageries Impériales, or imperial despatchers, with 'services maritimes,' and 'services direct et indirect,' and 'correspondances,' and 'postes,' and 'administrations,' and whose business temple on the Quai Johette is a bewildering maze of ticketed glass-cases, where legions of functionaries ply the pen and sprinkle sand for the bare life; this steam argosy lies in port off Marseilles under a furnace sun, moaning sadly, fretting, fuming, and chafing fiercely at her hawser, impatient to spring away into the blue ocean prairies yonder. There is a cheerful cosmopolitan polyglot company tripping aboard, on this bright, gaudy, staring day, crowding in at the gangways, rustling it in silks and gossamer muslins, and light airy garments. Here are dainty Gallic dames, quite fresh and cool, in spite of the sun overhead steadily grilling all things, without so much as a hair out of its place, seem to trip on to the burnished decks, as it were, out of their own tall funereal cases, now being swung over the side; and happy voyaging dandies, who have brought with them the dear familiar asphalt of the Boulevards, and laid it down tastefully on the deck of that noble fast-sailing line-of-packet ship Capitole, so called in compliment to the eminence of that name, once saved by the wakeful fowl we love at Michaelmas. There are French fighting men, too, in braided Moresco cloaks, and Arab hoods, draped with wonderful art, who promenade it industriously, and consume cigarettes. One portly warrior, M. le Capitaine, has girthed himself to a fearful tightness, and seems to be suffering cruelly. But there is a bouquet of young Italian donne clustered yonder in a corner, under an awning of fluttering parasols, chattering, whispering, and laughing slyly, perhaps at the puffed warrior himself. So, with such fascinating company looking on from the boxes, it becomes a plain duty for any fighting son of France to set himself a little 'in evidence,' and play his best in the little comedy; until at least the curtain descends abruptly about the middle of the second act, and an apology has to be made for the performer. No actor, surely, the tall rueful figure so bent and shrunken, with the hollow cheeks and grizzled beard, to whom cling helplessly the three little girls in black frocks—pretty things with white Chinese faces, perhaps a little proud of their dark finery. He finds a dismal solace in his cigar, which he smokes sadly, and sees many domestic pictures, doubtless, in those curling fumes, which float away from him so slowly. He is the only chill upon the lively scene, a miserimus, or undertaker's man, who is inappropriate to the occasion, otherwise it is no more than a gay glittering party in a Cleopatra's barge, with Youth at the prow and Pleasure (most acceptable of all pilots) at the helm.

Within an hour (under the direction of a real rough saline pilot), Quai Johette is many miles behind, grilling slowly, many miles behind, too, the red forts, now being steadily toasted into a hard crackling brown. Not by any means miles behind is the girthed captain, now about on the verge of apoplexy, yet who has walked his boulevards with such success as to be in actual relation (on a camp stool) with the young Italian donne. Those young peninsulars are positively shrieking at M. le Capitaine's wit; but, as was before barely hinted, the second act of his little comedy is yet to come. All is going merrily as a marriage-bell, however doubtful may be at times the cheerfulness of that musical instrument. Sea travelling has surely been monstrously blackened; shaped into a sort of hideous bogy. It may be reasonably doubted whether that

ugly disturbance, that abnormal muscular convulsion, which some of us have heard of, have read of in books, be more than a nursery woman's legends; at all events, it is confined to trading packets, and to such loose, uncivilized waters as Biscay and the Atlantic. And so the fashionable company (Youth still at the prow and Pleasure at the helm) goes down to dinner. Portly captain, now frightfully sanguineous, is placed by some mysterious dispensation among the Italian donne. Youth still at the prow and Pleasure at the helm, with, however, a slight tendency to desert their posts as the soup is set on, a tendency more marked as a sinuous and highly agreeable motion is observed in the fast-sailing line-of-packet ship. The noble French fighting admirals, who are fitted into medallions all round the saloon, in numbers perfectly marvellous to British understandings, incline their heads with a gracious homage. No one notices these eccentricities; for it is incredible, impossible, that a sea of refined tastes and sympathies properly brought up, and elegantly——A lurch! positively a rude, coarse lurch, rough and ungentlemanly! Our lively donne have turned olive tint; and as indelicate garçon tenders a choice fish ragoût, richly brown, fly in disorder to the door. It is now *sauve qui peut*. The banquet is left untasted. It is all over with the bursting warrior, who lies moaning on a coil of ropes; Youth at the prow, indeed, and Pleasure at the helm—those two mariners are sick to the death; so let us drop the curtain tenderly.

Henceforth, Capitole having now become a disorderly craft, goes on her way dancing riotous corrantos and unseemly gigas. The fighting French admirals below are nodding fiercely all day at the wretched beings coiled up in agony on sofa cushions. The sad and hollow sham of laying out splendid banquets, which do so coldly furnish forth the table, is persisted in steadily, apparently for the sole gratification of the fighting admirals before mentioned.

CHAPTER II.

THE 'OLD TOWN.'

An interval of, say forty hours, is to have elapsed: an interval filled in by horrid suffering and tossing tortures.

Turning wearily over, then, as he wakes from a sort of doze, compounded of a fever and a nightmare, the voyager of a sudden becomes conscious of a certain steadiness and calm, inexpressibly grateful and delicious. Strange to say, the noble fast-sailing line-of-packet ship is no longer performing its wild fandangos, flinging itself aloft, as at that awful moment when the conviction first came home to the voyager that he must go down—not by way of shipwreck—but to the narrow shelf, or Little Ease, provided by the Administration for its sufferers. The crash of fractured crockery is heard no longer afar off in the engine-room. The heavy fulling-hammers are at rest, and quite spent; and, framed in the little ring which lets in dungeon light to the Little Ease, is seen a long mole, tile-coloured, with a lighthouse, puncheon-shaped, and some scattered buildings, dust-coloured, gliding by in a cobalt sea, that glistens and radiates lustrously under the dazzling morning's sun.

The chevaleresque captain, whose moustaches and beard are peaked after the Vandyke fashion, and whose gloves are of a pale lavender tint, has his opera-glass in his hand, languidly watching his ship's progress, as from his stall at the Opera, mellifluously bidding the engines move 'a demi-vapeur,' and the helmsman 'port.' 'Laissez faire' has been his maxim all through. He would have been the slave of the captivating donne but for that malapropos malady of the sea; and so has nothing for it but to mince it, without spectators, in those fairy little boots of his, up and down, and fondly dream of a day when he shall pace the 'decque' of his own war 'stemar,' and receive, with graceful bendings, the swords of the conquered foemen: perhaps encounter fierce corsairs of the Mediterranean, and have the pleasing duty cast upon him of setting beautiful ladies free.

Here they emerge now, the donne fresh as the morning: emerges, too, the portly captain—once more a portly captain.

Still gliding in. Smoothly now work the hypocritical fulling-hammers in the engine-room, gently lifting themselves with a dulcet motion. Now a full stop, and the Capitole swings round. Voyagers eagerly take baskets, bags, and packages into their hands, so as to lose not an instant in going ashore. Not yet, not yet, for many an hour—innocent voyagers! unconscious of the protracted forms of 'debarquing.'

The blue cobalt still glistens round us, like the back of a gorgeous snake. Sandy dun-coloured houses fence us round, built out upon the mole, out of which step little blue-frocked, red-limbed leptidæ, and bask in the sun, looking at us. The leptidæ are children of France in a foreign land, and the dun buildings are their barracks. There is a heavy, sad-coloured fort to the right, from whose battlements look down more of the red-limbed little men, and behind, on the mainland, lie huddled a disorderly gathering of tenements, washed in originally with pale pinks and drabs, and sickly yolk of egg, and long since smeared and washed out again by copious showers and defective eaves. A dungeon-gate at the edge of the water gives hospitable welcome to the stranger. Sprinkle the steps and narrow quays with the lounging red-limbed, and we are gazing on a complete prospect of the port of 'Old Town,' Civita Vecchia! Not, surely, from such dingy mansions, such dull, unreflecting toning, did Callow and his ingenious brethren of the camel's-hair brush fetch their bright clear blues and golden sheen. This melancholy lacklustre tinting, this rueful acreage of dead wall, all peeled and chipped, are a miserable discomfiture for enthusiastic eyes, counting surely on being dazzled by the traditional garish effects. But the little piratical craft (in reality no more than harmless fishing corsairs), with the rakish masts, and the long graceful spar, bent crosswise, like a huge bow, and whose delicate rigging seems spider's work, does, indeed, make a certain *amende* to picturesque justice outraged. And here, fluttering from the bow-shaped spar, is a first symbol of authority ecclesiastical—the bunting Pontifical—displaying two keys crossed below a tiara. All true Britons and stanch upholders of the ever-glorious and immortal constitution, as ratified in 'eighty-eight, most reasonably from the deck resent this affront. Just as there is no real aristocracy but the one, so is there no flag proper in the world but that triumphant motley of red, white, and blue, which braves the battle and the breeze.

But this cloud of light canoes, jostling and crushing each other, that has surrounded our ship, each freighted with an untattooed Otaheitan, who, now standing up, now sitting down, now flourishing his paddle, wheedles, adjures, and menaces the frightened herd upon the deck into selecting his particular vessel; this invasion must surely be with hostile intent, such as made heavy the heart of that intrepid navigator the late Captain Cook. Wildest Autochthones! genuine cannibal ferrymen, eyeing their prey greedily, and licking their lips in anticipation of a flow of pauls! Now, now, the word has passed, and the Otaheitans are rushing in, boarding desperately by ropes, cordage, by any fashion—in preference to the recognized mode of ingress. They have plunged among the mountain luggage. They have flung themselves sprawling over the great funereal chests, by way of asserting a legal seism. They are dancing the war-dance of their tribe around the frightened white men, who stand scared and helpless.

CHAPTER III.

THE ORDEAL BY 'PAULS.'

With that 'debarquement,' as it is handsomely styled in the printed forms, rises a feeling of utter abandonment, as of having now done with the civilized world outside; and so each voyager, sitting alone with his Otaheitan, is paddled away, sadly casting wistful glances at the great outline of the Capitole, but yester-

day undisguisedly execrated, now regarded with even a fond lingering. Happily for him, he is thus prevented from seeing the fresh band of Otaheitans waiting for him on the beach. Sinks thy heart, O voyager! as thy head turns and has a glimpse of the wild miscellany drawn up, thirsting for travellers' blood, which is silver! Now the canoe has touched the steps, and he is under the mysterious empire of the Crossed Keys. The Otaheitans dance and howl round him wildly, after the manner of their nation. Such a decayed, lounging tribe, so mildewed and run to seed, so overlaid with that blight which hangs over tenants of debtors' prisons, and knights of the noble Order of Industry—only these are of the shabbiest out-at-elbow material—that any one who has turned with sour unbelief from that early and amusing legend of Romulus, gathering the scum and tag-rag of adjoining countries, and so kneading up his new nation out of ticket-of-leave elements, has only to cast his eye upon this Pentonville band, and must own that the old felon dye is not yet washed out. Not in good rough working clothes, or vesture that is honestly racy of their soil; but in old French caps, and fitted tightly into cast-off clothing, once of a fashionable cut; a sharp, piercing-eyed throng. Grown-up convicts, gray-haired convicts, whose looks belie them horribly, if they have not in early life been concerned in robbing of churches on an extensive scale—with small, but sadly precocious juvenile offenders, discharged prematurely from the reformatories—they all attend complimentarily on the hapless stranger, and howl round him for pauls. Let him look to it, if he be not well provided with those useful coins. Pauls surely for insinuating convict to the left, in the worn-out evening coat, who, it seems, lent his arm in a friendly manner on stepping from the canoe. There was a convict index-finger which pointed out a church, an hotel, and some other objects of public interest, which were of themselves palpable enough; and yet with much ferocity the index-finger prefers a claim for pauls. A gentleman in a hairy cap, walking in the procession, was good enough to break up small fragments of English, which surely gives him a strong claim to be remembered. And out of your bounty, O stranger! you will surely consider these lesser Facchini, the pantomime elfs, who have extemporized graceful drawing-room acts all the way, and varied the progress by elegant acrobatic performance. Pauls for the bystanders, for mere wayfarers even—in no way associates of the guild—parties driving carts and beasts of burden, who have left their charge and joined the procession; which, indeed, might be passed by without protest. But for that other, apparently clothed in official powers (exceptional certainly in his other material clothing), who at the water's edge takes your pass or permit of landing, and does this duty with such gentleness, such binding up, as it were, of the wounds of the poor baited stranger, that he seems a sort of official angel or good Samaritan on duty—for him to prove a mere impostor, who, accredited by the papers so fraudulently obtained, has been opposite to the Politzei Pontificie, and artfully secured the passport, which he now presents smirking, and with a large demand for pauls; this is a stab of the cruellest kind, a bitter shock to his trust so fondly reposed. So let voyager sit despondingly on his mails in a corner of the dogana, and wait his turn; for his second provocation is now setting in—the Ordeal by Custom-house.

CHAPTER IV.

THE ORDEAL BY SEARCH.

Scene from Pinelli: Bandits rifling the contents of travellers' trunks. Voyagers—white-livered, bilious, still in the cabin of the fast-sailing line-of-packet-ship Capitole, and tottering on the verge of illness, with the walls of 'H. M. Customs' rising and falling in isochronous beats—sit round, cowed and a prey to a monster terrorism. Strapping bandits seize the huge funereal chests and swing them muscularly down before the bandit chief. Keys are

hoarsely demanded, and brigand heads, laid close together, are diving greedily into the funereal cases. Gorgeous female attire, light gauzy vesture, overflow the sides like foam, and flutter trembling in the rude rough fingers. The bandit chief (in spectacles) looks on disdainfully while his subordinates rifle their booty. There, it will do! when suddenly—what contraband is this? —books, printed matter? Yes, real, practicable, palpable books. This is serious. All the spectacled heads are laid together with solemnity, and form themselves into a temporary council of the Index. They turn over the heretical pages with a profound gravity (one inquisitor has a volume all to himself, upside down), with an air as of really understanding, and let it pass, finally, with a doubtful, distrustful manner, admirably put on. Illustrated works, I remark, afford much interest to the bandits, as well as picture journals; they scrutinize the cuts with an infinite relish. I almost long for a pestilent work, written by a Frenchman, one *About*, to spring out suddenly and dance among them like an exploding squib.

In an inner chamber, under a lurid light, other bandits may be seen, engaged mysteriously in what seems to be cording each mail—an operation performed with great care and neatness. But what purpose can that special bandit have in his mind, whose mission it is to come at the end of the operation with an enormous pair of shears, and snip something with a sharp clinch? See the neat little leaden seal attached, with the crossed keys again developed neatly, and it is explained. Your mails have been plombéd, leaded by the shears, to prevent undue tampering. Well, voyager will make this allowance grudgingly. After all, there is a certain delicacy and honest carefulness in this transaction which contrasts favourably with Dogane of other countries. There was really a nice consideration in that sealing up, a disinterestedness so to speak——Stay, signor, this way, if you please; speak to this gentleman who is at the desk, writing as it were for a Derby Plate, and hiding himself in a dust-cloud of sprinkled sand. Here is your little bill, signor—so many packages, so many pauls. For that violating of the sacred privacy of locks, pauls; for the delving into your fine gossamer goods, pauls; for that careful cording, and, above all, for the neat impression in lead, very many pauls.

This was about the last straw breaking down the camel's back, that is the pecuniary vertebræ of persecuted voyager. So that when his effects are borne out to the door on men's shoulders, and pauls are demanded for that service—thence transported on a kind of spring-cart to the Strada Ferrata, or railway, and pauls demanded for that service—and again, are taken from the spring-cart, and laid under cover, and bearers have to be indemnified in many pauls—it comes on him with no surprise, but he pays out with a sort of cheerful idiocy and insane liberality To his astonishment the air is filled with blessings, and an affectionate convict goes his way styling him 'Signorino,' or 'My dear little signor'

But now, cruel Fates! do your worst; heap all conceivable woes upon this doomed head, for now do I not read upon this yellow Orario, or time-table, that the last train of the day has departed! This, positively the last straw, bows the miserable voyager to the very earth, and crunches his poor vertebræ to pure powder. But a gentle-hearted porter standing near sees his trouble, and, in sweet-toned French, asks monsieur 'what he has?'

'My friend,' traveller answers distractedly, 'it is gone, never, never to return. I mean, there is no other train to-day.'

'Excuse!' said he, 'monsieur is in error; there will be one at four o'clock.'

'Beware, beware, I say,' said the voyager, his overstrung nerves now giving way. 'I will not be put upon.'

'Pardon,' said the gentle porter 'monsieur is looking at last week's Orario. We usually change it for variety's sake once in the week.'

The voyager, now calmer, thinks how curious is this new feature in railway economy.

'That is nothing,' adds the gentle porter. 'Monsieur the director will not unfrequently alter the hours for the day early in the morning, sometimes twice in the week, according to the prospects of traffic.'

'How delightful!' exclaims the voyager, giving vent to his feelings in a burst of refined sarcasm, 'to regulate such matters, not by stupid cramping rules that never vary, but by the sweet impulses of pococurranteism! Is not this the land of the Dolce far niente, and shall there not be a steam Dolce far niente—sweetest dispensation, through which he who cometh in full time may haply find himself late, and he who halteth up hopelessly late, may discover himself to be agreeably disappointed!

CHAPTER V.

EXPRESS TO ROME.

From the windows of a carriage, splendidly emblazoned on the panel with crossed keys and tiara, we look out on a flat, sad-looking country, spread out like so many yards of poor green baize from which the colour was faded out, crumpled, creased here and there into low, melancholy hillocks, which bear us company on the left with a mournful persistence, and relieving each other with a staid and solemn monotony No houses, no homesteads, no labours of the ox; no driving of teams afield, as might be reasonably expected, by agriculturists in the quaint but theatrical costume of the district; no bowing of woods beneath the sturdy stroke of such farm labourers. On the right, a tract of mangy herbage, half sand, half soil, now brown, now yellow, green here and there, like the back of some diseased dog, travels on with us, in a dismal companionship, dotted with a few black kine whose horns are of startling weight and dimensions, afford those prize animals a scanty and precarious nutriment. Now, the cobalt sea breaks in periodically, showing itself in angular patches and tumbling noisily. Now a heavy square-built fort, like a middle-age fastness, thinly washed over in pink and yellow, stands at the very edge of the shore, as if hesitating whether it should walk out boldly and bathe. Not perched on an eminence, not waited on by a company of little parasitical tenements, but rising from the shell-strewn beach, in a naked, jarring solitude, an outlying enfant perdu or doomed sentinel of stone. He falls behind us presently—falls out of sight, with the lean kine whose horns are heavy and their green baize sustenance; we shambling on at a safe and respectable steam trot, as countless yards of that fabric are unrolled for us, as it were, on the counter. Now the easy old-fashioned rumble barely troubles at his scanty evening banquet the noble, old-established Roman ox, famous Bos piger, broad-shouldered and short-horned; in fact, the well-known brute who has been so well worked in hexameters and alcaics, and whom we had to construe painfully long ago sub ferulâ. I recognize the classical animal at once, as he barely lifts his head; his royal banquet being in no way disturbed by our peaceful progress. Happy beast! No screaming express sends him snorting and lashing his flanks in a fierce gallop to the other side of his paddock. We stop two or three times before little deal summer-houses, which it is reasonable to conclude are stations; and yet why such points are selected in unfair preference to others with quite as just claims to be considered, who have equally not a single cottage or homestead within view, does open a matter for ingenious speculation. In a sanitary point of view, and as affording opportunity to the passengers for air and healthful exercise, the arrangements of the company cannot be too highly commended. It being chanted out that ten minutes are allowed for refreshment, instantly Open, sesame! is called, and every passenger has sprung from his vehicle, and is bounding over the adjoining fields, inhaling the fresh country air, botanizing, or it may be culling simples, or per-

haps recruiting his hortus siccus. Presently time is called, and voyagers take their places again, much invigorated by these cheerful field sports.

A dark swarthy ecclesiastic sitting opposite, over whose forehead a broad beaver hat casts a darker shadow, has by this time finished with his breviary, and laying down that volume on the cushion beside him, looks as though he would not repulse any advances at conversation made through the legitimate channel of the weather and general temperature, on which benevolent M. C. and mutual introducing friend —which all the world over brings together forlorn strangers and makes them brothers—rest a wanderer's benison! To the swart ecclesiastic, then, the inquisitive voyager puts some plain questions, on the general philosophy of strada ferrata when under shadow of the Crossed Keys.

'Signor!' says the swart ecclesiastic—and voyager being hailed thus magnificently feels a new and agreeable dignity cast upon him—'it is no fault of the Santo Padre's.' (Voyager hastily waves off any intention of laying the railway breakdown at the door of the Santo Padre.) 'You will see in a particular quarter of our city a superb palace, labelled over the porch, "The Company of the Roman Railways," which includes the lines already constructed—the few that are in halting, staggering progress, and those which there is a moral certainty will never be constructed. Does the Signor follow me?'

'Capisco,' the signor answers; 'I understand, that is. Proceed, friend.'

'This company has got a patent, or monopoly, for many possible or contingent railways; nay, more: for one special line they have been actually in receipt of a guaranteed subsidy before a single spadeful of earth has been turned. It is therefore the interest of the company, or rather of its highly salaried officials who sit in the palace I have mentioned, to commence the said railway at their very latest convenience, and, when once commenced, be as tedious in its construction as they can, with decency, or rather without regard to decency. They have been years over a few miles, and will be years more over the remainder.'

'But how——,' says the signor, warmly, 'could any one in his senses enter into such a contract? How could——'

The swart ecclesiastic shrugs his shoulders, and presses his lips together desperately. 'We are as children in all money-dealing matters; no wonder the signor is astonished. I thought he would remain in stucco!'

'Remain in—— Pardon, I don't exactly——'

'Remain in stucco—be astonished —merely a local idiom. See this line,' continued the swart ecclesiastic, looking out. 'How poor and miserable the land—therefore, how cheap! How smooth and level; no hills to be opened by what you call cuttings; no valleys to be filled —therefore, again, how cheap! This fifty miles or so of railway should, therefore, be prosperous and paying. But it is not. And how shall we account for that?' Swart ecclesiastic shrugs again. 'Money is wanting for the state, and must be had. These speculators know their time, and strike a hard bargain.'

'I see,' the signor adds; 'so much in pictures, so much in fine fruity old wines, and say one-third in cash down.'

The swart ecclesiastic, not understanding this allusion drawn from the Hebrew dealings of the Great Babylon conversation suddenly lapses.

CHAPTER VI.

URBS ROMA.

A sudden barrier of hills in front, speckled over with white edifices, seen through a dull blue haze, and all enthusiasts present plunge (reasonably enough) at the conclusion that here, indeed, must be the Eternal Seven. There is a deadlock of heads at the carriage windows, and eager necks get inextricably entangled. Enthusiastic voyagers feel strange flutterings, and finger their crimson korans nervously, yearning to begin with Murray. Foregone conclusion! for these are

mere vulgar eminences—plebeian mountains with no decent stock or lineage. The mysterious Seven are not half so palpable; but they are at hand. For here, without jerk or dislocation, or, indeed, any of that violence and agony which waits on the sudden halting of express conveyances, our train is coming gently to a stop; and with awful influences pouring down in a tide from behind those cold blue mountains, and with overpowering thoughts and reveries of Rome under kings, republicans, dictators, purpled emperors, and tiara'd popes, of Rome classical and pagan; Rome chevaleresque and Christian; of Rome lying yonder before all the world in a dusky and traditional cloud, wherein flit indistinct pictures of barbaric pomp and richest feasts, and martyrs struggling with fierce animals, and gladiators sinking down on the gory sand with glazing eye, and the roar of the multitude droning in their ears like the surging waves—with all these famous associations coming fast and thick upon us from the days when we winced sub ferulâ, we stop suddenly to *take the tickets!*

Take the tickets! It jars terribly on nicely attuned nerves. 'Twas for all the world,' as Rev. Mr. Sterne wrote of another matter, 'like a cut across my finger with a sharp penknife.' On a rude prosaic platform, too, with a prosaic, highly unclassical figure coming round collecting the 'biglietta,' with many a 'Grazie, signor!' Still, the first-class dreamer, looking at the thing soberly, could scarcely hope to see an official cristatus galea, that is to say, in a fearfully nodding helm, and togatus—that is, in flowing costume of the period—in short, an Homeric railway guard. And yet, methinks, the administration might have provided nutritive diet for babes (of romance) on their travels, letting them down easily every gradation. Surely some unmeaning sham or hollow pantomime, such as calling it tessera, instead of ticket, might in mercy be kept up; for only consider at the very threshold of that dimly mysterious city!——but let it pass.

This is the threshold of the city called Eternal! A sad *désillusionnement.*

ONE GOOD TURN DESERVES ANOTHER.

A Proverb Paraphrased.

I.

ONE good turn deserves another;
Kindness, kindness oft insures,
Ease the burthen of your brother;
He may some day lighten yours.
There are none so poor and lowly
But may render back your due,
Cherish then this precept holy,
Do as you'd be done unto.

II.

O'er the rugged path of life
Each his burthen must uphold,
With as many evils rife
As Pandora's box of old;
In that toilsome, steep ascent,
Each should strive to help the other;
On this Christian truth intent:
One good turn deserves another.

III.

If in youth a friendly hand
Oft was stretched to help you on,
And a voice, in accents bland,
Bade despairing thoughts begone,
If a bosom, leal and true,
Owned you for a friend and brother,
When both friends and freres were few;
One good turn deserves another.

IV.

Fortune's wheel perchance has whirled
You on high, and him below;
And a cold, hard, changeful world
Now *your* friend may be *his* foe!
Shall its sordid dictates stay
Feeling's flow, and justice smother,
Whilst this precept holds its sway,
One good turn deserves another?

V.

Should that cunning hand be cold,
And that cheering voice be still,
And that heart so warm of old
Be all pulseless now and chill;
Are no dear ones left behind,
Widow, orphan, sister, mother,
That old friends may help remind,
One good turn deserves another?

VI.

But should man ungrateful prove,
Nor his neighbour's love repay,
There's a record kept above
Whence 'twill never pass away.
Forasmuch as you have given
Help to many a weaker brother,
You shall find, though late, in heaven,
One good turn deserves another!

ALARIC A. WATTS.

LONDON SOCIETY.

APRIL, 1862.

THE COST OF AMUSING THE PUBLIC.

IF an account could be furnished of all the money that is annually spent in this country on amusements, we suspect that the sum total would be found to be far larger than any one has the slightest conception of. Making a rough estimate by the aid of the statistics which have been furnished to us, and including in the list of amusements not alone Theatres, Concert-rooms, Exhibitions, and Entertainments, but also the performances of street minstrels, acrobats, Punch and Judy, and the like, we believe we shall be justified in setting down the gross amount at a figure somewhere between two and three millions sterling. The statistics of the latter class of exhibitions, however, are not within our reach, and in this paper we shall deal only with those amusements which have a local habitation, and are conducted upon business principles as a branch of commerce. Those who denounce theatres, and exhibitions of a kindred nature, have possibly little or no idea of the regular and systematic manner in which the affairs of such places are conducted, nor of the large number of families which they find in employment and bread. Now-a-days the affairs of a theatre are conducted with as much scrupulous, business-like exactness as those of a bank, or a merchant's counting-house. The mimic life and the pleasantries of the stage, which the public take as so much trivial pastime, become a matter of dry figures in the hands of the Treasurer, and resolve themselves, at the end of the week, into a carefully prepared debtor and creditor account, and the payment of salaries and wages. The treasury of a theatre and the counting-house of a manufactory are practically the same thing on a Saturday afternoon. Men, women, and children go to both to be paid for a week's hard work, and to be enabled to pay those who serve them—the butcher and baker who supply the meals, the tailor who furnishes the clothes, the landlord who provides the shelter, and the schoolmaster who teaches the children.

The employment which the theatre provides has, however, a much wider scope than this. It is not alone the actors, whose persons we are familiar with on the stage, who are enabled to live and bring up their families; but there is another class, whom we never see, and whose existence many do not even suspect, who are equally dependent upon the theatre for their means of subsistence, and whose labour is equally essential to the conduct of the establishment. There are scenic artists, scene painters, carpenters, scene shifters, and gas men, all employed within the walls of the theatre; and out of it, at their own homes, costumiers, tailors, shoemakers, hosiers, wigmakers, jewellers, upholsterers, armourers, printers, draughtsmen, engravers, and bill-stickers. These artists and artisans devote themselves exclusively to theatrical work. A stage carpenter could not make a chest of drawers fit for domestic use. If you were to

order such a thing of him, you would probably find that the drawers were all dummies, or that the whole concern was designed for a trick in a pantomime. So the tailor will fit you with an embroidered blue velvet tunic, or a pair of trunks; but he will scarcely undertake to furnish you with a surtout, or a pair of pegtops, suitable for the streets. Generally speaking, the theatrical hosier's hose are all particoloured, the theatrical shoemaker's shoes all red-heeled, the theatrical jeweller's jewels all glass and tinfoil, the theatrical armourer's armour all white iron and blue paint. Their craft is thus confined exclusively to theatrical work, and their art aspires to produce nothing which will stand the test of the light of day. It is, in fact, a branch of manufacture and trade called into existence and operation solely by the requirements of the theatre.

The whole number of theatres in the United Kingdom is 133. We may table them thus:—

Theatres in London . . .	25
„ in the English Counties and Channel Islands .	91
„ in Wales . . .	3
„ in Scotland . .	9
„ in Ireland . .	5
Total . .	133

We should expect to find very few theatres in Scotland, where the religious prejudice runs so strong against such amusements; but it is somewhat unaccountable that there should be still fewer in Ireland, where no such prejudice exists, and where the people are more numerous, more vivacious, and naturally addicted to all kinds of sport and entertainment. The fact, we suspect, must be ascribed to that want of prosperity which has made Ireland exceptional in many other respects. It cannot be Ireland's will, but her poverty which has made her consent to have only five theatres in all the land; for no people appreciate the drama better than the Irish, and nowhere are actors more warmly recognized and applauded than in Dublin and Belfast. Scotland, with less than a third of Ireland's population, has almost double the number of theatres. But here the thing is overdone: the supply is greater than the demand. Except at Glasgow, and, at certain seasons, in Edinburgh, theatricals do not flourish in Scotland. The Scotch are not unappreciative; far from it. An Edinburgh audience is said to be the most refined and discriminative in Europe, and actors are more proud of laurels gathered in the modern Athens than even in London itself But, unfortunately for the dramatic art, the audiences in Scotland are far more select than numerous, and the cause of this is too well known to require any explanation at our hands.

With the view of furnishing as close an estimate as can possibly be given, without the aid of official returns, of the amount of money expended, and of the number of persons employed in the work of amusing the public, we shall separate the places of public entertainment into four classes—Theatres, Music Halls, Entertainments (so called), and Gardens.

First, then, as to the Theatres. In London there are altogether 25, as we have stated; but as two of these have been closed for some length of time, we have, practically, to deal with only 23. The number of persons employed at theatres of the first class, such as Covent Garden, Drury Lane, the Lyceum, the Adelphi, and the Haymarket, varies from 70 to 350. If we take, for example, Drury Lane Theatre during pantomime time, we find that the number of persons employed every night is about 300. Allowing for the large families of some, and the small families of others, we may safely multiply this by 3 to find the total of persons who derive their bread from this theatre. Thus we have in all 900 persons. This, however, is not the largest number that might be adduced. When the Opera House in the Haymarket was in the heyday of its prosperity, more than a thousand persons went to the treasury every Saturday to receive their salaries and wages.

The number of persons employed at all the London theatres is about 4,000. And if we give to each 3

dependents, we shall have a total of 12,000 persons deriving their incomes from theatrical employment. The number 3 here is not by any means excessive; for though the majority may be unmarried, and many of them mere children, yet it is a well-known fact that little boys and girls of six and seven years often support a whole family by their slender earnings.

In estimating the amount of money taken at the doors of the London theatres, it would not do to select the best period of the year—pantomime time—when the various houses are crowded to the ceiling. Some houses are closed during a portion of the year, and, as a general rule, the receipts fall off during the summer. Taking, then, a general average, we find that the whole amount that flows into the treasuries of the 25 London theatres during the year is about 350,000*l.* Thus we have for London:—

Persons employed in theatres.	4,000
Money taken at the 25 London theatres in 12 months .	£350,000

In addition to the above, there are about 30 different theatrical tradesmen, employing in all somewhere about 160 hands.

We come now to the provincial theatres, of which there are 108. At the best time of the year (Christmas), the first-class provincial theatres employ about 100 persons each, the second class 55, and the third class 30. The average for all the year round we find to be 40. This gives us 4,320 persons continually employed in theatrical work in the provinces. Taking the small theatres with the large, and making allowance for periods when some of them are closed, we believe we shall be very near the mark in fixing the average nightly receipts all the year round at 12*l.* The account of the provincial theatres accordingly stands thus:—

Number of persons employed	4,320
Money taken at the 108 provincial theatres during 12 months	£388,800

We take next the Music Halls, which now represent a very important branch of the trade of amusing the public. These capacious and splendidly appointed halls were wholly unknown a dozen years ago. Their increasing numbers now, and the popularity of the entertainment which they present, are certainly proofs that the taste for refined amusements is rapidly spreading among the public. It is true grog, beer, and tobacco form a considerable element of the entertainment; but still the class of music presented and the ability of the singers are of a comparatively high order. The comic singing, so much in favour at these places, is possibly not altogether unexceptionable; but the selections from operas are given with a completeness and an effect which are not to be enjoyed anywhere else out of the opera-house. The theatres have looked with much jealousy and apprehension on the increase of music halls. But after the experience of the last two years, when the music halls have attained to the highest pitch of prosperity that could possibly be reached, we do not think that either managers or actors can say that they have suffered any damage through them. The theatres have been as full as ever; nay, we might say fuller than ever. As for actors, many of them have turned comic singers at music halls, and are earning double and treble the amount of money that they would ever have hoped to obtain by acting at the theatres. Does not a nigger melodist sing at three or four halls on the same evening, and drive from one to the other in his own carriage? We believe that the music halls, instead of injuring the theatres and the opera houses, are, on the contrary, nurseries to those places. They strike at the root of worse places of amusement; they afford entertainment to a large class who stand much in need of it, and they excite a taste for the more refined theatre and opera.

The number of music halls in London is 18; and the total number throughout the country, in England, Scotland, and Ireland, 119; making in all 137. The music halls are thus in excess of the theatres. As an example of the importance of this interest, and of the grand scale on which such places are conducted,

we are enabled to state that the proprietors of one of the largest Halls in London employ no less than 150 persons, 70 of whom are 'professionals,' and the rest servants and attendants. The sum disbursed every Saturday at the treasury is over 300*l.*

The charities belonging to the theatrical profession, and supported mainly by its members, are numerous and important. Much as the profession has been maligned, it is a notorious fact that no class of the public is so provident or so charitably disposed one towards another as actors. It would not be difficult to show, also, that actors are distinguished above the members of all other professions for their frugality and saving habits. The great majority of them have very little chance of laying by anything, but those who earn good salaries almost invariably save and invest money against a rainy day. We could mention at least a score of actors in London who are well known among their fellows to be 'warm men,' and a goodly number who might fairly be described as rich The array of theatrical charities is truly a noble one. In London alone they number seven, viz., the Drury Lane Fund, the Covent Garden Fund, the Royal General Theatrical Fund, the Dramatic, Equestrian, and Musical Sick Fund Association, the Britannia Theatre Sick Fund, and last, though not least, the Royal Dramatic College. The funds in the possession of these charities are very large. The Drury Lane Fund holds 40,000*l.*, the Covent Garden 32,000*l.*, the General Theatrical 13,000*l.*, the Dramatic and Equestrian 1,400*l.*, and the Royal Dramatic College some 3,000*l.*, over and above 4,000*l.* expended in building the college. The earnest spirit which has been displayed by the profession, and particularly by Mr. Benjamin Webster, the master, and Mr. Anson, the secretary, in originating, building, and endowing this Home for aged and decayed actors in the course of two or three short years, speaks more eloquently for the warmhearted sympathy and brotherly feeling which prevail among actors than any words that could be used. The college, when finished, will contain accommodation for twenty persons. Each one will be provided with three rooms—sitting-room, bed-room, and kitchen, with other conveniences. The allowance to each from the funds of the charity will be, besides the suite of rooms, coals, candles, and ten shillings per week.

The total sum of money set apart for the relief of the members of the profession in sickness and old age is thus close upon 90,000*l.*

There is another class of persons who derive an income from the organized business of amusing the public — we mean the dramatic authors. This class, though perhaps but little esteemed by managers and actors, may nevertheless be truly said to be the mainspring of the whole theatrical machine. What could managers and actors do without pieces? And good pieces, as a rule, can only come from skilled hands. Amateurs may occasionally write good novels or good verses; but an amateur author who had not previously made the stage a close study never yet wrote a good play. There are technicalities and artifices in stage writing which nothing but experience and observation can teach. It requires almost an apprenticeship to be a good playwright. It might be said that any one of ordinary literary ability, with pen, ink, and paper to his hand, could write a play. But so it might be said, that any one with leather and lapstone, wax-ends and an awl to his hand, could make a pair of shoes. So he could perhaps, but both the play and the shoes would be rather clumsy, and the one would be no more likely to draw an audience than the other to attract a customer. Dramatic writing is not so much a regular profession in this country as it is in France; but still it is to some extent a profession, and its members are so far banded together as a class, that they have a sort of guild for the protection of their mutual interests. This guild is known as the Dramatic Authors' Society, and almost every recognized author of repute is a member of it. Its object is entirely a business one. The members re-

gister all their pieces in the books of the society, and the management, for a certain per centage by way of commission, collects the fees for the performance of their pieces in the provinces. The business of collection is simplified in this way. The provincial theatres are rated at so much per annum according to their size and importance. One pays, say 200*l.* per annum, another 150*l.*, another 100*l.*, and so on down to the lowest rate, and for these annual payments the managers are entitled to play any pieces registered on the society's list. The whole receipts of the society are then divided among the authors according to the number of times their pieces have been played, and in shares in proportion to the class of piece. The system of disposing of pieces to managers in London is not so advantageous to the authors as it is in Paris In the French capital the playwriters enjoy what are called *les droits d'auteur*; that is to say, each author is entitled to a certain proportion of the receipts of every night's performance while his piece is played. The Académie Royale allows the author 500 francs for each of the first forty nights, and 200 francs for every subsequent night. The Théâtre Français gives one twelfth of the gross receipts, and the lower class of theatres, such as the Odéon, Variétés, Gymnase, &c., from one sixth to one eighth. The origin of this system is rather curious. In 1653 the actors of the Hôtel de Bourgogne, who had promised Tristan l'Ermite 100 crowns for a comedy called 'Les Rivales,' refused to give more than fifty when they discovered that it was by Quinault. The latter, however, eventually succeeded in obtaining one ninth of the receipts on each performance of his comedy. From this time the sharing system was established, and it prevails to this day.

It would not be easy to say what amount is annually paid to authors in this country for dramatic work, but we think we shall not be very far wrong in placing the limit at 10,000*l.*

Gathering up our figures, then, we find the following result:—

Annual receipts of the London theatres . .	£350,000
Ditto of the provincial theatres . . .	388,800
Ditto of the London music halls, entertainments, and gardens . .	162,000
Ditto of the provincial music halls, entertainments, and gardens .	178,500
Total amount spent in public amusements .	£1,079,300

Number of persons employed by the London theatres .	4,160
Ditto by the provincial theatres	4,320
Ditto by the London music halls, entertainments, and gardens	1,080
Ditto by the provincial music halls, entertainments, and gardens	1,785
Total number of persons employed in amusing the public	11,345

If we multiply this by 3, as before, we shall have a total of some 34,000 persons who derive their means of subsistence from the business of amusing the public.

Having thus given some idea of the importance of public amusements as a commercial interest, it will not be out of place to add a few words with regard to the moral aspects of the actor's profession. The ancient reproach which actors incurred when the law regarded them as vagabonds, and the clergy refused them Christian burial, is unhappily not altogether removed. There are many persons who firmly believe that the theatre, and everything connected with it, is very wicked, and that actors are all more or less dissolute and irreligious. These persons do not trouble themselves to reflect that theatrical affairs, like everything else, have undergone reformation with the course of time, and that managers and actors in the conduct of themselves and their business have been obliged to conform to the improved habits and tastes of the age. There was a time within the memory of those now living, when theatres

were conducted upon principles which justly brought scandal upon the whole profession. Those were the days when idle and dissolute men, with a little money at their command, became managers just to indulge their passion for dabbling in theatrical affairs, and for the sake of being on intimate terms with actors and actresses. Managers of this class encouraged 'bloods' and 'swells' behind the scenes; and instead of catering for the public at large, secured titled visitors to their boxes and stalls by privately exhibiting the mysteries of their coulisses. We all know what scandals came of this pernicious practice. But all this is changed now. Theatres have become commercial speculations in these days, and managers look for support only to the public at large. If any one thinks that 'behind the scenes' of a theatre is still a wicked place, let him find a valid excuse—and nothing but 'business' will avail him—to go 'behind' at the Adelphi or the Lyceum. If he be unknown and unaccompanied by any one belonging to the theatre, he will probably be asked, as soon as he has set foot on the stage, what business he has there. If he be allowed to remain, he will soon find himself in the way, for the stage of a theatre during the performance is a sternly busy place, and carpenters and scene-shifters setting and removing 'flats' have no respect for persons. Printed notices meet his eye on every hand. 'Strict silence must be observed behind the scenes.' 'No one is allowed to stand in the wings.' Let him visit the green-room and he will find all the proprieties of a private drawing-room observed with jealous punctiliousness. No one is admitted here who has not business in the theatre. Actors and actresses sit side by side on the sofas, waiting to be called to the stage, and in the mean time occupy themselves with pleasant chat, in reading, and the ladies, with their sewing or embroidery.

The slanders which pursue young and attractive actresses are for the most part the malicious inventions of scandal-mongers. Certain reckless and uncharitable people set down every pretty girl who appears on the stage as a social outcast, just because a set of young and vicious fools run after her and make free with her name. Have we not been told over and over again that ladies, whom we know to be happy wives and mothers, with children at their knee, are the mistresses of men whom they never saw in their lives? We hear these stories every day; but it only requires us to step within the theatre to be convinced that they are, in most cases, reckless and wicked falsehoods. We do not wish to urge that actors and actresses are better than other people, but simply that they are no worse; and perhaps if we were to take into account the temptations to which they are exposed, and the life of excitement they lead, we might justly give them credit for possessing at least some of the virtues in a higher degree than the members of other professions which are better esteemed. The theatre, acting as it does so powerfully upon Society, is such an engine for good or evil, that everything bearing on its purification and elevation demands our kindly interest and support. It is with the intention of throwing light on matters as they stand, and to dissipate erroneous and mischievous impressions, that we examine it from various points of view in such contributions as the present.

ARTISTS' NOTES FROM CHOICE PICTURES.

La Crême de la Crême.

PAINTERS, let us never doubt it, have their paternal partialities: else how happens it, as we loiter over a picture, which has enough of human intelligence as well as mechanical contrivance to tempt us to return to it once and again, that we find ourselves almost unconsciously dwelling on some special portion, some quaint or graceful fancy, some loveable or mirthful face, except that we instinctively feel that it must have been a Little Benjamin of the painter's, over which he lingered lovingly, and parted from sorrowing, playing with his pencil on dimpled mouth, or laughing eye, or sunny curl—'in Paradise the while'?

It may be a mere whim this; yet it is pleasant to fancy that it is not wholly so, but that we are thus far *en rapport* with the painter. At any rate it is to some such whim that we are indebted for the graceful design on the following page. In the course of his studies of the best works of our British painters, our artist has found a personal as well as professional pleasure in picking out here and there the faces that have most delighted himself; that were at once the loveliest and the most interesting; that seemed, to sum up all in a word, to have been the painter's own favourites. He has allowed us to select for our pages a few of these 'Artists' Notes from Choice Pictures,' as we may very fairly entitle them, and he will when necessary accompany the faces (as in this instance) with a small sketch of the picture from which they were taken, in order to indicate their place and purpose in the composition. In this way we shall have what the annotator deems the very essence of the picture, and at the same time, we hope, not offend the graver critic who might object to our picking out 'pretty bits' as prejudicial to the due appreciation of the picture as a whole.

The reader has recognized at a glance in the small sketch the charming painting of 'Sancho in the Apartment of the Duchess,' by C. R. Leslie, R.A., perhaps the happiest of the painter's conceptions, and one of the most generally attractive of the Vernon pictures in the South Kensington Museum. Leslie first painted the subject in 1823 for his friendly patron the Earl of Egremont. That is an admirable picture—every one who has been at Petworth will remember it—but the Vernon picture, painted twenty years later, differs from it considerably, and the variations are nearly all improvements. Leslie repeated the subject on a smaller scale for the poet Rogers, at whose sale the little picture brought 1,150 guineas—very much to the painter's delight (he was present at the sale), and a sufficient proof of the popularity of the picture. Its popularity, indeed, reached even to the United States, for the painter was constrained to produce a third repetition of it for an admiring American.

Painter and subject were in this instance exactly in harmony. Genial, gentle, full of a quiet, kindly humour, and with a keen eye for *pleasant* peculiarities of character, Leslie would thoroughly relish and assimilate so delightful a narrative as that of the interview of honest Sancho with the Duchess—one of the most enjoyable chapters in the second part of 'Don Quixote.' It is hardly necessary to recall the passage to the memory. Don Quixote has been expatiating after dinner to the Duke and Duchess on the peerless charms of Dulcinea del Toboso, and rehearsing the enchantments of which his princess equally with himself is a victim. The hour for the afternoon nap has arrived. The Duke, having directed his servants to treat the Don with all the courtesy and respect due to so eminent

a knight errant, has retired to take his siesta, and Sancho has come by special invitation of the Duchess to pass the hour alone with her and her ladies in a cool and pleasant apartment. The Squire, having first cautiously examined every nook and cranny to see that no one is concealed who might overhear the conversation, has seated himself on a low stool near her Grace's feet, that he might 'sit as governor and speak as squire;' and having given it as his own private and particular opinion that the Don his master is 'a 'downright madman,' 'as mad as a March hare,' goes on to relate how he had himself, 'knowing his blind side,' palmed off upon the Don the story, 'as wild and uncertain as the hills of Ubeda,' of the enchantment of the Lady Dulcinea, 'but whom you must know, is, in fact, *between you and I*, no more enchanted than the man in the moon'

It is just the moment of that confidential utterance which the painter has seized. 'Between you and I,' says honest Sancho; and he puts on his knowingest look, and twinkles his merry eye, and lays his forefinger along the side of his nose. You have the very man before you. Sancho could have been no other than we see him here, and he must have told the story in this very way. Leslie caught the turn of face and the peculiar action of the finger from Chantrey. The great sculptor loved a merry story heartily, and before fitting companions related one with unction. One day Chantrey, being in mirthful mood, looked so irresistibly comical as he was thus giving point to a sly allusion, that Leslie, who was just then considering how to represent the squire, begged him to remain so for a moment that he might use him as a model.

And this ludicrous position of the finger really serves as a key to the idea in the composition. The Duchess, already abundantly tickled at Sancho's odd sayings, finds this last touch of unexpected familiarity almost too much even for her well-disciplined self-restraint and courtly gravity, at the same time her thorough kindheartedness forbids her from any outward display of hilarity at the expense of Sancho's simple manners. And how exquisitely is this shown! In the whole range of pictorial art there is no happier expression of the sense of enjoyment breaking into laughter, but restrained by a feeling of decorum, courtesy, and kind feeling. The sweetest and most delicate smile was stealing over that lovely face, and there it is checked midway and preserved for ever.

'It is a great pity, Leslie,' wrote Washington Irving to his friend, he himself being at the time in Spain and enthusiastic on all Spanish matters, 'it is a great pity, now that you are engaged in painting Spanish subjects, that you don't get a peep at the country and its people. The countenance, figure, air, attitude, walk, and dress of a Spaniard all have a peculiar character.' No doubt Irving was right. But we hardly share in his regret. Leslie would have given something more of Spanish character to his pictures and people, but he would probably have lost something of his simplicity and naturalness. It is seldom, if ever, that a painter is as much at home with foreign character as he is with native. We might have had a duchess with a more Spanish air, attitude, and countenance, but we should have had no such lovely and loveable a being as we now have:

'A thing of beauty and a joy for ever.'

We might have had truer Spanish damsels than the owners of the two fair faces—whom our artist could not resist taking from the right-hand corner of the picture to place alongside of their mistress—but we may well doubt whether they would have dwelt so pleasantly in the memory.



THE MAD CABMAN.

IT was a close cab I hailed—a yellow cab—and its number was 1676. I remember the number distinctly, and I will tell you how it happened that its number and colour have stuck so like burrs to my memory. When I got out of the door of the Freemasons' Tavern (on the night of February —, 1860), where the dinner of the 'Benevolent Superannuated Night Porters' Association' had been held, and called a close cab from the stand, as the cabman got down slowly from his box and opened the door for me, with the natty twist and tug peculiar to the craft, I looked inside and saw that one of the cushions was torn nearly in half, and that the foot-mat was kicked up in a dirty heap in one corner. Upon which, observing the number of the cab to be 1676, and somewhat, perhaps, exhilarated by the 'Benevolent Night Porters'' champagne, I remarked good-naturedly that 'one might expect things to be at sixes and sevens in cab 1676.' The cabman growled something in return, but he made no other answer.

One other thing, too, I noticed about the cab—having a rather sensitive eye for colour—and that was, that the vehicle was painted a bright canary colour, bright as the wings of a goldfinch: now yellow being a colour I peculiarly abhor, except in sunshine and calceolarias, I grumbled, half aloud and half to myself, that 'it must have been a madman who painted a cab such a colour.'

'No more mad than you, master,' replied instantly an angry voice from somewhere or other; but whether it was the waterman, who now stood holding the door, and hoping 'I would remember him,' and whose pewter badge shone like silver in the gas-light; whether it was some street boy lurking round for pence; whether it was a drunken waiter, or even some mere impertinent passer-by, I could not in the hurry of the moment very well determine. I remember, however, replying to the waterman, as I gave him a penny—

'When I forget thee then shall Long Acre forget thy cunning;' a foolish perversion of Scripture, and so unmeaning, that the very uttering of it struck me in an instant with the conviction that I had taken too much wine. So the waterman thought, too, for I heard him as he passed the cabman say—

'The cove's sprung—take care of him, he's worth half a shiner to ye!'

I felt vexed at the time, but I said nothing, but roused all my cautiousness, determined to watch this cabman narrowly, and resist all attempts at opposition. Wine turns some men into braggarts, others it makes cowards. Some sing, and others talk, when wine mounts up into their brain. Me it makes silent, wary, suspicious, and cautious. It quickens me, it extends my mental vision, it heightens all my senses. It seems—if I may so express it—to come to the windows of my mind, and rub a vapour from them, so that I see people clearer and deeper.

It specially had this effect on me on the night in question, so before the cabman had yet shuffled up the capes of his coat, and tied a fresh knot in his whip, I had calculated how many miles it was from Long Acre to my cottage on Downham Green, east of Hammersmith, and observed that the horse was a good one, and untired.

'Vere to, sir?' said the cabman, forcing the door with great difficulty into its proper place, and then with all his strength grinding down the rusty or bruised handle.

'To No. 4, De Beauvoir Terrace, Downham Green, Hammersmith.'

'And how many miles do you make it?' said the sullen rogue again, as he rudely thrust his rough face in at the window, speaking with a sour, hard voice.

I replied that I called it not quite five.

'Not much less,' said the man bitterly, with a growl, as he put one foot on the step to mount to his coachbox.

'And mind it's double fare, sir, after twelve,' he added, returning again to carefully pull up both windows, and to re-open and re-slam the opposite door of the cab.

I did not like the vindictive look he gave me as he did this; but I said nothing, for I knew his number, and the wine made me reckless of all dangers, but I did not know the motive of all that care then.

'Will you go on,' I cried, 'with your ramshackle cab, or I'll get out and take another—a better one?'

'Ve'll go on fast enough presently,' growled the ill-conditioned fellow with a peculiar emphasis, as he jumped up on his seat. The horse spluttered about for a moment on the stones, struck out a spark or two with its hoofs, and then sprang forward. The waterman, flinging down his water bucket, took off his hat ironically to my driver. I heard a voice behind us calling for a 'cab, quick.'

'Take care how you drive that there gentleman,' cried out a policeman, and we were off. The lamps of Long Acre passed us in quick procession; it seemed but a minute, and we were in St. Martin's Lane. At that instant the gusty wind bore across the road the 'half-past twelve,' struck by the bell of St. Martin's Church.

The driver, thinking of his over-fare, turned, and tapping at the window, with a brutal leer asked me if I heard 'the clock a-striking;' but I did not reply, for I had taken a strange dislike to the man, and my only wish now was to get as soon as possible to my own home, and rid myself of a fellow probably half intoxicated, and evidently determined to be extortionate and troublesome.

By this time it had begun to rain fast; the mist, before wavering and wandering, now fell in long, lashing lines, that beat fiercely against the cab windows, covering them with a moving surface of water, that rendered it impossible for the time to see out of either glass. The wind, too, beat against the cab, and flew howling before us up the street. Still we drove on fast and steadily up Regent Street, where now nothing could be seen but a stray policeman cowering up in a doorway.

I never saw such rain before nor since. It seemed to whiten all the pavement, and to madly dance and splash, as if each drop were a living thing. Yet all this time that the rain seemed ready to beat in the windows, the cabman, with head bent deprecatingly down, drove on singing scraps of a coarse sea-song:

'Belay there' belay' was all he would say,
As we tossed in the chops of the Channel.'

I struck the window angrily, to stop his ribald and insolent song; but he did not seem to hear me, and paid no attention to my signal; so throwing myself back in a corner of the cab, I began to turn over the chief events of the evening in my mind, just to wile away the time.

Through a pleasant haze the past hours seemed again to defile before me. I went through all the moments from the time the man at the door gave me the ticket for my hat, to the time that I gave it back again to the same man, and told the waiter to call me a cab from the nearest stand. I remembered all the bows and hand-shakings of the Committee Room, and how at last, in an irregular body, we moved in to the dining-hall, marshalled by the jolly-looking, portly stewards, with blue rosettes at their buttonholes. I remembered the buzz as old Lord Foptoddle, our noble chairman, arrived and took his seat; I remembered, too, with a smile, the bursting out of 'Down among the barley,' from the professional singers, just as the dessert was set upon the table. Then came the procession round the table of 'the superannuated night porters,' and the tremendous auctioneer's blow of the toastmaster's hammer, that heralded the first toast. Again I seemed to hear the anile speeches, the insincere compliments, the ridiculous praise, the extravagant self-laudation on the mutual flattery system. Again, through a din of tongues, and a clattering of plates, I heard the treasurer read those tiresome, endless items, such as—

'Twenty pounds from Lord Foptoddle.' (Cheers.)

'Ten pounds from the Marquis of Cheshire.' (Renewed cheers.)

Again, too, for the twentieth time, I heard the treasurer thank the secretary, and the secretary thank the treasurer; and then, at last, not a little flurried, I rose myself to pro-

pose 'The Ladies,' who smiled upon us in the gallery, I all the time thinking only of pretty little Nelly Pledgett, my doctor's daughter, who I saw beaming and radiant in a front seat. I got quite eloquent on the subject of female beauty, and sat down amid tremendous applause. I was replied to by the good doctor, who, thanking the meeting on behalf of the ladies, begged to propose the health of one of the best friends of the society—need he say he alluded to—'Osbert Wilkinson, Esq.?' (Cheers.)

But suddenly, through all these motley recollections, there flashed a painful thought—a suspicious apprehension of I scarcely knew what coming evil. It seemed, when I think of it now, almost like a presentiment of what shortly after happened. I remembered that, as I sat down, somewhat heated by my speech, and was pouring myself out a glass of that excellent sherry to wind up with, my old friend, the doctor—who by-the-by sat opposite me at dinner—leant across the table and gave me a peculiarly keen and searching look from under those thick grey eyebrows of his.

'What does that detective's look of yours mean, doctor?' said I, pleasantly enough.

'*It means that you must take care of yourself,*' said he in a grave voice; and no more passed between us, for at that moment I rose to leave, having some business that would call me up early in the morning. He followed me out, though, and when we shook hands in the doorway, I am not sure that he did not hold his stop-watch in one hand, and feel my pulse with the other; but I was so busy helping Nelly on with her scarlet opera cloak that I did not pay much attention to the nervous old fellow, who, between ourselves, I think is rather getting past work; he worries one so with warnings and mysterious threats, as if I wasn't in the finest health, and my life insurance just advantageously settled.

Dear Nelly! what an anxious look she gave me, as I stepped into my cab! I was sure that girl loved me.

All this evening I had been haunted with anxieties about that troublesome Chancery case of mine, 'Wormwood *versus* Widgett,' the vexation and delays of which had nearly driven me mad. I had really felt quite giddy over it that very morning, and began to get alarmed about overworking my brain, as my doctor taxed me with doing. I could not get the thought of it, even now, out of my mind, till a certain growing apprehension overpowered it.

We were still driving on at a strange, unequal rate—now at a furious gallop, now at a fierce trot; but where we were I could not very well determine—I looked out, for we had just got into a dark bye-street, and there was no lamp visible, up or down, as far, at least, as I could see without putting my head out, for the windows were jammed so close that it was impossible to open them.

It was here that, for the first time, I began somehow or other to have some vague apprehension of the sanity or honesty of my driver. Then came thronging into my brain stories I had heard years ago in Paris of a celebrated and dangerous gang of thieves who had for their accomplices many of the drivers of the night *fiacres*. These fellows drove whatever passengers they could procure into obscure streets, and there robbed and sometimes murdered them. Was I to be the victim of such a scheme?—and if I was, what hope had I, alone and unarmed, to escape, at such an hour too, and on such a night?

Now was the time to resist, however, before it was too late. My resolution was prompt. I struck at the window as loudly as I could without breaking the glass; I kicked at the panels of the door; I shouted. Suddenly, with a tremendous jolt on the curb, the cab stopped. As the door opened I cried, 'Let me out, you rascal—I'll not be robbed.' I stepped forward to get out, but was met by a fierce blow on the chest from the cabman, whose eyes now literally glared with rage.

'That's enough of your mad tricks, Bedlam Billy,' he said, as he thrust me back violently into the cab; 'you vant a straight vescut,

you do, and you shall have one;' then slamming the door with a wrench that showed extraordinary strength, he leaped on the box, and drove away again with a fury that sent me reeling into a corner of the seat.

Hitherto I had dreamt only of robbery, now I was sure that the man who drove me was mad, stark staring mad. He was going to drive me into some river, or down some pit, or in some way or other to hurry himself and me to a horrible death. There he was now, standing up to drive, leaning forward to lash on the eager horse, that, frothing with pain, leaped at every blow of the man's whip. I do not know why I did not instantly break both front windows, and pull the man off the box; or force open the door and throw myself out; or, breaking all the glass, shout to every one through the openings that the man who was driving me had gone mad.

From whatever cause it happened, I know not, but I did none of these things. It was now long past midnight, and I could see no one, not even a policeman. We were fast getting into the suburbs. The speed rendered it almost certain death to leap out, and, moreover, no strength I could evoke could succeed in forcing open either door. I waited, therefore, for some halt or pause that would give me an opportunity of struggling with the madman to whose care I had so unhappily intrusted myself.

On we flew, on, the horse leaping and plunging as if it would have broken from the harness. We dashed down streets, whose random lamps seemed to race past us; we tore down lanes, where houses were yet but few, except at the beginning. Now the wheels grazed against a post, and now against a garden wall; but still the madman who drove me seemed somehow or other to struggle through all dangers, and drive on more frantically than before.

Once we dashed through a turnpike. Some voices screamed after us, and my driver screamed to them in return, but what they said or what he said I could not distinguish.

What could I do? What use was it to threaten a maniac with violence, with blows of the fist—a man who perhaps imagined himself hunted by devils, or escaping from his would-be murderer? His crazy suspicions had already, doubtless, associated me with some old persecutor, or supernatural enemy of his. How could I reason with him—how could I sooth such fears? Would he not leap at once at my throat like a wild cat, and tear my very life out?

We were now racing up a long side street, where in the distance, to my horror, I could just discern, through the pale light of the first daybreak, a yawning pit dug for the foundations of new houses. There was no railing on the one side, and the road was a mere deep-rutted lane, without limit or boundary.

I saw at once that our fate was inevitable; it came ere I could in any manner extricate myself from the vehicle. The horse near the deepest place gave a plunge and reel, then dropped, spite of the redoubled lashing of the frantic driver—yes, fell, dragging the carriage with it into what seemed to me, in that imperfect light, and in that whirl of my senses, a chasm of darkness at the bottom of which crouched Death waiting for his prey. There was a crash, a cry, and I fell stunned.

* * * *

I know not how long I lay insensible; but when I recovered, it was daybreak, a faint red light was striping the eastern sky, and I could see surrounding objects, though in a dim uncertain way. I was lying beside the fallen coach and its dead horse. the driver I could nowhere see. My first impulse was to rouse myself, totter on my legs, and discover where I was hurt, or if any bone was broken. To my great delight I found myself whole and sound, with the exception of a slight sprain in my right foot, at least so I thought at first; but as I put down my hand to touch my injured foot, a heavy red-clotted drop of blood fell on it. I lifted my hand to my forehead, and found there a deep cut, from which the blood was oozing thickly. I instantly took out my handkerchief and bound it tightly round the wound, so as, if possible, to staunch

the blood till I could get assistance. But where was I, and where was the driver? 'Thank God,' I cried aloud, 'that I am at last rid of that madman!' I looked round to see what sort of a place the wretch had ensnared me into.

It was an unfinished suburban street, with raw brick skeletons of houses, stretching their frail dreary walls up into the misty morning air. Some were caged in with scaffold-poles, others had great heaps of mortar still piled up in front of them; unfinished iron railings, doors daubed, like clowns' faces, with patches of red; windows with white circles in their panes; gateways with gaping pits where steps were to be, everywhere met my eye. In front of me on a dead wall, 'Alpha Terrace,' the name of this future paradise, was written in staring white-wash letters. The only sound I could hear, far or near, was the restless twitter of the wakening sparrows. I touched the horse; he was dead, cold, and already stiffening. The coach lay on its side, rising like a wall before me, at the bottom of a new-dug foundation, some twelve feet from the roadway. It was wonderful how I had escaped.

But the wretched maniac who would have taken my life, was he lying crushed beneath the cab? I must rouse myself and see if I can find any trace of him, though doubtless he believed me dead. If unhurt, he had fled, howling and exulting, to meet with that certain detection he had not cunning enough to escape; if injured, he had crawled away to obtain help.

As these thoughts passed through my mind, I stepped painfully over the dead horse, and again exclaiming, 'Thank God he is gone!' walked round to the other side of the cab, which hitherto had been hidden from me.

Good heavens! what did I see? My enemy the madman, sitting down between the upturned wheels, with his back against the body of the carriage, quietly cutting a leather trace into two long flexible strips. On his face, which was smeared with mud and gore, there was a hideous smile of malice as his eyes met mine.

'Vy, hallo, Lushington?' he said—not appearing in the least alarmed or surprised, and continuing his task—'this is a rum start of yours, isn't it? Vot are you a-going to give me for my fare? I'm not going away, Colney Hatch, vithout getting paid for your mad capers, so don't think it, Mr. Hanwell. So now then, Crazy Bill, stump up.'

'It is you who are mad,' I said, 'and I leave you to your keeper.'

'Ve'll see about that,' said the villain, slowly getting on his legs and advancing towards me with the two leather straps, that he had now knotted into one long cord, dangling behind his back. 'You must come off with me to Bedlam, my man; you ain't safe at large; a cold shower-bath is what you want, old Billy Bodlam. Now easy,—hiss!—easy.'

'Lunatic,' I cried, 'beware of a desperate man.'

'There's two on us desperate, as fur as that goes,' said the wretch, leaping on me to bind my hands.

God forgive me for it, but as the fellow advanced, and ere he could seize my throat I drew a long broad knife quickly from my trousers pocket, and stabbed him under the left breast. He threw up his hands, screamed, 'The madman's done it!' and fell dead on his face.

I stood for a moment spellbound, but the sight of a red stream of blood winding towards my feet aroused me. * * I was a murderer; my brain was on fire; those drear gaunt houses seemed dancing round me; the earth seemed heaving into graves.

I erased the number of the cab, 1676, to escape detection, then threw down the knife, and fled I knew not where, with the speed of an escaped malefactor.

I shall never know where I ran. I passed through streets where shops were beginning to be opened in the bright morning sun; people called to me but I never stopped; I leaped over gates and chased through the rank grass of lonely meadows. There was a dead stillness at first in the air, and I thought I had escaped; but presently a sound, at first no louder than the bay of a watch-dog, seemed to gradually swell into the clamour and cry of a vast pursuing

mob. I could hear voices, and the tramp of feet: the wretches had dogs with them: they were tracking me. How strange that among them I seemed to specially distinguish the voices of Doctor Pledgett and his daughter Nelly! What had they to do there? I saw the mob breaking through a distant orchard, and thought I had beaten them off like so many wild curs; but suddenly in front of me, at a turning I cannot avoid, ran three men. They point to a dead, bleeding man lying on the ground. I dash at them. There are blows that fall crashing on my head, then there is a great darkness.

* * * *

When I awoke it was a soft spring morning, and I was in bed in a room I had never seen before. Oh, so neat and trim! A goldfinch was singing pleasantly at the window, and there were bouquets of violets on the white cloth of the dressing-table. A bright, rosy cloud rippled over the sky; a cheery fire sent quivering up the chimney its little yellow flames, and made a cozy, murmuring sound with its puffing jets of gas. I rose in bed by a great effort, for I was very weak, and looked at myself in the great toilet glass that faced the bed. I saw not myself, but a pale, hollow-faced, old man, whose shaven head was bound in wet bandages. It looked like Lazarus when he ascended those steps that led from the inner darkness.

Suddenly the door opened, and who should enter but my good friend, Dr. Pledgett? It was his house I was in. He smiled when he saw me once more conscious; but shook his finger when he observed that I was trying to speak.

* * * *

The rest may be told in a few words. The long and the short of it was, that I had had a brain fever. The disease had broken out the night of the charity dinner, as my doctor had long expected. The severe mental labour of that case of 'Wormwood *v.* Widgett' had been too much for my brain. Pledgett had, indeed, as he sat opposite to me at dinner, that eventful night, seen premonitory symptoms of the disorder, and had tried to follow my cab. By my friends' wish I had been sent to his house, for the sake of greater attention.

Of my crazy doings that night, the less said the better. They ended, however, I may mention, in my upsetting the cab myself (for I had insisted on driving), in a dangerous place, and then stabbing the cabman, whom I had mistaken for an escaped madman. Luckily the wound, though it bled severely, had not proved dangerous As for myself, I had then escaped from the cabman, who had tried to take me safely home seeing I was delirious, and being found in a field near Chiswick, was driven to a hospital, from whence Dr. Pledgett, hearing of my detention there, took me to his own house.

I soon recovered, thanks to my kind doctor, but, alas! having before lost my senses, I now lost my heart. I spent my long days of convalescence in wandering in the garden with Nelly, in practising duets, and reading Tennyson. I soon found it impossible to be happy without her.

To-morrow week, Nelly Pledgett, I am proud and happy to say, becomes Mrs. Osbert Wilkinson, thanks to my imaginary MAD CABMAN and the yellow cab No. 1676.

W. T.

ANSWERS TO MR. HERVEY'S CHARADES IN No. 2.

I. HUNTING-GROUND.
II. SNOW-DROP.



Drawn by Florence Claxton

LONDON SOCIETIES

No I Society for the Practice of Part Singing.

London Societies.

No. I.—SOCIETY FOR THE PRACTICE OF CHORAL SINGING.



SOPRANO, contralto, tenor, and bass. Any one who has the honour to belong to a 'Musical Society,' can, I flatter myself, easily distinguish the part nature has allotted the four principal figures of the sketch in the quartett they are performing with such evident satisfaction; but for the sake of any individual not blessed with such advantages, it may be as well to point out 'which is which,' and 'who is who.' First, then, the gentleman at the piano is 'our conductor, manager, and director,' and very proud of him we are, and a horrible life we lead him, especially on Friday evenings from eight to ten, P.M. For my own part, I should scarcely think life worth having under the condition of 'conducting an Amateur Choral Society' to glory (which means the concert at the close of the season). The most delicate tact, the most inexhaustible patience, the most profound art, are *among* the simplest qualifications for that arduous post, especially as, being non-professionals, we naturally feel entitled to give ourselves airs, and take little pains to conceal our disgust when publicly accused of a false note. I am proud to enrol my name among the Bassi, and am represented by the 'party' next to the piano, with his mouth *well* opened. On my left stands our 'first tenor;' and here, perhaps, I should mention that between the 'gentlemen tenors,' and 'the bass,' there is war. No bass with a proper sense of *esprit de corps* will ever acknowledge any tenor can sing a solo without murdering it, or that the tenors, as a mass, are anything but a pitiable failure. To balance this, there exists, I believe, no tenor capable of a more noble sentiment than malignant satisfaction, on the *rare* occasion of a bass coming to grief. This being the case, I avoid the subject of the gentleman on my left, and pass on to the contralto—who is—no, I won't say fat, but plump and good-looking; next to a bass, give me a contralto. How soft, how delicious, how true is such a voice; how gracious, how lovely, how sweet-tempered, is a contralto's face. All are fine women, but some—oh! I need now scarcely say that the tall blonde in the foreground is 'our first

soprano!' She is not an ill-looking girl, and evidently thinks nothing of the upper C; but whilst I acknowledge her astounding ability, the force of her style, and her dazzling execution, I feel thankful, sincerely thankful to the tenor and alto, and both ladies' crinoline, for the space they interpose between us. Soprani actually swarm at our *réunions*—their name is Legion, and their principal characteristics are grey eyes, pink and white complexions, slender necks (capable of a good deal of muscular action under excitement), and light or auburn hair. I have seen these ladies *singing at each other in a full chorus*; and I remember my impression at the time has always been, that one or other of the fair creatures must drop dead off her perch. It is in vain our honoured conductor waves his hand and cries beseechingly, 'Piano, pianissimo, ladies!' He—mighty master as he is—can only stand aside, like the rest of us on these occasions, and 'Praise Allah' when the battle comes to an end. Not but that we are *all* personally very good friends; it is only as a tenor I object to that feeble-looking young gentleman on my left, and I hope it is only as a bass he regards me with, perhaps, merited contempt. As for the ladies, any one passing the door (so kindly left ajar) of their room at the conclusion of our practice, may behold such a scene of kissing and embracing as shall prove their ardent affection for each other to every one except a cynical old bass.

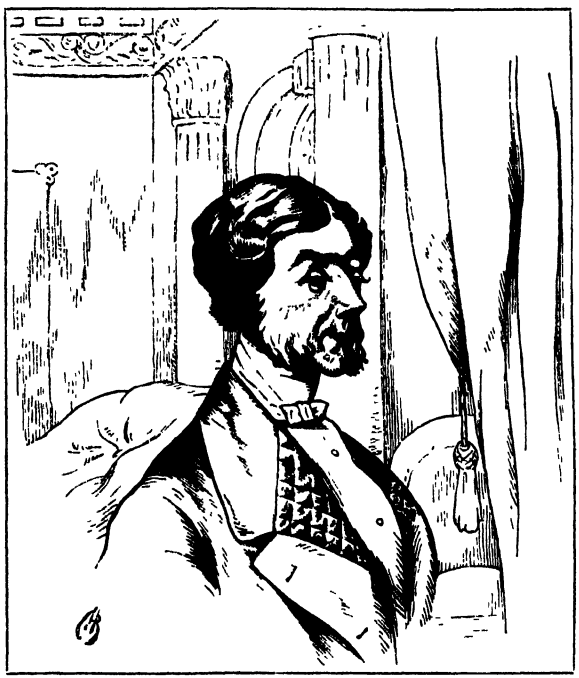
ODE TO THE SWELL.

[*The Bard reciteth his Anthem to the Noble Swell who inspired them.*]

THE Swell—the Swell—I sing the Swell!
Come, Sisters of the tuneful shell,
With me your rapturous voices raise
To celebrate his solemn praise.
If e'er you spied at Noon and Eve—
(For Morn his couch ne'er saw him leave)—
That listless form—that faultless suit,
The spotless hat—the speckless boot,
The drooping lid—the rising nose,
That snuffs at Nature's meaner shows,
The curling lip—the whisker trim,
The dainty glove—th' umbrella slim,
The self-wrapt, world-despising face,
The lounging figure's studied grace?—
If e'er you heard in Park or Ball
The long 'haw-haw'—the languid drawl—
The softened R, whose roughness rude
To gentle double U's subdued?
If these you heard—if these you saw—
(*Swell interposing with beseeching accents*)
'I—say!—aw!—this—is—gett'ng—' baw!'

T. Hood.

'THE BEST OF ALL GOOD COMPANY.'



SWELL! Who's the Swell
That our cunning artist has limn'd so well?
Ah! the solemn Swell so fine!
A Clerk, oh, reader mine,
'Neath the Treasury's sway benign.
At Whitehall is he
From eleven till three,
When he cuts the 'shawp' for good company.



Swell! Who's the Swell
With a beard like a lion's tawny fell?
Ah! who is this Swell so fine?
A Soldier, as I opine,
Who can fight—and dance—and dine.
A Major used he
In the Heavies to be;—
He's a heavy Swell in good company!



Swell! Who's the Swell
Who lifts a contemptuous organ of smell?
Ah! who is this Swell so fine?
The Bar, boys, is his line,
Though he does not care there to shine.
Special Pleader is he
In Society,
And he drops the law for good company!



Swell! Who's the Swell
Whose solemn grandeur no tongue can tell?
Ah, who is this Swell so fine?
The Heir of thousands nine,
Judge of beauty, horses, and wine.
A lounger is he
With a long pedigree,
And he mixes in very good company!

T. Hood.

THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.

A TALE FOR MAIDENS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS; AND, INCIDENTALLY, FOR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN.

CHAPTER III.

'SAY, GEORGIE! IS IT SO?'

It was the middle of the season, and London was full, and hot, and gay Both opera-houses were open, and Louisa Pyne on the boards of the one was proving those people mistaken who look down on English opera, and becoming a formidable rival to the Italian prima donna who made melody on the boards of the other. In addition to the new star, who was neither fascinating little Piccolomini nor pretty Patti, dear, stately, handsome Grisi was in London giving her last weeks and last nights, and not having the heart happily to go after all. And Mario, that matchless Don Giovanni, and the golden-throated tenor alternated with each other in charming and ravishing the musical public And concerts were daily, and exhibitions of pictures of the old and new Italian and Flemish school were many. And the Sydenham Palace was rushing into all kinds of extravagancies in the way of flower-shows, presenting of colours, festivals, concerts, and bazaars. And the debates of the session were interesting enough to excite the members when there, and to send them away to balls and conversaziones animated and brilliant. And the whitebait had arrived at perfection, and Mr. Hart and Mr. Quartermaine were meeting the constant calls upon them with their accustomed admirable promptitude and energy, when Mrs. Knightly and her family returned to town after their season of sad seclusion and retirement.

Mrs. Knightly was back in the Piccadilly mansion. She had said to Gerald that she should perhaps go and live in Harley Street; and Gerald had told her he thought it would be 'a very good move' and a very proper course to pursue; 'For,' said he, 'when Rupert and Georgie are married you see, mother, they must live here of course, and I don't approve of the whole family being quartered together.' Gerald's prompt acquiescence in her proposed scheme was not altogether pleasing to Mrs. Knightly.

There was a delightful and select small reception at Mrs. Vining's in May Fair. Mrs. Vining had the prettiest and best-arranged drawing-rooms in London, said her friends, and they were not very far out in their assertion. Anything more conducive to ease and conversation than the ordering of those little rooms, furnished in amber-coloured silk rep, it is impossible to conceive. Every one grew fluent in Mrs. Vining's house. Some people said it was owing to Vining having such good wine; others to the best people always being there; others to the lounges and chairs being freely arranged; but the real cause was to be found in the bright, never-failing vivacity of the host and hostess.

The best people did not mean, in the Vining vocabulary, those with the loudest titles and longest purses, though there were many of these there, for Mrs. Vining was the daughter of a nobleman who, as the song says, 'had been naturally mild, till he found his only child had been bothered and beguiled by an Irish hussar.' Harry Vining was the gayest, and brightest, and best-looking of Irish hussars; and as the father of his wife soon forgave him for having carried off his daughter from wealthier suitors, the pair rapidly succeeded in making the little house in May Fair one of the most attractive in London, and collecting around them at these weekly receptions many a celebrity as well as many an aspirant for honours in literature and art. The time passed at Mrs. Vining's Wednesdays was one sparkle.

Mrs. Vining herself was a pretty

little woman of the very dashing order; but then this manner was tempered by such very high breeding that you never had the fear of its degenerating into fastness. She was the particular friend of that Georgie Clifford of whom mention has been made; and this evening Georgie was here, and Mrs. Vining had been vainly trying to get speech of her for a long time, but had not been able to manage it in consequence of the constant claims on her attention as a polite hostess.

Miss Clifford was just what Georgies nearly always are—very pretty, very piquant, rather small, and rather clever; altogether a very brilliant and very warm-hearted little individual. A universal favourite, courted, and flattered, and openly admired, she was neither a flirt nor a fool. She liked admiration, and she had a great deal of it; but she did not think the finest and most glorious thing in the world was to cause a fellow-creature's heart to ache; consequently, though this admiration very frequently ripened into love, to her honour be it said, it never afterwards changed to hate and contempt. Amongst all the men who had sighed for her love, and sued for her hand, there was not one whom Georgie Clifford could not have claimed as a friend. She had never been guilty of the baseness of telling and boasting about the offers she had received; of meanly trading upon former successes to enhance her value in the eyes of others. No; Georgie Clifford was the soul of honour.

People did not dress much at Mrs. Vining's Wednesdays. Those ladies who went there for the evening went in demi-toilette. There were some who looked in on their way from a dinner-party or to a ball, and these, of course, came resplendent with gleaming shoulders and horticultural heads. But as a rule people did not dress much. And yet surely elegance in demi-toilette is a thing which it costs as much artistic consideration to attain as does the fullest dress. The most critical—and there were many authorities in the critical world of art present—were ready to allow that artistic considerations had presided at Miss Clifford's toilet on this especial Wednesday evening.

I have called her a pretty girl; but that is an extremely marginal phrase. She was a sparkling brunette; but by this I do not mean that she had sharp black eyes and a vivid complexion. Not at all. Her eyes were not black, and though bright and clear they were very far from being sharp; and her complexion was faulty in the extreme, in the eyes of those who can only admire white foreheads and clearly-defined roscate hues in the cheeks. Georgie's face was of a uniform creamy-brown tint by day, lighting up at night into that dazzling whiteness which is so often seen in Italian faces. She looked sweetly, her friend Mrs. Vining thought, as she stood in the corner balancing her head against the wall, her soft black hair turned back lightly in elastic waves from her pretty little face, and her rounded, graceful figure robed in a high transparent pale-blue dress, with a quantity of rich white lace edging the front of the body and sleeves. She was rather clever, and talked well; and, above all, she had that gorgeous cloak for all deficiencies, an immitable manner. For about a year and a half she had been betrothed to Rupert Knightly, and it was of Rupert Knightly that Mrs. Vining was so eager to speak this evening.

'Where is Mr. Knightly, Georgie, do you know?' she asked, ruthlessly interrupting a young artist who was imploring Miss Clifford to come to his studio the following day with Mrs. Vining to inspect his novel treatment of the 'Finding the body of Harold.'

'He's in town by this time, I suppose,' she answered. 'He has been at Warmingston with his mother for a month; but I believe he's coming back to-day.'

'The whole family came up yesterday, I have just heard; so probably Mr. Knightly will be here directly, as he always can count upon finding you here. I'll drive you to call there to-morrow, Georgie, shall I?'

'Yes do, please; that will be very nice of you.'

'And I tell you what else I will do if it so pleases you. I'll offer to

chaperone Gussie and Florence till such time as either Gussie or you are married and don't want me; for Mrs. Knightly won't go out, and they would sooner go with me than almost any one else, wouldn't they, Georgie?'

'Much sooner, I should think. It's a capital idea of yours. I heard from Rupert on Monday. I wonder he did not say they were coming up so soon.'

'Wanted to surprise you probably. I hope he will come to-night,' said Mrs. Vining, turning away from Georgie, after bidding her look for her to-morrow at Kensington Gore at two o'clock, and addressing a gentleman who, in consequence of having overheard their conversation and allusions to some Rupert, was employed in making up his mind not to address those lovely lines of his to 'proud Clifford's daughter' as he had intended.

'Are the Knightlys Mrs. Vining was speaking of the same there was that little buzzing talk about last year, Miss Clifford?' asked a slight, refined-looking, pale, dark man, with a smile that was half a sneer hovering perpetually over his face.

'You ignore my share in the conversation, Colonel Crofton,' replied Miss Clifford. 'Tell me what the little buzzing talk was about, and I will then tell you whether it related to the same family Mrs. Vining and I were speaking of.'

'Miss Clifford places me in the witness-box, and demands the truth—nothing but it—and the whole of it. Here goes then, the talking in question—of which, of course, you are ignorant, how should you be otherwise?—consisted of a series of smart and other sayings, which went the round of the clubs and other gossip-shops last season, relating to the doting folly of the rich Mr. Knightly, who left his sons and daughters penniless in carrying out his fine theory of doing all honour to his wife. Many-tongued report also added—forgive me, Miss Clifford, I'm in the witness-box, you know—that this judicious last will and testament would be the cause of swamping the matrimonial arrangements of the junior members of the family. That the classical-faced Augusta——'

'Who refused you, Colonel Crofton, two years ago; go on,' interrupted Georgie Clifford.

'Miss Clifford honours me too much by remembering such trifles in connection with me; however, to proceed — that the beautiful Miss Knightly, who, as you kindly remarked, was good enough to refuse me two years ago, will never queen it over society as Lady Tollemache, and that the eldest son——'

'To whom I am engaged, Colonel—allow me to remind you of that fact, which appears to have escaped your memory——'

'Is likely to sue in vain for the hand of Lord Clifford's daughter; say, Georgie, is it so?'

He came nearer to her as he spoke, with his polished easy air, and Vandyke face, and with passionate admiration in his dark half-closed eyes. He came nearer to her, fascinating her into silence by the depth and earnestness of his gaze.

'Say, Georgie, is it so?'

He had asked the question in all seriousness the first time, but the second, a half-smile played about his mouth and eyes, and stung her into speech.

'How dare you put me into such a position, Colonel Crofton? how dare you, after my telling you again to-night, what you well knew before, that I am engaged to Rupert Knightly?'

'Miss Clifford certainly made a statement of a fact with great frankness, about which young ladies are generally more reticent.'

'Because you forced me to it; you obliged me to be either ungenerous to Rupert Knightly, or—unfeminine I suppose you will call it. I prefer being the latter, and bearing the brunt of your sarcasms, Colonel Crofton. Rupert Knightly will have the hand of Lord Clifford's daughter, as you poetically phrased it, whenever it suits Rupert Knightly to claim it.'

'It is you who are sarcastic now, Georgie,—Miss Clifford! Can you imagine no deeper motive than idle curiosity on my part when I asked you that question?'

A quick warm blush overspread Miss Clifford's face as she replied, 'No; for your own sake I am unwilling to believe you had another motive; for you have always professed friendship for Mr. Knightly.'

'Chivalrous notions these, Miss Clifford; however, I accept the rebuke, and now, are we friends again? Though you despise me yourself, perhaps you will allow me to endeavour to create a favourable impression on Miss Florence Knightly?'

'That I do not think you will ever do,' replied Miss Clifford, and as Rupert Knightly then entered the room, she held no further conversation with Colonel Crofton that night.

Colonel Crofton was a man of two or three-and-forty, with a polished, cold, hard exterior, and a handsome though cynical and melancholy face. He was of good family, and, without any ostensible means beyond his pay, always contrived to be in the best society, to have the most unexceptionable chambers—he had retired from active service—and to be the best-mounted and best-dressed man in 'the Row.' He had no very intimate friends; men admired him, did not exactly see through him, and, as a rule, did not like him very much. Women did not understand him, and consequently, as a rule, liked him very much indeed, as they frequently do those whom they do not understand. And Colonel Crofton cared very little whether the generality approved of him or not.

Mrs. Knightly sat with her daughters and her youngest son in the spacious drawing-room, in their handsome house in Piccadilly. The windows were open, and the air came throbbing in laden with the perfume of the flowers with which the balcony abounded. The comely widow had got to the silvery shades of mourning. The heavy crape had given way to the most delicate of pearly tints and thinnest of materials. Her year of strict retirement had not at all attenuated her or robbed her of her bloom. She was a fresher, fairer rose than one could reasonably have expected such a mature one to be. Mrs. Knightly had on the whole enjoyed herself very much indeed at Warmingston. Rupert had never once offered to interfere in anything, and she had liked the steward coming to her, to know what should be done as to everything connected with the land and the tenantry upon it. She had offered to bear the expenses of his election if he would like to come forward for the borough; and this Rupert had declined rather coldly, for he felt that he ought to have been in a different position—in one which would have enabled him to bear the expenses himself. His mother only opened her limpid eyes a little wider at this refusal and manner of Rupert's. Gerald had spoken to her warmly and forcibly, though still gently and affectionately, for this these sons never forgot, about the injustice which had been dealt to Rupert; and he had brought a terrible storm of hysterics about his ears, and sobbing offers to give them everything and go and be a nurse in a hospital or a sister of mercy. This had been too much for Gerald, who resolved that henceforth he would be silent on the subject; but still he steadily refused to have that affair of the exchange arranged.

Augusta was sitting near the open window when the sharp draw-up of wheels attracted her attention; looking up, she exclaimed, 'Here is Georgie Clifford, mamma, with Mrs. Vining!' and presently the visitors were in the room.

Now Georgie Clifford had a keen idea that Rupert was being very badly treated by his mother in this matter of the property, though he had never spoken on the subject to her; but still she really liked Mrs. Knightly, and met her after this long period of non-intercourse as warmly as ever.

The two Knightlys and Georgie were very fond of each other, quite independently of the future sister-in-law-ship which was to exist between them; and Gerald believed his brother's betrothed bride to be as perfect in every respect as a woman could be. The majority of the party being so little antagonistic, it is difficult to conceive how the meeting

could have been other than harmonious; but alas! one of Mrs. Knightly's heart-strings got jarred.

'I am going to propose, Mrs. Knightly,' Mrs. Vining said, in her off-hand way, 'that till Gussie or Georgie can do it, the girls go out with me; and I am ready to begin my duties to-night, by taking one or both of them to the Opera.'

Mrs. Knightly smiled, and said, 'it was very kind, and she was much obliged;' but she felt injured to the very centre of her being. If Mrs. Vining represented general opinion, then general opinion took it for granted that she, the wealthiest and most independent woman in London, was going to shut herself up and have done with pomps and vanities. And by her offer, pretty dashing Mrs. Vining made an enemy on the spot.

CHAPTER IV.

'LOVE TOOK UP THE HARP OF LIFE, AND SMOTE ON ALL THE CHORDS WITH MIGHT.'

'You don't mean to go and hear Borghi-Mamo to-night then, Georgie?'

'Not to-night, dear,' replied Miss Clifford, as her friend Mrs. Vining reined up her two handsome bay ponies at the door of Lord Clifford's house in Kensington Gore. 'Not to-night, papa has a dinner-party; and I have some people coming in the evening. Does Harry go with you?'

'No; he has deputed Colonel Crofton to represent him, and bring us safely through the crush.'

'Colonel Crofton? Ah! well, good-bye;' and Miss Clifford walked into her father's house, feeling that she would have given no small sum to have been able to guard Rupert Knightly's youngest sister against the insidious advances of a man of whom she felt so doubtful as she did of Colonel Crofton.

Georgie had no time to seek her father, and tell him the impression her mind had received from this visit to the Knightlys, for she had stayed in the park till late; and when her maid had given the finishing touch to her costume, and she had descended to the drawing-room, she found most of their guests had arrived.

Rupert Knightly was there; and Georgie was as graceful, pleasing, attentive a hostess as ever: but still her father, who knew by heart every shade and expression of the face of this only cherished daughter of his, saw that something had occurred to give her food for reflection. Lord Clifford was a silver-haired old man of nearly seventy, and a fine type of what he was, an old naval officer. He had just attained post rank when he came most unexpectedly into the title, and then he had married, and seen little service after, so that he had never risen beyond it.

He was very fond of collecting naval men about him, and telling them his old stories, which Georgie knew by heart but never grew tired of listening to, and hearing details of the social life of the service of the present day. This day he would have enjoyed himself particularly, for he had two or three young officers, a lieutenant, and an assistant surgeon amongst them, dining with him, who had been stationed in the Bay of Naples for the last year and a half; and these were full of the Bourbon iniquities (tempered slightly by their admiration for the lovely queen), and of Garibaldi enthusiasm. But that shadow over Georgie's eyes disturbed him; and for once in his life the hospitable old gentleman wished his guests away, that he might learn the cause of it.

He felt sure it was something connected with the Knightlys, for they, too—the father and daughter—had talked it over many times during the last twelvemonth. He had known, from Rupert's manner that a heavy weight was pressing on the young man's heart; but with true delicacy he had never once alluded to a subject that he felt convinced must be so painful to Rupert, determining quietly in his own mind, that if Mrs. Knightly took no steps at the expiration of her year of retirement, he would offer to make Rupert's position

nearly as good, as Lord Clifford's son-in-law, as it ought to have been had he come before the world as Rupert Knightly, Esq., owner of the Hall, and M.P. for Warmingston.

But he had not to wait till their guests dispersed to learn the cause of the cloud in Georgie's eyes, for during a terrific conflict between a young lady and the piano, Georgie came up to him and said, in low tones and with an earnestness that almost amused him—

'Oh, papa! Mrs. Knightly is in grey barège and—blushes.'

The father and daughter were eminently sympathetic; and trivial as the phrase appears, Lord Clifford fully understood now why Georgie had looked grave.

Rupert was the last to leave. He had been standing silently for some minutes, till his eyes had caught the reflection of the shadow in Georgie's, and then he looked up frankly into Lord Clifford's face, and said—

'My mother is up in town again, sir. I suppose Georgie has told you; and to-day I have drawn my quarterly allowance. I am nothing, I have nothing, save at her will and pleasure; and under these circumstances I am bound to resign all claim to the hand you promised me a year and a half since.'

His face had grown very white as he spoke, and his eyes inexpressibly sad, but a crimson flood passed over the one and light came back to the other, as Lord Clifford, rising, placed his hand on his shoulder and replied—

'I have no son, Rupert; it will be a small thing to me to settle all I have upon you, considering I have already given you the most valuable thing I possess—the hand of my little Georgie.'

What could Rupert say? It was not a pleasant or an easy matter for him to accept this favour at the hands even of such a true, old friend as Lord Clifford was; but what could he do, knowing, as he well did, how Georgie's happiness was bound up in him? To refuse this offer of her father's would be to abjure *her* hand, to crush her woman's pride, to bitterly mock and wound her woman's love. He had thought to lay so much at her feet, and now that hope was baffled, and he must occupy the position of the receiver instead of that of the donor, or be cruel in his unrelenting pride and self-respect. There was a fierce struggle for a few moments between his good and evil angel, and then looking into the pleading, anxious eyes of the woman who had given him her heart, 'love was still the lord of all,' and he wrung with grateful warmth the hand of the generous old man, and felt, now that it was removed, what a weight had been on his heart all these months.

'Will you ride with me to-morrow at twelve, Georgie?'

'Yes, Rupert; and, oh! remind me that I have something to tell you—I've no time now, it's so late—about Colonel Crofton. Good night, Rupert; we must not keep papa up any longer.'

But papa stayed up some little time and talked to Georgie about the widow. 'I only wish I could give Gussie what Tollemache understood she was to have, Georgie; but I must take care that this Rupert of yours does not feel what he has lost. Absurd boy, to imagine his mother's folly could make any difference to us.'

'But, papa, isn't it strange—wrong of her? I did think better of her than I do now.'

'My dear child, she's a woman I could never think well or ill of. I liked her when she was powerless, because then her uncontrollable silliness did not affect the peace of any one; now I am afraid she will do a great deal of mild mischief. Those children of hers are every one of them too proud to make her do what is right; and I greatly fear that the girls and Gerald will suffer for it. Sir Francis Tollemache cannot, in justice to his wife and the children she may bring him, marry without a fortune, and a large one too. However, we'll hope for the best; and now go to bed, my pet, and don't let me see you looking sorrowful again.'

'Well, papa, I had cause, for if you had not been what you are—the dearest and best of papas—where should I have been, eh?'

'I don't think Georgie Clifford is exactly the kind of wife Rupert should have selected,' pensively remarked Mrs. Knightly, when her visitors had departed, and while Georgie's glance of amazement at her pearly tints was still burning into her soul.

'Not the sort of wife? Oh, mamma! where could Rupert, or any one else, find a better, dearer wife than Georgie will be?' answered Augusta.

'Where could Rupert, or any other man, find a purer, truer woman than Georgie Clifford, mother?' put in Gerald, rather hotly. 'A woman more worthy of being the wife of a noble-natured fellow like Rupert does not exist'

'I didn't mean anything against her truth and purity and goodness,' responded Mrs. Knightly petulantly, 'it's very hard I can't make a remark, without being snapped at by my own children, very hard, indeed. I only meant that I thought, considering all things, Rupert might have done better; and I will repeat, in spite of your both snapping at me so, that Georgie Clifford is too—too—I hardly know what to call it, but not staid and dignified enough for Rupert'

'Dear mamma,' interposed Florence, 'I think you hardly understand Georgie.'

'Good morning, mother,' said Gerald, rising; 'I am sorry you should do yourself the injustice of affecting to fear that the dignity of the proudest man in the land could suffer through Miss Clifford.'

'Now you are unkind, Gerald,' began Mrs. Knightly, two tiny tears welling up into her eyes.

'Not that, dearest mother,' he answered, lightly stooping down to kiss her; 'but, for heaven's sake, don't test our tempers by disparaging Georgie Clifford.'

Mrs. Knightly immediately protested that she was very fond of her; but when Gerald walked out of the room she could not help repeating that after all she still must think, and perhaps they would allow her to say what she thought, that Georgie Clifford was not the wife for Rupert.

Augusta heard the reassertion in scornful silence—she frequently now received her mother's remarks in this way—but Florence combated the notion warmly, and there was anger and wrath between Mrs. Knightly and her youngest daughter.

Sir Francis Tollemache—a fine, handsome, young, frank-faced man—was waiting to meet them that night at 'Her Majesty's;' and as Augusta's hand lay upon his arm, and Mrs. Vining kept close to him in the excitement of some important communication she was desirous of making, Florence fell to Colonel Crofton's charge, and it was by her side that he took his stand when they entered Mrs. Vining's box.

He had been bending down speaking in soft, under tones to the beautiful younger sister, when raising his head suddenly he met the full, fixed gaze of the elder, of that Miss Knightly, even more beautiful now than then, to whom he had tendered his hand and heart two years before. He returned her gaze as fully and unflinchingly; and a mocking, defiant light burnt in his dark, velvety eyes, and the reflection of a sneer curled his lip for one moment. The next he was bending down, renewing those dulcet whispers which he had judged to be displeasing to Miss Knightly, as being addressed to her sister.

Florence Knightly was lovely enough to have commanded any man's homage; and on this, her first night of reappearance in the London world, she looked extraordinarily so.

Unlike her sister, who had placed jewels on her superbly-beautiful head, Florence had adopted the artifice of extreme simplicity for this occasion. She had robed herself in a high white muslin, with not the smallest bit of colour superadded to brighten up its cold purity, and she had brushed all her fair hair back in a loose, unconstrained mass, and fastened rather low down on the left side—partially against her cheek, partially against the golden hair—a large white rose; this was all there was of ornament about her, and though she looked

very lovely, Mrs. Vining had found an opportunity to whisper her strong disapproval of this beauty-unadorned whim of Floy's into Augusta's ear.

She had known little or nothing of Colonel Crofton before; for his offer to Augusta had been a sudden thing, and he had never been a visitor at their house during her father's lifetime. But now, on this night, whether it was through some few but well-chosen and judicious sentences of praise about Miss Clifford, or because he seemed to know a great deal about Gerald, and could tell her what a favourite he was in his corps—now, after talking with him through the music for some three-quarters of an hour, Florence seemed to know him very well and like him very much. He was acknowledged to be a great critic in matters dramatic and musical, too; and here he was agreeing with her view of things, and complimenting her delicately, in a veiled, irresistible way, upon her true and cultivated taste.

Florence Knightly's heart beat quicker when she heard him tell her sister, while an undercurrent of mournful, manly frankness ran through his tones, that he should do himself the pleasure of calling at — Piccadilly, and renewing the acquaintance which had, so unhappily for him, been interrupted. Almost for the first time in her life Floy felt angry with Gussie, for the latter acquiesced in the proposed scheme of the colonel's with what appeared to Florence repulsive coldness.

Georgie Clifford would be rather late in the field with that warning she was going to give Rupert about Colonel Crofton the next day.

Others had talked through the music, too. Sir Francis Tollemache had found time to let Augusta know that he was tired of this sort of thing, and should wake her mother up to-morrow, and Augusta had entreated him not to ask: 'Wretched as it will be, Frank,' said she, 'if things are all wrong, it will be well for you not to trouble yourself by asking for what may be refused, after all.' And though Frank Tollemache repeated that he should make the attempt to-morrow, he bit the ends of his tawny moustache with mortification, for Sir Francis Tollemache, rich in ancestry and honour and singleness of heart, was but a poor baronet; and he knew, better than any one could tell him, that he could not marry unless Gussie had her fortune After this disturbing of the embers of his grievance, the strains of some of the sweetest singers in the world fell harshly on his ears; and standing behind her chair, looking down on the well-loved, beautiful, graceful head of the lady that should have been his bride, his mind began to be filled with some rather uncharitable and unchristian thoughts concerning that lady's father and mother.

Men of that age are invariably more agreeable than younger ones, thought Floy, as the pressure of his hand in farewell was still warm on hers, and the tones of his 'good night, I purpose honouring myself by calling upon you to-morrow, Miss Knightly,' were still ringing in her ears. What a mind he has, and what a voice! and though she mentioned the mind of the gallant colonel first, even to herself, yet it was of the quality of the latter that she thought most.

'That youngest Miss Knightly is handsomer even than her sister, Crofton,' said a man who joined him immediately after he had taken leave of Mrs Vining and her party. 'There was nothing else so lovely in the house to-night—she's lengths a-head of everyone else.'

'I object to turfy comparisons, Stanley; I think I have told you so before,' answered Colonel Crofton; 'for the rest, I think it very absurd of Miss Knightly to play the "Woman in White" to crowded and fashionable audiences.'

'It suits her style,' said the other, laughing.

'And a very bad style it is that descends to stage tricks to produce effects. Handsomer than her sister? Augusta is sublime.'

'And Florence?' interrupted Stanley.

'Ridiculous; good night.'

Surely Georgie would have felt satisfied that he did not contemplate winning the hand and heart of

Rupert's sister, could she have heard that speech.

For many hours after Florence had pressed the pillow that night, she remained awake thinking over every word, recalling every look, tone, and gesture of the man who had stood by her side during those too quickly fleeting hours. They seemed a great deal to her; but they were in reality trifling enough in matter. Colonel Crofton was not at all the kind of man to give the reins to his tongue and let it carry him on to dangerous ground. He had told her one or two short anecdotes relating to one or two of the vocalists whose strains were ravishing their ears at that present time, and whom he had known at Malta he said -a circumstance which directly caused them to assume a new and far greater interest in Floy's heart, than their glorious talent had procured for them before. And he had hinted disparagement at the taste of those who in vivid colours and gorgeous array surrounded them. Floy made up her mind on the spot to wear 'white muslin and nothing on it,' through all time. And he had declared himself to be getting an old and uncared-for man, who, when he dropped from his humble niche into the grave, would do so unregretted and unmissed; and this had nearly brought the tears into Floy's eyes, as he observed to his intense amusement. He had made some little remarks about Tollemache too, in a tolerant sort of way, and glanced at him with what seemed to Floy hardly suppressed contempt. She had always been very fond of Frank before, and done full justice to the open, noble nature of her future brother-in-law; but after this speech, and the look down from those grand heights, she found that she herself did not think Frank quite good enough for Gussie.

And what did Colonel Crofton think, when he pressed his downy couch? Was he full of love and reverence for the pure young nature which had been so ready to believe in him? May be so: but the one sentence he muttered before he fell asleep did not look like it. 'If the mother's as weak as I've heard, as weak as her youngest daughter, indeed, Miss Gussie will repent of the scornful glances she gave me so freely to-night.'

Two years before, Colonel Crofton had really fallen desperately in love, really and truly, with Augusta Knightly. Her proud beauty had made the keen man of the world lose his head for the first time. He would have lost anything to win her; and he had failed. From the day her answer fell cold and clear upon his ear and heart—and she was not a soft, tender woman to the generality of men—he had determined that she should be made to suffer for it. He would have won her brother's plighted bride from him, and then jilted her, to hurt and wound Augusta Knightly. But now, now there was a brighter opening. Her own mother's hand, guided by him, should deal a blow that she should wince under; and Florence, her beautiful sister, should be made the means of throwing dust in their eyes, until everything was settled and he could unmask his battery. The road was fair and clear before him; it would be easy to travel along it; and with this soothing and comforting reflection, Colonel Crofton fell calmly asleep, while Florence, with open eyes and glowing cheeks, dreamt of a nature grand and lofty, of a heart purified and ennobled by some past sorrow, of a wound which she might heal.

I hope they will all like him. I hope mamma, above all, will like him, was one of her last thoughts.

Poor dear Floy, said Augusta to herself that night, that man is very much mistaken if he thinks to win her. Oh dear! I wonder what mamma will say to Frank to-morrow.

CHAPTER V.

'WHAT WONDER IF HE THINKS ME FAIR.'

Mrs. Knightly sat alone in her drawing-room; and how it was that she came to be alone, shall be explained hereafter. She sat alone in what was beginning to seem like wearisome solitude; and the summer wind laden with the breath of flowers—mixed with the odours of

Rimmel's patent vaporiser—sighed past her unheeded. For the fair widow was plunged deep in thought —or what stood her in lieu of it—building castles in the air.

She had come to the business and cares and pleasures of the day in rather an aggrieved frame of mind. For her daughters, in talking over the events of the previous night, though they had dutifully regretted she could not share such delights with them, had done so in a manner that proved that the impossibility of the thing was more vividly before their minds than the melancholiness of it. Mrs. Knightly was not at all the sort of woman calmly to contemplate the idea of being shelved, and she had not been sorry when her dear children withdrew, and she could uninterruptedly cherish her woes within her own breast.

Mrs. Knightly had put on a grey silk this day; a grey silk with some frills and falls of lace about it, in place of the too suggestive crape And on her head, instead of the plain, simple widow's cap, which her children would have loved to see her wear, she had an arrangement of cloudy tulle and lace, which blended most becomingly with her dusky, soft, brown hair, and delicate complexion. A mild-eyed, kindly, pretty woman she looked—and was —on this fine summer morning, when Colonel Crofton was ushered into her presence.

Now before I go any further, I must devote a few lines to Colonel Crofton, lest injustice should be done him. He is not to be the villain and worthless character of my story, without an end or aim. He was a man who had a slight predilection for doing the right thing, if it did not cost him anything; but he would say, 'Farewell, for a time, to honour,' if the doing so would add anything very considerable to his yearly income. If doing Augusta Knightly a good and friendly turn would have made him master of thirty thousand a year, he would have waived the righteous wrath he had lavished upon her for two years, and have done her that turn and given her his blessing in addition. But as it was, he saw his way to gaining something like that sum through doing Augusta Knightly the reverse of a kind and friendly turn. He was getting too old to be sentimental, he said to himself, therefore he should take that way.

Mrs. Knightly knew nothing of Colonel Crofton as the rejected suitor for her eldest daughter's hand. Augusta kept such things to herself,—to herself and her brother Rupert, who had of course told Georgie. But she knew he was a rather intimate friend of the Vinings, and a man who had a very good standing in society; and though she had only seen him three or four times previous to her widowhood, something in his manner, as he entered the room and bowed over her hand, impressed her with the idea that she was receiving rather an old friend than otherwise.

'My daughters are out riding,' she explained, in answer to his inquiry as to his companions of the night before. 'Gerald, that's my youngest son, came up and persuaded them to go out, rather against Florence's will, I think, for she does not seem very well this morning; she was rather late, you know, last night—late, at least, considering what a quiet year we've all had.' Mrs. Knightly looked pathetically pensive, and Colonel Crofton called up a fellow expression immediately, though he was mentally smiling in perfect appreciation of Miss Florence Knightly's unwillingness to ride.

'Is Knightly up to-day?' he asked, after a moment. 'What a fine fellow he is, Mrs. Knightly; I never met with a more popular man in a corps than Gerald is in his.'

'He is a fine, handsome boy, and a dear good boy too,' replied the flattered mother; 'he's very much like what his poor dear father was at his age.'

Colonel Crofton did not desire the lady to grow retrospective, especially about Gerald's poor dear father; so he twirled a paper-knife round and said nothing.

'You'll find a likeness of Gerald —likenesses of all my children, in fact—in that album, Colonel Crofton; there's one of me, too,' she continued,

blushing freshly, 'but it was taken before the time of my sad trial; you won't see any likeness now probably. I've altered very much.'

Yes, Colonel Crofton thought to himself, the old lady looks a few degrees more lively now than when this was taken, but he said—

'These things never do justice to ladies, Mrs. Knightly; this is very pleasing, very pretty, but still;—well, at the risk of your feeling offended at the disparagement of your photographer, I must repeat it,—it does not do you justice'

'So my sons tell me, foolish boys; that one you're looking at now is my eldest daughter; a good one, isn't it?'

'Yes,' Colonel Crofton said, 'a very good one.' If she had been watching his face, she would have seen that it had grown a little paler. It was a double album, and on the opposite page to Augusta there was a likeness of Sir Francis Tollemache.

'And that's Miss Clifford,' she continued, as he turned a leaf or two.

'I wish you were married to him, and off out of the way for a few weeks,' he thought, as he looked at the face which retained its bright, fearless frankness even in a photograph.

'Your son is a lucky man, Mrs. Knightly, unless report errs; this Miss Clifford, for whom I, in common with most people, have a very profound admiration and respect, will soon stand in a somewhat nearer relation to you than she does at present'

Mrs. Knightly liked Georgie very much as soon as Colonel Crofton praised her.

'Yes, I hope so; a dear girl she is, and so attached to Rupert. I have serious thoughts of giving them Warmingston.' It was the first time the idea of making such an alarming sacrifice had entered into her head; but she thought it would look well to show Colonel Crofton that she was as fully alive to the merits of her son's future wife as most people were.

'And this is Tollemache, surely,' said Colonel Crofton, speaking very fast, and turning back to the objectionable page; 'poor Tollemache! I pity that fellow; poverty is bad enough; but poverty and a baronetcy together must be a little too much.'

'Do you mean our Tollemache—Sir Francis Tollemache, Colonel?' asked Mrs. Knightly, eagerly.

'The same; he's unfortunately gone a little fast with that property of his. I heard a year or so ago that he was going to right himself by making a wealthy marriage.'

Mrs. Knightly immediately conjured up a horribly vivid picture of her beloved Augusta in a garret, with three or four ragged children about her, and all her money gone.

'Why, he's engaged to my eldest daughter!' she exclaimed at last.

'Then let my most unfortunate communication be forgotten, madam; let me intreat you not to think more of what I, in my utter ignorance of existing circumstances, have unguardedly said.'

'Not think about it? Indeed I shall think, and speak about it too, Colonel.'

'There's no help for you; you must be frightened into circumspection,' thought Colonel Crofton. So after looking darkly at one moss-rose bud in the carpet for a time, he raised his eyes, fraught with severity, to her face, and said—

'I need not impress upon you, Mrs. Knightly, the absolute necessity there is that my name should not be mixed up in this matter in your communications to your daughter. Should it be so, I can only tell you the results will be probably most awful, most painful for you to contemplate; but I need not tell you this.'——That, said he to himself, has sent her off, thinking of pistols and coffee, and will keep her quiet.

'I must speak to my child, Colonel,' commenced the harassed lady.

'By all means; but you need not mention me; it would at once put a stop to that friendly intercourse which Mrs Knightly has inspired me with a wish to create between us.'

'Well, I won't, Colonel; and I'm sure you are very polite and kind to say so. But she shall not marry

him. As a parent, I should not be justified. All property has its cares.'

Colonel Crofton had never suffered from the cares which property brought with it; but he agreed with her nevertheless—agreed, that is, with as much of her disjointed speech as he understood. He even went so far as to say that he was convinced she was one who would nobly fulfil all the duties property brought with it.

'But they are very, very onerous, Colonel. Many, many a time have I been tempted to give everything to Rupert. I should have done so, dear fellow, if I had only had my own feelings to consult, but there is Mr. Knightly's last wish to be thought of, and his wish was ever law to me.'

This was a gratifying sentiment from the lips of a woman who had meekly thwarted the most devoted of husbands in every little scheme he had ventured to originate, with admirable perseverance, for six or seven-and-twenty years.

'And most properly so, Mrs Knightly; it does you the greatest honour.'

Mrs. Knightly began to look upon herself as a woman of a very grand and exalted character.

'Those dear children have all the pleasure of it, as is right, and I have the worry,' continued the blooming martyr. 'My lawyer has been with me this morning, there is always something to be done, and thought about. It's quite fatigued me, but I never shrink from my duties—never.'

Her duties this morning had not been of such an arduous nature as her speech would have led one to suppose. Her lawyer, a sensible old gentleman, who despised the widow of his friend and former client as much as he disliked his will, had been with her for four minutes and a half. He had rapidly read once ten lines, which she could not comprehend, and did not attempt to, and asked her to sign it, which she had done, marvelling the while whether he was struck with the beauty of her hand, the whiteness of which was well set off by the blackest and widest of mourning rings.

'She's a terrible fool this woman,' thought the colonel, 'I have been here long enough for once; and now I'll be off to the Park, and join Augusta.'

'He's one of the nicest, best-informed men I ever met with,' soliloquised Mrs Knightly, as she listened to the echo of the firm military strides. 'He's right about that photograph; I'll have another taken. And about Gussie's, too. Oh, dear, dear! what troubles mothers have!'

Georgie Clifford did not think about Colonel Crofton until Rupert and herself had taken a turn or two up and down the Row, when catching sight of the Misses Knightly at some little distance, riding with their youngest brother, she exclaimed—

'Look! there's Gerald and the girls; let us join them, Rupert. Oh! but wait first. I have something to tell you.' And then she told him of that conversation she had held with Colonel Crofton, a night or two before, at Mrs Vining's.

Rupert had felt rather indifferent about whether Colonel Crofton married his sister or not, as he looked upon him as a very good sort of fellow, until he learned that he had tried to win Georgie from him. The knowledge of that fact altered his views, and caused him to think that it would be very wrong and reprehensible indeed of him to allow Floy to have anything to say to Crofton, if he could help it. By the time Georgie and himself had finished discussing the subject, and put their horses into a canter to join the others, the group had received an addition in the person of Frank Tollemache. Augusta Knightly was a very proud woman; but she was prouder for the man she had given her love to than for herself. In thinking over the determination Frank had come to the night before, she had decided that she would not allow him to run the risk of being humbled by a refusal. She would herself ask her mother to do her the simple justice of giving her without further delay the fortune her father

had told her and Frank should be hers. If her mother refused—which Augusta thought was just possible, and only that—she alone would have been humiliated, not Frank; and it would be far better that it should be so. She had given him her heart, and having done so she could not bear that the least slight should ever be put upon him. In the same way she could not have borne that the least shadow of blame should ever be cast upon him, and if it had been possible for Frank to do anything to pain or wound her, she would still have defended him to the world, and have argued that he was right. So she told him plainly this morning when he joined her that she wouldn't have him speak to mamma on any account, she would rather do it herself, and as Frank was accustomed unhesitatingly to obey all her behests, he gave up the point on which had set his heart, after a short protest.

'Here comes Crofton. What good horses that fellow always has; he's always changing too, but unlike most gentlemen horse-dealers, he doesn't go from bad to worse,' said Gerald, about half an hour after to Georgie Chfford, by whose side he was riding

'Horse-dealing is his profession, isn't it?' replied Georgie, 'not a very noble one, but still I suppose it pays, as you rarely see him on the same horse twice.'

'They are showy, but nearly all screws,' put in Frank Tollemache. 'I bought one of him last year, gave him rather a long price for him too, and after I had ridden him once or twice the horse went to pieces entirely.'

'You were taken in, in fact, then,' said Georgie.

'Well, something very much like it He didn't warrant the horse, certainly, but he said he was sound. I ought to have examined him, instead of buying him off-hand, from seeing Crofton on him.'

'It seems to me you are accusing Colonel Crofton of something very like cheating,' said Florence, who had been riding along silently, but with a glowing face, from the time of Gerald's first deserying Colonel Crofton at the end of the ride nearest to the Piccadilly entrance, where he had reined up to speak to some ladies on foot.

'Something very like it, Floy,' replied her brother Rupert; 'we have even a harsher name for such transactions, of which you ladies are supposed to know nothing.'

'I know one thing,' said Florence, 'and that is, that Colonel Crofton made a very bad deal, as you call it, when he sold a horse to such a reckless rider as Frank.'

Perhaps it was because he had been aspersed, but certainly Floy gave Colonel Crofton a welcome, when he joined them presently, that was more than cordial, and smiles that were more than kind. For once in her life, honest-hearted Georgie had done more harm than good Rupert and herself soon rode away home, leaving the others in the Park still, and as he assisted her to dismount she said to him, half laughingly—

'I am afraid there's no help for it, Rupert—you'll have him for a brother-in-law.'

'Unfortunately he's just the man to fascinate Floy,' he answered, 'and I'm sorry for it, for I wanted her to do better—in every way.'

Florence meanwhile, bidding adieu to this man at her own door—this man 'of whom she had heard that beauty had unsuccessfully angled for him for years past—thought 'What wonder if he thinks me fair?' And Florence's mamma, sitting in comfortable proximity to a mirror, thought very much the same thing, though in less poetical language.

(To be continued.)

DRIFTING.

ILLUSTRATED BY A. W. COOPER.

DRIFTING—drifting—drifting away,
Past rapids, and deeps, and shallows;
While gleam and gloom alternate play,
Where the breezes bow the sallows;
The flashing drops from the idle oar
Dimple with crescent ringing
The reflex fair, that evermore
On the stream the trees are flinging;
And down in the rushes fringing the shore
You can hear the reed-wren singing,
Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
Into the haze, where dies the day.

Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
Into the Dreamland shadows;
Their thoughts through the realms of Fancy stray—
The young heart's El Dorados!
They are gazing into each other's eyes,
All unconscious of persistence,
(As if to gather what future lies
In the misty purple distance,)—
And wish the skiff might their world comprise,
And the river their existence!
Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
Into Hereafter's twilight grey!

Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
Down Thames' and down Thought's stream dropping,
Softly they glide in the sunset's ray,
Nor dream that there comes a stopping!
The charm will break when the boat arrives,
So loiter—little Shallop—and tarry
Here, where the broad-leaved lily thrives:
Dearer than gold the freight you carry—
The happy visions of two young lives,
That the heavens conspire to marry:
Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
On to the dawn of the bridal day!

Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
I, too, would float on the Ferry,
Where your skilful fingers, friend artist, portray
This happy pair in the wherry!
I, too, would glide o'er the glassy wave,
Where the gleaming swifts are winging,—
I long for the dusky willows, and crave
To listen the reed-wren's singing:—
And fain in dear eyes so tender-grave
Would I watch the pure thoughts springing!
Drifting—drifting—drifting away,
I fain would 'be in the same boat' as they!

THOMAS HOOD.



PHILOSOPHY IN SLIPPERS.

On Sickness and Health.

IT was the custom of some nation, or person, or persons, whose name every one except the present writer will no doubt remember, to debate all important matters twice;—once, namely, when drunk, and again when sober.

It was the custom of Mr. Shandy to debate all such matters once in bed, and again when he had resumed the perpendicular.

It is the custom in our day to bestow immense laudation on all manner of compromises. The graceful essayist of 'Fraser' warns us alike off Scylla and Charybdis, and recommends the pendulum for our humble and respectful imitation. He believes (probably) that Mr. Shandy would have found the true solution of all perplexity in an arm-chair; and that the nation, or person, or persons not named above attained true wisdom only at the stage of soda-water. If Thompson says 'Yes' to any question, and Dickson says 'No,' then we are relieved by A. K. H. B., who steps in like a bland *Deus ex machinâ* and assures us that the only correct word is 'Perhaps.'

Now, with all deference to the 'Country Parson' whose recreations are mine also, and everybody's, I think that either Thompson or Dickson is pretty sure to be right;—that in a majority of cases the answer to a question must be 'Yes' or 'No,' and that 'Perhaps' will generally be no answer at all. It is only when the pendulum is at one extreme or the other that it registers time. It never hangs in the half-way except when the clock is stopped.

And having entered this mild protest, I have now to eat humble pie, and confess that I should have strengthened my position much more by acquiescence than by contradiction, inasmuch as my qualification (if I have any) to write upon Sickness and Health unfortunately happens to be that I am neither sick nor well. I have the misfortune to suffer from a severe cold, and yet nobody but a Saturday Reviewer admits that I am at all an object of pity, or, indeed, far removed from being a nuisance.

I have been thinking how very different from each other would be two essays on this subject which should be produced, the one by a sick man, the other by a man in the vigour of health. The judgment of Silenus and the Arch-Teetotaller himself would scarcely present more curious points of discrepancy. Given, in each instance, precisely the same set of ideas, I think that physical circumstances alone would cause them to be treated in lights so different, that when the pictures came from the brain-camera they would be as the negative and the positive of a photograph: each might be in itself absolutely true, but each not the less would be the exact contrary of the other.

You remember the fine opening of that wonderful essay of Carlyle's entitled 'Characteristics': 'The healthy know not of their health, but only the sick.' And so true is this, that the sick man knows of it also in no way save as a negative quality,—a something—he knows not what—that is denied to him. A man who has been long sick thinks with a sort of blank, incredulous wonder of the manner of life of those who are well. He tries in vain to realize to himself, either by memory or imagination, the feeling of strength in his nerveless arm, lightness in his prostrate body, freedom, vigour,—anything that consists with what he hears called health. He conceives of these things vaguely, as a deaf man conceives of sound, or a blind man of colour. He sees with a strange surprise that those around him who are strong and hearty go about their affairs as if unconscious of their good. They can even eat victuals and think that nothing won-

derful! It seems to him that a man who is well should carry always a face beaming with happiness, radiant with exultation. And, lo! here are people about him surly, cross, petulant, querulous, as if their lot were even like his—an *un*-happy one. They see no blessedness in their lives. 'The healthy know not of their health.'

As little, on the other hand, can the strong man sympathize with the invalid. He who can walk his twenty or thirty miles a day without fatigue—who can carry his twenty-stone sack of barley and scarcely stoop under it—who in each hand can hold half-a-hundred weight at arm's length, has much ado to speak with common patience to him who is exhausted by walking to the bottom of the garden, or who cannot hold the book he reads without a support for it. He regards him as an animal much lower in the scale of creation than his brawny self. He professes, it is true, a sort of pity for him, but that pity, if the truth were told, is nigh akin to contempt. Nay, it was kindly Charles Lamb who insisted that in the bottom of our hearts the feeling of the hale to the ill was that of sheer dislike, and confessed that for his own part he really *hated* sick people. The jest, we know, was but a jest, yet it had, as all good jesting has, no small infusion of truth. Such is, no doubt, the impulse of nature. The herd gores the stricken deer. The barbarian leaves his fellowman to perish in the sun's glare of the disease that consumes him.

Let us thank Heaven that it is but an impulse of *savage* nature; and that the motions which have been given in opposition to it are of the chief of those blessings that have come to us in the train of civilization and Christianity.

For unspeakably dear to the sick are the kind words and unspoken friendliness of those about them. More precious than gold and silver.—making not only sickness less irksome, but health and life itself more valued for their sake. Without these sweet uses of adversity hell were already begun on earth. We, too, should seek out the hidden thicket: we, too, should turn our faces to the wall, and long to die in our chagrin and despair.

Have you yourself, oh, friendly reader! never lain on the bed of pain,—never counted the weary hours from nauseous draught to nauseous draught,—never watched the dim night-light as it floated and waned with your own dim waning life,—never stood, as it seemed, by the verge of your own open grave? Most of us have had these experiences once at least in a life-time. On your knees, let those of you who have not bow down and thank the Lord in humbleness and fulness of heart, praising him that He has spared you the knowledge which can only so be gained.

Looking out from the sick-room upon the busy world,—hearing its noises in the distance,—reading of its pageants, its amusements, its crimes, joys, traffickings, follies, in the daily sheets, where all is recorded, we seem to have gained a stand-point apart from it all. We are no longer in it, nor of it. We scarcely realize that it is the world that we have moved in,—the world that will move on in the same courses when we and millions like us have found our rest in its bosom.

When we are well again—should the Great Disposer of events so order it—we have as little remembrance of what our sickness was like. But how well we recollect all the little outward signs that attended it! How our worldly books, perhaps, were exchanged for us by a friendly hand, and we took to a kind of reading that was strange to us with extreme disrelish and shame and penitence,—penitence forgotten, it may be, hereafter, but sincere while it lasted. How the child of our brother that was born just then was called by our name, with an unuttered foreboding of an event that came not. How, as the light flickered more and more, the loving tongue spoke to us less of the future, more of the past. How friends whose love had long been proved withheld the question, 'How are you?' when they saw that the answer was irksome to us. How gladly, when the scale seemed turn-

ing, they told us, 'You are looking better to-day.' How mildly they bore with our petulance! How all our faults seemed forgotten—all our little good magnified; and we, who knew ourselves to have been vain and worthless in the world, were made to feel how much we should be mourned and regretted if we left it. Unspeakably precious, I say, is the remembrance of all these things to him who has been sick and is well. And even in the very struggle we feel by these kindly ministrations that the pain of our disease is less to us who bear it than to them who only see it. They groan more than we, because their suffering is greater than ours.

For indeed the difference in degree between the severity of mental pain and that of the body is incalculably in favour of the body. As with dread of disaster and all evil so the terror of pain is more insupportable than the pain itself. No man knows until he is actually grappling with his ailment what degree of suffering he can really bear. Montaigne relates with touching human garrulity how through long years of happy health he had looked forward, with a sight delicate and sensitive, to the approach of a malady to which he knew himself to be subject, until at last the thought of it had become a haunting, unbearable horror to him. Yet when he is actually in conflict with what he calls 'the worst, the most sudden, the most painful, the most mortal, and the most irremediable of all diseases;'—when he has had trial of five or six very long and very painful fits, he writes that even in that estate he finds only what is very well to be endured by a man who has his soul at ease.

'When I am looked upon by my visitors to be in the greatest torment, and that they therefore forbear to trouble me, I often try my own strength and myself set some discourse on foot the most remote I can contrive from my present condition.'

Again he puts, in his own words, precisely that physician's axiom with which Mr. Carlyle himself sets out:—

'We are not so sensible of the most perfect health as we are of the least sickness. Our well-being is only the not being ill. It is the reason why that sect of philosophers which sets the greatest value upon pleasure has yet fixed it chiefly in unconsciousness of pain. To be freed from ill is the greatest good that man can hope for or desire. As Ennius says—

"Nimium boni est cui nihil est mali."'

And herein at least the heathen philosopher and the great sceptic do but agree with the most orthodox and devout of churchmen. For I think the most touching prayer that is contained in our Liturgy,—the prayer that is most thoroughly human, and which is uttered with truest sincerity and earnestness by all classes of men, is that in which we ask, not for length of days or wealth of worldly estate, but simply that 'we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may pass our time in rest and quietness.' There is no other blessing that we entreat with half so strong desire all our life through. It is, indeed, the chief association in our minds, even with heaven itself, that it is to be a place of eternal rest:—our long life-task will be ended;—our long unrest succeeded by longer rest.

It is this hope—of rest, namely—that sweetens all toil, and is the only true mitigator of that curse which came with 'man's first disobedience and the fruit of that forbidden tree.' No greatest amount of labour, or even punishment, to which we cannot resign ourselves, be there only at the end of it a prospect of rest. The grave itself, most dreaded goal of all mortals, becomes the blissful haven of the woe-worn and broken-hearted. It is the one solace which tyranny could never take from the wretched, that when the end arrived they would all be taken to the breast of their great mother, where neither heat of the sun, nor ache, nor toil, nor any rage of the oppressor should reach the oppressed again. We read in Scripture of its being permitted only once to call from its rest a spirit of the dead; and the first words of that spirit are, 'Why hast thou disquieted me?'

Thinking sometimes of these things—of the longing for rest in life, of the dreaded, certain rest at the end of it, and of the hoped-for

rest beyond, I turn with a shock and a shudder from the contemplation of that everlasting unrest which a sad theology denounces to the unfaithful, but in which kindly Leigh Hunt so firmly refused to believe. And I wish in my heart that I *could* believe in that comforting and comfortable doctrine of purgatory. I think those devout people of the flock of Rome who do believe in it honestly and trustfully must pass their lives more contentedly and hopefully than we sterner-hearted Protestants. To me I confess it would be an unutterable comfort to have faith in gloomy moments that as the tree fell so it *sometimes* might not for ever lie—to be assured that after all was over here my sins and offences might be wiped away even by countless ages of expiation—the impurities of heart and mind be consumed by purgatorial fire, and I at last forgiven. The human mind does indeed cling to a middle course—yearns for an alternative. Think what a fearful, horrible poem that 'Vision' of Dante's would be did it contain only an *Inferno* and a *Paradiso*. How the *Purgatorio* links together the two extremes and enables us to contemplate both the unsullied brightness and the blackness unredeemed. I think, indeed, it would be hard to find anything grander than this *Purgatorio* in all poetry. Grandest utterance of human penitence and sorrow, brightened and ever brightening by human hope! As in hell we heard nothing but the cry of insatiate ambition,—'Speak of us in the world,' so here we hear only the entreaty, 'Pray for us;' 'Let those who loved us pray for us.' Whether the spirits are fettered and borne along on the wings of the wind: whether they grovel out unnumbered ages on their bellies prone: whether they climb the awful steep bent to the ground with heaviest burdens, it is with this voice that they all speak to him who still casts a shadow. And in this entreaty we see their hope. For every prayer helps them onward and upward, and every step brings nearer the time when for them also the whole mountain shall shake with joy, and they shall enter on the plains of everlasting rest:—

> 'The shining table-lands
> To which our God himself is moon and sun'

But I have unconsciously wandered into dreamland and far from my subject, and can get back to it only *per saltum*.

It is a question worthy of no light consideration when we come to reckon up the compensation that is in all things, good and evil—whether is sickness a gain or a loss to a man in the matter of insight into the truth and nature of things?

In the sick-room do we see things more clearly, or only more calmly? Passion and excitement are shut out by that door that turns so noiselessly on its hinges. We have leisure to think on the true relations of much that we have before but glanced at hastily—to estimate the world, its baits and its worries at their real worth—to consider the future, and its awful mysteries, with an open mind. We ask of our consciences many unusual questions, and the low truthful answer reaches us distinctly. But on the other hand, it is by the exaggerative light of memory that we see all things. Practically, we live without a present. Instead of a present there is the ghost of a past recalled to us, and everything is 'sicklied o'er with the pale cast of thought.'

Is not the true view of things that which comes with prompt decision in the moment of action, rather than with leisurely reflection after all is over? In the busy press of the world, where each man jostles his neighbour and is jostled himself, where the weaker gives the wall to the stronger, and the race *is* indeed to the swift, there is no place for the sick. There is the place for the stout arm, the quick eye, the ready hand, the prompt judgment. And are not the opinions we form thus in the heat of the fray, when all is before us with its rough, sharp outline, more likely to be true than those which come with dreamy philosophizing?

Much has been said of old, and much is said yet by some people about the furtherance of religion and morality that is due to sickness.

The body, we are told, is punished, that the soul may amend. Unless our unruly members were scourged and tamed down they would bring all to ruin. As the holy fathers said at the burnings of heretics—'Periissent nisi periissent.'

The sentimental poet writes of the dying baron, who hears the hymn of the nativity, and, touched by it, in his last moments sets free the slaves whose freedom he has withheld all his life. The sentimental reader admires this, and in his own mind canonizes the baron. But *I*, for one, join with all muscular Christians in refusing to canonize him; would rather, if I must canonize anybody, select him who makes a stream of water flow for the thirsty labourer, or, in his prime of health and life, spends a noble fortune in quiet, unostentatious good works. To deny, indeed, that our chastisements are sent for correction would be to impugn an authority higher than human authority. But, at the same time, let us not forget that it is a very poor morality that owes its existence only to whipping.

A friend of the writer not long ago was maintaining, in discussion with a clergyman, certain views which the latter thought somewhat heretical. He was maintaining them sincerely, earnestly, but with good humour. The clergyman, pushed somewhat closely, had recourse to the *ultimâ ratio*, and said—'Ah, my young friend! you will come to think differently on these things if ever you lie on a sick-bed.'

The answer was to the point:—'And how far will the sickness that acts on my body to weaken it and prostrate it, act with like effect on my mind? How far are the thoughts of a sick man, when they contradict those which he honestly entertained in health, to be valued—how far themselves to be accounted morbid and unhealthy?'

Truly it is a serious inquiry, and we know not how much the consideration of it might affect the light in which we view many death-bed repentances, conversions, changes of faith, of which we have read. If, as all philosophy tells us, the soundness and vigour of the mental faculties depend malienably on those of the body, we should surely rely more on those opinions which we held when all went well with us, than when we were in gloom and despondency, dreading it may be a conflict with the king of terrors.

But even to this question, as to all others, there are two sides. If we insist too much on the dependence of the mental faculties on the bodily, do we not trench dangerously close on the great question—'Is the soul, then, immortal?' For if that by which the soul manifests itself dwindles, and flickers, and grows dim, as the light of life trembles and gutters in the socket;—when the light goes out, does not the light go out?

To answer, 'Yes,' would be to obliterate the guiding star of life itself, and to show how inadequate is reason to grapple with the subject. It is a mystery beyond our depth. Which of us does not learn every night when we sleep, and every morning when we wake, how our souls have been expatiating at large while we slept? Our bodies have lain dumb, motionless, insentient The mysterious tenant has roamed round the world, and into worlds we know not of—has burst all the bonds of time and space—has talked with its fellows,

> 'Spirit to spirit, ghost to ghost,'—

with the spirits of the dead, and the ghosts, it may be, of the unborn: and now it is here again, and answers to our summons.

Suppose that we had waked no more, but gone on sleeping eternally, would the dream have continued also?—or would the spirit have come again, uncalled, and slept with us?

Suppose that this long disease, which we call life, is suddenly cured by the remedy of death, shall the spirit not be the better for it also, and be *free* thenceforth? Yes!—'It is written,' Well for our faith and hope that we have the Divine assurance to still the soul's alarm.

R. H.

ANGLO-ROMAN LIFE.

FROM how many points of view have authors looked on Rome? Into what various phases of discussion has that fruitful subject passed? Who could reckon the volumes which it has filled, from Titus Livy's Decades to M. About's satirical pamphlet? Is there among its numerous treasures a single monument unmeasured, or notable picture unengraved? Didn't we learn all its history at school, from Romulus to Constantine, and from Constantine to Rienzi, including all those useful facts and figures, some of which (for instance, the origin of the second Punic War and the date of Valentinian's birthday) I never *can* recollect when I want them? Have we not all pictured to ourselves her deserted Forum, the great dome which Buonarotti raised, the stately Vatican, and the gloomy Campagna? We have all heard more or less of that famous city—the Easter ceremonies—the glories of the Vatican—the gloom of the catacombs—the faithful bending over the papal toe, and a hundred other characteristic scenes are familiar to many who have never even crossed the Channel. I knew the dear venerable old rookery long before I visited it, and walked straight out of my hotel down to the Coliseum the morning after my arrival. I have seen many cities on this and the other side of the Alps, but I know none with which a man can become so suddenly familiar as Rome—none which, revisited, seem to greet you so like an old friend as you walk over its rugged pavement through streets which are as interesting, as picturesque, and as dirty as they were—how long shall I say ago?

When my friend Trotman of Corpus travelled with me at mid-winter from Florence to Rome I could not help admiring the assiduity with which he dotted down a record in his diary of all trifling incidents which occurred on the road, and a description of every little village through which we passed. I have often thought since that if any respectable publisher could be induced to accept his MS. a great many useful statistics might be obtained. For instance, there is the notice of

'Pietra Dura. Pop. 2091½. Inn: the "Columba Spiumata"—a dismal and dirty auberge. There is another in the town, viz., the "Agnello Tonso," said to be rather worse. Mortality so and so: average of births in the year, about the same. *Situate* in the midst of a fertile, though not healthy country. Although the name of Pietra Dura is associated with the horrible orgies of the French Revolution, the inhabitants most indignantly disclaim the disgrace of being the inventors of the too celebrated "Raschia di Naso," the instrument of so many brutalities, &c. Here was born in 1390 the great condottiere Pietro Briccone (the son of a poor herdsman), who became so celebrated under the sobriquet derived from his birthplace. He began his career in the service of Filippo Maria Cervelli d'Agnello, Grand Duke of Malatesta, and rapidly rising in power,' &c., &c., &c., or,

'Salsiccia Maggiore, a large and flourishing borgo, formerly fortified, but there is now scarcely a vestige of its two castles and the lofty walls which once surrounded it. The Duomo, or cathedral of Salsiccia, is the ancient sanctuary of the Madonna del Bosco, but it offers nothing remarkable beyond its historical interest. Salsiccia is a place of some importance in the history of art, being the birthplace of Zaccherante—a painter who flourished towards the end of the sixteenth century, and whose works have been sometimes confounded with those of Paolo Verniciatore the celebrated,' &c.

'In the baptistery is still shown (not more than thirteen francs should be given to the sacristan) a portion of the toe-nail of St. Dunstan, said to have been disengaged from his foot while the holy father was in the act of kicking a certain, &c., &c., &c., and presented by King Edward of England to the chief abbot of Salsiccia with the following witty,' &c., &c.

If I do not in these pages quote more from Mr. Trotman's itinerary, the style of which the reader will observe closely resembles that of a certain popular Handbook, it is from no want of appreciation of his labours, but rather because my recollections of that hibernal journey are not of the most agreeable kind.

The fact is, that delightful and exhilarating as all tourists find vetturino travelling to be at the outset, I am free to confess that after a few days' continuance it does become rather a bore. True, there is a novelty, and so far a charm, in being awakened at 5 A.M on a cold November morning. The process of shaving at that hour by candle-light, if your razor is not exactly in good order, is certainly trying to a person whose nerves, naturally irritable, have been rendered more so by the nocturnal attacks of the 'Pulex domesticus.' Still it is a change in your habits of life which Dr. Gibb may recommend, and this is some consolation; but the exercise repeated for some days together grows rather irksome.

At first, indeed, the delightful scenery on the road, the charmingly primitive manners of the rustics, the homely accommodation at the inns where you alight, the quality of the viands produced at your repast, and the amusingly disproportionate amount of remuneration charged for your entertainment, are all so many matters of novelty to the travelling British subject, and I have known them keep many a *blasé* youth in spirits for some days; but unfortunately men are for the most part restless, discontented beings. The charm of picturesque landscape does not last for ever. Even snow-capped mountains and fair river banks pall upon you after a time. You cannot always be looking, for instance, at Swiss cottages and subjects of goitre. I defy any one to keep up an unflagging interest in glaciers; and no reasonable tourist cares to inspect more than twenty churches in a week. So that after you have heard the honest vetturino sing his morning hymn and leave off to curse his horses a few dozen times,—after you have listened to the bells jingling on those quadrupeds daily for eight or ten hours at a tension, you begin to fall back on your friend—I mean, of course, figuratively—and your pipe for entertainment, and become rather inquisitive as to the precise time when you are to reach your destination.

Such, I admit, was the case with me, who am an old traveller, after we had left Florence by a zigzag route, and visited a dozen places of varied interest which I will not now describe. As for Mr. Trotman, he too began to lose his temper at last when Paolo, our vetturino, used to knock him up remorselessly at half-past four in the morning, on which occasions he used to descend the stairs thirty minutes afterwards exceedingly wrathful. Then woe to the wretched waiter if the coffee was not hot, or if the butter (as was not unfrequently the case) tasted like incomplete cheese. The slippered *chef* used to tremble before him, and I feel convinced on more than one occasion charged fifty per cent. in the bill as compensation for his trouble. So we are not sorry one morning when Paolo tells us that he is to perform the last stage to-day; and about 5 o'clock P.M. we are rumbling along a dusty highway on a level plain of scanty herbage, now and then passing quickly by some stately ruin—a gaunt and crumbling mass of ivy-covered brick, or the fragments of a shattered tomb, on which gray ground the lichen shines in the setting sun like gold, when suddenly a turn in the road discloses a far-distant view of wooded hills, where stone pines and cypresses stand in clear yet tender outline against the crimson sky, and from the plain below a tiny vault uprises, purple in the evening light. There is a short-lived sparkle on its crest as the last ray disappears.

'Ecco! San Pietro!' cries the driver, as he uncovers his head.

Yes; this is Rome!

The authors and authoresses of ingenious little manuals, viz., 'Rome seen in Eight-and-forty Hours,' 'A Week in the Eternal City,' 'A Sojourn in New Babylon,' &c., &c., do not fail to tell us, in their various

compilations, of the different points of view from which we may best enjoy a general survey of this wonderful city. One writer insists on your climbing the tower of the Capitol before breakfast the morning after arrival. Another advises you to rush to the gardens of St. Onofrio to enjoy the prospect. A third declares that the panorama is nowhere so fine as from the Pincian Hill. And, in short, if you followed all their different counsels, you might be running up and down stairs, and ascending and descending hills, from morning to night; but the truth is that the real aspects of the place are much more varied.

Our countrymen and countrywomen swarm in Rome every winter, and most of them 'do' the sights, to be sure, in common. It is respectable; and if you return to England and your friends say, 'Why—didn't you see the beasts blessed?' and you say, 'No Bless the beasts!' (or something naughtier), they stare and think you monstrous apathetic. But if all 'Britishers,' who pervade the Piazza di Spagna came solely to see the Coliseum by moonlight, and the Pope distribute the palms, what a dreary winter we should have in Rome! No: the motives which induce them to exchange their comfortable firesides in beloved England for a suite of dingy rooms in the Corso are more than this, and numerous in their kind.

You are perhaps an antiquary, and you come armed with Nibby and Niebuhr; or an architect, and you bring your T square and five-foot rod; or a painter, and you immediately get a studio and look out for a variegated contadina — a retired herdsmen, or an amateur brigand, according to taste, and all of whom may be hired at the moderate rate of one scudo per day, as they lounge about awaiting your orders on the steps of the Piazza; or you come fresh from Oxford, full of ecclesiastical sentiment, to make heel-ball rubbings of all the monumental inscriptions in the Vatican; or you are a speculative mamma, with an eligible daughter; or a botanist in search of plants; or a gentleman whose tastes have been too extensive for your means, and prefer Rome to Bologne as being more respectable; or you have lately retired from business and wish to show mamma and the dear girls the carnival (which they have always longed to see); or you are a dashing young warrior, with impressive whiskers, on furlough, and have heard that SHE will be in Rome this winter; or you are an enterprising young author, and wish to write the four thousand nine hundred and ninety-ninth description of Rome and its environs.

These and fifty other reasons might be assigned for that annual flocking of our Islanders to the Eternal City, which occasions such unparalleled success to the profession of landlord and hotel-keeper, and which causes the honest English face to be so familar in every street; from the Campo Vaccino to the Vatican.

We soon established our bachelors' quarters in the Piazza Barberini, where my bed-room window commanded a full view of the celebrated Triton (that unique invention of the ingenious Bernini), squirting water through a conch with no other apparent motive than that of irrigating the vegetation on his own shoulders. On the first morning after our arrival Mr. Trotman posted off to the Piazza di Spagna to consult Pellegrini's register of visitors, where also he entered both our names and addresses with great solemnity. There is something to me very awful, by the way, in your English shops abroad. They wear an air of severe respectability, which becomes all the more severe by contrast with their humbler neighbours. They seem to say to one, 'Remember this is an English shop, and here are none but English goods. Don't forget that you are an Englishman. If you come in here, in a swaggering English way, with a perfectly English air of English superiority, and ask for the best English articles, you may have them at the highest English prices, which you will be expected to pay with the utmost English indifference; but unless you are prepared to furnish these proofs of your English birth and education, don't

presume to come into English shops; you can be no true Englishman, or no rich one which is (on the Continent) the same thing.

The Anglo-Romans may be generally classed under two heads:

1. Residents, chiefly professional, and engaged either in their studios, shops, and counting-houses, or giving lessons in the Italian language, singing, painting, &c. &c., or else devoted to the study of Galignani, and the art of smoking, which they practise daily with great assiduity in the Caffé Hellenico.

2ndly. Non-residents, or perhaps, I should say, visitors who patronize the above—buy their pictures—take their lessons, or swallow their prescriptions, as the case may be, and who, it must be confessed, work much harder than the majority of residents, since they rush about in their carriages or on foot from morning to night, 'doing' and seeing everything that is to be seen and done, from the Coliseum to a cricket-match—from the Tavola degli Apostoli, down to a domestic teafight.

These may be subdivided, again, into many minor classes; as, for instance, the lady-amateurs, who are devoted to the fine arts, make sketches of the Arch of Titus by moonlight, and bribe young Pifferari (the dear picturesque little darling) with twice their usual fee to sit to them for water-colour portraits with pencil backgrounds, and are horrified at symptoms of fleas afterwards: the intellectual young persons who read Gibbon steadily, and are perpetually flooring you by alluding to the Catiline conspiracy—asking you if you remember the effect of the First Agrarian law, or what you think, on the whole, of the character of Calpurnius Piso—the enthusiastic old ladies who insist on ascending the tower of the Capitol, getting up into the ball at St. Peter's, mounting the Tarpeian Rock, the roof of the Pantheon, the top of the obelisks, or other equally airy but dangerous situations—the people who give parties and the 'parties' who go to them.

The artists in Rome are a tribe by themselves; and though they are found there in all society, their house of call is the Caffé Hellenico. There is a trattoria next door, where you may regale yourself on testiccioli, frittata, rosbiffe, maccaroni, zuppa Inglese, and other national delicacies. I brought away a tremendous bill of fare from this famous restaurant, which I show now to my friends in England as a curiosity in culinary literature. It contains several hundred dishes, and I confess I had at one time the temerity to believe that by ordering two or three of them every day, I should at last become conversant with all. These experiments did, however, not always answer, for on one occasion, having selected a 'plat,' with a high sounding title as a *pièce de résistance*, I found it to be nothing more than a biscuit, and was fain for the future to stick to the traditional viands. Zuppa Inglese, by the way, which most Englishmen believe to be mutton-broth, turned out to be a sponge-cake steeped in wine; and I have no doubt that if one ordered plum-pudding they would serve it in a tureen.

The process of dining at a Roman trattoria is rather complicated than agreeable. You enter and take your seat, that is, if you escape being knocked down by one of the waiters who are perpetually running about to get something, but by some ingenious policy of waiter-craft never bringing it, (and note that Italian waiters have a peculiar habit of walking on their heels which, if you happen to be drinking at the time, may cause the glass to vibrate on your incisors in a manner which is not pleasant). However, supposing you are seated and ready for action, you call out—'Pst!' 'Cameriere!' 'Hi!' 'Garçon!' or whatever ejaculation you may be accustomed to use on such occasions.

Waiter answers, 'Si, s'gnor!' hurriedly, and then exit.

Now don't be foolish and get angry at this, because that sort of thing doesn't do here. You may realize the situation of the Irish gentleman who, the more he shouted for his domestics the more they didn't come. No; take up the Galignani and read Gladstone's last

speech, or a critique on the new opera; but don't hope for the waiter's attention under twenty minutes. At the end of that time you may call him again.

'Cameriere!'

'Si, s'gnor — pronto — momento, s'gnor!' (Exit again but reappears.)

Now ask for the bill of fare, which he will bring you, and while you are perusing it, he is off again. Never mind; you read over the various dishes under the grand divisions of 'bollita,' 'umidi,' 'fritti,' and 'pasticcerie.'

Perhaps, retaining your English prejudices, you select 'bistecca' You order it, and away goes the waiter once more on his heels. You wait another twenty minutes, during which interval you are the subject of much amusement to certain facetious Italian 'gents,' who, lest their wit should not render them sufficiently formidable, keep their hats on and are additionally armed with eye-glasses and toothpicks. At last in stumps the waiter with a dish. You hail him with delight, but find that the refection he carries is for eyeglass No. 1, not for you You ask him where your dinner is, and he (the waiter) politely asks you in return what you ordered. On appealing to his memory and better feelings, he exclaims:

'Bistecca! ah mi dispiace, s'gnor, NON C'E!'

There is none it appears, and you tell him in a great rage to bring the first thing that is ready. Away he scuds and comes back this time (to do him justice) in less than a quarter of an hour, bringing you at last your dinner—a lump of hard, indigestible something without gravy or any evidence of the cooking art. Whether it be beef, or kid, or mutton, or porcupine, or pony, or doormat is more than you can tell. I am sure *I* couldn't, and I have had some experience.

It was after rising from a banquet of this description that Trotman and I dive down a little dark passage in the Via Condotti, and arrive at a glass door which, swinging open as we push it, admits us into a room, or rather two or three sections of rooms, lighted with gas, close, ill ventilated, dingy, and—but for the humanity assembled in them —cheerless. The smoke is so dense, that at first we can see nothing but the lighted ends of cigars which shine through it. In the mean time we hear a Babel of voices chattering French, Italian, German, and our beloved mother tongue, and presently some one shouts out in awfully hoarse accents, drowning every other sound, the following imprecation:

''N Kffiaaay! tray beeceraaaar!'

Presently, through the smoke, we begin gradually to distinguish noses, beards, and wide-awakes, and at last identify their owners. Artists of every grade and nation fill the place, from Vandyke Brown, the well-known classical, allegorical, historical, mythological painter, 'R A,' 'R.B.,' 'R.C.,' &c., &c., down to honest Karl Schmutzig, who will draw your portrait for a dinner and a glass of schnaps Here, too, you may see the celebrated Siberian artist, Herr Von Lang Weilig, who has been occupied forty-three years in painting the largest oil picture ever known, the studies for which alone occupied seven years in preparation. Three houses were pulled down to make room for the studio, and no one knows how many artificers were employed to prepare the canvas The picture is expected to be finished by his grandson, who is being educated for that purpose, and on whom the Czar will entail the annuity. By his side sits Daubney Glaze, the fashionable London portrait painter, who will knock off your head at a single sitting for the moderate charge of one hundred guineas.

Then on the right hand please to observe Tom Chippenham, sculptor, statuary, and modeller to the trade.*

There on the left, you may see

* The English nobility and gentry residing in Rome, are respectfully informed that T. C. has lately lowered his charge for portrait-busts, in consequence of a reduction in the price of marble. For terms see advertisement. N.B. Copies of Canova's works and the antique examples neatly executed. Cinque-cento chimney pieces on the shortest notice.

Dronemore of Dronemore's Town, Tipperary, commonly called Lord Chatterton, whom nothing but the grossest Saxon injustice keeps from his enjoyment of his title and the estates. He will tell you in one evening more particulars of his birth and pedigree, and more anecdotes of the great people whom he has met than you need ever hope to remember, or are likely to believe. He gives lessons in Italian and French, both of which languages he speaks with equal indifference His notions of the proprieties of English dress and manners are modelled after those of his deceased Majesty King George the Fourth, in whose august reign Dronemore left his native soil He has lived in Italy a quarter of a century and has not yet seen a railway. Bless his prosy face for the most perfect gentleman, and the greatest muff in Rome Yes! here they are. Artists, authors, wits, good, bad, and indifferent, consuming muddy coffee, watery beer, and halfpenny cigars. Here we are at last in the great artistic rendezvous of the most famous city in the world. Walk in, gentlemen, and take your seats. This is the Caffè Hellenico

The honest reader of these pages, if his patience has carried him on thus far, will have rightly inferred that I belong to the honourable confraternity of limners, and that my business in Rome was the study of my profession. It is a venerable tradition which induces young painters still to haunt that ancient stronghold of art, but the days have gone by when a residence in the Eternal City was sufficient to constitute a genius. Modern tyros come to look at the old masters—not to copy them. The great school of nature, however, remains for all. A Roman brunette is as fine a model now as she was some fifty years ago; and wondrous specimens of that type I saw during the Carnival, which took place some few days after my arrival.

Until that important festivity is concluded all attempts at work are vain. While it lasts the whole city is in such excitement that the old Anglo-Roman stagers, for whom the affair has lost its charm, gladly escape to Tivoli, or some other quiet retreat, till all the noise, and masking, and bustle is over—till the last moccolo is blown out, and the once-blooming bouquets have fallen, trampled on and forgotten, to the ground.

Yet, with these exceptions, the Carnival in Rome is becoming as essentially British an institution as if the whole ceremony took place in Oxford Street, as if Mr Nathan supplied the masks, as if the carriages came out of Long Acre, and the bouquets from Covent Garden. Keep the English visitors from Rome, and the Carnival would be a slow affair, indeed

For my part, I confess that I was contented with a few hours of the amusement; whereas most of our enthusiastic fellow-countrymen devote a whole week to the pastime, and would as soon think of missing an afternoon in the Corso, as a Sunday at the English church. Indeed, many of them go through both ceremonies with equal and becoming gravity.

At two o'clock, then, in the afternoon, there is a muster of cavalry in the Piazza di Spagna; and here, parenthetically, I cannot help reflecting what a gratifying fact it must be to the Romans of the nineteenth century to find even their amusements always graced by the presence of foreign troops—a compliment which, no doubt, they are the more ready to appreciate from the well-known forbearance and modest deportment of the soldiery in question, as well in circumstances of private life as in their professional capacity.

The ceremonies being thus inaugurated, private carriages enter the Corso in a long 'queue.' There you may recognize the state coach of the Dowager Duchess of Villaricos los Terreros, with her illustrious suite, followed by the humble gig of an honest contadino. Lady Crushingham Grandling, in an elegant open barouche, in close proximity to the plebeian trap hired by Mr. Chippenham and his beery friends. Behind those gentlemen, in a splendid mail phaeton, drawn by four horses

profusely decorated with coloured ribbons, you distinguish my Lord Raikesmere, Captain Sympring, of the 'Light Bobs,' and Mr. Adolphus Stalker (late of the Civil Service). These illustrious youths are well armed with flesh-coloured wire masks, chastely painted in front in imitation of the human face, and are additionally provided with brown holland blouses bound with green and blue ribbon. Beside their august persons the vehicle contains two large hampers of bouquets and a bushel of confetti (comfits, alas! no longer, but vile lumps of plaster of Paris, to be shovelled out in handfuls). Then follow several native cabs, with about thirteen Romans of both sexes in each. The whole party are in gorgeous array, with second-hand dominoes and cheap finery. Halfpenny bouquets are thrown from these seedy vehicles, which in return receive a merciless shower of confetti from the windows, until the drivers look like amateur millers and the rest of the company resemble animated flour-sacks. Mrs. M'Tinsel's chariot is next on the rank. Her husband, a 'fat Adonis of fifty,' has been with difficulty persuaded to hide the symmetry of his form under a blouse. He is just putting himself in attitude to pass a balcony full of ladies, when he receives a stout bunch of evergreens in his eye, and retires ignominiously to his seat. The Graf von Schlupfenschleiden, with his Excellency the Baron Blauenstrumpf, and Lang Weilig, the Siberian artist, occupy a droshky behind.

And now the fun of the day fairly begins. From a hundred windows gay-coloured cloths and carpets hang glittering in the sun, and from twice ten hundred windows lean shouting a mirthful host, while I am battling my way on foot towards the Palazzo di Venezia. And no easy matter that, while every one in this vast crowd is pushing, jostling, and scrambling to throw his bouquet and then get out of the way of the next carriage as quick as he can. The 'gamins' of Rome run fearful risks of being trampled to death as they hastily pick up the ill-aimed bouquets (which fall back from the balconies) to re-sell. There is a little urchin of eight years old chasing one as it rolls under a carriage. Another instant and the horse trots on. You think the poor boy must be crushed this time; but see—before you can take breath he is off and away to the other end of the Corso, where he will make a franc by the transaction.

Presently comes rushing on a noisy troop of 'prentices. Each has a bladder, tied by string to a stick, and—whack comes one of these on your devoted head—rather startling certainly, but—Que voulez-vous? It didn't hurt, and it is Carnival time. Here is a lady six feet high at least, with a crinoline which reaches nearly across the street. This damsel's hands are somewhat larger and redder than usual, and as one of them smartly descends on the shoulder of a boy who stands in the way, we begin to have some doubts about her sex. Ah! now she is defending herself right lustily. One, two—that's right—give it to them. The honest fellow's bonnet has fallen off, and he is hitting out right and left to regain it.

On we go, pushing, shouting, scrambling, pelting. I recognize a fair compatriot at her balcony, and, after aiming five bouquets at her unsuccessfully, am obliged to retreat under a heavy fire of comfits. Again the carriages pass on—again our aristocratic friends appear, this time mixing with the vulgar herd, and enjoying themselves with true British energy. Raikesmere is particularly active. I call to mind old days, when his lordship and I shinned each other (as the phrase was) at football in the green at Eastminster, and wonder whether he recollects it too. Even Sympring seems to forget his gentlemanlike apathy in the general *mêlée*. 'Doosid good fun this is,' he says to his companions. Well for him if all his pleasures are as harmless.

Presently—boom goes the gun in the Piazza, and immediately the carriages file off right and left. Most of their occupants rush back to the Corso, and reappear at balconies which have been reserved for their especial use. For three quarters of an hour longer the honest folks go


EDI ᵈ EVANS Sc

on peppering each other with confetti and flinging bouquets, the best of which, originally costing five or six pauls apiece, may now be bought for a few baiocchi. Still more pushing, hustling, and scrambling. I come up to poor Chippenham (who stands about fifty-nine inches in his bluchers). 'Jolly this, ain't it?' cries the little sculptor; 'I've just hit an old party up there between the barnacles, and he's *so* riled, instead of taking it good-naturedly, as he *ort*.' While he is exulting over the successful shot, a huge bon-bon alights on his own proboscis, and off goes our little Buonarotti muttering his wrath.

Suddenly there is commotion in the crowd, and far off, up the long, long street, you may notice it dividing, like the Red Sea: the great waves of human life roll back on either side. There is a bloodless charge of cavalry. They begin with a trot, which grows into a canter, then a gallop, and presently they dash by us at an awful rate, their sabres and cuirasses gleaming in the sun. The crowd closes in immediately behind them, and is again in confusion. But when this ceremony has been performed twice, foot soldiers line the trottoirs, and the course is cleared in earnest for the horse-race.

There is a breathless pause.

'Ecco—Vengono!' cries some one, and we all press forward to look. It is a wretched dog yelping and frightened to death by the shouts and laughter of the people Away he goes with his tail between his legs, and is lost in the distance.

Two minutes more of suspense, and a sharp clatter is heard. Here they come, and no mistake. 'Where, where?' 'Here!' 'There!' GONE!

I declare and vow all I saw of the race was a horse's tail, three hoofs, some tinsel, and a good many sparks of fire. The race is over.

* * * *

If any gentleman should feel inclined to read over the above description five times, he may have some slight notion of what it is to 'do' a week of the Carnival, and we may be supposed to have arrived at the last night, when itinerant and amateur chandlers are rushing about selling little wax tapers at about thrice their usual cost, and according to a time-honoured custom, we are all lighting up as many as we can hold at a time. We are about to consummate the festivities of the week by the intensely amusing sport of blowing out every neighbour's candle that we can reach, and then rekindling our own, which in the mean time, of course, has shared a similar fate. The whole street is blazing with a fitful flickering light from the trottoir, from the kennel, in the porches, on the balconies, flashing now across fair faces and making bright eyes brighter still or throwing deep and ugly shadows on some scowling brow below.

The carriages return to the Corso. Confusion recommences, and under cover of it, a good deal of boisterous flirting goes on. The ladies are especially busy, and perhaps may kindle many a flame to-night while they are extinguishing another.

Ah! carne vale; carpe diem. To-morrow we shall be in sackcloth and ashes, and then——

Just as I am about to philosophize, I hear a vigorous puff behind, and whizz! out goes my light. 'Senza moccolo, senza moccoloooo!' roars my victorious assailant, and disappears somewhere in the crowd.

'Senza moccolo! sen—zamoc—colo!' is now so wildly shouted on all sides, that the words appear to have lost their real meaning, and to have become an eager war-cry.

Laughing, shouting, pushing, scrambling, the merry mob passes on. A minute more, and the carnival will be over. Senza moccolo! senza moccoloo! The lights are visibly diminishing. Hark! there is the well-known signal. Once more my taper is extinguished. The smoke curls round a dying spark and goes up into the night air—Faugh! how it smells as I throw it away. Sic transit gloria mundi.

* * * *

On Ash Wednesday, after church, I detected Mr. Trotman in the act of writing verses on the frivolities of the previous week. He presented me, after much hesitation, with a copy of them, on the express con-

dition that they were to be read by no one but myself. I hope, therefore, he will forgive me when he finds that I have taken the liberty of introducing them to 'London Society.'

'Hark! The signal gun has sounded,
And its echo has rebounded
From the walls on which was founded
Many mighty Cæsars' home.
Riding forth in lordly state,
Prince and civic potentate,
Onward come to celebrate
Their old Carnival at Rome.

'Flags are flying—banners swelling,
The festivities foretelling,
From the proud Venetian's dwelling,
To St. Mary's modest dome *
In long vista—never ending,
Fair and manly forms are bending
From each window, lustre lending
To the Carnival at Rome.

'From each workshop, field, and mart,
Busy sons of toil depart;
The painter leaves his magic art,
The sage his dusty tome.'
With dull care no brow is aching,
But their labour men forsaking,
Come by hundreds merry-making,
To the Carnival in Rome.

'Bonbons drop in snowy showers,
Fairer hands are strewing flowers,
Culled in Doria's mossy bowers,
Or Albano's dusky loam.
My bouquet fell at Laura's feet,
She raised it with a grace so sweet;
'Twas matchless in that crowded street,
And the Carnival at Rome.

'With the speed of lightning vying
Soon the fiery steeds come hieing,
Fifty goads around them flying
On their lips a bloody foam.
But ere ends this joyous day,
Let us give one cheer and say
Viva-ana (which means hurray!)
For the Carnival at Rome.'

JACK EASEL.

* The Corso, which is the chief scene of the Carnival, extends from the Palazzo di Venezia to the church of Santa Maria del Popolo.

HINTS TO POETS;

Or, The Spirit of the Age.

WE'VE heard of jewels, gems, and June,
And jessamine, before,
May, magic, musical, and moon,
Occur in Tommy Moore.

Whisper and willow, wind and weep,
Dark, dying, desolation—
A modern bard should strictly keep
For *private* circulation.

A truce to this eternal lay
Of sentiment and passion;
Give us the subjects of the day
Tossed up to meet the fashion.

The sun, the moon, the fleeting breath
Of violets, ere they die,
And day and night, and love and death,
Are *blasé* all, and dry.

We're not materialists, to think
The universe eternal,
To see in every star a link
To mysteries supernal.

Like sober Christian men we know
This lesson—worth the learning,—
The world's used up, as dry as tow,
And ready for the burning.

And poesy—its fancies blind—
  Its world of tremulous feeling—
An orange sucked from rind to rind
  And quite unworth the peeling.

But still some praise to him be due
  Who, from such sorry farings,
Contrives to cook up something new
  From bitter pips and parings.

I never can imagine quite,
  Why birds are made to sing,
Or the same flowers to shed their light
  Again from spring to spring.

A blithe young bird, that spends its days
  In jocund jubilations,
And haply deems its old-world lays
  Original creations,

Is one of the absurdest things
  A listening world can hear;
A song that's run two thousand springs
  Falls very dull upon the ear.

But oh! the nightingale and thrush,
  And such impassioned wooers,
I fear will never care a rush
  For critics and reviewers.

As waves the wood, as falls the dew,
  As springs the buttercup,
That comes again, whate'er we do
  To kill, and cut it up,

They sing because, quoth Dr. Watts,
  'It is their nature *to*,'
Just as the blue forget-me-nots
  Persist in being blue.

But thou, O Poet! seek no more
  Thy vain conceits to father,
We've heard of joy and grief before
  Of moonlight memories—*rather!*

And as for songs by stream and grove
  They're older than Silenus,
While from the rifled flowers of love
  There's not a leaf to glean us.

Good night, my friend, the moon shines pale
  Through clouds of pearly glow—
'Tis pretty, but exceeding stale,
  And most supremely slow.

Good night—the tide flows fast and clear
  To fill the moon-lit bays—.
But that it's done for many a year,
  And now it never pays.

Good night—a soft voice sighs 'good night,'
  In murmurous modulations,
'Tis Echo—but how tame and trite
  Her puerile publications!

G. F.

THE SIDEBOARD VIEW OF SOCIETY:

As seen by a 'Man who Waits Out.'

I AM a confirmed invalid, condemned, after a youth and manhood of remarkable activity, to an elderlyhood of Bath chairs and sanatory regulations, dependent on my medical man, and reduced to a limited field of observation. 'Why, then, strive to bloom in print? What can you have to say for yourself?' ejaculates the un-gentle reader. A great deal, I assure you I am chatty and sympathetic; and men, women, and children come to my Bath chair and tell me their troubles, their triumphs, their small views of life, their little convictions, their large condemnations of their neighbours,—and this filtering of 'all sorts' produces a curiously flavoured whole—equal, perhaps, to a sermon under many heads on charity, forbearance, and forgiveness.

A few weeks ago I stumbled on a new experience to me, which I may term the 'Sideboard View of Society.'

It was a rare sunny day. My chair and myself were stationary under one of the large trees in Kensington Gardens, to permit the charioteer (if the appellation be allowable) time to breathe after toiling up a short but steep acclivity. He was a quiet, punctual, civil man, with keen gray eyes and solemn propriety of demeanour. I had often spoken to him during his short rests, but had as yet drawn forth little more than monosyllabic answers. 'Brown,' said I, observing him smother half a dozen consecutive yawns, and that he wore a peculiarly pallid, pasty aspect, 'you look ill; you yawn. You had better let me prescribe a tonic for you before you get permanently out of health.'

'Out of health! No, sir; out late last night, sir.'

'Out late at night, Brown?' said I, reprovingly.

'Yes, sir,' he replied, 'I waits out' (he called it 'hout').

'Oh!' I returned—a vista of curious knowledge opening before me—'an occasional waiter, eh?'

'Just so, sir.'

'You must be a good deal behind the scenes, then,—up to the shortcomings of plate and contrivances in crockery, eh! Brown?'

'Don't know about the scenes, sir; but I know there's a rum lot to be seen from behind chairs.'

'Ha! And I should say you saw as much as your neighbours.'

'It's my dooty, sir, to have my heyes on heveryone.' He spoke with solemn emphasis, and aspirated accordingly.

'There's no end of life to be seen by a man who waits out,' said he meditatively, breaking at length into confidence and loquacity. 'It is not to every one I would talk of the houses as I gets my bread by; but to a gentleman like you' (which, being interpreted, meant 'a poor old fellow who can do no mischief') 'I don't mind saying that for all the outsides of houses are so like there's no two of the insides the same. Some are as stiff as pokers, and rubbed up to that state of polish that they are as slippery as ice; others, again, so loose in the joints that won't work nohow. And I don't know which is the worst. Bless your heart, sir, by the time I've put on my pumps in the pantry, drunk a glass of ale in the kitchen, and took over the plate from the parlour-maid, I can tell the whole bearings of the establishment—if its staff or loose, or flimsy or solid.'

'I suppose,' said I, 'you are seldom engaged where men servants are kept?'

'Oh! dear yes, sir. They always want supernoomeraries. You see, no one, 'cept p'raps a lord, has enough men, or women either, to

wait on twenty people. But I don't care to go to those families as keeps flunkeys: they always make believe to look down on the waiter, and gives theirselves airs, though they have quite a limited sphere compared to a man who waits out. No, sir, I like a female establishment' (poor Brown had no idea of an Agapemone). 'They mind what you say, look to your little comforts, and doesn't dispute your superior information. But, sir, of all the houses to wait in there's none like a good comfortable widow lady's, with daughters. Gentlemen are so ready to cut up rough; but the ladies, if you keep a civil tongue in your head, have a deal of consideration—that is, a good many of them, not all, as I'll mention to you. But there's a widow down there in Acacia Villas, with two nice young ladies—her husband was something in the army; she always has his picture in a red coat on her buzzum—a fine personable woman, as you can hear two pair of stairs off rustling in a stiff silk gown. And doesn't she make the whole house keep up to time! but all pleasantly. There is always a right good supper there, and plenty of ale, and a first-rate plain dinner for the company—the best of soup and fish, game and poultry, and lots of nice vegitables and fruit, but no side dishes, 'cept a curry. And, then, how I've seen the old yellow nabobs pitch into the curries, and be like to bust themselves with fire and brimstone stuff of chutney and mangoes, and the like of such outlandish burning rubbish' Here Brown's face assumed a look of intense disgust. 'She doesn't care two pins what Mrs. this or that or t'other has for her dinners. "But," says she to me, the fust time I waited at Acacia Villas, "you'll have no side dishes and trash to hand about. Be quick with the vegitables and sauces, see that every one's glass is kept full, and whoever is not satisfied without Russian rubbish and cat-pie *entrées* may go elsewhere for 'em." Ah! she is a clever woman! Every one is merry and comfortable there, sir; for there's a wonderful likeness between the company and the dinner.'

'The food and the feeders?' I ejaculated.

'Just so, sir. Why, sir, there's a heartiness about widows (as has money, of course) that's quite pleasant to see. But this one will stand no nonsense; not she. Do your work, and play arterwards. That's her motto.'

'But, from what you say,' I interposed, seeing him pause, 'all ladies are not equally considerate?'

'Well! no, sir. I have received no end of kindness from ladies, but there is some on 'em that is just cayenne and lemon-juice together.'

'Not a pleasant compound,' I remarked.

'No, sir, not at all. Why, there's some houses as three times seven and six would not pay you to wait in. Down there in Albion Terrace there's a lady, and isn't she stylish! She is so genteel, sir—that—in short I know nothing genteeler! There is not a thing, from a knife-rest to an épergne, that she hasn't a big name for. She has *rayther* a grand turn out of glass and silver, and china, and all that—the table looks very well I must say—but the looks is the best of it. She is fond of the Roosian style, isn't she? She says to a lady I was handing tea to one night, "It's elegant and inexpensive," says she. But you know, sir, five shillings' worth of flowers and green, with a good lot of paper and artificials, make a wonderful show; and,' lowering his voice, 'I myself see two roses in a wine-cooler on Tuesday as I observed in her own bonnet in church on Sunday, the identical same.' He paused to see the effect of this revelation. 'She's purfessional,' he resumed, evidently full of his subject, 'strongly purfessional.'

'How,' I said; 'in what line? Do you mean an artist?'

'A hartist, sir!' he exclaimed; 'Law bless you, sir, she would as soon be a charwoman! Not but that she always has a hartist or two in the evening, just as you have olives or ice after dinner, because it's genteel; but there is never no knife nor fork for 'em; you see they give nothing but talk in return—there's no use in feeding *them*. What I mean

by "purfessional" is law, and the lady I'm mentioning thinks it the genteelest trade going—her husband is in the law. He is a curious little chap—very curious: he never meddles in anything about the dinner; but it's my belief he has his own way about things out o' doors. And I will say, that if I wanted a trifle of law, it isn't to him I would go. He is thin and dry, and awful clean, like the streets on a March day, when a sharp wind sweeps 'em clear. He looks through and through you, and says very little; but I don't think he is quite as genteel as she is; and,' with a genuine burst of admiration, 'there isn't a cleverer woman in all London than that 'ere! She isn't handsome, but there's not two people among all she knows has found it out. She dresses—doesn't she dress!—and what with a flower here and a bit of lace there, a piece of ribbon 't other place, you never seem to see her any way but the way she chooses! Only she sometimes bothers you a bit with too many directions, and that's the only mistake never she makes, as *I* knows on But it's always the same! As soon as I am in the house the words is, "Missis is waitin' to speak to you in the dining-room," and there she is in a sort of gown that is not fit for a drawing-room and too fine for a bed-room, with a lot of silver and glass spread out before her, and she counts 'em all, and makes me observe they are all right; then she will turn to a young lady as lives with her, and says, "You see, my dear, the number and condition of these things; you will be so good as to take them up from Brown to-night before he goes;" and then she has fifty directions to give—"Don't take the sherry round more than three times, Brown, if you please, and the hock and champagne twice. Pour out the champagne boldly, and just let the froth touch the top of the glass; stop then: there's nothing so ungenteel as a full glass. Mind what I say—never fill up any glass, it is *so* vulgar." Everything that is full is vulgar with her. And then about the dishes—how one was to be carried up one side, and another down the opposite, so as to spin out four corners into eight; but there she is not far wrong, for no one scarce ever tastes an *entrée*, as they are called. Then it is, "Brown, there are a pair of ducks at the second course, see that you make them go once round"—maybe to sixteen—"and the two ice shapes, they ought to serve twice round." Law bless you, sir, she knows to a grain how much can be got out of everything, and so on, till before I was accustomed to her I used to make a horrid mess between fear and variety of orders; for though it is, "If you please," at every turn, the words sound much more like, "Mind your eye, or I'll pitch into you," and at the end she finishes mostly with "Remember what I say, for I must not have my mind disturbed during dinner." Then away she sails, an hour and a half before hand, to dress, and leaves miss to watch Will you move on a bit, sir,' interrupting himself, 'p'raps I am tiring you.'

'Far from it, Brown; I am much interested.'

'If ever there was a poor thing worked hard for a crust—and a mighty dry one,' he resumed reflectively—'it's the cousin. She is so cowed by the missis that she is afraid of every one, the cook's just awful to her; and she is horrid frightened to do and say the things she is bid to me She is supposed to be in delicate 'ealth, and can't dine at table; so, after hanging about to see that nothing's touched, till dinner's just announced, she scurries away into a small back room they call the library, with a skylight to it, and there she sits until the last gentleman's up, and then she comes in and locks away even to a stray cherry. I feels for that poor girl, I do; there's no life or comfort left to her; and she'd be pretty if she had a hope or a kind word. See, sir, I'm a poor man, and I have a little girl as will have to work for her bread, but before I'd have her like that young lady, I'd walk cheerful after her to Kensal Green.'

He paused, and taking off his hat, wiped his brow.

'You cannot much like to wait in Albion Terrace?'

'No, sir; yet I was sorry to lose a "waitin," and I'll never be sent for to Albion Terrace again.'

'How?' I asked.

'You see, sir, it was through 'elping of another.'

'How did that injure you?'

'I'll tell you, sir. There was a smartish young man, cousin to my wife, as wanted to get on in the waitin' line; active and good-lookin', but "Hirish" and "needn't apply," you know. Well, sir, I wished to give him a turn; and one day there was an out-and-out spread at the Terrace, and I recommends him to hact under me (he goes for three and six, you know), and really, sir, it's a good 'ouse to learn in, there are so many gentilities, so says I, "Do what I bid you; keep your mouth shut, and p'raps it will be an opening" So he puts on his best, and looks very respectable. Now, it's a way with the lady we're a talkin' of to have any rich old cove as she wants to please put alongside of her, and then, as I'm putting the usual thimbleful into his glass, she'll say, with such a sweet smile, "Brown wants to put you on half-rations, I think, Mr. So-and-so—be more bountiful, Brown, if you please." Then you see that particklar chap gets full and plenty, and he doesn't notice how the rest are put off, or thinks it's my hignorance It's a dodge I've seen her do twenty times. Well, on this here hoccasion, Johnson (his name's Murphy, but that, you know, would never pay), Johnson, of course, was by when she give the usual lot of orders and directions; and because it was a bigger dinner than usual, and a strange man, she was more perticler nor hever about the wine Johnson was fairly struck with fear at the way she has of saying, "*If* you please," and was rayther unhinged before the company came in; however, he got on very well till it came to the wine Now, this day there was a most uncommon rich old gent from India' (he said the Hinjees), 'that might have had gold to eat if he'd ask it, sitting next the missis, and Johnson, trembling to have to serve the wine so near her, puts in about a thimbleful, and she makes the usual remark: this bothered him so, he didn't know what to do, so he puts in another thimbleful, at which she frowns sudden upon him, and signs for more, which, not understanding, he says in a loud whisper, "Three quarthers full, shure ye tould me yerselt." I thought the old gent would have bust a laughin'. "You've got a character there, ma'am," says he. She looked all colours in a minute. They say he never took wittles in that house agin, but went and adopted a nephew in some City office—all I know is, we were packed off, and never sent for no more. It wasn't a pleasant 'ouse to wait in, but still it is a loss.'

Brown here, without consulting me, disappeared behind the chair, and propelled me in silence for a quarter of an hour, during which time I meditated how I should induce him to renew his revelation, which amused me greatly.

'Let us stop here by this disputed ride,' I said at length, and we came to a stand by the newly-erected rails. Brown stood a little in advance, leaning against them meditatively Suddenly turning to me, he exclaimed—

'There's a gentleman, sir, passed at the other side as employs me, and his house is just the direct opposite of the one I've been telling you of, it is just too much the other way Bless your 'eart! the meat and the vegitables and the bread that's lying about in that 'ere basement, and the bundles and bundles of firewood, and cheese and potatoes, and eggs, and kitching stuff, and stale milk, to say nothink of jam pots, *not empty*, and scuttles full of coals, and no end of things as the charwoman carries away—they would keep three families. It is a grand house, the colonel's (he was a colonel in India), but somehow it's never all right; there's a something broke in every room, and curiosities of all kinds that you could write your name on in dust, yet they keep four women, and a boy in buttons; and of all the boys I' hever come across, that's the most precocious young willain: he keeps a lob-eared rabbit and two squirrels in the front arey;

and the bills for parsley and lettuce and nuts, and oh I don't know what as he has at the greengrocer's, would drive a careful missus into a lunatic 'sylum; but the missis there is a grand lady, on another tack from the last as I mentioned. She certainly is a liberal lady, and I might get drunk and carry hoff no end of wittles every time I waits there, there is such a lot of things lying about as she never asks after, but I'd scorn it; then you see, sir, all this plenty might be taken, but it isn't given. There's another lady, as I'll tell you of presently; she knows the difference. The dinners there are of that sort that the very men as puts the things on the table ought to be a trifle over the common as to strength and height. Now, for a small party—say six or eight—I've seen a boiled leg of mutton, almost too much for me to lift, a big roast turkey with about three pound of sausages round it, a large-sized pig's cheek, and a curry, beside fish, and two or three kinds of vegitables; it's melancholy, to say nothink of its being wulgar! When there's a spread there's generally two women in to 'elp the cook and parlourmaid, there's myself and a stuck-up chap as thinks a deal more of hisself than I do, who gets his 'alf suvrin for carving, and another under him, but the whole three of us are scarcely able to keep that page out of mischief. he seems to have a spite against us, whips away plates before people's half done, and keeps thrusting wrong sauces under the company's noses, wine sauce to game, and p'raps lobster-sauce to hiced pudding. I've heard tell of banditti in Hitly, and that 'ere boy's a banditti; he's never content to have one thing at a time on a plate, but as soon as a slice, may be of roast beef, is put on, away he goes and gets a slice of tongue, or a spoonful of curry, or some other out-of-the-way mixture; he has no civilization. And then the state of the plate and glasses—it's something hawful!'

Here Brown paused with tragic effect.

'It's a desperate business there to get up the *hentrés*, and as to the second course! bless your 'eart, sir! I've seen the missis (I name no names) turn round every bracelet on her harms a dozen times, and the last word of conversation just die away, till you might hear that chap as carves, a breathin' hard behind the master's chair; and when I've stole away to see if the kitching chimney's a fire, or any other such misfortune happened, maybe I find the cook a sitting at one side of the table, and the charwoman at the other, discussing wages an' bonnets over a bottle of wine, as they has for sauces; then when I go in rayther in a flutter, the cook will say, quite hoity toity, "Gracious goodness, Mr. Brown, where's the hurry? give the company time to digest their food, we're not slaves, are we?" Oh! she's a cool hand, that 'ere cook; then when I comes back, there's the old colonel a shoutin', "What the d—l's become of the dinner?" disregardin' manners altogether. As to the young ladies (there's four of them) they don't care for nothing, except the gents along side of 'em; and they always do have gents with no end of moustachiers and shirt-fronts, to take them down to dinner; swells, you know, sir, as always has a French name for hevery dish, and don't they want waitin' on! And then the young ladies keep laughin' an' showing their teeth, an' tossing their heads, an' chattering like so many canary birds. They are no more like some ladies, as we hands coffee to in the drawin' room, quarter of an hour arter lounging about half asleep, than a dancing-dog is to a dormouse.' Brown paused after this imaginative effort, and taking out his handkerchief, flicked away the dust from the panels of the chair, then resumed, meditatively: 'There's no end of differences between houses and dinners, but p'raps the greatest differences is in talk. Why, sir, it's downright curious to listen to one set of people, one day, and another to-morrow, and so on. At the house as I mentioned to you (the widow's) the conversation is just like the dinner, it's plain, but pleasant; the gentlemen are a little fond of old fashions in politics, and horses, and all that; but then they never seem

to look down on any one, only the old milintary gents don't like "The Times" writing about milintary affairs. I've heard a deal of hard swearing about it after the ladies have left the room; they don't know no French names for nothink, but they are all *gentlemen*, an' the ladies, some of them in perticlar, couldn't be given the go-by nowhere. Then at t'other one, it's all cut an' dry; one begins, maybe, about the court, and what Her Majesty wore there; and another will cut in with the last Philharmonic; they're strong in concerts at Albion Terrace, but whatever the talk's about, you may be sure it's all fashionable and correct, no one ever forgets hisself there. I sometimes think it's in the Rooshian style as well as the dinners, for they say Rooshia's a terrible hicy place, and everything as is said there might have been packed in hice twenty years back, for all the life it has; then I knows as well as if I was inside of her, the missis never is 'appy unless she sends away two or three of the ladies dying of spite, to see how much better she can do things on less than they can, and two or three of the gentlemen downright cross with their wives because she manages to make them think her so much carefuller, and closer, and sweeter, and milder, and what not, something between a hangel and a screw. I wish they had her, that's all. An' doesn't she swell out as she says, "You will despise my small ways and methodical system after your magnificent style of doing things, when p'raps everything has gone wrong at t'other's own house a few days before. I know how she sours every one, by the way the ladies speak, so vexed like, when they comes out. Ah! it's wonderful what a deal of money the nobs spend to make one another *uncomfortable*.'

'You are a philosopher, Brown,' I remarked, 'and well versed in the science of generalizing.'

'As to that, sir, I'm an ignorant man, but I do see a pretty large sprinkling of generals, 'specially at the colonel's, and I should say they are raither a greedy lot! At their age you see, sir, it's not the ladies nor the conversation, so much as the wittels, that's the hobject; one keeps bawling for bread, and another for wine, and others for more sauces and pickles than ever was found in any cookery book; and not one of them will wait a minute—'till a waiter doesn't know what to lay his hands on first. The talk there, too, is different again, it's very milintary; the ladies never mentions any one's name, but they add the regiment he belongs to. All the funny stories, too, are about majors and captains, or new joined hofficers; the curious thing is, that no stranger as didn't know all the ins and outs of everybody, would be able to find out where the fun was; but the company there is easy made laugh and as easy put in a passion.

'Bless your 'eart, sir, I've heard such contradictions flying across the table, as you'd think would lead to blows. I've heard the young ladies themselves snap each other up wonderful. They are fond of fashion, too, at the colonel's; but it's a different sort from Albion Terrace, more what's called Fast, and the ladies do sometimes,' lowering his voice, 'sing comic songs—not often—but I *have* heard them; and the gents all have a "baccy" before they go away; still they are openhanded, and I think a deal more on 'em than that stuck-up set at the Terrace. Now sir,' he resumed, 'if y're not tired, I should like to name another family, as goes on quite a different line from all I've named before, that you may not think I find fault with all my employers; far from it, only I feel inclined to speak confidential to you. But there's a house not half an hour's walk from here as it's a pleasure to go into—Laurel Lodge, down by P—— Square. It's not a fine house, nor a rich family, leastways nothing to speak of; but there's a comfort and a nicety, not to say a helegance about that 'ere establishment as beats most places high and low as I waits in. The gentleman's something in the City, a good-looking man though not handsome, and a bit hasty and wilful; but it's the lady that's at the top and bottom of everything. It's

a house I like to go to, a pretty place, with lots of flowers and pictures, and no end of nice things, all put just in the right place, and as neat and tidy as if no one ever moved about, and yet not cumbersome. The lady is not to say a beauty, but pleasant-looking, and speaks so soft and kind. There's a large and a small drawing-room at one side of the hall, and a dining-room and morning-room at the other. They never have what may be called a great spread there, never more than ten or twelve, and no champagne; port and sherry and claret, but all very particular, I've been told; and they only keep three women, cook, housemaid, and nursemaid, for there are two pretty children, a boy and a girl, about four an' five year old. Then they have a nice lot of plate, though some of it is very old-fashioned, and there it is as clean an' bright as a new pin, all laid out ready when I goes in, and the glass the same; and the missis, p'raps, will be putting fresh flowers in a pretty basket they use for the middle of the table instead of a heavy épergne; and then she has just a few directions to give, so clear that it would be a stupid indeed as would make a mistake; and then away she goes to play with the children, or sing to them, or something. There's no kind of flurry in that establishment. The dinner is the same sort they have every day, only more of it, and one or two particular dishes, and nice p'raps from the confectioner's, what can't be done in the usual run of kitchings, but every one knows his own work there. They has these sort of dinners two or three times a month, and they are used to them; the cook, she *is* a steady one; and though she has your supper right good and comfortable, with a first-rate pot of porter, takes good care of the wittles, and knows they'll be looked after the next day. Then the missis will be dressed an' ready and glide in so quiet and composed, and sure of herself when everything's laid, to see all's right; and she's ready for the master directly he comes home, with p'raps a pine or a melon or something good for dessert. Often the company comes before him, but that never puts either of 'em out, for they're somehow not wanting to seem finer at one time than another, and the company's just the same. Bless your 'eart, sir, it would do you more good than all the doctors in London to hear the laughing and fun, and the jokes that goes on! The missis, too, has such a kind way with her, every one seems to feel that he or she, as the case may be, is real downright welcome, and if she's a thought kinder or more attentive to any one, you may be sure that's a poor relation, or some one as has been unfortunate in the City, or somethink of that sort. And she can talk too! and has something pleasant to say about everything, but it's the way she has of listening, as if it was a pleasure to her, that makes every one feel so light and good-humoured. Then as to the wittles, it's my belief,' said Brown, solemnly, 'that if I stood up before her and said, "If you please 'm, the roast haunch or the ducks, or whatever the principal dish might be, has fell into the fire," she would just say, "Well I hope there is enough left to satisfy the cravings of hunger," or something like that; nor as long as she could make people happy, would she care two pins about seeming in apple-pie order, or better than others, or anything of the sort. Then you see everything being looked to in time and working free from fear, as it were, seeing the missis so quiet an' easy, all goes right. I never was in a house where there's so little fuss, and so few misfortunes. I sometimes think when you don't expect evil, it doesn't come. The gentlemen don't sit long there, and there's such a pleasant evening afterwards. They sing and they play, and sometimes act plays, an' more times they get talking of such curious things, politics and the Bible, and painting and books, and what things are made of. Why, sir, you'd think their whole lives depended on these here bout of the way subjects; they go into them so earnest like, and seem to be so taken up with what they are saying—not the way they say it, but it does them a deal of good—they stay later there than

almost any other house I waits in, except it's a ball; and I always observe the company go away brighter and more cordial-like than they come in, as if they had been warmed and cheered up body and soul. Then the missis nearly always settles with me herself, and looks into the pantry, and the kitching; and last winter, when my wife was ailing a long time, she would make me call the next day, and give me with her own hand nice little odds and ends of soups and sweets and jelly, what I know as she had thought over as would be best. Now a good turn like that from a careful lady is quite a different thing from being let to carry away a lot of broken wittles by the cook, which no one is thankful for, nor no one kind to give

'You'll excuse my speaking so bold, sir, but you see a man as waits hout has a curious lot of hopportunities, and sees a deal of insides, and I can't help saying," that in parties of all kinds, more depends upon the missis than the master; for though I am an ignorant man, I know p'raps better than a wiser one what makes a dinner go off well. It isn't the fine feed, nor the very perticlar wine, nor yet the grand people that's to drink it, but the spirit it's all done in; and when the master and missis doesn't want to make things seem finer and bigger than they'll stretch to, nor to mortify nobody by overdoing them, but are just real anxious to please the company, and make 'em happy and at home, it's quite wonderful what a deal of comfort and satisfaction can be got at a low figure.' Brown paused here, shook his head gravely, disappeared behind the chair, and propelled me in silence towards home, while I meditated approvingly on his recipe for a successful dinner.

FLORAL HINTS AND GOSSIP:

Window Fashions and Fabelties at the Conservatory.

SPRING flowers, budding trees, fragrant new-mown lawns, blossoms of pearly May. These are the fair belongings of the days that are passing now. And we poor London dwellers are shut out from all of these, and from all the pleasures of the fragrant spring.

There is the disputed point. Some people hold that a single flower-stand, or a window-ledge, may bring to us all the pleasure that the country gives, reminding us so vividly of the places we long to see, the green and bowery lanes, and the sloping glades, where the wind-flowers star the turf, and where the great narcissus clusters round the trees. It is not so much the actual sight we want, but to strike the key-note, and awake the music that ripples amidst the leaves. It was but a little moss in the trackless and sandy waste which cheered the traveller's path, and touched his heart to tears—no very great thing—only a blade of moss. And so to us a root of some wild flower may be no great thing, neither very costly nor very hard to grow, and yet, for simple happiness, few things may be more winning than the bright pink blossom of the pimpernel; the scent of the wild thyme that we have so often trodden; the little harebell, with its elastic stalk; the scented, pencilled, pale anemone, and the three-lobed wood sorrel, with its dazzling green, and its purple red-streaked bell.

The tenderest wild flowers will live amongst our streets, if we do but tend them with the care they ask.

The old garden flowers are many of them still our very greatest favourites; and amongst hot-house plants, for those who delight exceedingly in all that is new and rare, surely there is enough to be gathered of ever-varied beauty.

My own especial taste is for common things. So first, to-day, I shall

write of a glass of English wild flowers, and then I will describe a gorgeous stand of exotic brilliance, and a few of the new and beautiful 'foliage plants.'

First for the little wild flower. One half of the lady florists have never so much as seen the little pale wood sorrel—a little flower, thin as a frozen vapour—streaked with lines of the darkest red, hung on a bending stalk, and nestled upon a bed of the freshest green.

In a pine wood corner I used to see it grow: there a whole mass of the loveliest green would fill a glade at the foot of one old tree, the little flowers spangled all about, and above sang the wood pigeons, who built in the pine trees' shade. Even as very children, eager after all wild flowers, we could respect that dazzling, lovely bed. The shady spot, and the bright blue sky seen through the pine trees' top, made it all so beautiful.

These little flowers, then, should be grown in shade—in one of those northern windows which drive their owners frantic, in the fear that no plants will thrive there.

Why not adopt the pretty Belgian fashion, now gaining ground amongst us—a little sloping outer window? Say we have a wooden box placed on a little bracket, or on a side-less balcony; a low little wall, of three panes of glass, encloses it, set in a wooden frame, and screwed to the wall or window frame. The top is formed of one or two larger panes; and this may be hinged on to the centre window bar, to drop thence to the edge or frame of the front glass wall. A little care is needed that these joints should be water-tight; and being thus once arranged, we have a tiny greenhouse ready at any moment, by an opened window, to scent the room with flowers.

Of course our window forms the back of this little plant-house; and very many of the hardier ferns and flowers we there may grow most perfectly—watering the soil a little on a fine warm day, but never saturating anything in a flower-pot. Ferns and wood-sorrel, anemones and bluebells, primroses and sweet woodruff, sweetbriar and cowslips, all will thrive brightly there.

Such a trumpery heap of weeds!—we will leave them instantly, and pass to the consideration of a more splendid style.

The most beautiful material that I know for flower-stands is a dark rich ware, called English majolica. It has, of course, all sorts of variations; but I saw one large vase lately (it was made, I believe, at Phillips's in New Bond Street) which certainly would harmonize with any sort of colour.

There are, of course, endless variations; but the plain material, made in a good shape, is as all-accommodating as an Indian shawl. The colours are blended in a manner almost as charming.

We may suppose a vase (in shape not unlike that in an illustration of the last month's number of 'London Society,' only without the glasses), low, and wide, and round—perhaps in the centre a tall tree fern rises—perhaps a graceful pillar of clustering, climbing roses, or a white camellia, covered with its heavy blossoms; lovelier still, a deutzia, fringed with snowy tassels waving and shining like flakes of the purest snow. Rose-coloured flowers and hyacinths may be clustering round; blue lobelias and forget-me-nots are hanging upon the brink; a streamer of blue clematis has caught upon the white rose, or a lapageria wreath has twined almost to the floor. And let me never forget the little red China rose: it is so very bright, comes early, and lasts long. Then the old pink rose—which now is grown, apparently, chiefly on cottage walls—for sweetness and for loveliness there are not many like it.

There is a hanging basket—I hear, quite a Paris fashion—so of course it ought to be very fine. It represents a cabbage; yet more, it is a *fine* cabbage—my cook says it's a savoy!

It is of all baskets certainly the funniest; and being made of china, it looks as if it were a great green vegetable, all crisped, and curled, and wrinkled, like a winter cabbage on a frosty day. The colour is really

pretty, and would suit well with pink roses; but it is to be confessed that cabbage stalks are awkward terminations, and the monster should hang low.

Whether it is the name or what I cannot pretend to say, but it strongly strikes me that a group of cabbage roses would be the most proper flowers for suspending in it. But let me not be suspected of speaking with disrespect of the cabbage rose. By its prettier name—one of the Provence class—it is not at all despised; and as a *sort* of cabbage, we might have pink moss, or the white rose unique.

Making a long digression, apropos of hanging baskets, it always much surprises me that Orchids are not more common. I heard of one yesterday—one of Lycaste Skinneri—which has now lasted in a drawing-room for more than fourteen weeks, and this without any extra protection. I have some myself, of the beautiful Calanthe vestita, and of the pink Lunatodes, which for some weeks past have been waving across my plant case their beautiful wreaths of flowers. One of these Calanthes is spotted with a rosy lilac; the other has a sort of pale amber centre. The petals of each are very clear and waxen, and though the buds are slow in opening, the flowers when once out seem quite as slow in fading; while no plants can be more various than Orchids in their beautiful shapes and colours, providing brilliant butterflies to hover on ladies' bouquets, and the pretty picture of the nestling dove. Their ways of growing, too, are so various that they are in themselves an interest; some suspended, soil-less, on a dry piece of wood, living indeed on some aërial food; others requiring to be constantly well bathed, basket and all, in water; others rooting themselves into decaying tree trunks; others fastening on to the very stones of the hot-house wall; others, cruel plants, preying on their own neighbours!

The reason that amateurs do not often succeed in growing them is partly that they forget that Orchids are almost like bulbs, in the absolute requisition of a time of entire rest: some months for dryness, for not growing, for fairly lying by, are absolutely necessary for all kinds of plants. Bulbs *insist* on it, Orchids will not dispense with it; and the sooner people begin to give it regularly to all their petted plants the sooner they will find their work in gardening easy.

My beautiful Calanthes have one little weakness, that of wanting green. It is, however, wonderful how easily, in almost all cases, this can be given by placing the plants without leaves, in a natural manner, amongst some evergreens. Wonderfully beautiful, indeed, are the leaves of plants. I know nothing more pleasant than flower-stands filled with green—not quite with ferns alone, because ferns grow so much in shade that there is a sort of unnaturalness in the absence of a tree—but a stand of ferns, a palm-tree too, wide-spreading, with silvery feathery fronds, or the close-growing fir; and some delicate drooping flower, as snowdrops, hiding, or wood anemones sheltering in the really natural little ferny bed; for what we want after all is to see the things growing even in our drawing-rooms just as in some dingle they might grow themselves, grouped round a tree of rather larger growth, sheltering beneath them little woodland flowers.

We are always seeing some especial evergreen, which, by its colour, or by its mode of growth, strikes us at once as doing well with such things as ferns. The list too, day by day, is being more extended, till one almost waits to see the 'foliage plants,' with their brightly-painted or snow-besprinkled leaves actually take the places, in our stands, of flowers. And they have, too, the worthy quality, that 'foliage plants,' in the gardenesque slang, being not flowers, but leaves, are so far less fleeting.

As far as I have had experience amongst drawing-room plants, it seems to me that their health and beauty may be thought inseparable. There is not any grace in a flagging leaf, whilst in luxuriant freshness everything is forgotten of quality, or

of kind, in enjoying to the utmost its brilliant look of health.

Nor, indeed, is it wonderful that, on grounds of intrinsic worth, these 'foliage plants' are popular. Fancy great leaves of some two feet long, and of equally enormous breadth, all the surface seeming like the richest velvet, and even the touch presenting a sort of silky pile. A kind of leafy, branchy pattern is traced in a lighter shade on the rich dark green, and decided lines of ivory or of silver seem to divide the surface with their graceful curves. The under edge, where that heavy sweep of foliage swings in a curve aside, is shown to be of a purple or of a reddish hue — but the dark-green velvet texture is the greatest charm. I once heard some one say —gazing meditatively at one of these great leaves—that she would really not mind much having a dress like that. She was measuring it with her eyes, and evidently calculating the yards of her material. It is indeed a singular compliment to talk of flowers as resembling wax, or of leaves being velvety; still, I do confess, my first impression was that that leaf *was* cut out.

It is a great acquisition this Cyanophyllum magnificum, for it is not so expensive as some other of the new plants, and except for requiring a reasonable degree of heat (being brought originally from the hot, moist woods of Mexico), it is not hard to grow. Such plants as these would really be worth having, and a few well-chosen things, lasting long enough to show their own mode of growth, would be very pleasant for those who like to watch the silent marvels constantly going on. Very marvellous, indeed, is the diversity of green leaves; one remembers one's childish wonder in hearing that no two leaves were ever found alike—and how many leaves we did then pull off — beginning with the laurels which we thought must soon be matched, though I doubt if we took in much—at that time at any rate — of the many varieties there are even in size and colour.

Contrasting vividly with the velvet foliage come the long, narrow, glowing crimson leaves of the red Dracæna, which is most attractive in its many changes, bright veins of red appearing here and there, then a crimson edging creeping up the leaf, and at last, in suitable warmth, whole leaves assuming this most brilliant hue. The plant is, in fact, as good as a thermometer by which to judge of the heat of stoves or plant-cases. My own plant stands in the middle of a flower-case in a drawing-room window; and the case itself being a private invention and a special 'hobby,' the thriving condition indicated by all this glowing colour has been very gratifying.

Then there are the Caladiums—long, narrow drooping leaves—like spear-heads reversed, carrying one off in thought to shores like those of some slow-creeping Ceylon river, where amidst the strange sharp cries of many a gay, wild bird their leaves are drooping in their exceeding beauty.

There is a lovely little Caladium argyrites with the glossy soft green leaves peculiar to the tribe, all flecked and sprinkled over as with flakes of snow. Another much larger leaf is in colour somewhat similar; only in the Caladium Bellcymeyii, a sort of rosy blush tinges the inner surface; and in others, again, the colour gathers into deep rose spots, which mingle with the white. Others, again, present quite a metallic lustre, the Caladium Veitchii, for instance, being a great shield-shaped leaf with a shining surface and a burnished lurid lining of a purplish hue.

Then we have mosses—exquisite forms of ferns; delicate and beautiful both in colour and form: and let us glance for a moment at the wonderful aquatic plants which load the lakes and rivers, far up in but half-known lands, from whence these floating marvels are one by one brought home to us. Think of the queen of water plants! the enormous rafts of the Victoria lily—the marvellous texture—the long anchoring roots of the lattice leaf (*Ouvirunda fenestralis*)—a wonderful plant from the warm Madagascar waters, the leaves of which seem

like lace, as in the 'ivy skeletons,' we all used to seek as children. There is a most interesting description given of this plant in an old volume of a French horticultural magazine of two or three years ago, in which, after mentioning the introduction of the lattice leaf at the gardens at Kew and at Chelsea (where it may still be seen in Veitch's beautiful conservatory), the embarrassments caused by the multitude of crocodiles which shared with the plant the banks of its native stream are graphically described

These plants are grown, like the Victoria regia, in reservoirs of warm water, and their lace-like leaves float like a maid's veil just underneath the surface, slowly, silently, waving to and fro with the heaving and swelling waters.

Perhaps for the dinner-table a few new hints may not be quite uninteresting, while we talk of lovely flowers and water plants. One of the newest things in this way is a *lake* of looking-glass bordered with moss and ferns, this is represented as being at once amusingly fresh and pretty.

A margin of tablecloth is left for people's plates, and then comes the verge of beautiful green moss, the sheet of shining glass looking like smooth water, and the ferns and flowers all reproduced upon it.

The feet of china figures are half buried in the herbage; and tall-growing flowers, exquisite wreaths of orchids (as, for example, the Calanthe vestita), snowy camellias, and rose-coloured climbing lilies, massive spikes of blue and purple hyacinths, and a wealth of fern-sprays, are repeated constantly on the literally 'glassy' water.

The border may be so lovely! My own delight in flowers is such, that every fresh-found instance of their ever-new forms of loveliness is an actual pleasure to me. That verge of moss! think of it full of lilies just rising up above it, and then drooping down in their pure pearl bells, which are yet scarce unclosed. Then the waxen daisies and the starry auriculas, so exquisitely painted and with so fine a brush; the fairy cyclamen with its rich purple spot, and its sometimes rosy tint, and its fragrant scent; the loveliest wild primroses in their still folded buds, and with the one just open, and our own home flower, the little woodland violet, nestling in continually, and revealed but by its perfume, which speaks of the mossy banks and of the sunny lanes.

This glass, I think, is a very good invention, for red velvet cushions put on a dinner-table, to me are a perfect grief, I never can disconnect them from a place upon shop tables or in a lady's jewel-box; and it seems that on dinner-tables such things are out of place. If they formed part of the vase or dish it might not be so unnatural; but I don't like haberdashery on a dinner-table.

White damask is certainly fairly an institution, and sorry indeed would any one be to part with it, were it even for silken sheen. Vases and dishes we *must* have to hold our dinners, or their more unsubstantial accessories; but red velvet pedestals, or pincushions if you please, *they* are not wanted, and certainly seem to me to be most intrusive articles. It is as if ladies wore their diamonds made up on bands of velvet to imitate the jewel-box which displays them so becomingly; and fancy a diamond brooch carefully pinned upon a small velvet cushion in front of a lady's dress! Some of the foliage plants of which I spoke just now are extremely pretty, arranged on glass, as in this new fashion. My own impression is, that figures and *real* baskets, or baskets of such light china as to look like real, are the proper things. A low wide-spreading basket of gilded or silvered work—the wonderfully beautiful Mexican and Peruvian filigree which we sometimes see, looking like silver lace—leaves of plants, again, knotted and twined together till they form woven frames;—these are, I think, the things for this sort of table.

Three or four wreaths of ivy or some enlaced flag-shaped leaves, would be very pretty—for the latter, securing the cut ends of the long, narrow leaves to a cardboard floor,

bringing them up and crossing them, securing them at the top just by a thin black wire, all overcrept with moss. Dræcena leaves, grass, flags, yuccas, all sorts of long, thin leaves, might thus make very charming water-suggestive baskets.

I do not advocate the gilding leaves or painting them; though it is true that sometimes, when the colour goes, it is well to retain the shape of the natural leaf, and they may be beautiful. Perhaps for these baskets no shape is so good as the oval kind leaning slightly outwards, done very openly, perhaps three to eight inches high and nine to twenty-four inches wide, to suit the size of the table.

I cannot resist supposing such a basket, of the larger size, made of the lightest structure, creeping mosses hanging down through the sides, and the Linaria cymbolaria or little ferns or trailers mantling at the foot. This must be arranged to make a good reflection. For the centre plant I should choose a tall white azalea — not one of those which make a mass of blossom such as is almost heavy in its unrelief, but a plant with branches spreading, covered with sweet snow-drifts. Then should come ferns; for though they wave most charmingly and are lovely to see, they are not dense enough to obstruct a view.

Red poinsettias contrast vividly with azaleas; or there is a most brilliant scarlet or coral orchid (Epidendrum vitellinum) which lights up and relieves the white by its own brilliant glow. Otherwise there are heaths; again there are euphorbias, bright-red tulips for an undergrowth — low, almost prostrate plants of the white azaleas thrusting their blossoms over, and clustering on the rim. Then there are knots of snowdrops and of the pretty little vernal 'snowflake,' which is like a snowdrop of taller and larger growth. Ferns keep adding to the spreading shade, reflecting themselves, like the flowers, in the watery surface, and tufts of ferns and even wreathing blossoms sometimes creep down through the open basket sides, breaking any straightnesses, with many pretty knots of the smallest flowers. The basket, of course, is lined with a case of zinc lower than itself and by no means closely fitting. Flowers are trained out and moss is taught to droop down over this inner tin, which ought to be painted of the darkest green, some people might say black.

The ground is all filled, as usual, with the moss that makes of the whole one living, verdant pile

Most carefully must it be remembered, in arranging these or any other flowers, that it is not in the least *to show off* our flowers we want. We simply want to make such an artistic group as may be a model of gracefulness and of harmony.

PRIVATE THEATRICALS:

Arming for the Part.

ILLUSTRATED BY F. R. PICKERSGILL, R.A.

'When you speak, sweet,
I'd have you do it ever: when you sing,
I'd have you buy and sell so; so give alms;
Pray so; and, for the ordering your affairs,
To sing them too. When you do dance, I wish you
A wave o' the sea, that you might ever do
Nothing but that, move still, still so, and own
No other function. Each your doing,
So singular in each particular,
Crowns what you're doing in the present deeds,
That all your acts are queens.'

Winter's Tale.

SHE cons the tender tale again,—
That peerless tale of love and woe;
Until the griefs she seeks to feign
Have taught unbidden tears to flow:
And sighs she should but simulate,
Mere onsigns of a feigned distress,
The Poet can, at will, create,
She cannot, if she would, repress!

She knows the course of mortal love
Did never yet untroubled glide;
That Faith resides in realms above;
That crosses earth-born hopes betide;
That e'en when love and truth unite
In bands that death alone may part,
Stern, sordid Care is near to blight
The cherished visions of the heart!

So deems this life a Tragedy
Of intermittent good and ill;
A chequered sky, a troubled sea,
Ending with some deep sorrow still:
Sad Fiction's soft embodiment,
Until she half believes it sooth;
And can each phase of grief present
With all the eloquence of truth!

In stole arrayed of nun-like state,
Impassive to those busy hands
That fix the dagger, smooth the plait,
With air absorbed Castara stands!
The hum of gathered guests without,
Sweet girlish laughter of the heart,
And childhood's glad, exulting shout,
Recall her to herself and part.

Sweet sisters! fair antitheses!
Bright contrasts of the grave and gay!
May all your future griefs, like these,
As lightly come, as briefly stay!
Should sorrow prompt the tear or sigh,
Oh! be it ever thus ideal;
Fictitious woes but dim your eye,
And nothing but your bliss be real!

THE NEW PICTURE AND THE NEW PROCESS.

APART even from its merits as a work of art, the picture of 'The Meeting of Wellington and Blucher after the Battle of Waterloo,' which Mr. Maclise has just completed in the Royal Gallery of the New Palace at Westminster, has, as it seems to us, claims to a more respectful consideration than is usually given to such works. With the exception of Mr. Watts's fresco in the Hall of Lincoln's Inn, it is the largest mural painting executed in England in the present century; and it greatly exceeds the Lincoln's Inn fresco in the amount of labour bestowed upon it. It is painted in a material new to English artists. It is one of the first attempts made in this country to paint contemporaneous history on a large scale with a strict regard to historical truth; and it is the result of years of almost undivided and laborious application on the part of one of our most esteemed painters.

Before speaking of the picture it may be well to notice the process. The new picture is commonly designated a fresco. It is really a water-glass painting. Between the two methods there is this in common, that the painting is executed on a ground composed of lime and sand (technically *intonaco*); but there the resemblance ceases. In fresco the intonaco must be painted on whilst it is still moist (whence, indeed, the name, *fresco*, Ital. 'fresh'). Consequently only so much of the ground can be spread in the morning as the artist can paint over during the day. For each day's work there must be laid down a fresh portion of intonaco. This, of course, necessitates as many joinings as the work has occupied days; and as the chief value of fresco lies in its adaptation to mural painting, where usually a large space has to be covered, the joinings will probably be very numerous. Mr. Maclise has, for example, on a careful computation (and throwing out of the reckoning Sundays and holidays) been engaged a year and a half *of days* on the actual painting of this picture, which, therefore, if a fresco, must have had at least five hundred and fifty joinings. Now all these joinings would have to be concealed. To this end the fresco painter regulates each day's work as far as practicable by the leading outlines of his composition, and, if he be prudent, takes this necessity into consideration in preparing his design. But plaster shrinks and colours change in drying, and no management can obviate the necessity of patching over the joinings with distemper, or some other ill-matching material; and the obvious result is, injury to the local and general effect, and danger to the permanency of the picture *as a whole*. In water-glass painting this difficulty is got rid of. The entire surface to be painted over is prepared before the picture is begun, and the painter goes on with his work, day after day, just as he would if he were painting in oil on a prepared canvas, having merely to moisten the surface before commencing to paint upon it.

Another condition imposed by the necessity of painting in fresco upon the moist surface is, that the painter must complete his work at once. Fresco allows of no change or modification. If any error be detected, the part must be removed, a new coat of plaster be spread, and the section be repainted. Hence the necessity of a fac-simile cartoon, the size of the picture, being previously prepared. And just as Raffaelle's famous Cartoons were copied by the tapestry workers at Arras, might the finished cartoon for a fresco be copied on the intonaco by any one else almost as well as by the designer. In fact, this is what is commonly done in the case of the much-vaunted frescoes of Germany. Cornelius or Kaulbach makes the cartoon, but the actual painting on the wall is left to scholars or assistants. Water-glass painting, on the other hand, permits the freest use of the artist's individuality. He may admit or reject as much or little as he pleases of his original design; correct what is erroneous; avail himself as he goes on of advice or criticism; paint

directly from his model; or what, if he be a really great painter, is best of all, follow the promptings of his genius as he works there with his mind full of his subject, and all his heart and energy concentrated upon it. Those who saw Mr. Maclise's cartoon, when exhibited in the Royal Gallery about two years ago, will remember what a magnificent drawing it was; and, noticing a broad general resemblance in the completed picture, will not suspect probably that there has been any material deviation. But, in fact, Mr. Maclise has been able to make, without difficulty, alterations of every description, and, thereby, from the great amount of information proffered during its progress, to increase materially its historical accuracy—a matter of primary importance in a work of this order.

Again—not to multiply illustrations which will occur to every one who has handled a pencil or who will reflect for a moment on the subject—from the causticity of fresh lime, fresco allows the use of only a limited palette; the colours change considerably in drying, and they cannot be safely modified by the superposition of tints. The painter in water-glass may, however, use nearly the entire range of colours. When dry his colours appear the same as when first applied, or rather as when obtained in powder from the colourman; and the process admits of any amount of working upon the first painting that the taste or manner of the artist may lead him to desire. The one process, in fact, is hard, exacting, unyielding, and at the same time limited in range; the other free, elastic, admitting of the application of any style or method, and as open to the transient play of genius as to the most studied academic propriety. Water-glass painting, in a word, seems to offer all the advantages of fresco for mural decoration with special capabilities of its own.

And now, it may be asked, what is water-glass painting? Well, apart from technicalities, and without reference to working details, the explanation may be given in a word: water-glass painting (or stereochromy as the Germans call it) is, as Mr. Maclise has well expressed it, precisely water-colour painting in its purest form. Ordinary water-colours require water and gum at least, and there is usually added honey or some other material that facilitates working or serves to add a factitious lustre to the pigments. In water-glass painting no vehicle whatever is employed save distilled water. The painting is performed by thin washes of colour, which, as has been mentioned, may be modified by the superposition of other colours. When the painting is finished it is 'fixed' by being washed over with the water-glass (soluble silicate of potash diluted) in the manner of a varnish; but which, unlike varnish, leaves the surface free from gloss. The German painters at first used the water-glass as a vehicle to mix with the colours, and Mr. Maclise tried that method, but found that the brush quickly became stiffened, and that anything like freedom of handling was impracticable. With the other method he is, after the experience of his great picture, quite satisfied.

The question, however, remains, Is it permanent? The rumours of the rapid deterioration of the frescoes already painted in the New Palace may well suggest such an inquiry. As far as can be ascertained from experience and experiments, water-glass painting promises to be, not only more permanent than fresco, but more permanent than any other method of painting now practised. The silicate of potash is absorbed into the intonaco and enters into chemical combination with it, leaving the paint a mere pellicle on the surface, protected by what is, in fact, an extremely thin coating of glass. Should it be found, in course of time, that the potash effloresces, or that the sulphuric acid in the London atmosphere has acted on the water-glass, it seems to us that there would be no practical difficulty in cleaning the surface of the picture and covering it with a new coating of the silicate; and this, if carefully done, might of course be repeated as often as necessary. In Munich, and elsewhere in Germany, there are water-

glass paintings which have stood from fifteen to twenty years without showing any symptoms of deterioration; whilst frescoes of the same age, and placed under the same circumstances, are materially injured. Kaulbach has given up fresco painting on account of the altered appearance of the frescoes painted by him. His great pictures at Nuremburg and Berlin are executed in water-glass, of which he is a warm advocate. It was, as we have understood, his dissatisfaction with the state of the recently-painted frescoes that led Mr. Maclise to turn his attention to the new process. He had received the commission to paint this large picture in fresco, but he felt that our modern frescoes were not satisfactory, and he made a journey to Italy in order to examine the old frescoes, and ascertain, if he could, whether the failure was not due rather to the modern method than to the process itself. The result was far from encouraging. He turned his thoughts to the water-glass process, and made numerous trials of it. Still dissatisfied, he resolved to go to Germany and compare the two processes in actual operation. What he saw convinced him of the superiority of the new process. He mastered the technical difficulties connected with it, and, after acquiring facility by means of many trial-pictures and experiments, commenced the painting. We have now the completed work, and, if in no other respect, it will at once be acknowledged to be in this thoroughly satisfactory. There are in it a force and depth of colour, a richness and variety of surface, a playfulness of handling, a refinement and finish, such as are never seen in fresco, and, indeed, are incompatible with its conditions.

So much for the process. Let us now look at the picture. The meeting of Wellington and Blucher occurred, it will be remembered, about nine o'clock in the evening, after the general and decisive advance of the allied army, and when the enemy were beaten at all points. The place of meeting was the cabaret named 'La Belle Alliance,' in and around which there had been fierce fighting during the day, and which had at the last formed the centre of the French position. There was little time for more than a hurried greeting between the two commanders, and a few words settling clearly the course to be taken that the defeat might, if possible, be rendered final and irreparable.

The meeting was thus in itself one of serious import, and it was one marked out emphatically for pictorial representation on a worthy scale. It was the symbol and the consummation of the crowning victory of the great struggle on which depended the destinies of Europe. In it were concentrated at once the story of the past and a clear indication of the future. Something like this the painter has evidently felt. Plainly as a picture can does this enable you to read the story of the meeting at a glance: to read it, that is, as to its general purpose, but supplying by many broad indications, as well as refined subtleties of thought and expression, a deeper meaning, and along with all an infinite accumulation of secondary and subservient facts and suggestions which repeated examinations do not exhaust.

The picture occupies a panel on the right wall of the Royal Gallery, forty-six feet long and twelve high, the base line being eight feet from the ground. It contains fifty or sixty figures, those of the principal personages being about life-size, while those in the immediate foreground are much larger. From its size, shape, and position the eye cannot easily embrace the whole of the picture at once; and the artist has evidently taken this condition into account. Obviously a work like this, occupying so important a place in the palace of the legislature, should be monumental in character. The painter has made it so; but, attentive to its size and shape, he seems to have had in his mind a sculpturesque mode of treatment—to have regarded it in fact, if such an expression may be allowed, as a grand pictorial rilievo. And being monumental, he has determined to adhere strictly to historical truth. Of all the heroes of that day

only those are represented who were actually present at the meeting. The portraits are from likenesses painted as near to the time as could be obtained. The actual uniforms and accoutrements—now all obsolete—were procured with inconceivable difficulty from all sorts of sources, private as well as public, and the national stores were of course freely open to him. In short, for every point of detail, as well as for all the leading particulars, the painter might cite as goodly an array of authorities as the most painstaking historian of this chapter of modern history. Indeed as regards the uniforms, weapons, &c., as Mr. Maclise has introduced a representative of nearly every British regiment that took part in the fight, the picture may come to have an independent interest for the military antiquary as an authentic record of the costumes of the British army in 1815.

His rendering of the meeting is after this fashion. The chiefs, with their respective staffs and escorts, occupy the centre of the picture. Behind them is the shattered cabaret. Beyond the secondary group of Prussian generals a Prussian band is marching in playing the national anthem, while the British cavalry—chiefly Lifeguards and Blues—are responding with uplifted swords by a military salute and a hearty cheer. In front, and on either hand, stretching away to the extremities of the picture, are the wounded and the dead, with the various incidents and details that belong to such a battle-field. Along the distant ridge of elevated ground the French are seen in rapid retreat, the artillery and covering cavalry skirmishing with the pursuing cavalry of the allies.

But with all this crowd of figures, variety, and bustle, there is a remarkable unity and repose. You feel at once that there is a break in the current of events—a momentary hush and pause. The eye turns instinctively to the central figure and rests long on it. So noble a presentation of the Duke does not, to our knowledge, elsewhere exist. It is no idealization, but a literal likeness of him in form, feature, and habit as he was on that day. And yet it is something more than a mere likeness. The very mind of the man is shown in his form and face. He sits his horse with the calm self-possession of one used to command. He looks the conqueror, and as one who knows the greatness of the work that has been accomplished. But there is no parade, haughtiness, or lurking self-consciousness; no boastful or jubilant expression. His features are serious, thoughtful, even pensive. It is the face of the man who felt, as he said, that 'next to the pain of losing a great battle is that of winning one;' of him who deemed it no shame on his manhood to weep bitter tears that night as he thought of the many gallant comrades of whom the day had deprived him. Very finely discriminated, also, is the difference of character and expression in Wellington and Blucher. Blucher has ridden hastily up and is grasping eagerly the hand of Wellington. In his eye there is a gleam of savage delight, and on his features an expression that tells of long brooding over his country's wrongs and a pent-up passion for revenge, now triumphing in the assurance that the day of vengeance has at last come; but the utterance of the feeling is for the moment checked by observing the grave earnestness of the British general, whose emotion he scarcely understands and is incapable of appreciating.

Both Wellington and Blucher are plainly habited. Wellington is in the simple frockcoat, short cloak, and low plumeless cocked-hat he wore throughout the battle. In his hand he carries a small field-glass, and he rides his famous charger Copenhagen. The man, the dress, the sword-handle, and the glass; the charger, even the charger's bit and bridle, all are as they were on that day. Lawrence's and other portraits, painted the same or the following year, have supplied the features; Ward's portrait of Copenhagen, faithful to the animal's every point and almost every hair, is the authority for the horse; the dress and equipments were copied from the actual relics religiously preserved by the present duke. And so with Blucher; the rough forage-cap is that worn by the grim old

marshal throughout the campaign—features, equipment, and cap being obtained at first hand from Berlin through the good offices of the late Prince Consort.

The respective staffs and escorts are of course in their full uniforms, and the gorgeousness of their costumes as they are massed together add greatly by the contrast to the simple dignity of the two plainly-dressed chiefs who have ridden a step in advance. The characters, national and personal, of the generals in attendance are discriminated with equal care, and their portraits have been ascertained with equal fidelity. On the English side are Lord Arthur Hill (afterwards Lord Sandys) and Lord Edward Somerset, and behind them Major Percy, who carried home the official despatch and the captured eagles. The group is completed by the escort, 2nd Life Guards, Blues, and Scots Greys, a band of noble fellows, admirably drawn, full of life, vigour, and purpose—British soldiers of the true stamp. They are represented saluting with raised swords, while a Guard and a Grey are holding aloft side by side a riddled British standard and a captured eagle. On the other side with Blucher, are Nostitz, his aide-de-camp, friend, and constant associate; Gneisenau, distinguished by his white plume; and Prince Frederick William (the late king) of Prussia in a dragoon's uniform, with a Brunswick Hussar beside him. Slightly separated from this group is another in which the foremost figure is the hardy old General Bulow, attended by Count Ziethen, and supported by the Prussian escort; whilst in front are Sir J. Vandeleur, the leader of the light brigade, and that *preux chevalier* Sir Hussey Vivian, habited in the showy uniform of the 11th Hussars, and mounted on a magnificent white charger.

For convenience we have spoken of these as separate groups, but they are, in fact, merely sections of the grand central group, a group admirably arranged both as regards perspicuity and pictorial effect. In like manner the remaining portions of the picture are broken into distinct groups, so that a spectator walking from one end to the other finds, wherever he stops, a picture in a measure complete in itself; and yet each group is so united with its neighbour on either hand that none can be said to be independent of the rest, whilst all subserve the impressive singleness of the entire composition. These secondary groups are in their several ways full of power and pathos. On the right of the central group there is a cluster of stalwart fellows—footguards, Highlanders, dragoons—tending with feminine gentleness a wounded veteran, the duke's aide-de-camp, Colonel Canning. Above and a little to the right other commiserating soldiers are bearing off the 'young gallant Howard,' immortalized by Byron. Still farther back is a Belgian officer, his head supported by a friendly arm that he may receive the last services of his religion from a monk who is holding a crucifix to the dying man's lips. A sister of charity is looking on; whilst a buxom vivandière, with ready handiness, proffers a glass of eau-de-vie. Thus last is the only female fairly brought into view in the whole composition. Had the painter been a Frenchman he would have assuredly invested her with a *parfum de sentiment*. But Maclise has sternly put aside the temptation. He has made her a frank, pleasant-looking body; one a soldier would cheerfully spend his sous and pass his joke with when in health, and accept as readily aid and a pleasant word from when sick or wounded; but he has given her no opera-house sensibility. He has even estopped any excess of sympathy for her on the part of the spectator. On the gun carriage behind her she has set a chubby bright-eyed baby, who is playing with the stars and crosses the young mother has been stripping—why should not she as well as another?—from the breast of many a gallant soldier of either army; and lest the purpose should not be sufficiently clear, across there in the distance the painter lets us see a couple of Belgian peasant women busy at the same hideous occupation. At the extreme

left of the composition is a soldier having his wounded leg dressed by army surgeons—a brave fellow who bears his pain without a murmur, though, as you see, it is very hard to bear, and he has not strength to push off from his shoulders the weight of the artillery officer who has fallen over the gun he has defended to the death. About this gun lie many a gallant fellow, the most conspicuous being a handsome French cuirassier, and a stalwart piper of the 95th, who has died of a musket wound in the breast after the tourniquet had been applied with a view to amputating his arm. Close by are a fusilier and Connaught ranger, and more towards the centre a group of Guards, all wounded, but cheering vociferously, for they have the duke full in view. In the immediate foreground are stretched sleeping their last sleep, a cuirassier, a trumpeter of the 2nd Life Guards, an officer of the Imperial Guard, an Enniskillener — and many another of 'the unreturning brave'—mingled heedlessly together,

> 'Rider and horse—friend, foe—in one red burial blent.'

Yet, with all the piled-up horrors of that fearful carnage, there has been on the part of the artist the rarest reticence. The hideousness of war is sufficiently indicated as well as its magnificently stern array. The more repulsive features are concealed. The dead have died the death of heroes. Suffering bravely endured is shown, not the hideous disfigurement of manly forms. Wounds are not mawkishly kept out of sight, but neither are they paraded. And as the Duke's suggestion to Sir William Allan when he was about to paint a battle was, 'Don't put in too much smoke,' so from a military surgeon well acquainted with battle-fields Machse has learnt to be sparing of blood. The gallant fellow who has succumbed to a bullet will scarce show a spot of blood on his manly chest.

In looking beyond the human figures of this wonderful composition, we see the same thoughtful working out of the idea of the painter. The cabaret is the background to the principal group. It has been taken and retaken during the day; the walls are shattered, the roof beaten in, but there are the doves returned to their ark at the close of the day—though some of their number lie there victims to the fire. And notice how unassumingly the site of the meeting is indicated by the partly obliterated inscription on the cabaret, 'La Belle Alliance;' and the season, by that sprig of wild roses at your feet, which will probably escape notice unless you look for it; and the hour, by that soft crescent moon and the pale stars that reveal themselves one after another as you gaze on the cool evening sky. And, by the way, this indication of the time is what will probably suggest some criticism on the part of those who adopt what seems to be the painter's own theory of representing the scene with strict historical fidelity. It will be said—The hour of meeting was nine o'clock, and we know that Napoleon himself attributed the failure of some of his latest movements to the increasing darkness; yet there is a broad glow of light on Wellington and his companions, and every object in the field is distinctly visible. This is undoubtedly so, and it must be justified or explained—if capable of justification or explanation—either by the state of the atmosphere or as a painter's licence. As far as the light is concerned, the 18th of June is equivalent to the longest day. There is no night, the sun has gone down behind, but a little to the right of the spectator, and the western sky we feel is filled with a brilliant effulgence. Stand against the opposite wall, so as to take in the whole picture, and you will see that the glowing light on the central figures is reflected from the western sky, whilst a diffused light illumines the distant fields. Probably the light is stronger than it was in reality, but the painter had but a choice of difficulties, and he chose that which cost him by far the most labour, but, as we believe, improved the picture and added to the pleasure of the spectator.

In technical power and manipulative dexterity, this picture undoubtedly surpasses any of Mr.

Maclise's previous works. As a draftsman he has always taken a foremost place; and certainly his reputation will not be imperilled by his latest production. Looked at largely we might dwell on the skilful arrangement of the lines of the whole composition, and the adaptation to that general arrangement of each group and figure. In dealing with individuals, very noteworthy is the way in which is given the easy, upright carriage of the well-trained horsemen; the wonderful variety of quiet expression, as well as the intensity of that of pain and suffering; the mastery of form as shown in the attitudes of the dead and dying—notice especially such foreshortened and contorted figures as that, on the extreme left, of the artillery officer who has fallen dead across his gun, and the soldier who has expired in a death-struggle under his horse; and the clearly-marked distinction between the rigidity of those long dead, and the relaxed muscular system of those whose breath has scarcely departed. Nor less observable is the precision shown in rendering the form and character of the horse, from the fiery and impatient chargers of the generals, champing the bit, all eagerness for the fray, to the magnificently painted group where a cuirassier has been knocked over with his horse upon another horse and rider, dead or dying, and the noble animal is making frantic efforts to tear himself free.

A word must be given to the handling—the actual painting of the picture. Seen at a due distance the whole looks broad and effective in treatment—suggesting, indeed, least of all any thought of the painter's handiwork. Yet, in truth, every part is finished with a degree of patient labour which, in a work of such a size, and in which there is not a hand's-breadth unoccupied, it is almost fatiguing to contemplate. The heads of the more prominent personages are moulded with as much care, and much in the same manner, as in an elaborate chalk drawing, *hatching* being freely employed, and, what seldom happens in oil painting under any such treatment, without any loss of fleshy character. The costumes are rendered with minute attention to every strap and button; drums, weapons, musical instruments, all sorts of military paraphernalia—and, indeed, the accessories of every kind—are finished with what seems superfluous elaboration, yet with perfect ease;—some portions, in truth, appearing to have been so done out of very wantonness, a mere playing with the pencil, *tours de force* elaborated with as much nicety as though parts of a cabinet painting of the Gerard Dow class. But with all, as we said, step back but a few feet from the picture and all appearance of labour is lost—you are conscious only of broad results, with perhaps the feeling of greater security as to verisimilitude.

In colour the work is a triumph as compared with the best of the modern frescoes. The general tone is low, but free from all tendency to blackness. A warm subdued light, the glowing depth of midsummer twilight, pervades the whole. The various uniforms afford an ample range of resplendent hues, while the predominance of any one has been skilfully provided against, and all have been brought into a most agreeable accordance. Surface and texture are throughout rendered with exquisite truth, facility, and variety.

We might turn now to petty faults or shortcomings, and suggest points where we fancy the painter has seen less clearly than we have done; but we have no intention to do so. A work like this is too rare an achievement for us to care about spending upon it any small and carping criticism. It is beyond comparison the most successful mural painting yet executed in this country; and it is one in its class not likely to be speedily excelled. We heartily congratulate Mr. Maclise on the completion of such a picture, and the nation on its possession. The corresponding panel, on the opposite side of the gallery, Mr. Maclise has undertaken to fill with a companion picture, 'The Death of Nelson:' may it be as successful!

J. T.



BEAUTY'S TOILETTE:

The Finishing Touch.

'Now awful beauty puts on all its arms,
The fair each moment rises in her charms,
Repairs her smiles, awakens every grace,
And calls forth all the wonders of her face.'

Rape of the Lock.

I.

SHE stands before her mirror, and a flush
Of conscious triumph lightens o'er her face;
Her dark eye gathers splendour from the blush
That floods her cheek with more resistless grace:
A Queen of Beauty, she goes forth to prove
Her sovereign empire o'er the realms of Love!

II.

She hath no dream of universal sway;
She seeks no conquests now for conquest's sake;
For if she bids a vassal crowd obey,
'Tis but assurance doubly sure to make
That he, whose love her kingdom were alone,
May prove the foremost pillar of her throne.

III.

The latest touch is given; the cherished flower
Flashes its creamy whiteness in her hair;
The *négligé*, an amulet of power,
A *gage d'amour*, upon her bosom fair
Hangs like the glove upon some knightly crest,
To show whose ensign she approveth best!

IV.

All that consummate taste and art can do,
To 'add fresh perfume to the violet,'
To give the opening rose a lovelier hue,
And on the diamond brighter rays beget,
Is done: the rush of parting wings we hear,
That says Belinda's sylphs have finished here!

ODD LETTERS TO A LONDON EDITOR.

A GRAVE, middle-aged, grey-haired man, sitting at a pedestal-table in a dingy and disorderly-looking room into which only the very faintest gleams of the afternoon light have entered. Scattered heaps of letters are before him; on his left hand is a correspondence clip; at his feet is a basket intended for the reception of waste paper. There is a pair of scissors within easy reach, and the grey-haired, middle-aged man calmly takes them up and begins to open his letters with the dexterity and the nonchalance of a fishmonger's assistant who is opening oysters. For long practice has made him steady of hand and sure of eye: he knows exactly where to cut and how to cut every envelope that comes under the dulled blade, so as to save his own time and spare the letters before him from all wanton and unnecessary injury. He has already opened some ninety or a hundred, and the process has been performed with so much celerity and neatness that we begin to think he might almost take out a patent for himself, as a machine capable of executing any amount of such mechanical work in the shortest possible time.

But now comes a mental process: the ninety or a hundred letters have to be read. And this difficult task is performed quite as rapidly, quite as noiselessly, quite as neatly as the other. As John Caspar Lavater could read the human countenance at a glance, so this grey-haired gentleman appears capable of perusing whole pages of note-paper, letter-paper, and foolscap-paper with a few rolls of the eye and twitchings of the mouth. Certainly not more than five minutes have elapsed, and already he has read through eight or ten long and wearisome-looking letters, most of which seem to have been written by the feet of wandering gad-flies recently escaped from a blacking-bottle. How does he manage? Is he another Joseph Balsamo? a nineteenth century Nostrodamus? a modern Jerome Cardan? a second William Lilly? or the great Zadkiel himself, devoid of robes, pointed hat, and magic wand?

There is something almost irritating in the quick and yet deliberate manner in which he performs his work. All the letters he is reading are addressed to him, but in not one does he seem to take the slightest interest. Yet one writer tells him he is a dunce, a blockhead; that he is utterly without principle, and that he merits the scorn and loathing of every right-thinking man. It has not the least effect upon him. Another writer eulogises him with extravagant adulation as the saviour of his country, a benefactor of the entire human race; not the faintest flush of modesty passes over his cheek. Praise and blame, threats and wheedlings, commands and entreaties, all are alike to him. He reads on with a calm impassibility which looks like indifference, but which is in reality critical intelligence disciplined into the closest concentration. In truth, he has made good use of his time. he has been in the room not much more than an hour, and already his work is finished.

Let us introduce ourselves, therefore, to this grave and industrious gentleman, whose labours we have hitherto foreborne to disturb. He is no longer grave now though, for as he rises from his chair, and comes up to the corner in which we have placed ourselves out of the way, there are so many smiles upon his face—smiles breaking up ever and anon into smirks—that if he were suddenly and without warning to dig us violently in the ribs, or balance the paper-cutter on his nose, or give us some lyrical information about 'The Cure,' we could scarcely be more surprised than we are at the change which has taken place in the expression of his countenance. And yet, after all, why should we be surprised? Our friend is but mortal; he is editor, in fact, of a London daily paper, and a portion of his day's labour being completed, it is but natural that he should feel relieved in mind and reflect that feeling in his outward

aspect. He has been silent and absorbed hitherto, but now is ready to crack a joke if we like, or to gossip upon the news of the day, or to talk politics with us a while if such is our mood.

No, we don't want to crack any jokes, or to listen to any mere gossip, or to enter into any political discussion: we simply want our friend to tell us something about the occupation in which he has been engaged. Is that all? Well, then, he has been opening the day's letters 'to the editor' he informs us, and those he found suitable for publication he placed under the clip; the rest were thrown into the waste-paper basket. We look upon the table as he speaks, only eight or nine letters have been promoted to the place of honour; the rest are in the basket, ignominiously thrust there before being subjected to yet more contemptuous treatment.

Let us begin by examining the correspondence secured within the close embrace of the clip. 'The Charge of Forgery against a Solicitor;' 'Lisbon Telegraph;' 'Distress in Bethnal Green;' 'Woolwich Academy;' 'Hartley Colliery Accident;' 'Overcharges on Railways;' 'Assassination in the Papal States' such are the subjects treated by the writers. Not bad subjects, it may be, and, as topics of the day, possessed of a certain amount of interest; but if we wait until to-morrow we shall read all about them, no doubt, in the paper, so let us pass away from the clip and see what the waste-paper basket contains.

We wondered a short time since at the rapidity with which our friend executed his work; we overflowed with bilious envy when we noted the almost preternatural dexterity with which he distinguished the publishable from the unpublishable, the epistolary grain from the epistolary husks. Our wonder sensibly diminishes, and our envy gives place to respectable self-satisfaction when we discover of what materials the great mass of the rejected letters are composed.

Mr. Editor turns the basketful of letters upon the table, and we both sit down to examine them. 'Look here,' says our friend; 'you know, and it might have been supposed all the world would know, that a London daily paper does not give a long string of "Answers to Correspondents," like the "Family Herald" or the "Weekly Dispatch." What we may come to ultimately, in these days of penny journals, I don't know, but at all events we remain at present much as we used to be, and yet we continually receive such letters as this,' and he hands us the following epistle:—

'Sir,—Will you please state through the medium of your valuable paper whether the maiden name or the name of the late husband of a widow lady is proper to use for wedding cards, and oblige

Yours, &c.'

'While he was about it, I wonder this gentleman did not ask me if it would be proper to marry in top boots, or quite *en règle* to take his coat as well as his hat off upon entering the church,' says our friend, sarcastically, and then passes to us another letter. This, too, is from a correspondent whose mind is evidently in an unsettled state, and who wants a little information of a thoroughly practical and utilitarian character. Thus it runs:—

'I shall be truly obliged to you as a constant reader of your invaluable paper if you can inform me as soon as possible what will take grease out of the cover of a red cloth bound book without removing the colour.'

'This kind of letter is always from a "Constant Reader,"' says Mr Editor, who still remains good-humouredly satirical, 'and there is no question, however absurd or however trivial, that the Constant Reader will not ask. He is my nightmare, my *bête noire*, my evil genius. I don't suppose he looks at the paper once a month, and yet he calls himself a Constant Reader, and on the strength of that self-bestowed literary title, seems to think he has unnumbered claims upon my time, my memory, and my books of reference, which I am bound in honour to satisfy. If he were to ask me to take tea with him some day at Shepherd's Bush, or to stand as godfather to his tenth child, or to go down to Herefordshire and give my opinion upon the little bit of land

he had bought there, or to lend him five shillings, or to advance him sufficient capital to start in the oil and colour line, or to forward him a prescription for the measles, or to tell him whether I know anything about his brother who went to India and who has not been heard of since 1805, or if I think pork sausages indigestible when eaten for supper, or to give him my impartial opinion as to the probability of his wife having twins, I should not be in the least surprised:—

'Look,' he adds, 'here is one of these gentlemen with a very simple request, and whose orthography is primitive enough to find favour with Lord Malmesbury himself:—

'I shall Feel Greatly Obliged to you if you can inform me where i can get a receipt for making Lemon Rasbury and Other Syrups and Sweet Warters and if there is a receipt for making Syder without Apples anoer in your next Correspondent will Greatly Oblidge a

CONSTANT READER.'

'There,' exclaims Mr. Editor, triumphantly, 'did I not tell you so? This very modest correspondent, not content with asking me how to concoct lemon syrups and other sweet *warters*, actually wishes me to tell him how to make cyder without apples! It's a wonder he did not ask me if it is possible altogether to dispense with malt and hops in brewing pale ale, and whether a good crop of oats cannot be raised without previously sowing seed. But here is a third Constant Reader, who, like many other constant readers, is tormented with a gnawing desire to see me, and who, having been denied that gratification, evidently believes he has a cause of complaint against me which is almost actionable. Listen to his letter:

'To the editor. I have Been A Constant Reader of your paper for the Last 3 years and i Brought Some rascality To you Last night which I wished to Be published But I dont see it in to days paper I Came with it myself and Brought the Card for you to see it But your porter said I Could not see without an apointment But as it Contains the whole Truth as I have Been Served I hope you will publish it or I will get it in some other paper.

'P.S. I Leaved it with your porter myself and he said he would give it to you.'

Mr. Editor, now fairly roused into loquacity, begins to describe to us the peculiarities of other letters continually addressed to him. A large number of people will insist, he says, in writing to him upon the mere business arrangements of the paper, with which, of course, he has no concern. One wants to know the cost of advertising, another the rate of subscription, and a third the price of the journal 'if a dozen copies are taken at once.' Then he shows us a curiously crumpled and ink-spotted epistle, dog's-eared and greasy, he has received that day from a correspondent who dates from a great suburban thoroughfare she calls the 'harer rode,' and who is thus explicit in the expression of her requirements.—

'Sir i shood Be glad if you wood let me now wat the expence is to hadvetize for washing and ironing as you dont publish the price.'

'And now,' says our friend, 'I have a curiosity to show you. It is a letter from Jeames. Here it is, as you see, written on pink note-paper, evidently of Paris origin, and highly scented with Ess bouquet. It is the first the worthy fellow has favoured me with for a long time, and certainly if I merely consulted my own judgment it should be promoted to the clip, and enjoy the honours of publication. Jeames, as you will see, has a complaint against our friend the "Times;" and note the style in which he gives expression to it. Could Mr. Thackeray write half as well? For see how cruelly critical, how mischievously witty, and how indignantly eloquent is Jeames as he lashes the "Times" for its mean-spirited, nay dastardly injustice towards flunkeydom and yellow plush. If I published this letter, Printing-house Square would never survive the blow:'—

'Sir a short time since when the times ware about to reduce its paper from 5 pence to 4 pence it ware Published every Morning in front of its leader until it became a by word and onley stopt after being rapt on the knuckles by the venerable Punch—now Sir let aney one look over the times and see if they can find where it informs servants that their advertisements will rise on and after so and so no sir not untill the get to the office do the find out this sneaking imo-

vation of their pockets; it occurs to me in comparing the former to the latter that its very like an omnibus with the word 3 pence for such a distance and imeadeiately under with the words allmost obliterated such a distance 6 pence this being the second time advertisements have risen under 2 years i wood call upon all servants to resist this increasing Monopoly and if the times does not pay let them rise the price of the paper so that the may bear the burden that is most able by inserting this you will oblige one who as allready advertised in your paper.'

'Some of my correspondents,' continues Mr. Editor, 'send me little scraps of news, out of pure good feeling, I believe, and without the slightest desire for remuneration; news of the most trivial character, encumbered with the weight of utterly superfluous details. For instance, the other day I received four closely-written pages of letter-paper—from a hodman or paviour, as I should judge by the style—the entire purport of which was that a young man living at Hackney Wick had promised to marry a young girl living at Ball's Pond, and that just before the marriage was to take place, the intended husband basely and surreptitiously quitted the greengrocer's shop in which he had been an assistant, and had not since been heard of. To-day I have received a piece of intelligence almost equally interesting. Here it is, look at it, and judge for yourself.'—

'Sir you would greatly Oblige me By Inserting the Accompanying letter as soon as possible in your daily paper.

'A Mysterious Parcel.

'Sir. On Tuesday (November 26th) a Parcel was sent to the residence of [name and address given in original] and left in charge of his Landlady (he being a single man) for him. On his opening it It was found to contain What? A Baby.

'It may be a little comfort to the Anxious Mother to know that it is progressing very favourably under its new Nurse.'

'But my most persevering and original correspondents are the mad people,' says our friend, when he has disposed of this mysterious parcel. 'They write to me incessantly upon every variety of subject and in every variety of style. Sometimes they are tolerably coherent and intelligible, and I obtain thus a faint glimmering of their meaning; but in the vast majority of cases they are as hopelessly crackbrained as Lodowick Muggleton, who doomed every one to perdition that would not believe the sun was only four miles from the earth. What can I say, for instance, to a gentleman who very modestly informs me that he believes himself to be "the spirit of Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the Ending," and who expresses himself to the following effect?' Here our friend takes from the heap a letter he has for some time had his eye upon, and reads:—

'Sir. Having read an article in your Paper of Yesterday I take the Liberty of Making a few remarks on the same. In the first Place the world has already been tried in righteousness and where is there one that has not broke the ten Commandments. Not one and those Open Air Preachers well know the Same. They Likewise know by what means your Merchants and Manufacturers and Tradesmen accumulate there wealth. I will tell Thee how it is done it is done by Secret Contract they have bartered their Souls happiness hereafter for present worldly gain and they know not what an hour may bring forth have they been Deceived or is it Gold they alone worship it is not for me to say Such is the cause of the small attendance at Our Churches and not to be surprised at Pity they do not know better This much I know they must not think lightly of the scriptures for its no-vel reading not novel reading understand that.'

'Most of these mad gentlemen,' continues Mr. Editor, 'have an extreme desire to make my personal acquaintance, to see me, if only for the briefest period. Ah! if I would give them five minutes! One would square the circle; another would prove by undeniable evidence that the earth is a plane; a third would give me some exclusive and important information respecting the Seventh Vial. If I would but spare them only five minutes, what mysteries they would unravel; what secrets they would unfold; what disclosures they would make!

'Of course I never do give them the five minutes. Perhaps I already unravel quite as many mysteries as I care for; perhaps the police courts supply me with a sufficient number of startling disclosures; perhaps I

am growing stout and stupid. However it may be, I turn a deaf ear to the appeals of my mad correspondents; and when I ought to be closeted with them, all anxiety to learn some great truth by which humanity is to be saved and truffled turkey brought home to every man's door, I am quietly engaged with my chop and glass of pale ale, utterly indifferent to the advantages I am losing.

'You must not suppose, however, that these imaginative correspondents fail to announce many great truths to me, notwithstanding the neglect with which I treat them. A few months ago I continually received, for a full fortnight, the following startling information, which I was evidently at liberty to publish if I pleased:—

'THE QUEEN WILL DIE
on the Fifth of June.
Keep this.'

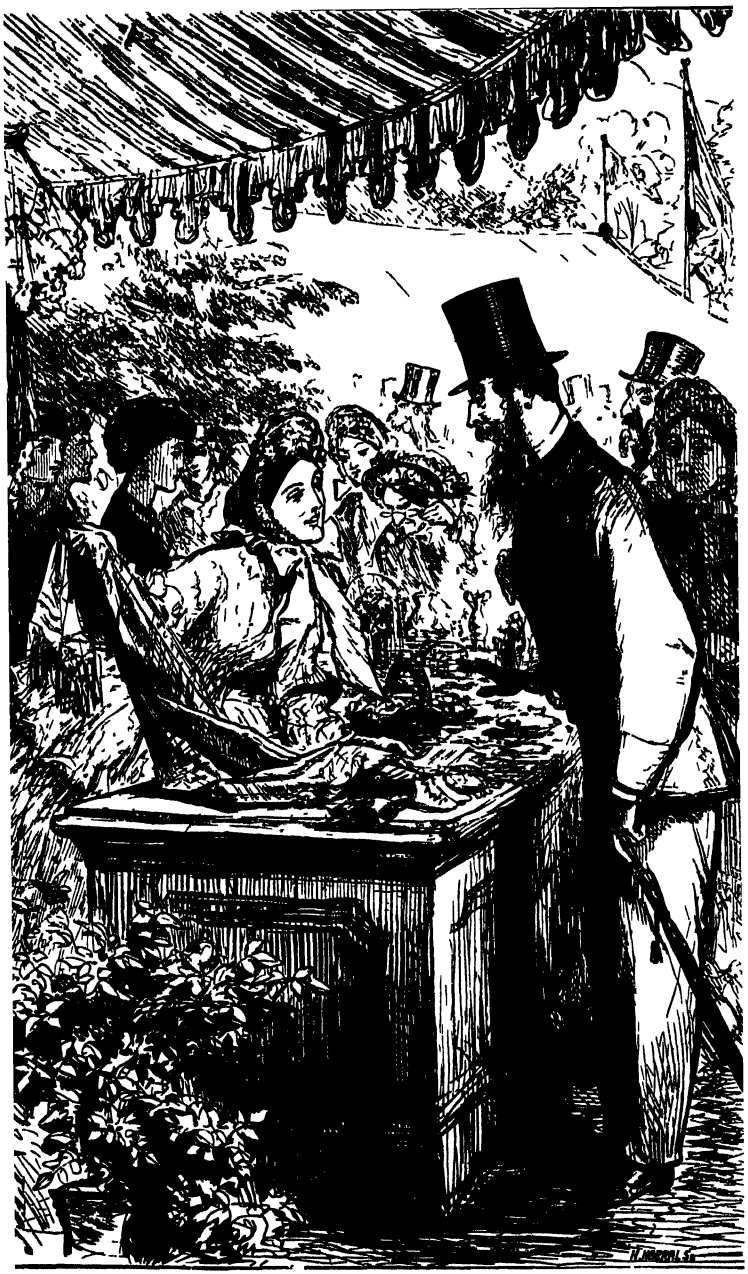
'I did not keep it, however: it shared the usual fate, and was basketed with the rest. Then, too, I have a most industrious correspondent who sends me under envelope two or three cards every morning full of devices infinitely stranger than that upon the famous banner in Longfellow's poem. Of course there must be some deep and stupendous meaning in the remarks upon these cards; but I give you my word of honour I have never yet been able to discover it. Here are a couple; see what you can make of them.'

Of course we can make nothing of a couple of pages of maundering rubbish, in which the words have as little connection as those read down the page of a dictionary.

'There!' said our friend, after he has shown us the said very rational productions. 'What do you think of them? Would not "Ride a Cock Horse," or "Hey Diddle Diddle" be agreeable and refreshing, if not dignified and elevating after such unintelligible hurry-skurry? Well! you have seen now a few specimens of the letters I throw into the basket every day. It is true, all are not so bad as those I have read to you. The great mass, if tolerably pure in style, and free from the grosser grammatical errors, are nevertheless commonplace and uninteresting, full of slipshod ideas and second-hand opinions. Emphatically, there is nothing in them. We have a stirring leader, for instance, to-day upon the American question. On the morrow "Brutus Secundus," or "Hampden the Younger," sends us a long rigmarole merely echoing our statements and reflecting our views. He is rejoiced to see that we have such a just appreciation of the real merits of the question at issue. He "hails with delight" our strictures upon the conduct of the North, while "cordially agreeing" with us in our censure of the South. He echoes with all his heart our wish to see terminated what we have so "appropriately termed" a fratricidal contest; and finally, he is sure we express the feelings of the entire nation in declaring that the honour of the British flag must be maintained at all hazards. By inserting his letter we shall of course greatly oblige him; and he remains ours, most obediently, &c. What can we do with such a letter? When we are really in want of matter—which rarely happens—we sometimes print it, to fill up, but more frequently we throw it into the basket. Depend upon it, every correspondent who sends us anything worth having is sure to meet with attention. But the number of such correspondents is comparatively small.

'And now I hope you see how it is the basket is so full every day. The great mass of my correspondents doubtless think they are scandalously treated, and picture me as a surly, snarling, puffy, overgrown, querulous, carping, dogmatical, hypercritical cynic, utterly devoid of all sound judgment and human feeling. If they could fill my post for a week or two perhaps they would form a more charitable opinion of me.'

We shake our friend by the hand and assure him that at all events *our* good opinion is secured to him. And as we leave his dull, half-lighted room, and grope our way down the well-trodden staircase that leads to the street, we have a more friendly feeling towards editors generally than we have entertained before.



Drawn by George Thomas. p. 271.

THE FANCY FAIR.

THE FANCY FAIR.

'Indeed, sir, there are cozeners abroad, and it therefore behoves men to be wary.'
SHAKSPERE.

I.

PERHAPS I may as well concede,
Now that the thing is over,
A Fancy Fair may have its care,
And not its seat in clover.
I had to worry all my friends,
And beg from my relations,
Who only sent me odds and ends,
And hoped for invitations.

II.

I'd little misses' brodequins,
And little masters' blouses,
And little *boîtes* for little pins,
And darling babies' 'shoeses;'
And sachets with divine perfume,
And *sacs* of work and leather,
That make such litter in a room
When mingled altogether.

III.

At length the day of days came round,
And who could then feel spiteful!
A task that may begin a bore,
May end in being delightful:
The busy hum like honey-bees;
The jesting and the laughter;
The whispering among the trees,
The soft breeze whispering after.

IV.

The Coldstream band struck up an air
Electrified all dancers;
Sweet 'Rosalie the Prairie Flower,'
And 'Love among the Lancers;'
I took my place behind my stall,
I looked as blithe and sunny
As though I never thought at all
Of such base things as money.

V.

A little *ruse* I improvised
(I wish such tales were true),
What heaps of trash I 'sacrificed,'
As made by 'YOU KNOW WHO!'
The Cymons quite besieged my stall,
And helped my poor invention;
I smiled, and hinted to them all,
'Friends' names I might not mention!'

VI.

At length lounged up young Millionaire,
With voice as sweet as honey—
'As poor as any Prodigal,'
'Cleaned out,' and 'Got no money;'

With all the stuff such people prate,
And think so vastly clever;
I made him buy a hideous scarf,
And hate him worse than ever!

VII.

Poor Cousin Charlie from behind
(That youth is growing bolder!)
Said, with his short sardonic laugh,
In whispers o'er my shoulder—
(I give his own vernacular,
You know I never heed him)—
'I see you've nailed yon fatted calf,
So do your best to bleed him!'

VIII.

Mamma put on her spectacles—
Perhaps she saw but blindly;
When Isaac Walton baited hooks
You know he did it 'kindly;'
I tried to do the self-same thing,
I put on airs and graces,
Because the art of selling well
Is making civil faces!

IX.

And now I've done my very best,
Been grateful to each comer,
I think I've fairly earned my rest,
Like any other mummer;
My *porte-monnaie* is gorged with gold;
I've neither loves nor quarrels;
I'll do as people did of old,
Repose upon my laurels!

Z.

THE GRUMBLER'S CORNER.

To the Editor of 'London Society.'

Sir,

ATTRACTED by the title of your Magazine, we purchased the first number, in hopes of finding a corner reserved for the grumbles of those who feel themselves aggrieved by various usages of society, which are extremely onerous, and to obtain the abolition of which would be to confer a real blessing on that class of persons who are supposed to be exempt from every social evil—we of course allude to the class of bachelors.

If you will grant a small space to our complaint, we propose to call your attention to two especial grievances, and to beg your influence and help in getting rid of them. The first of these is one from which married men are generally free; and the prospect of immunity from it which matrimony offers is quite enough to account for any number of imprudent unions. In fact, we have often observed that married men, in calculating the advantages of their position, reckon amongst the very first the fact that they now delegate to their wives the duty which was so troublesome to them once. Without further preface, we will add that the grievance to which we here allude is that of card-leaving. We don't complain of bonâ fide calls, made in hopes of

finding at home friends whom we wish to see and converse with, but we are protesting against the cruel farce of travelling miles for the sole purpose of leaving cards at the houses of such of our acquaintance as we wish merely to remind of our existence when it could be done in a much simpler way.

Married men, as we said before, leave these things to their wives, who enjoy the arrangement exceedingly But there is no plan by which the unhappy bachelor can perform this duty, except at great personal expense and toil. The majority of men one meets with in ordinary London society are more or less engaged up to four o'clock; consequently, if a man's visiting acquaintances are scattered over London, he is obliged to make repeated expeditions in Hansom cabs first of all to let them know that he is yet alive and in London, and that he will be happy to form one of the crowd about to throng their drawing-rooms, and then, when that pleasure is over, to acknowledge the honour conferred on him. In fact, the necessity of leaving cards is an incubus which weighs heavily on the soul of every unfortunate bachelor whom inclination or a sense of duty urges into society The remedy is simple and obvious What objection could there be to transmitting cards by post? It would surely answer every purpose as well as knocking at a door, and thrusting your card into the hands of a powdered footman, and bolting. If society would consent to receive cards by post we are sure that bachelors would not prove ungrateful for the boon The second grievance to which we allude is, that a bachelor is never allowed to know when he is old enough to give up dancing, and to leave such an amusement to more youthful competitors. After thirty very few men care about dancing in the least: they would personally avoid it if they could. But that is no easy matter. If they have dined at the house of Mrs. A——, or Mrs. B——, they are well aware that, if they wish to be asked to dinner again they must not fail to present themselves at the ball which those ladies will probably give during the season. They present themselves to their hostess, and in compliance with her request may have joined a few dances, in hopes of purchasing for the rest of the evening a little peace. But, no; it cannot be allowed by any means. By virtue of their unattached condition a duty devolves upon them, which they must discharge. There sit rows of young ladies, lovely in wreaths and muslin, who are longing to dance, and it seems churlish to refuse to make them happy when pressed to do so The consequence is, that men spend the evening in dodging their hostess, who is bent on catching them, or yield to their fate with the best grace they can assume

Nor is Darwin's theory of natural selection allowed in drawing-rooms. If the victim is a very tall man he is generally consigned to some *petite* whose waist he can just manage to reach by bending double. If he is a very short man he will probably find himself standing on the tips of his toes, attempting to encircle the waist of some fair Juno who towers above him by a head and shoulders. And as the lookers-on watch his frantic efforts to control the rush of his partner through the mazy waltz, they have an opportunity of observing the sublime but ridiculous sight of a brave man struggling with his destiny—for it will be his destiny to be obliged to dance until he becomes incapacitated by old age, or is absolutely driven into matrimony. Feebly, sir, as we have portrayed these grievances, we hope you will kindly afford space for the insertion of the lament of

A Brace of Bachelors.

SOCIETY IN CELTIC LONDON.

THE head-quarters of the Peninsular and Occidental Company had, for many ages anterior to the fifth century before Christ, been fixed on the easternmost shore of the Mediterranean; and the western limits of the trading voyages of its liners had been the ports of Southern Spain, and the Cassiterides or Tin Islands of Britain. Tyre had at this time lost the prestige of virgin splendour and impregnability; and had suffered an instalment of those woes which had been denounced against her in scathful, prophetic numbers. Thanks, however, to the elasticity of her reproductive powers, she was again the great mart of nations, the city of merchant princes. Her borders were again strong in the midst of the sea; and her visage, once perfect, restored to its pristine beauty in all but this—that when she smiled, the scar left by Babylon deepened into furrow, and the actual shadow of the Persian sceptre fell dark and strong upon her when she looked defiant. She was yet a merchant of the people to many isles; yet her vessels bore over the waters the revenues of distant kings; yet she clothed her people in purple and fine linen; and yet 'she heaped up silver as the dust, and fine gold as the mire of the streets.'

Say it is a day of the year B.C. 450, and both day and year are in their spring-time. An off-shore breeze is liberating the argosies that have been wind-bound in the harbour. As they row seaward, sheet after sheet is loosened, flapping to the gale. Alongside, prow by prow, oar by oar, stroke by stroke, in stately march, move out the 'Phœnix' and the 'Hiram,' presently, with mutual cheers, to part, the one for Egypt, and the other, *viâ* Cyprus and Rhodes, for Smyrna. Third, and unfellowed, follows the 'Ashtaroth,' the crack ship of the Tyrian P. and O. flotilla. Her crew are picked men of Sidon, Aco, and Tyre; and her cargo, whatever of most precious Asia has to give to Europe. Her timbers are of Senir fir-wood; her masts are cedars from the Libanus; her oars are of oak of Bashan; her benches and hatches of ivory of the Isles of Chittim, her sails of fine linen, with embroidered work of Egypt; and her awnings of scarlet and purple. An image of the goddess after whom she is named adorns her prow—that same *Dea Syra* who afterwards came to draw so widely on the popular piety of the Roman world, when her priests, drunken vagabond hypocrites, of the morals and social standing of modern gipsies, wandered about with a miserable ass on whose back was borne aloft, in awful state, a dingy, tawdry doll-divinity, in whose name faithful rustics were invited, to the accompaniment of Phrygian airs on castanets and cymbals, to contribute their alms of small money and broken victuals. The good ship leaves port to the festive sound of song and harp; and an inquisitive stranger from Halicarnassus sees her go.* First, with her miscellaneous

* Sees, but does not see. The truth is, that Herodotus—for it is he whom we identify in the Halicarnassian stranger—has come to Tyre to inspect a famous temple of Hercules, which is still fresh and awful from the ages of remotest legendary antiquity. His speculations, as he saunters by the harbour, are so fixed upon its pillars of fine gold and emerald which make night divinely lustrous, that he omits to indulge his wonted universal curiosity. The fact that he has left no information about the Cassiterides, except that they were situated somewhere or anywhere in the uttermost parts of the western world, is an incidental voucher for the success with which the Phœnician merchants, jealous of a profitable monopoly, enforced upon their navigators a sacred obligation to silence. If the Father of History had *tipped* the bold black-eyed sailor whom he dreamily jostled by the dock-side, that ancient mariner, anxious to secure his bribe at the same time that he kept his oath, might, *more nautico*, have spun him such an inventive yarn as would glowingly have taken the place of the historian's bald notices of the Tin Islands and the Lands of the Celt. Seriously, it is possible that it was because the time and attention of Herodotus, during his stay at Tyre, were so taken up with the elabora-

cargo, she makes for Piræus, the maritime emporium of Athens, to which, amongst other commodities of use and luxury, she carries a consignment of Hebrew slaves, kidnapped for Grecian markets. From the Piræus, she steers for Carthage, the Tyre of Africa. Then further to the west, impelled over the blue waters of the tideless sea, she passes the Pillars of Hercules, and pays a commercial visit to Gades, another Tyrian colony, founded in discharge of the command of ancient oracles. Leaving the abundant springs of the silver-bedded Tartessus, whose mouth breathes to the western ocean the fragrance wafted from banks which hide themselves under orange groves, she sets forth to scale the shifting mountains of the Atlantic. Northward, and northward ever, past Finisterre, till at length another Land's End looms through the haze, and the *Ultima Thule*—of her voyage at least—is reached, and harbour made on the southern coast of Cornwall or of Ireland.

We have two or three reasons for introducing the foregoing epitome of the log of the 'Ashtaroth' into a paper titled like the present. The Phœnicians, and they only of all the civilized world of that day, knew of the whereabouts of Britain. For perhaps more than five hundred years before the particular voyage we now immortalize, they had traded with the Silures and the Dumnonii, to whom they brought salt, earthenware, brass, chains, necklace, and other knicknacks of civilization, and took, in return, wool, skins, lead, and tin, the latter of which then ranked in the high places of the world as the foremost and most valuable of the metals. But further, these princely merchants, in thus repairing to the people of Britain, were visiting their own kinsmen—their poor relations—who had, perhaps, whilst national organization presented only the airy cohesion of nomadic hordes, gone off from their primitive Asiatic seats in the direction of the setting sun, leaving another body of their race to consolidate itself in the country between Libanus and the Mediterranean. From this district the westward-going pioneers, some of whom had wandered as far as utmost Europe, had been ever and anon reinforced by stragglers, or sparsely colonized by exodes rendered compulsory by the aggression of the Israelites upon the inland borders of their Phœnician brethren. These, pressed and excited into an amphibious activity, had developed an enterprise which in time had made their treasury the riches of the world. Such also, in part, may have been the causes, which, in their operation, lined the coasts and sprinkled half the islands of the Mediterranean with a people whose mother-tongue was one of which, for want of anything better or nearer, the Erse has been regarded as the closest surviving representative. We are not going to flounder amongst ethnological probabilities; we are not going to deny all or any of the hypotheses which derive the primitive inhabitants of Britain from Gaul, Germany, Greece, Egypt, or even from the moon,[1] if any one likes to take up the theory of a remote lunarian immigration, darkly suggested by the knowing gravedigger in Hamlet. Still less are we desirous of throwing discredit upon the touching, venerable tradition of the Britons themselves, that they were island-born. Only we may postulate a greater or less community of blood between the Briton and the Tyrian; or, if that be disallowed, intimate how such a community might be supported by the lingering evidence, long drawn out, of community of rite and superstition; of topographical and theological nomenclature, if not of entire language or dialect.

Now it is all very well for the commander of the 'Ashtaroth,' and the supercargo, and the influential P. and O. director's son, who is out

[1] tion of that theory of the twofold Hercules, which gives profundity to the 44th and 45th chapters of his 'Euterpe,' that his knowledge of the regions beyond Calpe and Abyla was so hazy. It would not be wonderful if in those days, historically as well as commercially, Britain had to suffer for the mythical suggestiveness and the material grandeur of the Phœnician city.

to see the world, to land at their own sweet wills, either on the shore of that bay on which stands the town lately and loyally transformed from Cove of Cork to Queenstown, or to make for the Cornish harbour which best suits their purpose. They, it is presumed, know what they are about, and will not seriously imperil the safety of their persons, which, precious to themselves, are also sacred to the supple-witted people of the coast as the incarnations of profit, as the angels of salt, hardware, and bracelets. But where shall an amateur voyager, undefended by the tutelary god of traffic, find a safe landing-place? Shall he essay Ierne? Its gentle inhabitants affectionately inter their defunct parents by mouthfuls; and for a breakfast, make light of half a stone of flesh which itself has been heretofore quickened and enriched by the juices of its kind. Oh! delicate reader—alas! too delicate and delicately flavoured—beware of the Erin of the fifth ante-Christian century. Betray not the trusting, unsophisticated native to his own disaster. Accustomed to brawn and savage thews, he would with difficulty assimilate the finer tissues of a dish in which you should play the distinguished part of principal ingredient. About you an ethereal soupçon of mental culture subtly lingering, might, whilst it whetted his habitually unpampered appetite, inflict upon him a troubled digestion, or even invite nightmare and hideous dreams in which he should profanely doubt the favour of his gods. If, apart from considerations of tenderness to the hypothetical dyspeptic, you have any personal scruples to piecemeal sepulture in half a dozen living mausolea, it is manifest that not the clamouring echoes of Biscay hazards so lately escaped, nor yet the pleaded weariness of a tedious voyage ought to prevail upon us to land you here.

Even the inhabitants, comparatively refined, of Cornwall and Devon are, to persons unaccustomed to approach them, as docile as wolves would be in the fresh, first joy of freedom from the pious restrictions of a lupine lent; and what charms have you to soothe the savage breast? You are no Sidonian mariner to make your peace with twopenny ornaments and *bric-à-brac*; no Tyrian skipper to pay black mail in the shape of a cast-off purple mantle in which some gigantic chief—enfolding the well-arched hugeness of his chest and veiling the noble sinuosities of his legs, beautifully and in the true spirit of adventure receding from each other into the spaces of the outer world — shall grandly strut, as struts to-day on the fevered strand of tropical Africa, his majesty Quashee, in regalia of napless cocked hat and tarnished epaulets. Let us leave the island at its anchorage to ride out a quarantine of a couple of centuries. It will by that time be a little purified from its taint of blood; and we will then land, not upon a sterile spur of Cornwall, but on the banks of Tamessa, now royal-towered Thames, and crowned with the diadems of kingdoms from Columbia to Ceylon; of lands that hibernate beneath the stolid stare of Bootes, or that open genially out to the mild gaze of the Southern Cross.

Here two or three grave considerations meet us—meet us, but do not appal. First we are conscious that our dramatic spectacle is proceeding in violation of the unities. But since Voltaire is dead, and his school of criticism buried with full rites and jubilant requiem, we are not sleeplessly anxious upon that score. The difficulty of ascertaining the social condition of the islanders of Britain before their country first became generally known to the world, is a weightier matter. Their comparative culture or rudeness has been debated with much bitterness and decision; with much philosophically indifferent assertion and *quasi*-patriotic denial; and is even yet a *quæstio vexata*. We deftly avoid the necessity of partisanship by fixing on a time for our visit when the most enthusiastic of philo-British apologists, making due allowance for the operation of the laws of progress, or rather reading these backwards to arrive at our selected era, dare not cavil if we discover a state of society for the most part such as has been handed down by

ancient annalists and geographers. There is, in addition, a topographical quarrel, touching not only, as in strictness it should, the precise locality, but even the very existence of London before the time of Cæsar. If any one has a fancy for the *pros* and *cons* of this discussion, we wish him joy, and relegate him to authors aridly and voluminously conversant with the subject. We have done all that our duty and the wishes of most readers can impose, when we profess to have struck the balance of arguments, and decided, in conformity with evidence direct or inferential, that the London of the third century before Christ is to be found on both sides of the river.* Adventuring to visit the city of the northern bank, the heart of which may be represented by the neighbourhood of the railway terminus in Fenchurch Street, we should find ourselves the guests of the Trinobantes. Crossing the river, and allowing our skin-covered boat of wattles to drift a little with the rising tide, we should have an opportunity of saluting the Cantii—a people favoured not only, as the Trinobantes, by such communication with more civilized nations as the Thames affords, but by influences of humanizing intercourse which, working up from the southern and eastern coasts, make the New Cut the site of ideal British refinement.

* Apropos of London, did the reader ever see two books that independently agreed to give the same etymology of the name? Here are a few specimens of what human ingenuity can furnish as *probabilia* in a doubtful case. London has been deduced from Caer Lud, or Lud's Town; from Luna, another name for Diana; from Lindus, a city of Rhodes; from Lygdus, a Celtic prince, from Llan Dyn, temple of Diana, from Lundain or Llandain, the Thames bank town; from the British word Llhwn, a wood, and Dinas, a town; and, once more, from Llong, a ship, and Dinas, a town, the compound of course implying that it is a town or harbour for ships. In such a case a highly polished exhibitor of curiosities would, in tones of insinuation and endearment, invite his friends to take their choice. A like interesting, if not indeed romantic, uncertainty appertains to the names of the country, Britain and Albion.

We fear that the 'History of Inventions,' a book written by our enemy, might discountenance any furtive attempt to use a pocket compass to point us through the wood by which our approach to the northern city from the land side must be made. We may, however, in scorn superb and silent, avail ourselves of some such guide and vehicle as the golden arrow with which Apollo gifted the druid Abaris, to reach the walls through the devious night of the forest. Behold them sweeping round and sloping down to the Thames. These formidable barriers, what are they? An outer ditch, and a rampart formed of the trunks of trees curiously piled and overlapping. Entering the town, we find it still a thick, cumbersome wood, an aggregate, if not a segregate rather, of detached villas, each of which contains one circular room, with the family hearth in the centre, whilst a hole in the roof, opening up heaven to the inmates, professes to let in the light, and to let out the smoke, but succeeds perfectly, if we may trust our diagnosis of ophthalmic tendencies, in neither function. If we had time, we should see that circularity is a universal formula of the British mind. The roofless temples of religion, the memorial mounds of the dead; the enclosures of towns; the walls of houses; all model themselves according to the outline of the sun's disc. But we can afford to be conscious of Stonehenge, and the Nine Ladies of Hartlemoor, only in the same way that a modern Londoner is conscious of Manchester, or Wiggenhall St. Mary Magdalene.

We are fortunate in our selection of a day. A grand council of the nation has been called; and, as this is the third morning since the summons, the most tardy have arrived, and business is about to commence. Questions of peace and war are to be decided; criminals and cowards are to be put upon their trial; budding heroes are to undergo the dignity of manly initiation; and the whole is to wind up with song and festivity. The warriors, in arms, have taken their seats around the open council space. Fingal has

come from his wattled mansion in the backwoods of Charing Cross, and exchanges guttural compliments with Cormac, who has left his flocks to browse the herbage of the wilderness of Whitechapel. Old friends have given and received a kindly recognition; old rivals in the race of martial or athletic glory, have subsided from looks of challenge into senatorial gravity. The whole assembly is hushed, or, if not, will be, as soon as yonder advancing Druid, the most venerable of the district, shall have enforced silence in his priestly character. Patriarchs, whose hair is white with the snow of a hundred winters; chiefs, men of conspicuous courage and conduct, or of most commanding eloquence, place before the meeting the advantages of a war with their insolent neighbours, the Atrebati, the raids and secret robberies of whose enterprising cadets have lately become insupportable. Rises at length the Nestor of the Trinobantes. He has fought with four generations of heroes. He has driven home from a hundred battles with the heads of slain foemen fringing the furniture of his war-horses; and the measure of his glory is filled up. He is for moderation; and advises the leaving of the question to be adjusted by reprisals in kind on the part of their own youngsters. The honey of his eloquence is sweeter than bee or comb ever yielded; his words are weighted with the authority of the great departed, whose comrade he has been; he leans upon his spear easily and majestically, as Time, with a wig, might rest upon his scythe; but the only response is an inarticulate murmur of dissent This arises from the younger warriors, whose tale of heads is not yet sufficient, and from the youths who will an hour hence claim the virile investiture of the spear. At length, when the question has been debated, and much, on both sides, said and gesticulated, a chief, scarce in his prime, but old in valour and achievement, in winged and burning words and action that must compel conviction, protests that his tribe can wage no little wars, and urges the necessity of a grand expedition. The clash of shield and javelin, applausive and multitudinous, shows that the assembly have by an overwhelming majority decided with him. Judicial cases follow. Some wretched kerne did not respond when lately the summons went forth to all good Trinobantes to take arms against their foes, the Iceni. The Druids are the judges; for crimes of state or social life are also sins against the gods. The poor fellow is convicted, and will help to cram the bulging sides of the wicker Colossus at once to be commenced for the temporary accommodation of the prisoners expected to be taken in the war that will in a few days be raging A thief, who might meritoriously have exercised his Mercurial talent upon the herds of the Atrebati, has lazily helped himself from those belonging to a member of his own tribe, and he is therefore cut off by theocratic sentence from the commonwealth of his people

Whilst these affairs of national or judicial complexion are in process, a knot of youths without the council, burning for state recognition as men, are scarcely continent of their patience The flush of hope alternates with the quick, palpitating tremor of doubt, until their claims are ratified by the august tribunal. One by one, on reason shown, they are approved as capable for the use of arms. Thereupon, in the midst of smiles of grim encouragement from the assembly whose warrior ranks they are henceforth to recruit, some discreet chief, or some relative, the sponsor of their valour, equips them severally with shield and spear. With this ceremony the serious business of the assembly is over. Most of its members will remain for public feasting and diversion. We prefer to follow the father of one of the youthful candidates, who wishes with greater privacy to celebrate at home his son's introduction to the rights and duties of manhood. He is a chief of position, and will entertain his friends and retainers at a banquet worthy of the occasion. We are secure of welcome; for he of all men, and at such a time, is not the one to encounter the infamy

of closing his mansion on a wayfarer.

Through streets in which the languishing condition of the brushwood betrays the frequency and throng of traffic, we thread our way in the wake of our elected entertainer, at present ignorant of the favour we design for him; and soon have an opportunity of inferring, from the extent of his cattle-sheds, the magnificence of his resources. The enclosure in which the mansion stands is bounded on the side of our approach by a stream, which, in its winding course from north to south, is destined, more than a thousand years in the future, to be called Walbrook, and in the far-off nineteenth century to be sought rather than to be found. Six running paces and one vigorous bound clear the stream for us, and altogether it seems a tame enough and innocent rivulet. But provoke it; stir it up with winter showers; let loose upon it the boundless stores of the Hampstead springs, and it will swell and foam with fury, ready to carry away whoever should rashly confront its chafing torrent, down, down to dark, resistless death, and to the Thames. As we draw nearer to the house, we observe the chief-like grandeur of the preparations. We pass by rude plots of garden, where the roots and fruits that shall be sparingly offered for condiment in the feast of marrow and fatness, are struggling with weeds for existence. A few steps further, and the culinary fires are revealed, where boiling, and broiling, and roasting on spits, the more substantial part of the entertainment is being prepared. Here, taken from underground garners, in which it lay covered in the ear, the corn sufficient for the feast is being beaten out before undergoing attrition in primitive hand-mills. Amongst the throng of busy slaves, male and female, a hare or two moves stealthily; and geese and hens waddle and strut, and hiss and cackle. These are domestic pets, and we need not wet our lips in anticipation of such fare, for to eat of their flesh would be profanity.

In all the imposing dignity of reeds and sticks woven into hurdles, and mud-cemented, the mansion towers in haughty roundness, thatched with mosaic work of reeds and straw. The roof is a frustrated cone, and a column of smoke betokens the orifice of light and ventilation. At the entrance we give up our arms to the master of the house, who, with a refined instinctive ceremony, well-nigh peculiar to an early stage of culture, receives them in token of welcome to his hospitality and shelter for the night. We accept the offered bath for our feet, whilst he bridles the curiosity of his nature till the feast shall have restored our strength to announce our rank and tell our story. When the banquet is in readiness we are conducted to a lounge of straw; or, seeing that we have the appearance of strangers of distinction, to a more luxurious couch of skins. Then every guest apart receives his portion. They who have taken only one moderate meal since they rose in the early morning, fall to with appetites of an interesting vigour. But we, who have come for inspection quite as much as for refection, have time hastily to note the apparel and other habits of the company. The host and the more wealthy have collars and bracelets of gold, others of more limited means are content with the same ornaments in iron. A few have a woollen tunic of a coarse manufacture, that, fitting closely, displays the flows of limbs which exercise has developed into brawny strength rather than into symmetry; others are covered, or not covered, with the skins of beasts, fastened by a clasp, or, in default of this, by a thorn. The guests and family are ranged round the side of the hall; before each stands a stool, with a platter of wood or earthenware, or a basket-work dish of osier: the portions vary in quantity and choiceness with the rank and the exploits of the guests. Each man takes up his mess with his hands, and separates it for mastication with his teeth. If difficulties of bone or texture occur, he surmounts them with a knife, which, *pro tono publico*, in a certain place lies ready for such a contingency. Behind the

company stand servants, boys and girls, Hebes and Ganymedes, to pour the potent mead, the joy of the horn, or administer the beer, the strength of the shell. But that the warlike expedition upon which the council of the tribe has determined is imminent, the feast would likely last for days, as long, indeed, as provisions and liquors should hold out. And when these should be exhausted, a migration would take place, and the host and his company repair to a neighbour, whose hospitality would be honoured and taxed in turn.

But this feast is special. It is to celebrate the initiation of young Oscar, eldest son and pride of the host. The song is therefore to be raised; the foaming shell sent circling round; joy is to be heard in the hall. Hark! the prelude already rises from the harps, sweet as the musical gales of spring. The bards strike up a chant lodged in their memory in praise of the ancestral glory of the family. Then one alone proceeds to improvise a description of Oscar The young hero is blooming as the bow of a shower; his hair like the mist as it rolls on the river, soft and curling in the day of the sun. A moment after birth he had been plunged, unflinching and in silence, into the neighbouring stream, whose icy covering had been broken for his immersion. Promptly he took his first sustenance from the point of his father's sword; at five years old he swam the Thames, and climbed, at six, the elms of Smithfield. The numbers swell to illustrate how, in early boyhood, he remained up to his neck for three days in a morass, and came out more sleek and fresher for the ordeal; how he snatched up a spear from a disabled hunter, and did fierce and successful battle with a boar; and how he brought down a bird, floating secure on distant wing.

'In wrestling nimble, and in running swift,
In shooting steady, and in swimming strong,
Well made to strike, to throw, to leap, to lift,
And all the sports that *Britons* are among,
In every one he vanquished every one,
He vanquished all, and vanquished was of none.'

So the past instances of his skill and strength and valour are summed up. Then with an accession of fire and furious inspiration, the bard foretells how, ere many days are fled, he shall attain to the novel luxury of a draught of a foeman's blood, whose head shall be brought in triumph to swell the number of those which already adorn the paternal doorposts.

The recountal of Oscar's prospective exploits fires the assembled heroes. They praise their own valiant deeds; contemptuously measure others with themselves, and exchange the ready insult and intolerable taunt. A scuffle ensues between a pair of the most eager disputants; soon they embrace the floor, disabled by mutual wounds; and are carried out to be experimented upon by druidic leechcraft. Alas! for them too late the songs of bards arise, and voices of sprightly mirth; the trembling harps of joy are strung to the battles of heroes and the heaving breasts of love. The newly-dubbed *man* with grace and agility executes a martial dance amongst the sharp points of sword and spear; and then leads off a general dance, in which the young men and maidens join. The elder warriors canvass the chances of the coming war.

Before unreasoning wrath or drunken sleep becomes general, Rurmar—we have to apologize for not announcing our host's name before—who is a pious man, would wish in the presence of his friends to consult the oracles of the gods, spoken by the mouth of birds and the clippings of fruit-trees, about a rather important family matter. It is a problem with him whether he ought to give his daughter, the deep-bosomed Strina-dona to Comhal, a young chief who has joined her in the chase, and who is now, of all her lovers, most pressing in his suit. Many a leader of heroes, many a hero of the iron shield, many a youth of heavy locks comes to her father's house. They come to woo her, the stately huntress. No wonder: she is as fair as a sunbeam; her eyes are stars of light; her face is heaven's bow in showers; her dark hair flows around it like

the fleecy clouds; and she, the white-handed, dwells in the souls of many chieftains. And Comhal has already earned distinction in the hunt and in the war-field. He is as strong as Hercules with his club; beautiful as Apollo with a difference. None can better than he follow the boar, or track the wolf; or bring down the wild bird with more unerring shaft. None can give so truculent a curl to his moustache; or trim his meteor hair so dauntly, or let it fall in so flaming a fold on the azure amplitude of his shoulders. None can so deftly tattoo the star upon his manly breast, or depict an owl; none mark so well upon his limbs the punctured outline of fish, or fowl, or cloud to resemble at once a weasel and a whale. His coracle is the smartest craft upon the river, his spear the sharpest in the hunt, his heart the tenderest in the hall, his head the strongest to resist the insidious attack of the joy of the shell. His chargers are the fleetest; the scythes of his war-car are the keenest and most dreadful of his tribe, and his war-whoop is the fiercest in the battle-cry. Alas for true love! alas for manly virtue! The indications are unfavourable, and Comhal and Strina-dona must teach each other to wait.

There is a fear that the duel we saw an hour ago may be followed by a mêlée. Let us escape to stroll as we may through the town by the pale light of stars. As we step out in the direction of the Thames, the stillness is broken by the fall of venerable branches, the rustling of leaves, and the pattering of acorns to the ground. We startle the hog from his prowling, and the heron from her roost in Barbican; and presently hear the owl hooting at the nightingale because she makes night and Cheapside hideous with her senseless grief. The unbridged tide is just ebbing slowly seaward; as its wavelets break on the pebbled shore the glow-worms of the water sparkle forth a momentary protest against disturbance; the swan looks up half-awakened to menace; and a rolling porpoise, a stray otter, or a leaping trout occasions a hollow sound that rises and falls only to deepen the silence. From the banks we tortuously and painfully repair to a grove of which every tree is populous with gods; and in which a holy man, a druidic Plato, has his cave of residence. Fleet ditch flows at his feet, and is to him Ilissus, though in long after times to be chiefly famous as an affluent of the Styx. Here by day he instructs the youth of the laity, who, designated from their infancy to arms, have no time for the twenty years' curriculum incumbent on priestly aspirants, to undergo which training these last are accustomed to frequent the sacred groves of Anglesey, or the haunts of literature and science on the breezy downs of Wilts, or the crags of the Peak. He tells us, the holy watcher for the midnight revelation of his gods, the secrets of his order He communicates his astronomic or astrologic lore; initiates us with awful penalties, conditional upon violation of secrecy, into mysteries of terror and sanctity; and shows us the true esoteric meaning of that doctrine which to popular auditors he declares as an eternal transmigration of the soul of man into other human forms. We are awe-stricken by the place and the time, and the weird appearance of the hoary druidesses who minister to his wants, and participate in his divine knowledge and prowess. We leave the wondrous man to his intolerable gloom and sanctity; and return, ere yet the feast be quite done, to Burmar's echoing hall. Here, when the company is in great part dispersed, and only those who are going to lodge for the night are left, we couch ourselves with our host, his family and visitants, in one large bed continued round the room, and invoke unwilling sleep on a skin, a rush, and a wisp of straw.

The scene changes. Three days have passed. The warriors have mustered, and Smithfield is at once the *Campus Martius*, and the place of divination. Priests, garlanded with the sacred leaves of the oak, enter upon their rites. Two luckless stragglers of the Atrebatii have been seized; of whom one is

stabbed with a sword, that his death-throes and the channels of his blood upon the ground may indicate the fortune of the expedition, and propitiate the deities. The other is, for like purposes, pitted to fight against a champion of the Trinobantes, hopelessly his overmatch. The movements of the fish which abound in the lake—in after times to be filled in or exhaled—are anxiously watched as fin and tail indulge in agitations at once propelling and prophetic; the water is disturbed that its circling undulations may fore-announce the issue of the contest; and the pair of white-winged crows who caw amongst the venerable elms are invited, by the way in which they feed, to give a verdict. On the whole the omens are satisfactory; the hymn of praise is chanted, the war-cry raised, the imprecations devoutly pronounced upon the enemy, and the expedition sets out on its march.

Later yet, and the Trinobantes have met their foes in preparation to receive them on the verge of the forest at Teddington. There the battle is joined. Blood has flowed. Slain and wounded on either side attest the thunder of the shock. Now the Trinobantes essay their well-practised tactic of pretended flight. Rallying again, they prepare for a grand advance. Holy priests are piously cursing; warriors furiously whooping; dogs baying; and women with dishevelled hair, with lurid looks and hearts of furies, flying from post to post, and hurling burning brands. Bows are bent; slings are poised; spears are levelled; the reins and the lash are given to the horses; the scythed chariots are gathering speed, yell, and din, and clatter, and horror are at their height, when, lo! a band of Druids and attendant Druidesses from the monastic caves of Sheen appear to stay the uplifted weapons and the torrent of epithet and war. Peace is made by their authority. Each side retains its captives. Our London friends retire with the bodies of their heroes who have gloriously died, and with the heads of vanquished foes dangling from their chafing, proudly-stepping steeds.

Smithfield is reached once more. A huge colossal terror of wicker-work rears its misshapen head and holds out its limbs for victims. Bring forth the lowing cattle; drive on the bleating sheep; heap up the lusty, sullen prisoners; fling in the three native cowards who, conscious of disgrace in the late encounter, have volunteered to compound by immolation for a passage into the forms of braver men; pack thick with hay and brushwood, then add the flame to crackle and roar out glory to the god of war. That divine personage, it is to be hoped, with benignant scowls receives the sacrifice.

Then to where St. Paul's shall in the far-off time to come rear its massy pile, and lift its dome sublime, to inter with due honour, with slaughter of steeds and favourite dogs, the heroes who died in the conflict. The men starkly buried in rows to-day, with arrow-heads and weapons by their side, will long ages hence be found when Wren shall dig for the foundations of his cathedral. Meanwhile, for sons who shall no more return, for fathers who have intermitted the training of their hantlings to the scent of blood, Cheapside is forlorn, and Shadwell disconsolate, and the widows of Wapping are loud in their wail.

As we raise our head, lately bowed for a moment in homage to their picturesque bereavement, the tear in our eye becomes suddenly empearled in the blessed sunbeams of our native century. Was then our spectacle only a dream? Was it fancy alone that gave denizens to winding, tangled forest-streets and huts that clamed to be a city; clustered the collective wisdom, piety, and valour of warrior, priest, and patriarch; placed shadowy meats before feigned guests, went forth with serried ghosts to meet armed phantoms in illusive war; and thundered forth a wild diapason that in truth was not so much as a whisper or an echo? Or did we, chance-favoured, stumble on one of those musty pigeon-holes in which the somewhat capricious muse of history has stowed away the archives of so many unblazoned nations? Plainly and frankly, to all these

questions, No! We have dreamed nothing; we have nothing fancied; and the stately Clio has been to us, as in this case to all, a well-nigh tuneless niggard with disabled lute.

We did not dream, we say, but shared the methodic vision of a retrospective seer. We forswore phantasy in favour of an imagination that dared to exercise itself only within the limits of the *verisimile*. We caught stray, fragmentary, and half-contradictory voices from a score of speakers whom it boots not to name, and pressed them to unanimity and coherence. Changing the figure, our picture was a composition, but an honest one, and of which no part had been invented. Before a background of national institutions and customs by various study-painters made ready to our hand, we threw in individuals, and gave them names, humanity, and action.

But will such an explanation suffice to excuse us for presenting in something like narrative form, gatherings, disputes, and sacrifices, which did not circumstantially happen? We think it will. If by the dialectician, then *à fortiori* by the delineator of manners, the probable, and even the possible, may oftentimes with propriety be assumed as the true. Ingenuously our little sketch cannot pronounce itself a photograph of events in which, on the one hand, all minutest accessories are brought to light, and to which, on the other, none are supplied; but it is not venturesome to declare as ingenuously that it is fairly representative of other events, which, in conditions only slightly changed, would have taken the form and complexion of history.

A. H. G.

OPERATIC NOTES AND ANECDOTES.*

Part I.

THE opera is demoralizing. *Cela dépend.* It is far from being of necessity so, for it stirs the passions, in proportion as it is artistic, varied, and dexterous, less keenly than tragedy or comedy, which assail our sensibilities with irresistible force with their recital of right and wrong in impassioned words, accompanied by suitable action. The same is said by Rousseau, inferentially if not directly, that in opera the ear is flattered by sound, rather than the heart touched by sentiment.

The opera is unnatural! No more unnatural than song in birds and perfume in flowers. The monologue of opera is as old as the hills, and spontaneous as the breath of life. Its origin dates far back in the auld lang syne, when the first little maid born into our world, wreathed at six years old her spring garland of wild flowers for her head, and danced in her infant glee and sang, and said while she sang, 'I love my mother, and my mother loves me.' No less simple and sacred was the first operatic combination of music, dance, and song, than that old-world outburst of reverent affection, irrepressible mirth, and impulsive melody. The opera of modern days is unlike, yet the same; it is still music, dance, and song—with a difference.

Jubal played opera when he made his earliest essay at artificial music from twanging wire and pandean reed.

Miriam and her minstrel maidens recited opera by the shore of the Arabian Sea.

And David danced opera before the ark, when with accompaniment of music and song he transported the sacred cabinet from the house of Obed-Edom to its home on kingly Zion.

Let none be scandalized that we class the music of Holy Writ under this large generic name—for opera is the child of religion by a direct descent—springing up in Italy, its

* 'The History of the Opera, from its Origin in Italy to the Present Time. With Anecdotes of the most celebrated Composers and Vocalists of Europe.' By Sutherland Edwards. London: W. H. Allen and Co. 1862. 2 vols., pp. 303, 324.

modern birthplace, out of the mystery plays of the middle ages—not to mention its evidently more early progenitor in the Greek plays and the Roman festival music.

To a classical scholar its resemblance to the grand Greek tragedies, which, with their choruses, moved to the rhythm of a stately symphony throughout, will at once present itself—and these tragedies were constructed to inculcate the fear of the gods and the most awful moral lessons. In them no dramatis personæ were without a *Deus intersit*: no plot was resolved without an oracle: no catastrophe attained without the fiat of fate: while all the background was alive and horrible with grand and mysterious spectres of deities, demons, and furies, boding, beckoning, forbidding.

But while the resemblance between Greek tragedy and modern opera will not fail to strike the most superficial observer, a deeper inspection will show how these two entertainments, starting from the same point of music, song, and dance appropriated to a religious festivity, took a final direction that led them far apart from each other, and issued in a total divergence.

In the tragedy the words and sentiments were everything, although the solemn and the sprightly strain lent smoothness to their intonation; the human tongue and the great heart of man spoke with power to human hearts, and left 'the cornet, flute, harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music' but a subordinate part to play.

But the opera, on the other hand, has turned the music into its *primum mobile*, and left the sense it would express to make its way into light on the wing of concerted sounds. The Greek play addressed the understanding, the opera chiefly the senses. Olden tragedy was the drama harmonized, but modern opera is music dramatized. There must needs be words, more or less appropriate, to excite feeling in the singer, and form a centre round which the composer shall marshal his compacted notes; there must be a distinct and uniting theme—a passion or purpose to be represented which shall admit of musical treatment and exhibition—but beyond the utility of a libretto for actor and composer, no words are wanting to tell the tale of the tuneful drama, which develops itself by the aid of harmony alone. An opera must be considered a failure, whose music does not so clearly define its intent, that no monitorial adjunct is needful to explain it. If it cannot go without the crutches of intelligible dialogue, it cannot go in a musical sense at all.

The essential condition of opera is that singers act. whether they act well or ill is of little moment, as their proper function is singing. Actors, on the contrary, attempting to sing, will not fulfil the condition, as only on the wings of disciplined song will the soul of opera expand its flight. In a word, an opera is an overture dramatized—music its main strain and leading condition—music the breath of its life—and action only an accident, a superaddition, lending it a new form of expression, but not increasing its native force.

Opera, as its name imports, comes to us from Italy, the genial home and gymnasium of the arts. Opera was originally accompanied by an explanatory term, as it was a musical or other exhibition; 'opera per musica,' 'scenica per musica,' or 'opera musicale.' Its sacred origin is bespoken by the circumstance of the conversion of St. Paul being played to music in Rome so early as the year 1440. The success of such exhibitions naturally led to the adoption of profane subjects in intervals between the sacred seasons. Our term 'performance,' which is an exact equivalent of the word 'opera, has secured for itself the same technical application for a theatrical exhibition, which the corresponding Italian term possesses, and thus relieves the foreign art-word of its aspect of solecism.

It must have been a mere accident—the casual employment of a great painter in the papal service—which gave scenic embellishment the chief place in the attractions of the opera in the time of the painter Balthazar Peruzzi. His architectural illusions were perfection—the astonishment

of even the greatest artists. Titian, it is said, was not satisfied that the plane surfaces of Peruzzi were not solid chisel-work, till he ascended a ladder and touched the paintings. What was counted a curious achievement in those days, to us seems a very small and mechanical contrivance. We have observed the same thing over and over again in continental palaces—notably in Amsterdam and Berlin, and to us, notwithstanding the crowing of our cicerone over the *miracolo* of execution, and the much-belauded example of old Zeuxis crammed down our throat in credulous childhood, the result never appeared otherwise than as a vulgar and unartistic abomination.

The 'Orfeo' of 1480, the music of which was composed by Angelo Poliziano, and the words by Cardinal Riario, nephew of the pope, is the first legitimate opera of which record exists, differing doubtless, in many points, from the elaborate compound of modern days, but presenting an essential resemblance—quite as great as that between the cultivated man of the fifteenth century and the polished frequenter of the salons of the nineteenth.

In the earlier stages of opera, choral music appears to have had undue preponderance, to the detriment of the dramatic part, but by degrees the drama claimed a fairer proportion of the work, and Vincent Galileo, father of the astronomer, is especially noted as the inventor of the recitativo.

The interval in time is great, down to 1597, more than a hundred years; but the result in achievement is still greater, when 'Dafne,' the first complete opera according to the modern pattern, was performed in the Corsi Palace, at Florence. Of this work, Ottavio Rinuccini, the first poet of the day, wrote the libretto, and Peri and Caccini, accomplished musicians, composed the music.

'Euridice,' followed three years afterwards, a musical play in five acts, represented on occasion of the marriage of Henry IV. of France, with Maria di Medici. Each of the five acts of 'Euridice' concluded with a chorus, the dialogue was in recitative, and one of the characters sang an air which was introduced by an instrumental prelude.

The opera was now complete: the model raised, which succeeding artists were to copy, improve upon, and excel, if they could, within the prescribed limits, but not desert for any fashion of their own.

The 'Dafne' of 1597 was associated with new music in 1608 by Gagliano; and this in 1627 was translated by Opitz, 'the father of the lyric stage in Germany,' set to music by Schütz, and represented at Dresden on occasion of a royal marriage. But though this was a formal and first introduction of the opera into Germany, it was not till seventy years afterwards that the composer Keiser naturalized the musical drama in his native Wolfenbuttel.

In the earliest forms of opera the musical accompaniment occupied quite a subordinate position, and knew little of those splendid bands and magnificent harmonies of the present day which conceal, and more than make up for the poverty of vocal resources in the singing sirens. The 'Dafne' of 1597 had an orchestra only of a harpsichord, a guitar, a lyre, and a lute—all stringed instruments but one, the whole evidently subordinated to the voice. But the same opera, eleven years afterwards, as differently arranged, was accompanied by two harpsichords, two lyres, ten violas, three bass violas, two double basses, a double harp, two French violins, besides guitars, organs, a flute, clarions, and trombones. A curious device accompanied this revolutionary movement in opera, which was evidently a step in advance, by making the instrumental a larger supplement to the vocal part of the performance—the device being the appropriation of certain classes of instruments to certain characters in the play, a new-old contrivance resorted to by our modern Hoffmann, in his 'Undine,' in 1817, and later still by Herr Wagner. In the 'Dafne,' for instance, the bass violas accompanied *Orfeo*, the violas *Euridice*, the trombones *Pluto*, the small organ *Apollo*, and the never-old ferryman of the Stygian lake, *Charon*, whose

Senectus was, *semper virida*, sang to the music of the tinkling guitar.

The introducer of this enlarged orchestra having become chapel-master of St. Mark's in Venice, produced works of equal magnificence with that first named, until the fame of the Venetian operas was spread throughout Italy, and the new entertainment, in its more fully-developed splendour, was established in all the principal cities of the garden of Europe.

Among the leading female singers of that time was Leonora Baroni, daughter of an equally celebrated singer, Adriana Baroni. To Leonora, won by her voice and scientific skill, our Milton addressed his three Latin poems, 'Ad Leonoram Romae Canentem.' Thus fair cantatrice of the eternal city was the Lalage, *dulce ridentem*, and *dulce loquentem*, of the beardless northern minstrel's song. When the opera attained its perfect development as a refined and ennobling species of entertainment, its migration to the more civilized countries of Europe became a mere question of means and opportunity. In Germany, Dresden, as we have already seen in the case of Opitz' translation of 'The Daphne,' was the first field of its production and elaborate cultivation. Augustus 'the Strong' of Carlyle (see his 'Frederick the Great') was the most munificent patron of this kind of entertainment; but his period comes down into the early middle part of the eighteenth century, whereas before his day Wolfenbuttel and Hamburg presented claims upon recognition as cultivators of the opera.

As early too as 1645 Queen Christina of Sweden sent a war ship to Italy for the conveyance of the singer Ferri to her court. Ferri is said to have been able to descend two octaves of the chromatic scale without taking breath, performing a shake on every note unaccompanied, with all the precision of a tuning instrument.

Under Leopold I. at Vienna, the earlier opera was distinguished more for its magnificence of appointment than for its scientific results. Leopold was an impassioned lover of music, for it is said that, feeling his end approaching, he sent for his band and bade them play a symphony, to whose sweet sounds he died.

Apostolo Zeno and Metastasio contributed the matter of several operatic plays at Vienna, which have been set to fresh music over and over again by successive composers. Till we come down to Gluck, however, as a composer, and, later still, Mozart, there is not very much claiming our regard in the Viennese operatic department. In 1716 Lady Mary Wortley Montagu visited the opera at Vienna, and was agreeably impressed by the al fresco character of the entertainment, open-air performances being still in vogue occasionally in Austria and Hungary, as we ourselves can testify at no distant date. Real water was of course one of the attractions—said 'real water' being one of the barbarous abuses of scenic illusion—fatal to general effect, and in some cases giving rise to ludicrous incidents.

In one of the stage effects arranged by Bernino, who was sculptor, architect, and scene painter too, the Tiber, 'real water,' was represented as rushing from the rear of the stage forward towards the orchestra in such threatening guise, that the audience rose to flee in real alarm from the impending danger, and nothing but the subsidence of the flood through open traps in the floor stayed their flight.

The same incongruous union of the real and ideal appears in the introduction of live birds into the visionary groves of the Haymarket in the days of 'The Spectator.' 'The sparrows and chaffinches at the Haymarket fly, as yet, very irregularly over the stage, and instead of perching on the trees and performing their parts, these young actors either get into the galleries, or put out the candles.' A truce with these impertinences, which have not yet lost their hold, however, upon the grosser tastes and material likings of the multitude. A man must be specially educated for the function who can criticise and relish a picture *per se*; and the same must be said of the richest and most rational en-

joyment of the music of opera, apart from its decorative adjuncts.

The rage for spectacular adornment of the musical drama was at its height about the middle of the last century, when at Dresden accommodation was furnished on the stage for manœuvring four hundred horsemen together; when at Stuttgardt, there were one hundred and twenty dancers in the corps de ballet, and when from the number of soldiers on the stage, and their excellent drill by De Chassé, maitre de ballet, Louis XV. named him his general.

As the heroic romances of other days—the 'Grand Cyrus'—the 'Pharamond,' the 'Cassandra'—have given place to the novel of the *monde* or *demi-monde*, the *life-novel* in its most emphatic expression, so have the classical themes of the original opera, with their heathen machinery, subsided into the modern domestic of the 'Spanish Barber,' the 'Lost Spoon,' and the 'Don Pasquale.' The lofty flight and at the same time monotonous plot of the early operatic craftsmen gave rise to the squib of Favart—

'Quiconque voudra
Faire un opera, &c., &c

The which we may thus render—

'Whoever would an op'ra make,
Must first gravely our counsel take
On Pluto let him first intrude,
And borrow thence a Hellish brood
Next let him mount the upper air
And bring down gods—at least a pair
Then, as his third *desiderandum*,
A hero be packed up at random
The plot with dim ing overlay,
Till one can scarce find out the play
Amid a summer happy *fête*,
Bid a wild tempest sudden beat
And interrupt a tranquil feast
With roar and rout of evil beast,
Lion, or deadly snake at least
He that would thus an op'ra make
Away must reason's dictates shake;
Must sing, where no one sang before—
Must dance, where none would beat the floor
As to *Finale*, never mind it—
Its end somehow 'twill surely find it.'

The history of the Italian opera in England is the history of Handel, its greatest composer at that period. Driven from Hamburgh by a quarrel with his colleague in the conduct of the orchestra in that city, and betaking himself to Hanover, Handel very naturally followed the fortunes of those English nobles whom political connexions led to sojourn in the Electorate. In 1711 he produced 'Rinaldo,' his first opera, at the Queen's Theatre in the Haymarket. His last opera was called 'Deidamia,' and was composed in 1740, after which he devoted himself exclusively to the production of oratorios, which are, in point of fact, sacred operas, *non costumés*. Oratorios have all the variety, *verve*, and perfection of the opera, apart from its scenic and liveried accompaniments. But the great composer and director had sailed upon a very tempestuous sea, during his previous career, from the emulation of rival houses, the discords of ill-conditioned singers, and the shutting up from bankruptcy of the Royal Academy of Music (or the Opera House under royal patronage) which he directed. He engaged Buononcini and Arne to compose for it. Buononcini had his party of patrons, who rang to the skies applauses of all his pieces, while those of his far greater maestro were as passionately run down. This rivalry led to Swift's celebrated epigram.—

'Some say that Signor Buononcini
Compared to Handel is a ninny,
While others say that to him Handel
Is hardly fit to hold a candle,
Strange that such difference should be
'Twixt Tweedledum and Tweedledee.'

Buononcini was a musician of considerable merit, and lived till nearly a hundred years of age in the exercise of his profession.

The quarrels of Faustina and Cuzzoni, favourite Italian *prime donne* of Handel's day, are classical. Their styles were so entirely different that there was not a shadow of pretext for commending one at the expense of the other. La Faustina was brilliant—La Cuzzoni expressive. The pathos of the one and the rapid execution of the other were distinctly characteristic. As if, however, the throne of supremacy on the stage admitted of only one sovereign, those who liked the one could not but cry down the other of these great artists. When one began to sing, the partisans of

the other began to hiss. Cuzzoni, pretty but cold, had the Countess of Pembroke on her side. Faustina, lively and familiar, commanded the men. One of these *preux chevaliers* of the latter singer must have given birth to the ungallant epigram:—

'Old poets sing that beasts did dance
Whenever Orpheus played;
So to Faustina's charming voice
Wise Pembroke's asses brayed.'

Cuzzoni had to give way. She was got rid of by the directors by the shabby device of offering her one guinea less of salary than her rival, which her pride would not allow her to accept. Twenty-three years afterwards the poor soul sang in London, old, infirm, and voiceless. In Holland she was imprisoned for debt after this; and finally died at Bologna, earning a scanty maintenance by button-making. Improvidence on the part of those pampered pets of the public may be charged with the larger share of their misfortunes; nevertheless, no feeling mind can fail to regret the hard fate by which—on les adore quand elles sont belles,—on les jette à la voirie quand elles sont mortes

Faustina was happier, well married, and died in 1783 at Venice, being then no less than ninety years of age.

As the composition of our national air, 'God save the King,' dates from Handel's time, it may be permitted to interject that Handel is not its composer, nor Dr. John Bull, who harmonized a simple chant on the four words 'God save the king,' nor Lulli, nor any one besides of earlier date than Henry Carey, who composed the tune, exactly as it is sung now, in 1740, in celebration of the taking of Portobello by Admiral Vernon.

London could not support two Italian operas; and yet political rather than artistic considerations induced the leading nobility to support an opera of their own in opposition to that patronized by the king, the first George. The natural consequence befel, that both speculations were ruined, and no Italian opera existed in 1739.

Another reason, doubtless, was the immense popularity achieved by the English 'Beggars' Opera,' acted in a language 'understanded of the common people,' recommended by really attractive melodies, and by the same class of incidents that made the prose melodrama of 'Jack Sheppard' so popular at a more recent date. Porpora, the manager of the rival house, retired to the classic shades of the King's Bench, and Handel to the Elysian field of the Foundling Hospital.

But the opera shortly revived. In 1741, the Earl of Middlesex undertook the management of the King's Theatre, with Galuppi as composer, who produced several successful operas. And so on through the remainder of the century. The best pieces from Italy and Germany were usually performed in London for years before they found their way into France—Italian opera, until within the bounds of the present century, not being fully naturalized in Paris. To Handel much of the excellence of opera in its after history in England is due, from the great care he bestowed on the accurate execution of operas produced under his direction.

Of the gentlemen singers of his day the fame chiefly survives of Farinelli. This singer first distinguished himself by a trumpet-song in Porpora's opera of 'Eomene.' Farinelli sang it in Rome in 1722, and in London in 1734. His one sustained note in this song, following the trumpet, called forth the somewhat profane exclamation from an enthusiastic English lady, 'There is but one God and one Farinelli.' This fact robs the great Frederick's kindred profanity—'There is but one God and one Voltaire'—of its only possible claim to remark—that of epigrammatic originality. The original *mot* was not worth remembering—the copy is 'weary, flat, stale,' and in every sense contemptible. Fritz borrowed his wit and his deism alike from England.



LIFE'S GOLDEN PRIME

LONDON SOCIETY.

MAY, 1862.

MY FIRST PICTURE.

A Tale.

IT was luncheon-time in the South Kensington Museum Female School. I threaded my way through the deserted life class, making a rather perilous journey among spread easels and empty seats, having a care of uncorked bottles of turpentine and sticky paint brushes. I had purchased a cut of bread for the sum of one halfpenny from the attendant at the luncheon-table, and turned my back upon currant buns and ham sandwiches. Now, crust in hand, I made my critical expedition, reviewing some score pieces of canvas, on each of which brush and palette had performed a distinct variation upon the features of that poor model who had just laid aside his Tyrolese hat, and descended from his draperied dais for a glass of beer, and a turn in the open air.

'Whose is this?' I asked, hardly repressing a smile as I turned from the easel to a little fat girl, whom I found eating a cheesecake at my elbow.

'Is it not a guy?' said she. 'Don't you know that new girl? Short hair and a grey dress. She can't draw the figure at all, and she's attempting the most difficult works in the school. Law! you should see her Discobolus!'

'I think I have seen her,' I said; 'I remember remarking that she had a beautiful head.'

'La!' cried my little fat friend once more; and stared at me with all her round eyes. And then bethinking herself of another cheesecake, she charged in among the easels, and miraculously escaped from the room without doing damage.

I stood before the daubed sketch, oddly attracted. Truly it was a curious production. There was a wild lack of drawing, a wild ignorance of all the laws of painting. Glazing pigments had been used without any foundation whatever; the strange tones on the cheek portrayed not flesh, and yet there was a triumphant vividness of design in the colouring that fascinated me. The glowing faults seemed dashed on the canvas with a hasty might of untaught effort. I thought, 'It must be a rich passionate soul that has flung here this maimed reflection of its colour dream.'

The students came trooping in to their afternoon work, while the clatter of plates in the passage announced that the attendants were taking back their empty basket to that restaurant at the museum entrance. I stood aside a while, watching for the 'grey dress and short hair.' She came in.

I think most students must at some time have experienced that sickening sensation, when, after having indulged during hours of work in the sweet wild dream that at last they are shadowing forth their idea, giving to the eye some sparkles of ore from the burning mine within them, they leave their canvas for a time, still dreaming of success while absent, to return, and with freshened eye perceive all their poverty, all their error staring at them with blank truth.

This was the shock which flushed

and whitened the new girl's face as she came before her first attempt in the life class. Lonely and suffering she stood in the busy crowd, the half-raised brush drooping in her fingers. While I watched, a smile from some one passing finished her agony. She snatched the canvas from the easel, gathered up her brushes, and with burning cheeks and proudly-downcast eyes, quitted the class.

Ten minutes afterwards I was cutting my chalk in the Antique Room. The 'grey' girl was whispering and laughing extravagantly with a certain fair-haired romping lass who was the wildest madcap in the school. Absorbed students raised their heads and smiled, as peal after peal of merriment broke from the corner where the two sat. Some one said, 'What *are* you two laughing at?' Whereupon the blonde lassie cried out, 'Oh! it's all Miss Barry. You never heard such absurd stories as she has been telling!' A few minutes after they fell to fencing with their mahl sticks, and were only warned to order by the appearance of a hand on the curtain which hung between us and the passage.

'Her disappointment does not prey upon her then,' I thought. And I almost sanctioned an impatient desire that my own failures could sit as lightly upon me. But in another moment I had retracted the half wish. 'No,' I mused, 'the dark hour heralds full dawn; if we want light we must live through shade.'

Next morning, when rather late I entered the room, I found Hilda Barry (the name on her easel) sitting before her drawing-board, pale and passive, with dark circles under her eyes. She seemed to be of a strangely uneven temperament.

Some weeks passed, during which a slight acquaintance sprang up between us. It began by her springing to my side one day, while I glanced over my sketch-book for a note.

'Do you design?' she said, eagerly. 'Oh, please let me see!'

'I try,' said I, with a smile, and showed her the book.

'I envy you,' she said, as she returned it, 'but it is not a wicked envy.'

'I hope not,' I answered, smiling again. And then she left me suddenly.

One day I sat watching her in one of her still moods. She is beautiful, I thought. There is a latent beauty which might be richly developed. An idea of colour drifted vaguely through my brain. At luncheon-time, when the room was empty, I went and sought in one of the painting rooms a certain piece of green drapery, with dashes of tawny light and olive shade. I arranged it studiedly from a shelf behind the girl's seat. It will do, I thought: but stay, I substituted a red pencil of my own for the black one in Hilda Barry's port-crayon, and then I returned to my work. What a picture I had when the dark head shone against the rich sad folds! The outlines were good. The heavy hair swept short and curly from the round temples; the forehead had a pallor where the dusk curves met it; the dark eyes, often too dead and absent, now had a light, while the crimson pencil wrought beneath them. The cheek, too pale before, gained a ripeness against those tawny lights, and the full under lip shone in red relief from the olive shadows. It was a perfect little study—my vague idea of colour realized. Yes, there was exceeding beauty.

Presently she left the cast which she had been shading and went to her afternoon work at the Antinous. We seldom mustered more than half a dozen at a time in the Antique Room. We were in the model week, and it was a lecture day, so that the room, rather thin from the morning, emptied gradually, and at about half-past two o'clock I looked up and saw that its only occupants were Miss Barry and myself. As I glanced towards her, I was struck by her wobegone attitude and expression. She was sitting a little drooped, with her hands lying listlessly in her lap. Her face had that dull pallor, her eyes that shadowy heaviness that remind one of a winter rain cloud, when the desolate night is gathering among highlands.

I obeyed my quick impulse to go and speak to her.

'Are you unwell?' I asked.

'No, thank you,' she replied, stirring in the slightest degree from her still attitude.

I paused a moment. 'You have a headache, you are tired out. Do give up and go home!'

She shivered slightly. 'There is nothing at all the matter with me. I am as well as you. In perfect health.'

I would not be battled off so easily. That the girl suffered I knew. I might not have a right to pry into her trouble, but even a vague sympathy might soothe. I sat down before her, and leaned in a puzzle on my mahl stick.

'If you are not ill,' I said, 'in body, you are in mind. You have not been long at the school, and should not be so easily discouraged. We have all our dark days to grope through. Do you find the figure difficult?'

She glanced drearily at her board, with its false lines and smeared India-rubber marks. That rain-drift look swept across her eyes.

'I cannot see it,' she said. 'It looks right to me, as I have it. Mr. D—— says it is wrong, but I cannot see it.'

'Let me try. I am not the best mistress, but I have been longer here than you.'

She rose quietly, and I took her seat, and fell to work with pencil and plummet. I gave a lesson as well as I could, showing her where the several points cut the line, how to make the figure stand, how to block out the proportions.

'I cannot go about it in that way,' she said. 'I want to dash at it, and have it at once.'

'But you cannot, you *must* creep before you can walk. It is slow with every one. Patience is a surer guide to success than genius.'

Her lips tightened again, and the desolate, half-terrified look came back into her eyes.

I wondered at her. I said, 'You should not be so very, very despondent.'

'It is nothing,' she said, with a return of self-command. 'I am always dull in the daylight. I cannot bear the day. I long for night—in the night I live.'

'You were very merry this morning.'

'Ah! that is excitement. It is to keep me from thinking. If Miss Gilbert were here now, I should be screaming with laughter.'

Strange girl! What should I say to her? Still I thought of my own heart struggles and burned with sympathy. I said, 'I know exactly how you feel. I have felt so. An utter despair paralyzing all my energies, a blindness, a languor, a bleak, bleak desolation of spirit. But believe me'—and I ventured to take her passive hand—'these are but the death-throes from which we shall awaken to a new life of light and power. For me, I have suffered all those dying agonies which are racking you at this moment, and now I feel that I am waking. Standing on yonder spot of mat where the chair is, I have swallowed oh! such bitter draughts—but they are healing me. It will be so with you, in a little; only wait and work.'

Thus I went on, making use of the unusual language that rushed upon me, because I knew that she best understood and hearkened to it. For two hours I preached, I scolded, I rallied and cheered her, till the bell startled us both.

I feared I had not effected much good withal. The drear mood never yielded; I got few words and a quiet good-bye when we parted. And yet my trial had relieved me. I felt so as I hastened home.

After that my interest in the 'grey' student increased daily. I felt also that though she had shown few signs of feeling my sympathy, yet she came oftener in my way, hovered near me, seldom speaking but seeming to like my neighbourhood. Neither of us made many advances, but a tacit friendship existed between us. She seemed to spend all her time at the school. She was there before me in the morning, she was the last to leave in the evening. If there were no lecture to be attended she would spend the time till dusk in some part of the building. If I went for an hour to the library I was sure to find her knitting her brows over some ponderous book, from which

she never glanced. Sometimes I happened on her in the Vernon Gallery, often studying Landseer's picture of 'War,' holding that heavy veil, which she always wore, stealthily above her eyes.

One Friday evening Mr. M—— had kept us late at the lecture. I had left an umbrella at the entrance, and so went out through the museum, instead of by the male school, which was the shortest way from the lecture theatre. Coming quickly round the last corner, I saw on before me the slight grey figure, little black bonnet, and thick veil of Hilda Barry. She was standing alone, studying very attentively a certain specimen of 'Wych Elm' from Scotland, which stands about half-way down the last chamber. I halted as I approached her, for contrary to her usage she moved to meet me.

'I want to speak to you,' she said abruptly. 'The Irish are said to have kind hearts. I think you have, unless your face belies you.'

'It does not, at all events, in this instance. I will do anything in my power to oblige you.'

She kept silence a moment. Then said suddenly, 'Can you direct me to a respectable jeweller?'

'No indeed. I am a comparative stranger in London. I have never had any dealings with jewellers.'

She half turned silently away.

'But,' I added quickly, 'I can easily learn all about it. I promise to get you the information to-morrow.'

'That will be too late,' said she. 'Look! I want to sell this,' and she showed a brilliant ring lying in her purse. 'It must be to-night.'

'To-night? Oh, surely not to-night! Why, it will be dark in half an hour, you will barely have time to get home.'

'I am not going home. I have no home: I want to sell this in order to get a night's lodging. I would not have told it to any one in the world but yourself. All day I have been trying to make up my mind to say what I have said. Utter necessity at last chained me here till you should come up from the lecture. But if you cannot direct me I must go and seek my fortune.'

She said this last with a stern hopelessness of tone sometimes peculiar to her.

'You shall not get rid of me so easily,' I said. 'Come, let us get into the street, where we can talk unreservedly.' I hurried on and she followed. I gave my ticket and got my umbrella, and then we went down the tiled passage past the restaurant, smelling coffee all the way. As a matter of course my feet took the accustomed road to the bird-fancier's where I lodged.

'Where are we going?' said my companion, as we threaded Brompton Row, meeting omnibuses laden with city men coming home, and barristers from the Temple.

'To Chelsea, where I live. We cannot talk here for the noise. I am quite solitary in my lodging, and if you will come and take tea with me it will be a real charity.'

Hasty tears flashed into her eyes; she thrust her hand into my arm with an impulsive movement, and we made the rest of our way silently and quickly to our destination.

My heart misgave me as I knocked at the door. My landlady was rather uncertain in her preparations for me; indeed, to do her justice, I was irregular in my hours of return, so that it was not so much her fault. I had resolved to coax my poor little wanderer into confidence, and I felt hotly anxious that her first impressions of my surroundings should be snug and homelike, for these, I thought, would be likely to touch her lonely heart. And so my own bounded as I ran upstairs, and saw through my open door the ruddy firelight capering over the walls. When we entered, I could have hugged my quaint little old landlady, as she came up with the kettle, from her canaries. I suppose my lateness had given her plenty of time, but the fire blazed, the place was tidy, my small tea-tray set upon the dingy green table-cloth, the scanty red curtains were something drawn—in fact, the room was looking its best. I wheeled the old arm-chair to the fire, and ensconced my visitor therein. 'Sit there, dearie,' said I.

She looked up half surprised,

half grateful at the word of endearment, but I took no notice. I had made up my mind. I took away her bonnet, unpinned her shawl, drew off her boots, and laid her feet upon the fender. She made no resistance. I felt that I was gaining my point—her trust in me was growing.

I unlocked my little tea-caddy and wet—oh! rare event!—three great spoonsfuls of tea. I put the teapot by the fire, and toasted some bread. Butter was an unknown luxury in my quarters, but to-night we should have something better. I ran down and sent my landlady's little Johnny over to the Italian warehouse for a pot of damson jam. And then I stood a moment irresolute on the last step of the stairs, and thought that I might be wanting to leave that shilling with Mr Cecil Wood, artist colourman, before the end of next week. But 'sufficient for the day is the evil thereof,' I whispered, and sprang upstairs to see that my toast was not burning.

I gave her a cup of tea, and some bread and jam, which she ate hungrily.

'I have eaten nothing since eight o'clock this morning,' said she.

I was glad to hear her say that. Not glad that she had fasted, but that she had acknowledged it. It sounded like the beginning of confidence.

'You will tell me all about it, will you not, dear?' I said, when our meal was over, and I had drawn my chair opposite to hers on the hearth-rug. It was quite dark now, and we had lit no candles, but the firelight was springing through the room.

'I will,' she said, with a frankness which I had scarcely hoped for. 'I will tell you everything, for you have come to me like a good angel. I am not afraid that you will betray me.'

'You need not,' I said; 'indeed I am your friend.'

'I must be strangely ungrateful to doubt it. My story is soon told.'

She thought a few minutes as if considering how she should begin. It is so hard to take up one's own history, and tell of it condensedly like a tale. This is what she did tell at last.

'My father was German, and my name is not Barry, it is Werner. My parents died while I was very young, and until within the last two years my life was spent at school in England. I was heiress to a large fortune—better I had been poor, for I was spoiled and pampered because of my fine dresses and plentiful pocket-money. I grew up with a wilful temper, from which I suffer now. Two years ago, just when I was seventeen, my health became very delicate, and my guardian came and took me away from school. I had only seen him once before, and I did not like him. He told me that he had been my father's dearest friend, and that he expected I would be like a daughter to him. He was a very kindly-spoken old gentleman, but somehow I could not like nor trust him. We lived in a lonely old manor in the country, we three, my guardian, his maiden sister who kept house, and myself. I was very lonely, moped the days away by myself, and grew sicklier than ever. My only delights were reading and drawing. Drawing at school had been my favourite study. I loved it passionately. I had there, quickly gone through all the weak, good-for-nothing school studies, got prizes, and been lauded as a genius till I began to imagine myself a kind of female Raffaelle. You may easily realize what an unhealthy life I led in the dull manor with no congenial companion to speak to. I could not endure Miss Selina, with her prying censorious ways, nor my guardian's oily tongue and furtive eyes. They seemed to have no relations but a certain "dear Alf" who was a captain, away with his regiment somewhere at the world's end, and was expected home yearly. He was my guardian's son.

'I moped and read till I grew as romantic and useless for any purpose of existence as could well be imagined. I knew nothing of real life; I lived among stars and moons and poets' dreams.

'Love was the one theme of all the books I read; and an imaginary

love became by degrees my household god. "Love" seemed to me a bright unique word of a heavenly tongue which had strayed into this world's commonplace language. I saw it at night from my window printed in stars over the sky; I spelt it in the moonbeams that stamped their silver characters on the floor of my quaint old-fashioned chamber. Do not think too hardly of my folly in this—remember I had no real natural affections around me. I was lonely, and fond of no one in the world, though my heart ached with a load of unspent love.'

She paused a moment, turned her head slightly from me, and with a heated cheek went on, looking steadily into the fire the while—

'My health continued weakly: my guardian showed some anxiety. I said, "If you want to keep me alive, sir, let me have lessons in drawing!" I was full of artist's dreams. I think he was frightened, for he consented.

'A few days after Miss Selina made an announcement at dinner. She had ascertained that there was a very competent teacher of drawing in the neighbourhood, "a real artist," who was sojourning in the country, making studies from nature. He was giving lessons in the houses of several high families around, and was universally esteemed a perfect gentleman.

'Mr. Winthrop was engaged to give me lessons.

'Winthrop?' I echoed, starting.

'Yes, Mr. Fran. Winthrop. Before I tell you the rest do look back upon what I have told you already, and think of my life. My new master came to me three evenings in the week.

'It was summer, early summer—May. My guardian was always out at dinner parties; or if not, nodding over his wine in the dining-room; and Miss Selina always dozed away the evenings. It had been so long a habit in the house not to mind my doings or my whereabouts that things went on now just the same as ever—only, instead of crying with loneliness in the wood, or reading Tennyson in the garden, or moping up in my own room, I was listening to the glowing language that made me intimate with my master's picturesque thoughts; seeing my Lilliputian art-dwelling swept down by a strong hand, and the wondrous plan of a new heaven-touching palace sketched upon its ruins; receiving lessons which I can never forget; while the summer air brought us the jasmine on its breath, and the blackbirds in the garden sang treble to my master's deep musical tones.

'For many months things went on so—I breathed a new atmosphere, health returned to me I am afraid that I did not learn a great deal, my master's plan of teaching was so new, I felt so ignorant, and had to begin again at the very commencement. But I had found a friend. my master was kind, gentle, firm; no one had ever treated me as he treated me. He only, of all the world, seemed to feel or care for me Was it sinful, was it unwise, was it unmaidenly in me to give to this friend, who had bestowed on me new life and strength, all the pent-up affection which no other would have from me, and which was breaking my heart with its might? I have been told that it was all three, but I will not believe it. I cannot think that it was a crime so enormous that it must be expiated by a life of emptiness and sorrow. I did not give my heart unsought: I knew that I was his pet pupil, that my presence gave him pleasure, as his did to me.

'With his beautiful notions of art, faith, truth—with his soul of genius—his rich fancy and powerful hand—I felt that to be enshrined in his heart must be something like being enthroned among stars. "And this is life," I said—"how glorious life is!"

'In those days I had a certain beauty. You may wonder now, but I knew it when after my lesson I ran up-stairs to arrange my hair for tea, and stood before the glass in my white summer frock with eyes shining with happiness and a rose on each cheek. I had never before thought much about whether I had beauty or not: it is only for the sake of those who love us that we prize our good looks; and I had never had any such stimulus to vanity.

But now it was otherwise; and at some moments I have felt myself worthy to breathe in a world of love and beauty.

One evening I picked from the floor a little sketch-book, which I thought was my own. I put it in my pocket, and thought no more about it. That night, as I stood at the window in my dressing-gown, I opened the little book to put a rose leaf between its pages: a fine rose was dropping to pieces in a glass on the table. My eyes rested on a sheet which I had never seen before. A head was sketched upon it, exquisitely tinted, with a background of grave mellow drapery. It was a glorious little sketch — my heart swelled exultantly, for it was my own face that I saw on the paper. I laid the little book reverently on the silvered edge of the window, and bent over it in a trance of joy. Here on this tiny page were all my beautiful foreshadowings substantiated— all my heart's fair prophecies fulfilled: I now felt sure that my master held me dear. Half that night I knelt by the window, steeped to the lips in a sea of happiness, trying to pray, lest God should think me ungrateful, and take the sweet cup from my lips ere it was more than tasted.

'All this must sound very foolish and romantic to you. It is only while the sacredness of silence and secrecy hangs over things like this that they are real and true: directly they are thrust upon other ears they degenerate into *folly* and sentiment. I feel it so, but I must tell you that you may understand the rest. In the morning a difficult question occurred to me. How should the book be returned to my master, so that he should not suspect it had been opened? I thought over this long. Would it not seem strange if I employed any one else to give it him, having found it? and even if I did so, how should I see it given him without my face betraying my secret? I made up my mind that I must do it myself: I would hand it to him in a matter-of-fact manner, saying carelessly, "Here, sir, this was found upon the floor yesterday after you left." The very fact of my delivering the book myself with so much coolness would be sure to prevent suspicion. I did it. I stood five minutes at the library door rallying my courage; it was of no use to tremble. I could not now call a servant to hand Mr. Winthrop his book; I could not wait till he inquired for it, that would be worst of all. At last I went in, and with as much quiet bravery as it was in me just then to summon, presented the sketch-book. Had he taken it as quietly all had been right; but the sudden flash of eyes and flush of forehead overset me. I could not raise my eyelids, and felt the hot blood glazing my eyes and burning my temples. I need not dwell any more on that evening: before an hour I had promised to be his wife.

'I could not understand why he was so reluctant to speak to my guardian. I would not believe, in my utter ignorance of the world, that any one could be so wickedly unjust as to imagine that Mr. Winthrop coveted my wealth. One morning I went for a ride after breakfast, thinking gladly as I cantered along that to-night I should have a drawing lesson. In my absence my master came to my guardian and told his honest story. In answer he was abused, scorned, and driven from the house with insults. On my return I was met with recoilings and taunts, and ordered to my room till I should be sorry for my sins. Then they came and sneered at me, and accused and raged at me —oh, such horrible things as they said! I did not endure them long: my first stupor of amaze over, I gave rein to my wild temper, and with a whirlwind of passion drove them all affrighted from the room. I locked myself in, and remained in my anguish all day and all night. My one only friend was gone: that was all I realized. He to whom I owed so much had been insulted and reviled in return. As the hours crept on storm after storm of agony broke over my head; and it was only when daylight came that I was worn out and calm.

'I wrote a little letter to Mr. Winthrop telling him I was true. I bribed a servant to send it to him;

but I am sure that she was bribed again, and that he never got it. He never came, never wrote, never appeared again in the neighbourhood. I suppose that he did not think me worth getting insulted for.

'I will pass quickly over the next nine months. I was hardly nineteen, and yet I felt aged, as if I had lived a long life, as if I had tasted all of joy and sorrow that life could offer me, and was ready for the grave.

'It was just nine months after this that my guardian's son, Captain Alfred, came home; and I soon saw that I was expected to marry him. I could not endure him: he was a drawling, conceited, middle-aged coxcomb, whom I despised and detested. It seemed to be all arranged between father and son. The captain assumed a manner towards me which I could not brook. He seemed at first to think it a "doosed boa" that he had to marry the little schoolgirl in order to get her money; but as there was no other means of laying hands on it, he was prepared to do so. This stage of affairs was revolting enough, but I tried to endure till a crisis should arrive when I could speak my mind. By-and-by, however, he began to pay me attention—to act the lover. He haunted my walks; he followed me about the house and garden; he would not take rebuffs; he laughed at my passions. I had no redress, so I took refuge in my own room. I spent day after day there: often I did not leave it for meals: I had little appetite. Since the captain's return Miss Selma had been continually purchasing me new dresses, and having them made up for me. These, through spite, I would not wear. I dressed myself always in an old black uniform frock belonging to my school-days. One month I spent almost entirely in my own room, till, through dreariness of mind and confinement, my cheeks grew hectic, and my hands trembled. I was nervous, and fancied my room haunted. I could not sleep at night.

'All at once a feverish reaction came. I longed for society of whatever kind; I dreaded being alone; I wanted excitement.

'In those days we were a good deal asked out in the neighbourhood. The invitations were regularly sent to me, but I invariably declined them. At last, one day there came cards for a dinner-party, and suddenly I desired to go. I had overheard some one saying that the captain was going elsewhere, and I saw him ride away after breakfast. I resolved to take advantage of his absence, and taste the novelty and excitement I craved. At evening I took (I remember it all so distinctly) a violet silk frock from my wardrobe, and curled my hair over my shoulders. I saw my face looking wildly feverish in the glass, before I descended to the drawing-room. I entered, with my cloak hanging over my arm, prepared to acquaint my guardian with my intention to be of the party. The room was half dark, and I thought empty; but midway on the floor I recoiled in dismay, for Captain Alfred sprang to meet me. He attempted to take my hand, and paid me some hateful compliments. I know not what I said; I believe I screamed out. I was feverish; all my senses quivered with nervous excitement. My guardian and his sister came running in, and a scene followed, too miserable to be detailed. My guardian, in a fury, bade me give up my tempers, and henceforward look on the captain as my husband.

'I vowed I would not. I seemed to breathe fire; green and red lightning went flying over the walls, flashed in people's faces, and blinded my eyes.

'"You talk of fortune-hunters," I cried, "what is he?" pointing at the captain. My guardian became more and more enraged at this, swore terrible oaths that by my father's will I must marry his son, or be a beggar. I said no more, but fled from the room. They thought me cowed, and went to their party.

'I rushed up stairs, and flung myself on my knees, praying wildly to God to open some door of escape from my miserable life. My prayer calmed me somewhat. I rose from my knees, and stared blankly into

my future, which seemed as dark and vague as the night around me; feeling that I must do something next, and wondering what that something should be. My room was beautiful at that moment with moonlight; but I saw no beauty in it, only a sickly melancholy light lying among the shadows, like a deathly smile on dead eyes. I stood at the window, and a finger seemed to beckon me, and a whisper to breathe in my ear. A thought glimmered across my brain. I snatched at it, feeling a rush of life coming back to my chilled face. I rang the bell quickly. In lamplight and firelight I could harbour my new idea, and treat it as a substantial guest, but not among these unearthly moonbeams and depressing shadows. My maid brought up my tea-tray and lamp. Janet was the daughter of a neighbouring farmer. I had engaged her when I first came from school. I had grown fond of her, and made her many presents. I believe she loved me in return, and showed her kindliness in many little ways; but she was gay and giddy, and, I fear, not proof against a large bribe. I had learned of late to distrust her.

'When she had left me, I sat for ten minutes at the table, with my head between my hands. At the end of that time I had made up my mind. I then stirred myself, poured out my tea, and made a better meal than I had eaten for long. When the girl came for my tray, I said, "Janet, I shall want nothing more to-night; you need not come again." I would fain have asked her assistance, but I feared to do so.

'I waited only a few moments after her steps had been lost in the distance, and then I took my lamp in hand, and made my way up stairs to a passage little used, but which communicated with several old rooms, now quite musty and deserted. Their furniture was old-fashioned in the extreme; and the tall, narrow wardrobes and carved high-backed chairs had a ghostly look to me. I had only been in them once or twice before. I remembered, however, that there were certain quaint old dresses locked away in some of the wardrobes, which had probably belonged to some of my great-grandmothers or great-grandaunts. Miss Selina kept the keys. Remembering this, I went back, and searched her drawers, possessed myself of a bunch, and sought the ghostly rooms once more. All the queer old keys were tried again and again before I succeeded in opening a door. At last I grew nearly desperate, and listened in dread for steps on the stairs. Hearing none, I made a last effort, gained my point, and opened the largest wardrobe. I rummaged nervously, and with a sinking heart, among dim brocades and faded satins. None of these would suit my purpose. On a high shelf I found a pot of rouge, and a wig of grey plaits. I set these aside; they might be of service; and then, with a desperate energy, I returned to the attack on a neighbouring lock. It yielded, and there, within this second press, I found what seemed to be the earthly apparel of some departed widowed ancestor. Sombre garments hung from the pegs, and folds of crape, and muslin, and bombazine lay on the shelves.

'I chose a black gown of stiff flowered silk, and a white kerchief to cover the quaint, ill-fitting body; a wide old-fashioned cloak, and a cap and bonnet, which, though queer, and rather antique looking, I thought might pass well enough on an old-world dame of the present day. I took a little rouge from the pot, and left it back on the shelf; gathered the articles I had chosen in a bundle, locked the wardrobe, replaced the keys in Miss Selina's drawer, and hastened back to my room with my treasures. Having locked the door, it did not take very long to metamorphose me into an antiquated gentlewoman, with grey braided hair, widow's cap, and rich old-fashioned cloak and gown. I cut my long hair quite short, so that the wig might cover it. I rubbed a faint smearing of rouge over my whole face, which quite altered my complexion, and powdered my eyebrows to match my hair.

'Latterly I had spent nothing of

my allowance of pocket-money. I had thirty pounds in my desk. This I put in my purse, and also concealed some jewels about my person. I took with me the silk dress which I had worn that evening, and a pocket-handkerchief, marked with my name. In fear and trembling I unlocked my door, listened a while on the passage, and then passed swiftly down the staircase, and out of the hall door. I had been to London once, and I knew where to find the station-house, and at what hour a train passed. On my way I flung my dress into the river that skirted the lawn, and wet my handkerchief, and tangled it in the brambles on the hedge. "Let them think what they please," said I, as I hastened on, "only God forbid that they should track me out."

'I had no difficulty in getting my ticket, and soon found myself whirling away on the night-train to London. I often have wondered since at my sensations during that journey. I felt no fear, no misgiving I only felt that I was free. The moonlight flashed in at us as we sped along, and I now thought it radiant and cheering. But the carriage-lamp soon quenched it. My fellow-travellers were an elderly lady and gentleman. The latter dozed in the corner, while the former worked busily at crochet. She seemed inclined to converse, and I feared to answer her. I had been counted a good mimic at school, and now I imitated Miss Selina's sharp voice. Then, lest she should oblige me to keep up a conversation, I pretended to sleep also, and so the journey passed.

'Even when standing on the platform, alone and unfriended in London, I felt no fear of anything. I asked a porter, in my assumed voice, to direct me to some quiet place at hand for the night. He did so, and I knew by the manner of the chambermaid who attended me that my disguise was complete. Next day I took a cab, and told the man to drive me out to Kensington, and to stop at the first lodging-house he happened on in that neighbourhood. I inquired at several, and at last engaged a room in a respectable-looking house in —— Street. My landlady was very civil, and at once I found myself settled down in London.

'But, having thus successfully made use of my disguise, how was I to get rid of it? I could not attend classes at the Kensington Museum in my character of antiquated gentlewoman, and to attend those classes I had resolved. I fancied, in my utter ignorance of money matters, that my store would last me a long time, and that, by selling an ornament now and again, I could, with economy, manage to live, till I should be able to earn something in some way as an artist What a fool I was! I expected to be able to draw at once everything which I attempted. I had a vague idea that I should get into an atmosphere of art at the Museum, and be directed in the right way to earning.

'I had now to exert my ingenuity again. I purchased some grey carmelite stuff, brought it home, and made it up in secret, to fit myself. I then informed my landlady that my niece was coming up from the country to attend classes at the Kensington Museum, and that, having found her room comfortable, I would send the young lady to board with her. I also went to Mr. B——'s office, and procured a class ticket of admittance to the Museum for a young lady called Hilda Barry. I bade my landlady adieu one morning, desiring her to expect my niece at a certain hour in the evening, and then walked a long way into the City, past Temple Bar two miles, I am sure. When I thought I had walked far enough, I went into a shop, bought a bonnet (the same which I wear), and this shawl. I had brought the dress with me. I then called a cab, and got in with my parcels, and desired the man to drive me to No. 7, —— Street.

'As soon as we had started I drew down the blinds, pulled off bonnet, wig, cap, gown, rolled them up in a bundle, dressed myself quickly in the clothes I now wear, rubbed the rouge from my face with my handkerchief, smoothed my hair with a

side-comb, and tied on my bonnet and veil. When we arrived at the house, and the cabman opened the door for me, I could scarcely keep from laughing at his face of consternation. He stammered out something about the "old lady." I told him that the old lady had engaged the cab for me. He still stared, but as he found his money all right, he at length mounted his box, and drove off.

'It was rather amusing to see how completely my landlady had been deceived. She spoke to me often about my aunt, said she was a fine, active old lady, and that I resembled her something.

'I presented myself at once at the Museum. I had not been there for many days before my hopes of earning were dashed to the ground. I found myself on the very lowest step of the ladder, while even those who seemed to me at the highest, appeared to count themselves only beginners. It was of little use that I could design illustrations for the "Idylls of the King," and make them look well to uncritical eyes, when I could not attempt the "Antinous," for drawings of which others were taking medals. I saw the students smile at my miserable attempts. I knew, I saw, I heard all around me the assurance that years must pass ere I could earn. And where should I be in a short time? How short I dared not think. An indescribable agony of terror overwhelmed me at times. I feared to meet my landlady. The money went fearfully fast. I worked night and day. I dreaded to be anywhere but in the Museum. Mr. B—— noticed that I worked unceasingly. He spoke kindly to me, and warned me against injuring my health. One night he found me working in the Antique Room alone, and talked to me in a gentle, friendly way. When he had gone, I laid down my head, and cried in desolation. I almost wished that I *could* injure my health, and die while yet my landlady looked on me humanely, and would give me shelter. Better far, than to wander an outcast in the merciless city, and in the end die of starvation.

'Only at night, when I went home, did I feel secure for a few hours at least. In the mornings I hated the light, not knowing what the day might bring. At last my very energy gave way. I could not work for the haunting terror of what might lie before me,—what sufferings, what temptations, what outcast wanderings! It was to scare these phantoms that I laughed and romped with that lighthearted girl, who thought me as glad and gay as herself. You, only you, seemed to penetrate and sympathize with me. I feared you for it. I yearned for sympathy, but I dreaded to attract attention. Much as I shrank from the future before me, it seemed endurable, compared with that which must await me, did my guardian discover me.

'I sold my jewels one by one. But even my ignorance was convinced at last that I had received nothing like a fair price for them. I began to distrust my landlady, and she to distrust me. I thought she charged me extortionately on every small pretence, and I am sure that she began to suspect my difficulties. I received no letters, I had no visitors, I was scantily supplied with every necessary. She had opportunity of letting her room to better advantage, and threatened to turn me out, if I did not pay at once certain bills to which I objected. She told me this morning, that if I did not settle the account to-night on my return, I should not sleep under her roof. She is a cold-hearted woman, and I did not know how to cringe or beg. In my despair I applied to you to-night. You have been a true, true friend. I know you will not betray me. If I have acted unwisely I have been bitterly punished for it. God help me! The future is all a blank.'

She ceased speaking, and I saw the tears shining in the firelight, as they fell like rain into her lap. I knelt beside her, and drew her head down on my shoulder.

'Have no fear,' I whispered. 'The worst is past. God has brought you so far, and will not desert you. Stay here with me. I am poor, poor enough, God knows, but we will

work together and plan—and I have no doubt earn too, before long. At all events, we will rise or fall together.'

She threw her arms round my neck, and cried passionately, and kissed my hands.

I sat up on my pillow that night, and watched by the starlight Hilda's pale beautiful face, slumbering like a baby's beside me. I thought over her strange story, and strengthened my resolve to assist her. And then there arose a fear in my heart, and I thought of my widowed mother at home, with her slender income, and little Elsie with her longing to go to school. But I shook the fear from me, and turned to sleep again, murmuring, 'The Lord will provide.'

'Hilda,' said I one morning, 'have you any objection to sit for me?'

She smiled and asked why.

'Because I want to venture a little picture for this year's Academy Exhibition. I cannot afford a real model; you would just do.'

She laughed, and agreed.

She had improved wonderfully since that crisis of her distress. We had sold her ring, and settled accounts with the hard landlady, and we lived and worked together. Hilda progressed now at her school studies. She designed rapidly, and by my advice spent part of her time in learning to draw on wood. She also improved at painting, and her work in the life class provoked no more smiles.

She never alluded to Mr. Winthrop; but I knew she was quite ignorant of the fact that her former master was one of the most rising artists of the day. She never looked in newspapers or Art catalogues, or she might have seen his name figuring conspicuously in both. I at first wanted her to let me write to a lawyer and state her case, as I felt sure that her right to her father's property could not depend on her marriage with her guardian's son. But Hilda showed so much distress at the idea of discovery, and persisted so steadfastly in her belief that it would only bring a renewal of her old persecution, that I let the subject drop.

One night, while I lay awake, a bright idea occurred to me, and I devised a little scheme. The first step towards its development was that question to Hilda—'Have you any objection to sit for me?'

I procured a bit of drapery even better suited to my purpose than that which I had found in the school. I longed to ask Hilda the colour of those grave, mellow folds, which she had described in Mr. Winthrop's sketch. But I dared not excite her suspicion of my purpose. I studied the hues and shades, and at last satisfied myself that I had hit upon the right tint and tone.

In the early spring days we went to work. Hilda made an excellent sitter. She fell into a dream as soon as my brush began to move, and unconsciously gave me the very rapt, half-melancholy expression I wanted to convey. I gave her a sparing reflection from that 'rose on each cheek' which she had told of so naively. I gave her brow its transparent pallor, her eyes their dusky shine, and her lips their full mood of rich brilliant dye. I succeeded beyond my hopes of making the picture 'a thing of beauty.' It grew under my hands; I wrought my purpose into it; and every day I said, 'It is good.' Olive and crimson, amber and dusk, wove themselves into harmony like the strains in a choral burst of music. And the likeness was there, appealingly good. Hilda started in fear, when after the last touch she saw her double. 'If her guardian should see it? Or if——' she flushed and turned away. I knew what her thought was; she was too unselfish to finish her objection. She would not damp my hope. It was 'beautiful, too beautiful,' she said.

May came. The picture was sent, and, blessed chance! *accepted*. We went one day, and saw it in the Exhibition. Hilda wandered nervously among the pictures, hardly daring to raise her veil. Another day I made an errand into town alone, leaving her at her work, and sought the Academy again. I sat down in front of my picture, and for some hours watched all who passed, and all who gazed, hearing their remarks.

I had been there long, when a young man came and took his stand

between me and my work. Many men, young and old, had done the same, but I noticed this person especially, as he seemed to bestow all his attention on my small picture, unheeding its more prominent and attractive neighbours. I rose, and walked past and near him. Yes, he certainly was studying my picture. I returned to my seat. It was early, and the rooms were not very full. Our end was almost deserted. I saw him take something from his pocket and study it in his hand, then again gaze on the picture. After a long time he turned and walked away with a disturbed countenance. As I followed the pale stern face, a sudden gleam of recognition flickered through my brain. I struggled to recollect where I could have seen him before. And then association went to work, and gradually a mist of smoke seemed to rise, pierced by a single spark of fire, and encircled the head. Then memory presented me with a familiar sketch—Hilda standing still in the Vernon Gallery, looking stealthily from under her veil at that picture of 'War' by Landseer.

Now it was all clear. The face before me was strikingly like the handsomer of the two heroes in that picture. 'This must be Mr. Winthrop,' I said, and my heart rose to my mouth. Where had he gone? Ah! there he was again, speaking to the person who sells the pictures. He took a catalogue from the table, and looked hurriedly through it, passed his finger down a page, shut again and replaced it, hastened out of the room and down the steps.

I gathered my shawl around me, and was about to follow his example, when I saw some one approach and place the ticket 'Sold' on my picture. Positively on mine. I could scarcely believe my eyes. Twenty guineas wherewith to replenish our scanty purse! I stood in the fast-crowding gallery, seeing no one, blinded with sunshine. I hurried to the green-baize table, and inquired who was the purchaser of the picture just then ticketed. 'A gentleman who had just left—Mr. Winthrop, the artist.'

I had heard enough, and sped home with a light heart. I flashed in at Hilda, where she sat poring over her work in the little Chelsea sitting-room, looking dull and weary in the midst of a streak of May sunset gloss.

'Oh! Mavo,' she cried, dropping her block in bewilderment, as I flung off my bonnet and danced about the room with delight, 'is it sold? Oh, dear, is it sold?'

'Sold! sold!' I echoed, stopping my pirouettes, putting my hands upon her shoulders, and looking in her eyes. 'Really and positively sold—disposed of for evermore!'

And then we had a great hug, and the tears came trickling over my face, whether I would or not. It was very ridiculous, because I was laughing all the time No wonder Hilda stared at me She thought it was all about the success and the money.

'Now, my dearie,' said I, after we had subsided a little into our usual strain of conversation, 'I have reason to expect that the person who bought the picture may call here soon, perhaps this evening, so we must have the room very tidy, also our hair.'

'Who is he?' asked she with interest.

'Oh, a gentleman. How should I know his name? But he will call, and then I suppose we shall hear.'

'Perhaps he is going to order another picture,' suggested my innocent Hilda; and that was the last we said about him.

I spent a good hour, arranging our room to the perfection of neatness. In the fulness of my heart I had bought a large bunch of violets from a sad little Irish girl who haunts the Strand. I placed them in a pretty glass on the window table where Hilda sat at work. She laughed at my extreme particularity about her appearance. I arranged her curls myself in their most picturesque style, and insisted that she must put on a fresh linen collar of tiny dimensions, although she urged that the one she wore was not the least bit soiled, and hinted broadly at our washerwoman's bill.

'You are growing quite magnificent on the strength of your twenty guineas,' she said. And then, hav-

ing submitted, she went on with her work. I watched her a few minutes with satisfaction, and was hard-hearted enough to feel content that the pale, tired face looked touching, under the shadow of the cloudy hair.

I then retired to our inner closet, and left Hilda to her fate.

The clock struck seven, and quick upon its jingling tones came a rat-rat-tat-tat to the door. Hilda cried out to me, 'Mave! Mave! here is your visitor.'

'Stay, like a good girl,' I answered; 'I shall be ready in an instant.'

Scarcely had I spoken when a step was on the landing and a hand on the door.

I had provided myself with a chink through which to ascertain if the new comer was indeed the person whom I expected. I saw Hilda rise with her usual air of reserve and dignity towards a stranger. She turned her face to me and to the door. I saw the crimson blood flash over her face, and in a breath she was wan as the moon. She opened her lips to speak, her dilated eyes deadened and closed, and at once she fell heavily upon her face on the floor

I was terrified; I had not counted upon this. Hilda was usually so strong to bear and so self-governed. But I should have remembered that she was not robust, and tired after the day's close work. I had been wrong not to prepare her

I hardly remember what Mr. Winthrop did or said. I only know that his face was very white, and his lips quivered as he asked me for some water, in God's name. We were not kept long in uneasiness. Hilda recovered quickly. I shall never forget her smile—so pallid, yet so radiant that it seemed unearthly, when she saw her old master's face bending over her with anxious tenderness

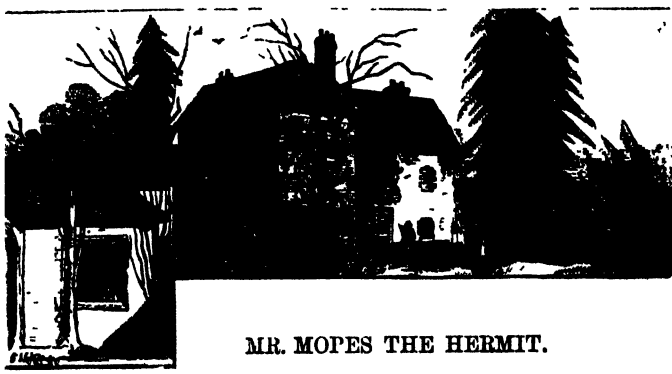
Hilda is now Mr. Winthrop's happy little wife. They have got a pretty house in Brompton, and my blessed picture hangs in the drawing-room. They are both very much annoyed at my fidelity to my old birdfancier, while a little jewel of a room lies vacant for me at Honeysuckle Terrace. But I stay on in my old lodging. It suits me better, my plain dress, and my bonnet seldom renewed; also my necessity for hard work, and the hoarding of time. But I do love to go to see them. Hilda's house is the neatest, her drawing-room the daintiest, her kitchen the best ordered, and her bedroom the most refreshingly tidy of any as yet known to me, although their young mistress does stain her fingers with paint in her husband's studio for several hours during the day. I don't know how it is. I used to say to her, 'Hilda, you are bound to be a slatternly wife, being an artist;' and she has answered, laughingly, 'Oh, certainly: you shall see what a slovon I am going to prove myself'

Perhaps it is that Hilda works at her easel during those hours which most ladies spend in their dressing-rooms, paying visits, shopping, or reading novels I don't know But she is no slovon, when I, having come for tea, met her in the hall of a winter evening, in her warm-coloured dress, her trim cuffs and collar, her little silk apron, and, though last not least, the sunshiniest of welcoming smiles. Mr. Winthrop is as kind to me as if he were my brother, and it is chiefly owing to him that I am beginning to succeed as an artist.

I have reason to believe that the cruelty of Hilda's guardian will speedily be exposed, and her property placed in her husband's hands. This will make them very rich indeed, but it cannot make them happier than they are.

They have promised to come with me on a visit to my West Irish mountain home next summer When the lilies are full blown on the blue lake under our cottage gable, I shall have looked in my mother's face, and held little Elsie in my arms.

R. M.



MR. MOPES THE HERMIT.

READERS of 'Tom Tiddler's Ground'—the last Christmas number of 'All the Year Round'—will not have forgotten the very curious introductory chapter, headed 'Picking up Soot and Cinders.' It formed the centre, they will remember, from which the various stories radiated. Mr. Traveller is spending a midsummer day 'down among the pleasant dales and trout streams of a green English county.' After a gossip with the landlord of the little village ale-house at which he has halted, he sets forth on a journey of five miles in quest of a man who is the marvel of the whole country round. This man is a hermit who lives amid soot and cinders, in a house he has allowed to fall into utter ruin and decay, and whose sole clothing is an old blanket fastened with a skewer. In due time Mr. Traveller reaches the dilapidated abode, speaks with its strange occupant, rates him soundly for the slothful and uncleanly life he leads, and undertakes to prove to him, 'through the lips of every chance wayfarer' who comes in at his gate, that in outlawing himself from society, in quitting the habits of civilized life, and in disregarding the laws of common decency, he is a poor weak creature, whose only merit is that of foolishly setting himself up in opposition to the designs of Eternal Providence.

Various visitors arrive who relate their experiences of life. These are all more or less condemnatory of the course adopted by the recluse. Finally, Mr. Traveller, strong in the consciousness that he has utterly routed Mr. Mopes—as he fantastically names his hermit—departs in company with a moralizing tinker, whom he invites to supper. To this act of graceful hospitality he is determined by the exact correspondence of the tinker's opinion with his own relative to the squalid and unproductive life led by the gentleman in the blanket.

All who have read 'Tom Tiddler's Ground' are, of course, familiar with these incidents; but very few are aware that they repose upon a basis of actual fact. Probably, indeed, not one in a hundred would imagine this to be the case; for the introductory chapter, which may be looked upon to some extent as a personal narrative, has all the appearance of being a cleverly arranged prelude to the stories which follow.

How is it possible to believe that such a social anomaly as Mr. Mopes is to be met with in England at the present day? Simeon Stylites was possible in his time; so, no doubt, were the grazing monks of Mesopotamia, whom St. Ephrem panegyrized. We can believe in Apemantus, and understand Timon. But our present problem is more difficult. We are required to realize as a contemporary a man whose skin is encrusted with dirt and smoke, and protected by a skewer-fastened blanket; whose bed is a heap of soot and cinders; whose sole society is the inquisitive stranger who comes to gape at his noxious cell, or the low tramp at-

tracted thither by the hopes of a stray copper and a glass of gin.

And yet, Mr. Mopes is no illusion or creation of the fancy. He really lives, moves, and has his being, much in the manner described by the traveller. The green English county in which he dwells is the county of Hertford. His abode pretty closely resembles the rotting, tumbledown dwelling-place so picturesquely described by the writer in 'Tom Tiddler's Ground;' and the occupant is quite as loosely, not to say indecorously, attired. Finally, Mr. Mopes's real name is L****, and the spot where he resides is about a couple of miles from S********, a station on the Great Northern Railway. If, being in the neighbourhood, you wish to find that spot, you have only to ask the first person you meet and you are sure to be directed to it, for 'Old L****,' as people familiarly call him, is thoroughly well known to every man, woman, and child in the district. And this will surprise no one when it is stated that for twelve long years he has led his present extraordinary life.

In the house he occupies, his father and his grandfather—persons of fair fortune and good position—resided before him; and although somewhat repelling in aspect now, it has evidently been in its day a cheery and commodious dwelling-place.

Even now, indeed, after twelve years of neglect, it is anything but a total ruin. Part of the edifice is of solid-looking red brick, which is in an excellent state of preservation. Another part, which has evidently been added to the other, is of plaster, and this, too, presents a tolerably fair appearance to the eye. The roof, where it can be seen, looks as though it were still water-tight, except perhaps in one or two spots. The place, nevertheless, has a decidedly deserted look about it, and might fairly be taken for a tenement in Chancery, or the country-house of a miser.

The front door, for instance, is partly boarded up, and thus protected from the influences of the weather and the depredations of thieves. The windows are barricaded with stout pieces or logs of rough timber, firmly bound with iron bands, and fastened to the framework by strong rivets; so that the spectator might at first suppose the building had either stood a vigorous siege, or was prepared for one. A fruit tree grows against the side of the house which faces the road; and attached to the wall behind its branches is a pigeon-house; but there are no pigeons in it now.

The outhouses, of which there are several, are far more dilapidated than the main building, though, as they are all tiled, there is, of course, no appearance of the thatch having 'lightly fluttered away on all the winds of all the seasons of the year.' The tiles, however, have in some places slipped away, leaving apertures, through which wind and rain have free entrance. In one case the front wall has entirely fallen out, and a neighbouring fir-tree has fallen with it for company—as if Nature herself languished forth a protest against man's neglect. If the rick-yard is not literally 'hip high in vegetable rankness,' it is certainly overgrown with sprawling vegetation and littered with fragments of ruin. The ricks themselves in an adjoining field are little better than so many dung-heaps, preserving scarcely any trace of their original shape or colour. As Mr. Traveller says, they look for all the world like 'mounds of rotten honeycomb or dirty sponge.'

The house stands a few feet back from the road, what was once, doubtless, a neatly-trimmed lawn intervening. This is now merely a huge patch of ragged grass. In other days, posts and chains protected it from the tread of passing trespassers; now, the chains are 'conspicuous only by their absence,' and a solitary post is left rotting alone. By the side of the dwelling there is a pathway, formerly entered by a gate; but as this gate has long ago gone off guard, the passage is open to any one who feels inclined to enter. The pathway leads to the kitchen and wash-house: in the former of these domestic offices the hermit has taken up his abode. The latter is an outhouse at right angles

to the main edifice, and at the bottom of the pathway. The kitchen is in the building itself, on the left as you enter.

There is a window in the outhouse looking upon the pathway, or rather a casement in two divisions, fastening in the middle, and opening outwards. One division has disappeared; the other is thrown wide open, and has evidently been many years in that position, for immediately in front of it an elder bush has grown, season by season, from the ground beneath, until it is not only higher than the window, but even higher than the outhouse itself. To shut the casement, therefore, would now be impossible, owing to the vegetable impediment which has arisen since it was opened. There is perhaps no feature of the scene more impressive or more suggestive than this. It is at once an exemplification of the activity of nature, and a rebuke to human indolence.

The kitchen has no casements: they have fallen away, or, it may be, have been removed, but the stout iron bars, with which the windows of country houses are often protected, still remain. Behind these bars the hermit holds converse with those who choose to come to see him.

A strange, gloomy place is the cell which this modern anachoret has chosen for his place of abode. As you gaze into it, even if your eyes have not previously been dazzled by lustrous sunshine, or by the summer brightness of trees and fields and flowers—it was a damp and misty day in spring when we visited the place—you have considerable difficulty at first in discerning what is within. You see after a while, however, that it is a small, low-roofed room, with a floor of unequal level, owing probably to the accumulations of dirt; and that its walls are blackened by the smoke of a small coal fire, which for years has filled the place with sooty gloom. There are three common wooden chairs, one tolerably well fitted for service, the others crazy and dilapidated. There is also an ordinary kitchen table, entirely covered with old and dirty wine-bottles. Other wine-bottles, some whole, some broken, are profusely scattered about the floor, with here and there a spirit jar by their side. There is really nothing else in the place.

Nothing? Stay, what is this dark object which is brought out into dull relief by the feeble light of the fire? It is a form as of some one crouching over the flame, and rubbing his skinny, outstretched arms in evident enjoyment of warmth too scant to be kindly, and too uncertain to be genial. You might think him some dusky savage, only half weaned as yet from the wild habits of his native woods; or, perchance, some poor outcast of reason, trembling and shivering lest the indulgence he has obtained by stealth should be harshly terminated by intrusion. He is none of these, however; neither untamed Indian, nor 'poor Tom;' he is the *genus loci*—the hermit himself.

He rises, as he sees we have come to speak with him; drawing himself up hastily, and falling back a step or two from the fireplace, so that the outline of his form can no longer be discerned against the uncertain background of smoky gloom. His eyes, however, shine out brightly, and the eyeballs look strangely white in the midst of the ever-deepening obscurity of the narrow room. But for this we should not know that we were in the presence of a fellow-man, or in the neighbourhood of any living thing.

It is by this time necessary for us to break silence, which we do by politely expressing a hope that he is in the enjoyment of a satisfactory sanitary condition. He abruptly answers that he is very well; trusts we are the same; and then begins a running fire of questions to which we are fain to reply.

'Who are you?' he asks, looking at us through what appears to be an engraver's working microscope, though it may be, for aught we can tell, the glass stopper of a pickle bottle.

We tell him our name and that of our companion.

'Where do you come from?' he asks, very rapidly, and without advancing a step out of the gloom in which his form is lost.

We state that we come from London.

'Do you live there?'

A reply in the affirmative conveys to him the information he requires on this point.

'What do you do?'

One of us following literature, and the other, art, we make the hermit acquainted with these facts.

'And what do you want?' inquires the hermit, evidently very well satisfied with the answers he has hitherto received.

'This gentleman,' I reply, 'wishes to make a sketch of your house; and I should like to have a chat with you, if you have no objection.'

Manifestly the hermit has no objection, for he says (with a sort of pleasant indifference, like a man who is gratified by granting a favour, but who wishes it to be thought that he cares nothing either way about the matter),

'Oh, he may sketch it if he likes; it has often been sketched before'

Then, without seeking for further information respecting us, he makes a comment upon the occupation of one of his visitors, which serves as a means of introducing the conversation that ensues.

But the hermit is not always so soon satisfied. From some visitors he exacts the most minute particulars. He will ask, for instance, where they were born, where their father was born, where their mother was born. Then he will wish to know whether father and mother are still living; and, if dead, where buried, and when. These points settled, he will perhaps ask his visitors whether they are married or single. If the former, the maiden name of wife. 'And where was she born, eh?' 'Her father and mother living?' 'No! Ah! Been married long?' 'Not very long.' 'Any children?' 'One.' 'One! ah! boy or girl?' 'Boy.'

Until the hermit's thirst for information is slaked by these replies, conversation on general subjects is impossible.

Our conversation has, however, begun at once in right good earnest, and it soon rises to the dignity of a set discussion upon the influence of the cheap press. The name of a popular and widely circulated newspaper has been mentioned, and while the hermit shows that, although living out of the world, he is quite familiar with that journal, he makes no scruple of affecting to regard it with superb derision and contempt. Indeed, he expresses his opinion that all newspapers are injurious rather than otherwise to the mass of the people, whom they mislead rather than guide Their invariable result, it would seem, is to excite evil passions, to set class against class, to create discontent in the hearts of the poor, and to disturb the minds of the uneducated. Their proprietors are mercenary; their writers are without principle; they give expression to sentiments they condemn; they declaim against opinions they applaud.

Then the hermit maintains that the great mass of the population, thanks to unjust laws and bad government, are far worse off than they were a couple of centuries ago; that there has been no real progress, except perhaps in medicine, during the last two hundred years; that railways are a delusion; popular enlightenment the merest humbug—he has by this time become emphatic—and sanitary reform a sham. Plagues and the sweating sickness no longer prevail, he admits, but their place has been taken by new and equally fatal diseases, in spite of Commissioners and Boards of Health. Then, too, he maintains, snapping his fingers at statistics, as distorted and unreliable, that the average rate of mortality is higher than it was even a hundred years ago; and that, whereas you cannot look at an old obituary, without finding numerous instances of remarkable longevity recorded, now you find that people hastily drop off, and rot away, long before they have attained to the allotted term of human life.

All this time, it should be remarked, the hermit is, apparently, so nervously apprehensive lest the sentiments he utters should be beyond the comprehension of his visitors, that he constantly stops himself, and inquires, parenthetically, 'Do you understand?' abbreviating the question after a while into 'Do you un—?' and affording thus a hope which is never destined to be realized, that

he will altogether cease soon to put this very superfluous inquiry. For, as may be imagined, his views are so free from transcendental obscurity or æsthetical indistinctness, that the chance of misunderstanding them is wonderfully slight. It is all Lombard Street, indeed, to a China orange, that you will fully apprehend his meaning.

And now it becomes evident that the hermit is getting accustomed to us; that he is losing something of the hesitating nervousness which has at times been visible in his manner; and that he is not displeased with our company. In fact, he has gone so far into the vocabulary of compliment as to say that, although he is bored by some visitors, he is always pleased with the conversation of an intellectual man. As a proof, perhaps, that he means this laudation to strike home, he comes forth from the obscurity in which he has been standing all this time, seats himself upon the window sill, steadies himself by firmly clutching the iron bars, and is at last fairly face to face with us.

It is impossible honestly to assert, when he is thus brought under our very eyes, that the hermit improves upon close acquaintance. While but dimly visible in the background of his cell there is a halo of mystery around him, and his very indistinctness invests him with attributes in harmony with the wild and fantastic life to which he has devoted himself. Imagination overmasters judgment, and you hesitate to believe you are speaking with an ordinary man like yourself. When he comes forth he will present, you fancy, the aspect of a stern and ascetic recluse. His countenance will be grave and severe, there will be no smile upon his lips, no indulgence in his eye. He will walk with slow and measured steps; his gestures will be commanding; and the simple garb in which he is arrayed, will give to his form a dignity that is rarely associated with more ordinary attire.

He comes forth; you see him as he really is; and the sight, it must be confessed, is so far from being a wholesome one, that you are something more than disappointed. For—there is no disguising the fact—the man is dirty, not partially or temporarily dirty, but dirty comprehensively and permanently. The bed of soot and cinders sloping downwards from his fireplace which he used to lie upon has disappeared; so it is to be presumed, that for the sake of softness, he lies now upon a bed of soot alone. His hair is dirty, his scalp is dirty, his face is dirty, his hands and arms are dirty, his body and his legs are dirty, his feet are dirty; in a word, he is dirty all over. And the difficulty of ascertaining this fact is by no means great. For if in other days the hermit was so far extravagant in dress as to indulge himself in a blanket and skewer, he now—from economical motives perhaps—dispenses with the skewer, and retains the blanket alone.

Now a blanket is serviceable enough in its way, and may be employed for a variety of purposes; but when it comes to be used as the substitute for an entire suit of clothes, its shortcomings are at once made evident. The hermit seems to be aware of this, for he continually adjusts and readjusts his one garment, that it may the more effectually perform its office and fulfil the requirements of a too fastidious civilization. But the blanket is but a blanket after all, and cannot by any amount of folding and refolding be made to do duty as coat, waistcoat, and trousers at one and the same time.

Thus, as before remarked, the hermit is not a wholesome sight to look upon. You cannot help feeling that his great primary want is a warm bath, or perhaps a series of warm baths, for a single one would evidently be insufficient to wash this artificial blackamoor white. Not that his skin is absolutely black. It is at present a sort of half-tone—a kind of compromise between soot and smoke — the soot evidently having the best chance of ultimately gaining the upper hand. In the twilight you might perchance mistake him for a Mohican; in the daylight you would say he was a sweep.

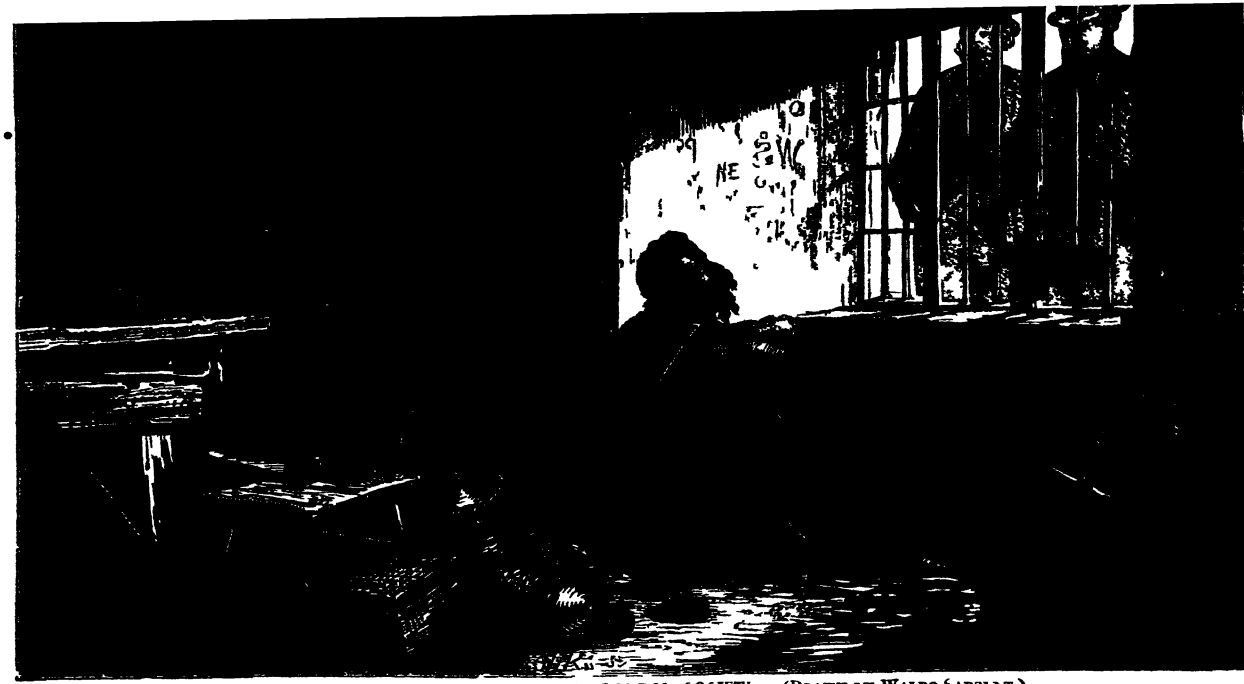
If the warm bath is needed, so also is the stealthy comb that precedes the agile shears. For the hermit's hair is open to the objection of being about as long and as lean as that of a mad artist; and is, moreover, so glued together in places by dirt, that it hangs about in seeming strips as of rope yarn, or clotted ringlet. Against the anchoritical beard and moustache—both in a wild state of vegetation—it would perhaps, in these hirsute days, be treason to utter a syllable.

And what are we to say of the anchoritical countenance? It is not a remarkably handsome one certainly; but on the other hand it is not remarkably ugly. Neither is it of a low type. On the contrary, there is a good deal of intelligence and strength of will indicated in those clearly defined features. The forehead is lofty and well-shaped; the eyes are large and expressive; the nose if somewhat aspiring is solid and satisfactory. But what of these lips that project so heavily from the face, and that seem to tell of the ardent temperament which can brook no restraint upon its strong desires? This is never the lip of a hermit, or, if so, it is a hermit whose cell is not always unsocial, and who does not incessantly occupy himself in mortifying the flesh.

There is no denying it. The hermit is not a hermit of the good old orthodox kind. He does not turn away from his breakfast with ascetic repugnance, or fail in the duty he owes to his dinner. When he wants fresh stores he sends for them; and when his tradesmen want money he pays them by a cheque upon his banker. Fancy a hermit who keeps a banking account! An archbishop who keeps guinea pigs would not seem half so incongruous.

The hermit has evidently been stimulated by our arrival, and by the conversation of which of course he has had the greatest share, and self-satisfaction now shows itself very plainly in his features. He begins to banter us in a friendly, not to say paternal manner; he cracks one or two good-humoured jokes; he laughs aloud, a lusty and full-blooded laugh. Then feeling, as it would seem, more and more sociable and convivial, he asks us if we will take a glass of wine. It is an offer he invariably makes to strangers with whom he is pleased, so we know by this sign that we are among the number. Yet we have heard so much of the state of his glasses, and have seen so much of the state of his cell, that we plead a cold, and respectfully decline the honour of taking wine with him, unusual and difficult as the honour of taking wine with a hermit may be. Our companion, however, in a self-sacrificing and heroic spirit, accepts the offer made him. Hereupon the hermit lights a small dip candle at the fire, in doing which he accidentally strikes his foot against some hard substance, and shows, by certain consequent contortions of feature, that his frame is not proof against pain. He passes into a small ante-room between the kitchen and the wash-house, and occupies himself for a few minutes in the obscurity of that apartment, groping, it would seem, amongst his stores. When he returns, it is as the bearer of a bottle of sherry and a wine-glass. In justice to the hermit's domestic arrangements it must be admitted that the glass was really clean; and in justice to his hospitality, it should be stated that the sherry, according to my companion's testimony, had no graver fault than that of having been uncorked a trifle too long.

At this point the eager air and manner of the hermit indicate his alacrity and readiness for another discussion. He evidently foresees a triumphant opportunity of cutting every inch of ground from beneath our feet, and of leaving us—articles of supererogation not being of his creed—not a leg to stand upon. He is particularly anxious to impress upon me that I am puffed out with intellectual pride—mentally distended by fallacy and assumption. As I am at S******** for the purpose of adding to my stores of knowledge, I do not reject this piece of information—unceremoniously as it may be flung into my wallet—but thankfully accept everything that is



MR MOPES THE HERMIT HOLDING 'LONDON SOCIETY' (DRAWN BY WALDO SARGENT)

offered, and meekly call upon the hermit to proceed.

And he does proceed! He overturns my opinions with ruthless energy, he kicks them when they are down, he pummels them with his two fists; and in a short time they are so bruised and disfigured as to be scarcely recognizable.

For instance, when I happen to express the not very original or startling opinion that England is a free country, he laughs aloud with ineffable contempt, and declares he would rather live in a despotic country.

'As, for example, in France under Louis Napoleon,' I say, with innocent maliciousness.

'Oh! Louis Napoleon's a humbug—I haven't a word to say in his favour,' the hermit replies. 'When I say a despotic country, I mean such a country as Russia.'

Upon this I ask him his reasons, and he unhesitatingly answers, in words which certainly seem as much a reiteration of his already expressed sentiment, as an explanation or defence of it—

'Because the government is a despotism.'

I venture to inquire what there is in a despotism which proves so alluring to him, and he tells me it is its simplicity and its efficiency. Power, instead of being in the hands of the ignorant many, is in the hands of the educated few. The highest men in the country fill the highest offices of state, and consequently the wants of the people are better provided for than they would be if left to the intelligence of the people themselves. As a natural consequence, all goes on easily; the government has no difficulty in carrying out whatever measures it may think desirable, and everybody is satisfied.

Here I venture to remark that this might be the case, and doubtless would be under an ideal despotism, enlightened and paternal; but that it certainly is not the case just now in Russia, where all does not go on easily, where the peasants are agitated, the students refractory, the nobility discontented, and society, in a word, completely disorganized. Hereupon the hermit candidly admits that he refers to the Russia of Nicholas rather than to that of Alexander, of which he knows but little; a confession of ignorance he would have been spared, as I cannot help thinking, if he had looked a little more closely into those misguiding newspapers of which he has so poor an opinion.

Then by a gradual transition we advance upon far more delicate ground. The hermit mentions that of the many visitors he receives in the course of the year, many are zealous Protestants, who endeavour to convert him to their way of thinking, but that he invariably opposes such a bold front to their arguments, that nothing comes of their attempt. He adds, that although not a Roman Catholic, he leans towards Roman Catholicism—is, in fact, a determined Tractarian.

I cannot refrain from expressing my surprise at this announcement, or of thinking that St Barnabas would be rather startled if this Hertfordshire convert suddenly made his appearance in Knightsbridge *en convertant*. But the hermit, in his turn, seems surprised that I should see anything remarkable in his confession, and goes on to assure me that his religious views are quite in harmony with his political views. He then informs me he is a Tory—not a follower of Lord Derby and Mr Disraeli—but a Tory of the good old stamp. Lest this should perplex me, he enters upon an explanation of his meaning. He tells me that a Tory originally meant, in other days, a man whose guiding principle in all things was, 'Do unto others as you would they should do unto you;' a curious piece of information, which I recommend to the attention of all students of history.

Then he tells me that the Tories, even when newly formed as a party, gave a proof of their political sagacity and patriotic enlightenment, by supporting the cause of King James II. As this illustration does not by any means impress me, the hermit begins an eloquent vindication of the conduct of that cruelly-treated monarch. Never, it appears, was there a sovereign more magnanimous or more

enlightened, more anxious to advance his country's welfare, or more intent upon furthering the cause of true religion.

This comes upon me like a small clap of thunder, and I can only at first reply that these views are strangely opposed to those of Macaulay. But at mere mention of that name, the hermit loses all patience, and bestows more abusive epithets upon the departed historian than I should care to repeat, or the readers of 'London Society' to be informed of At this I am stunned again, and when the hermit assures me that virtuous King James never broke the law, anxious as he might be to advance the interests of his religion, I allude quite timidly to his treatment of the universities, in contradiction of that statement. But the hermit tells me I may make my mind quite easy upon this point, and that I may consider all historical documents which do not prove his case to be the merest forgeries, and as I am getting cold in the feet, and feel my argumentative power growing damp and spongy, I admit I am vanquished, and meekly lay down my arms

That I do so evidently gratifies the hermit, for it is his desire to be regarded as a conqueror over all kinds of opponents. It is easy to see, indeed, that he likes to be thought superior to the common run of mankind, and that he strives to show he has a vast amount of wisdom stowed away under his dirt and his blanket, and that though he has abandoned the world, the world cannot very well afford to abandon him. For he tells me somewhat exultingly, that he never seeks out any one—it is his visitors who seek out him.

'I have had as many as twelve thousand in one year,' he adds, 'and as many as two hundred and forty in one day. I counted them and made a note of the numbers. I dare say, now, you think you see a good deal of the world, but I can tell you (do you un——?) that I see more of it than you can dream of. I have spoken here with the very highest in the land and with the very lowest. They are all as one to me. I adapt my conversation to their capacity and station. The other day I had some of the London swell mob here, and every day I have no end of tramps.' (Three were then loitering about the entrance of the pathway, and to these he afterwards gave coppers according to his custom.) 'I can talk slang with a thief, and religion with a clergyman. I'm not afraid of talking with any one.'

Though the hermit thus boasted of his superiority over most men, it was curious to observe that he was by no means indifferent to the opinion of others, but, on the contrary, decidedly anxious to stand well with the world. He was terribly annoyed, for instance, at the account given of him in 'Tom Tiddler's Ground,' and took pains to point out to me some few inaccuracies in Mr Traveller's narrative.

'I need not tell you,' he said, 'that the artist, and M. François Thierry, and the carpenter, and Miss Kinnneens, are all fictitious personages, for that any sensible man must see; for himself; but I solemnly assure you that no such conversation as that said to have occurred between Mr. Traveller and myself ever took place here, and that, therefore, every line is the merest invention In fact,' he added, 'I will go so far as to express my deliberate opinion that Mr. Traveller never came here at all, but drew his picture entirely from hearsay.'

Then, too, at parting, the hermit evidently was anxious that our interview should leave a favourable impression upon my mind.

'You'll admit,' he said, as he offered me his index finger in exchange for my outstretched hand, 'that I have fairly met every argument you have made use of, that there is a great deal to be said on both sides, and that I have given you some new ideas upon old subjects' And he affably bade me adieu.

One circumstance very much struck me. The hermit never attempted to defend his strange mode of existence, or to recommend its

adoption by others. He said—less in answer to my questions than to my thoughts—that he was compelled to lead the life he at present leads. It was the only means he had of escaping the persecution of relatives What magic charm there was in his blanket and dirt which enabled him to counteract the influence of those relatives he did not explain, nor did I inquire, for there was a hesitation in his manner when speaking upon this point which forcibly suggested to me the idea of insincerity He faltered like a man who tells a story that he feels will not be believed. And it should be noted that he seemed quite aware of the interpretation likely to be placed upon his present mode of life by those who are specially interested in his conduct

'I have made no will,' he said, 'and of course it would be of no use to make one now; it would inevitably be set aside.'

I could not help thinking, however, that if presumptive evidence were wanted for the purpose of disproving the charge he made against his relatives, it was to be found in the fact that those relatives take no steps, apparently, to prevent him from leading his present extraordinary life

In the neighbourhood, too, no importance is attached to the statements he makes in explanation of his conduct. I do not know what the opinion is of the landlord of the 'Peal of Bells,' and perhaps there might be some difficulty in finding that sententious and contemplative ale-house keeper; but the landlord of the Railway Inn at S********, who is almost equally sententious and contemplative, and who is evidently well acquainted with the hermit's antecedents, discredits the story of persecution altogether He will tell you, as you sit in his neat little sanded parlour, and listen to his quaint gossip, that he has known Mr. L**** for years, and that he knew his father before him. He will add, that even as a boy the hermit was remarkably froward and self-willed, and that as he grew in years he became even more averse to restraint.

Then he will relate an anecdote in support of these assertions. He will tell you how the hermit would shut himself up in his room and resolutely refuse to come forth, when he lived with near relatives years before. How food was placed outside his door, accordingly, by those relatives. How, by way of a compromise to mere conventional arrangements, he did not object to eat what was thus supplied to him; but, concession ending there, pertinaciously refused to surrender the plates and dishes upon which his meals had been placed. How, as a natural consequence, those plates and dishes accumulated in his room until there was not a single piece of table crockeryware to be found in any other part of the house.

When you have heard this and similar stories, and reflected upon the difficulty of carrying on a household with an inmate prone to indulge in such eccentricities, you will perhaps form your own opinion as to the real cause of the hermit's present unsocial mode of existence.

Whatever may be that cause, whether it be the persecution of relatives, a capricious and quarrelsome temper, some singular form of madness, or mere morbid love of notoriety, the fact remains the same

Here is a man who is still young—he is scarcely middle-aged—who, if not a profound scholar, is at least well educated, who is conversant with the habits of good society, and who can express himself in well-chosen and thoughtful language; who has a fair competence, and what was once a pleasant home, and who might take a place among his fellow-men at once dignified, honourable, and useful. We find him, instead, huddled up in a blanket, grovelling in a noisome kitchen, throwing away his income upon the idle tramp or the lazy vagrant, and exhibiting himself as a curiosity to all who choose to gaze upon him.

It is impossible not to feel that here are rich gifts rendered profitless, and a life that might be fruitful in results utterly running to waste.

Let us be charitable in our judgment, however. Whether the man would delude others, or is himself deluded, he is equally worthy of our pity.

E. C.

MAY IN LONDON.

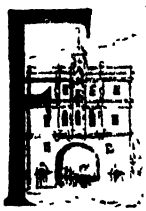
'Tis the merry month of May.'—CHAUCER.

MONTH of sunshine, mirth, and flowers,
Genial airs, and gracious showers;
Beautiful and radiant May,
Thou art Nature's holiday!
Though in populous city pent,
We are wont to be content
With thy town aspèct and dress,
Yet we do not love thee less
Than the hind who tracks thee out
By thy cuckoo's wandering shout;
By thy hedgerow's clustering bloom,
By thy violet's faint perfume;
Golden cowslip, primrose pale,
Scattered through each verdant vale;
And thy smile so warm and bright,
Turning saddest hues to light!
Though our very souls are sick
Of this wilderness of brick,
And we may not hope to trace
Half thy beauty, half thy grace,
Through the dun and murky screen
Here, that veils thy glorious mien;
Though we look for thee in vain
As becomes thy woodland reign;
Flower-crowned brow, and vesture green,
That bespeak the sylvan queen;—
Yet, by many a sign, e'en here
We can feel when thou art near;
Scent far off thy dewy wreath,
Taste thy pulse-enlivening breath;
Stealing sweets but to dispense
To the world-worn wanderer's sense,
Sweeter spells that call him back
On a long, untrodden track,
Which, ere yet his heart was wrung,
Oft he traced when life was young:
And though his bliss is dashed with pain,
He lives that sweet May month again,
And feels his heart with yearnings glow
He thought had perished years ago!

ALARIC A. WATTS.

LONDON MEMORIES:

No. I.—Old Fleet Street.



LUDGATE.

FROM the foot of Ludgate Hill to Temple Bar may be a space of eight hundred yards or less, yet it is large enough to hold the memories of as many years. Since London was a city, its liberty of Fleet Street, in the ward of Farringdon Without, has been a notability. As the direct highway of communication between the City and the palace, the parliament, law-courts, and woolstaple of Westminster, kings and queens have traversed and sojourned in it; lords, spiritual and temporal, have built mansions in it; ermined judges and coifed serjeants-at-law on their mules and palfreys, mail-clad knights on their destriers, Flemish merchants preceding strings of laden hackneys, rows of burgesses in furred robes pacing with civic petitions, files of armed soldiers marching to music with flags flying in the van of a triumph or an obsequy, have all worn its stones. Its area has afforded scope for revolutionary outbreak, as when, in the reign of Richard II., the furious rabble of Kent and Essex rushed down it to pillage the Savoy Palace; of social jealousies, as when, in the reign of Henry VI., the townsmen of the ward and the gownsmen of the Inns of Court fought out 'a great fray' therein, in which the queen's attorney-general was slain; for the execution of judicial sentences, as when, in the same reign, Eleanor Duchess of Gloucester did penance for her sorceries, by walking 'with a taper of waxe of two pound in hir hande through Fleete Streete, hoodlesse (save a kerchefe), to Paul's, where she offered hir taper at the high altar;'* or for theologico-political demonstration, as when, in 1679, during the agitation that preceded the passing of the Duke of York's Exclusion Bill, effigies of the pope, the devil, cardinals, and superiors of the chief monastic orders were carried in state to Temple Bar, and there burnt, amid the blaze of fireworks and the blare of horns. Into most of its houses the great plague-angel entered, and touched some victim. Well-nigh adown its whole length the Great Fire winged its devouring flight.

There is scarcely an inch of this soil without its memorial in history. Let us place ourselves under the guidance of some wandering Jew, Cartophilus, Ahasuerus, or by whatsoever name he may be known, whose sleepless eyes have for ever pursued the vicissitudes of Old Fleet Street, at whose summons its ghost will resume its material tenement. From a score of veracious chronicles, the work of such necromancers, beginning with that of Matthew Paris, and ending with that of Peter Cunningham, have been disinterred the following memoranda.

The City of London proper, as it stood in the middle ages, was encircled by a strong wall, pierced with divers gates, and moated with a deep fosse. The gate of Ludgate, by which the citizens had egress westward — a quaint structure adorned with the effigies of King Lud and his successors — stood a short distance below the brow of the hill which bears its name. It was used as a debtor's prison since the close of the fourteenth century. The wall, in this part of its course, ran in a line parallel to that of the present Farringdon and Bridge Streets, till it terminated on the river's bank. Immediately outside the gate we cross the fosse or town ditch by a drawbridge. Passing the Bailey, where the chamberlains of the City formerly held their courts, we come to Fleet Lane. Here, as early as the first year of Richard I., was a gaol, some representative of which lasted until our own day. The rebels under Wat Tyler burst open and burnt it.

* Stowe's 'Annals.'

A second structure perished in the Great Fire; and a third met with a kindred fate in the Gordon riots of 1780. In these dungeons, for sundry political and religious offences, have lingered Lord Surrey the poet, Hooper, bishop and martyr, Donne, divine and satirist, Prynne the antiquary, and Penn the Quaker. The Star Chamber's victims generally were here confined. Among the ignobler occupants were, according to fiction, Sir John Falstaffe, and, according to fact, the licentious Wycherley and the turbulent Savage. In the last century the cruelties practised on the prisoners excited public indignation, and became the subject of judicial inquiry. A reputation of a different, yet not less scandalous character hangs over the now deserted area, once known as the precinct or rules of the Fleet. There, until the middle of the last century, at any hour of the day or night was to be found 'a squalid, profligate figure, clad in a tattered plaid nightgown, with a fiery face,'* a disfrocked parson, who, for a consideration of gin and tobacco, was ready to link in matrimonial bonds any who came to him, without going through the preliminary ceremony of banns, or asking the consent of parents and guardians. His good offices have been put in requisition by runaway couples of all ranks and ages—sometimes a gallant youth and faithful maiden, honourable refugees from the constraint of an obdurate father or stepmother; more frequently a scoundrelly adventurer and a romantic school-girl of rank, the besotted victim of his designs on her fortune.

The prison walls were washed by the river Flete. A broad, and as its name implies, a rapid stream this. Issuing from Hampstead Heath, it flowed through what are now the suburbs of Kentish and Camden Towns; was spanned by a bridge called Battle, in memory of an encounter of Alfred with the Danes, on the site of the modern King's Cross; a little further on, took the names of the River of Wells, as it received the tributes of Bagnigge and kindred springs, and of Turnmill Brook, from its utility; was again bridged over at the bottom of Holborn Hill, down which the Old Bourne rushed to meet it, and finally emptied itself into the Thames. An anchor found some years since near Battle Bridge evidences the ancient navigability of the Flete for two or three miles upward. It was so wide and deep within the memory of men living in 1307, that ten or twelve ships, laden with sea-coal, could sail up it as far as Oldbourne Bridge, but at that period had become so narrowed by the erection of wharves on its banks, and the diversion of its waters to turn the Templars' mills at Baynard's Castle, that the Earl of Lincoln petitioned the King's Council for its cleansing. Some amelioration of its condition was the result, but it never recovered its old glory, and sank by degrees into a noisome kennel, under the title of Fleet Ditch, which was happily vaulted over in 1733, when the Fleet Market was planned. A bridge of some sort must always have spanned its channel at this point. The most noteworthy was erected by John Wells, Mayor of the City, in 1431, who caused his own name, 'embraced by angels,'* to be graven on the coping. Forty years afterwards the inhabitants set up a cistern of spring water thereupon. After the Fire, which destroyed the old bridge, another was built, which remained until 1765.

Crossing the river, we enter the street which bears its name. Immediately on the left is ground consecrated to the holy St. Bridget, or St. Bride. In oldest time her well lay here, the gracious effluence of whose waters has haply cured many a credulous, woe-weary pilgrim of his ills ghostly and bodily. Hard by was a church, where such an one might pay his vows of thanksgiving for deliverance. 'Of old time a small thing' was this church, as Stowe tells us; but by the piety and wealth of Master William Viner, Warden of the Fleet Prison in 1480, it was greatly enlarged. His punning monogram of a vine with grapes and leaves was wrought thereon in stone. Divers

* Pennant's 'London.'

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

spoliations were committed on the ancient edifice ere the Great Fire completed its ruin. Sir Christopher Wren's wand restored it to more than its old beauty, and bestowed on it the second steeple in the metropolis. In the churchyard are buried Wynkyn de Worde, printer, Lord Buckhurst, and Richard Lovelace, poets, and Samuel Richardson, novelist. At a house overlooking the same spot John Milton temporarily resided.

Near here, on the north side, the Bishop of St. David's had his London inn or mansion. Where is now Bride Lane stood from the time of the Conquest a royal palace Parts of it were destroyed in 108-, and subsequently, to furnish stones for erecting St. Paul's Church; but as late as the reign of Henry III. the building was still sufficiently large to accommodate the King's Court, Parliament, and Tribunal of Justice. It gradually fell into decay, as the Palace of Westminster increased in size and beauty, and lay in ruins until 1522, when Henry VIII. restored it to temporary splendour for the reception of the retinue which attended the Emperor Charles V Hurriedly, but sumptuously, a fair new palace was upraised, having a gallery of communication over the Fleet with the Monastery of the Black Friars, where the emperor himself was lodged In this new Palace of Bridewell Henry afterwards held frequent courts and councils. There it was that the great synod of divines met to discuss the validity of his marriage with the virtuous and hapless Katharine. There he summoned a special assembly of nobles and commoners to hear his own specious argument on this theme. There, for the last time, he and his queen dwelt together as man and wife, on the night before the court was held at the Black Friars to pronounce their marriage void. Twenty-four years after, behold the palace handed over by Edward VI. to the Mayor and citizens for a House of Industry and Correction. Thenceforward, to the idle courtier with curling locks, ruffling it in slashed sleeves and purfled doublet, frittering his hours in antechamber gossip, succeeded the idle 'prentice with close-cropped poll, in coarse prison garb, picking oakum with unnatural diligence under pressure of whipcord. Bridewell was subsequently devoted almost exclusively to female delinquents; and Hogarth's fourth scene of 'The Harlot's Progress' is accordingly laid there

Advancing, we pass on the left the inn of another Right Reverend Father, my Lord Bishop of Salisbury. The court-yard or quadrangle still preserves its memory. The mansion was in the sixteenth century made over to the Sackvilles; and Lord Buckhurst, afterwards Earl of Dorset, here wrote the tragedy of 'Ferrex and Porrex.' When the old house decayed its barn was turned into a theatre, called Salisbury Court Theatre, which stood until the Fire. The site then took the name of Dorset Court, and on another portion of it Wren built a new theatre, called 'the Duke of York's, or Dorset Gardens', of which Sir William Davenant was the lessee, and whose walls have echoed to the sonorous voice of Betterton. John Dryden and John Locke had houses in the same quadrangle.

In Shoe Lane, opposite, was the workhouse to which the body of Thomas Chatterton was borne after his suicide, and in the burying-ground adjoining which it was interred. At the south side of Shoe Lane a water conduit was erected, in 1471, by the executors of Sir William Eastfield, mayor, deceased. The water was conveyed from Paddington in leaden pipes. A few years afterwards, the inhabitants of the street, worthily grateful for the gift, added a cistern to the conduit, and 'builded on the same a faire tower of stone, garnished with images of St. Christopher on the top and angels round about lower downe, with sweet-sounding bells before them, whereupon, by an engine placed in the tower, they divers houres of the day and night chymed such an hymne as was appointed.'* This standard, as it was

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

called, gave place to a larger about a century later. At Peterborough Court beyond was once the inn of the bishop of that see. At Wine-Office Court, Goldsmith had lodgings for a short term. At Crane Court, in a large mansion built by Wren, the Royal Society held its meetings during the greater part of the last century. The Society of Arts took its rise at a library in this court.

On the left we now come to the far-famed White Friars. Here the white-hooded brethren of the Blessed Mary of Mount Carmel were established in 1241 by Sir Richard Gray, a knight of a noble house. Their church was rebuilt for them by Hugh Courtney, Earl of Devonshire, in 1350, and received divers additions in succeeding reigns. Many a Gray of Codnor and Wilton, and many a Courtney, lie buried under the soil of the ancient choir. The friars owned much of the land hereabouts; among other places the hostel of Bolton Town, the name of which still maintains a corrupt existence. At the general dissolution of monasteries the Carmelites surrendered their house and church The hall, or refectory of the former was turned into a theatre. In the 'Friary House' John Selden long lived 'in a conjugal way with the Countess of Kent,'* and there died in 1654. Stowe mentions that on the site of the old monastery were 'many fair houses builded, lodgings for noblemen and other.' In the vicinity of these sprung up many houses, anything but fair, and intended for any but noble men. The precinct of the White Friars was, from early times, a sanctuary for criminals and debtors. The accident often survives the essence, and the dissolution of this sanctity had no effect upon its odour. Felons, outlaws, rogues and vagabonds of every description, flocked to this place of refuge, which soon took the popular name of Alsatia, probably from its resemblance to the debateable land of Alsace, on the French frontier. Lombard Street (where the printing office of Messrs. Bradbury and Evans—formerly the George Tavern—is situate), was, no doubt, christened by debtors in mockery of their wealthy creditors. What was originally a house of prayer became a den of thieves; and Sir Walter Scott's Nigel must have been the only gentleman ever seen in the place. The law and its myrmidons were set at defiance. 'Amid a rabble so desperate no peace-officer's life was in safety. At the cry of "Rescue!" bullies, with swords and cudgels, and termagant hags, with spits and broomsticks, poured forth by hundreds; and the intruder was fortunate if he escaped back into Fleet Street hustled, stripped, and pumped upon. Even the warrant of the Chief Justice of England could not be executed without the help of a company of musketeers.'* The besom of the Great Fire did not utterly sweep clean this Augean stable of pollution, but what it failed to do was at last completed by a statute passed in the 8th & 9th Willam III.

Ere we part from this neighbourhood, let us cast an eye at White Friars Street, previously known as Water Lane. There, at the sign of the Harrow, lived John Filby, tailor, unmortalized as the maker of Oliver Goldsmith's 'bloom-coloured coat'

Within earshot of the lawless turbulence of Alsatia, the grave officers of the law, judges, and serjeants, established their guild. Here, and in the kindred inn beside Chancery Lane, we find them settled since the fifteenth century. The inn, as a corporation, remains, but in this its ancient home not a single brother now dwells.

Thence till beyond the Bar is the liberty of the Temple. In the early part of the reign of Henry II., the knights of Solomon's Temple removed hither from Holborn. Here, in 1185, they erected the Round Church, whose Norman doorway, columns of Purbeck marble, and tombs of red-cross knights, are among the most cherished art-monuments yet spared to us in London. Strangest of all anomalies, this brotherhood of soldier-priests, pilgrims

* Anthony A'Wood.

* Macaulay's History of England, vol. i.



FLEET STREET A HUNDRED YEARS AGO.
DRAWN BY WILLIAM M'CONNELL.

and knights-errant, regular Canons, and irregular freebooters, Cœlebses and Lotharios, the terror alike of Islam and Christendom, and, save the Order of Jesus, perhaps the most powerful confederation that the world ever saw, maintained itself here against all aggression for upwards of two centuries, and grew fat on the fairest lands of England. Here, so renowned was the stronghold, would fearful men commit their treasure to the keeping of the Templars Here, when at the order of Henry III., Hubert de Burgh's deposit was surrendered, were 'found, besides ready money, vessels of gold and silver unpraiseable, and many precious stones, which would make all men wonder if they knew the worth of them'* A season of panic, however, came at last. Fortunate were those depositors who withdrew their balance before 1283, when Edward I., under pretext of inspecting his mother's jewels, suddenly entered the bank with a posse of officers, and lightened those coffers which he chanced to find to the tune of 1000*l*. Even a Plantagenet king would scarcely have ventured on such an outrage, had not the downfall of the bankers been manifestly impending. In 1308 the Templars fell with a great crash, and their lands changed owners. The Earls of Lancaster and Pembroke, and the younger Despenser had each a brief tenure of the New Temple, as it was still called; but its next permanent proprietors were the Knights of the Hospital of St. John of Jerusalem. They, however, having a fine seat of their own at Clerkenwell, never cared to live here, and shortly after the king's grant, leased the property to the students of the common law. They continued to be its lessees until the dissolution of the Hospital, when they obtained a grant in fee.

A graver brotherhood than their predecessors in coats of mail, these Templars in gowns of stuff and silk, yet not without their genial side, as the rules laid down for their government abundantly testify. What a shout of indignant protest would resound throughout the precinct from King's Bench Walk to Devereux Court, were the revival of the old régime attempted!—if the decrees made in the reign of Elizabeth were still in force, 'that no hatt, or long, or curled hair be worn, or any gowns but such as be of a sad colour that no fellow of this house wear his beard above three weeks' growth, upon pain of XX*s* forfeiture: and that none go in cloaks, hatts, bootes, and spurrs, but when they ride out of the town!'* Rare doings at Christmas in the way of banquetings and mummings distinguished the Temple above all the Inns of Court. It was, doubtless, on some such occasion that Geoffrey Chaucer, when a student, so far forgot himself as to beat a Franciscan friar in Fleet Street, and thereby incur a fine of two shillings. The Lord of Misrule seems to have been a conscientious functionary, as one may gather from the limitations of his power which it was found needful to enforce in 1632—'That there be no drinking of healths, nor any wine or tobacco offered or sold within the House—that there shall not be any knocking with boxes, or calling aloud for gamesters, and that there be not any going abroad out of the circuit of this House, or without any of the gates, by any lord or other gentleman to break open any house or chamber.' At the magnificent Christmas entertainment given here in the 4th of Elizabeth, Robert Dudley, afterwards Earl of Leicester, was 'Constable Marshal,' and the 'Master of the Game,' was Christopher Hatton, subsequently the Terpsichorean Chancellor immortalized by Gray—

> 'My grave Lord Keeper led the brawls,
> The seals and maces danced before him.'

Rather a tedious business one of those banquets would seem to us. 'After the first course is served in,' we read, 'the constable marshall cometh into the hall, arrayed with a fair rich compleat harneys, white, and bright, and gilt, with a nest of fethers of all colours upon his crest and helm, and a gilt poleaxe in his hand,' accompanied by divers other officers and musicians. 'Which

* Stowe's 'Survey.'

* Dugdale's 'Origines Judiciales.'

persons with the drums, trumpets, and musick, go three times about the fire. Then the constable marshall, after two or three curtesies made, kneeleth down before the Lord Chancellor; behind him the lieutenant, and they kneeling, the constable marshall pronounceth an oration of a quarter of an hour's length, thereby declaring the purpose of his coming.' Various other ceremonies are then gone through, among which is the entry of a 'huntsman into the hall, with a fox, and a purse-net with a cat, both bound at the end of a staff, and with them nine or ten couple of hounds, with the blowing of hunting-hornes And the fox and cat are by the hounds set upon and killed beneath the fire. This sport finished,' it is satisfactory to learn that the second course was served. The entertainment is brought to a close by 'the antientest master of the revells, who singeth a song with the assistance of others there present' These jollities take place at the midday dinner. After supper the fun waxes faster. 'The constable marshall presents himself with drums afore him, mounted upon a scaffold, borne by four men, and goeth three times round about the harthe, crying out aloud, "A lord! a lord!" Then he descendeth, and goeth to dance, &c And after, he calleth his court every one by name, one by one, in this manner, "Sir Randle Rackabite, of Rascall Hall, in the County of Rakehell —Sir Morgan Munchance, of Much Monkery, in the County of Mad Mopery," &c. This done, the Lord of Misrule addresseth himself to the banquet, which ended with some minstralsye, mirth, and dancing, every man departeth to rest.'* Mighty pretty diversions these to vary the monotony of 'Grand Mootes' and 'Vacation Exercises'—not to be sneered at by opera-and-ball-going Templars of those degenerate days, if by no stretch of imagination to be deemed mirthful.

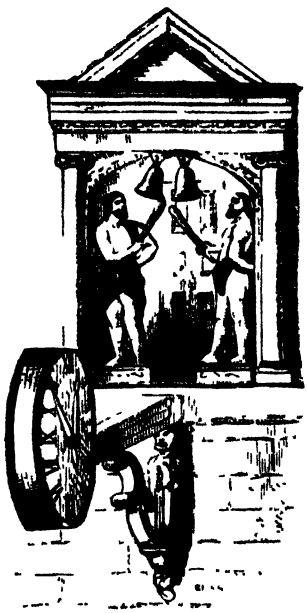
The Temple suffered grievously from the wanton violence of the rebels of Kent and Essex, in 1381, who burnt the houses and books of the tenant, in hatred to the landlord, Robert Hailes, Lord Prior of St. John's. The division of the House into Inner and Middle took place subsequent to this event. Of the former, Beaumont the dramatist, and Browne the pastoral poet, were members; of the latter, Sir Walter Raleigh, Sir John Davies, John Ford, and Richard Congreve. In the Temple Church are buried John Selden, whose chambers were in Paper Buildings, and Oliver Goldsmith, who ended his days in his lodgings at Brick Court. The office of Master, or Preacher at the Church, reckons Hooker and Usher among its occupants

On both sides of the street we now look on classic ground Samuel Johnson's chambers, in Inner Temple Lane, Bolt Court, and Johnson's Court, and the tavern where he set up his oracle, are well-worn places of pilgrimage Here Goldsmith made Boswell so jealous by his vain-glorious boast of intimacy with the chief's household: 'I go to Miss Williams!' There the boy Samuel Rogers, verses in hand, came to sue for a generous criticism, tremblingly raised the knocker, but fled before the terrible creak of the approaching despot's shoes. Yonder room in the Mitre has echoed to the autocrat's sententious dogmas, the pregnant wisdom of Burke, the fine fancy and uncouth blunders of Goldsmith, the solemn egotism of Reynolds, and the broad jests of Garrick. According to a doubtful tradition, the voice of one greater than all these has sounded in the Mitre—that of William Shakspere, whose 'rime' of 'From the rich Lavinian shore,' is said to have been composed there

Fetter, anciently Fewtar's Lane, the whilome haunt of fewtars or idle people, lies next in our path. In later times it could boast of a denizen anything but idle, Thomas Hobbes. In its neighbourhood were gardens within Stowe's memory. At both its extremities, scaffolds for public executions were erected so late as the last century. A church dedicated to St. Dunstan occupied the adjoining site from an early period. At its walls the Great Fire stopped its ravages on this side of

* Dugdale.

the street. In a house adjoining this church the poet Drayton long resided. Outside St. Dunstan's clock, which projected over the footway,



were erected, in 1671, the figures of two savages, which struck the quarters with their clubs. They remained here until the building of the new church some thirty years ago. The residence of Master Robert Clifford, deceased, on the western side of the church was, in the 18th Edward III., leased by his widow, Dame Isabel, to the students of the common law, and has ever since remained in their hands. New Street, known since 1377 as Chancelar, or Chancery Lane, comes next. Its history lies not within the scope of this survey, but we may mention that its change of name arose from the transfer which was then made of the House of Jewish Converts to the Master of the Rolls of Chancery. There being no more Jews in England to convert, after their expulsion by Edward I., the house gradually became empty, and was finally turned into the Rolls Court. In a house at the corner of this lane, Abraham Cowley was born.

Temple Bar has given its name to the remaining portions of Fleet Street, on either side. Memories throng around us here in such crowds, that but a few can gain vent. The liberty of Farringdon Without, since its first creation, was always bounded hereabouts by bars of some sort—in early times composed of wooden posts linked together with chains. The Strand Street, with its liberties of the Duchy of Lancaster and the Savoy, has immemorially been held to commence there. The view from the Bars, during the middle ages, comprehended the Inns of the Bishops of Exeter, Bath, Chester, and Worcester, and the Savoy Palace of the Duke of Lancaster, each with a garden sloping to the river's edge; the wells of St. Clement, and Holy Well; the Stone Cross where the Judges used to hold pleas; the Chancery Inns of Lyons and St. Clement; the churches of St. Clement Danes and St. Mary; the chapel of the Holy Ghost (near Milford Lane); the Convent Garden of Westminster Abbey, and the Woods of Long Acres, where the Lollards took refuge. The road was so thoroughly a river-side beach, that it was described, in 1315, as blocked up by thickets and bushes. Edward II., Edward III., and Richard II., levied tolls for paving it, and by degrees it became lined on either side by stately mansions. The Earls of Essex, the Dukes of Norfolk, the Earls of Arundel, the Earls of Salisbury, the Earls of Bedford, and the family of Drury, have each left a name there.

The bars and chains* gave place to a 'house of timber,' with a narrow gateway, which, surviving the Fire, was reached by the succeeding tide of renovation. On the summits of both the wooden and the stone structures have been spiked the ghastly heads of traitors—English, Scotch, and Irish—Cavalier, Roundhead, and Jacobite. Monarch after monarch, from Elizabeth to Victoria,

* Strype's Stowe.

has sent a herald to demand entrance at the closed gates, and received on their threshold the keys of the City, from kneeling mayors and aldermen.

In the vicinity of Temple Bar has hived a swarm of literary celebrities. At the Devil Tavern was the great Apollo Room, where Ben Jonson drank canary, and capped verses with his fellow wits; where, in later days, Addison, Swift, and Garth dined together, and, later still, Johnson gave a splendid supper to Mrs. Lennox and the Ivy Lane Club. In the reign of Anne, the Kit-Kat Club, under the secretariat of Jacob Tonson, held its meetings in Shire Lane (now Lower Serle's Place). At the Cock alehouse, Samuel Pepys 'drank, and eat a lobster, and sang, and was mightily merry,' with Mrs. Pierce and Mrs. Knipp. At Dick's Coffee-house, Steele (who lived, and wrote the 'Tatler,' in Shire Lane) often drank a mug of ale. Thence, after reading in the newspaper an article, which his frenzied brain misconstrued into a satire on himself, rushed Cowper with the intention of committing suicide. At George's Coffee-house Shenstone used to read the news. At the Temple Exchange Coffee-house, Goldsmith used to write his letters.

A word, ere this imperfect chronicle of Old Fleet Street closes, touching the vicissitudes that have come over its denizens. In the middle ages we find the guild of hat-workers settled here, whose members were signally worsted in an attempt which they made during the reign of Edward II., to obtain protection for their trade. At the same time, or later, we hear of the alewives, or breweresses, of Fleet Street, being in high repute. Wax-work exhibitors have fixed their shows here from the sixteenth century downwards. Bankers, represented by Messrs. Child, Hoare, and their brethren, have kept their treasure here since the reign of Charles II. But above all other professions, literature, from the first introduction of printing, evinced a preference for Fleet Street, which it has never withdrawn. Richard Pynson had a printing house at Temple Bar in 1493. Wynkyn de Worde lived at the sign of the Falcon (now Falcon Court), and printed the 'Frutye of Tymes at the sygne of the Sonne, in Fleete Streete' Later on, Edmund Curll published at the Dial and Bible, by St. Dunstan's church. Yet later, John Murray, the elder, sent forth 'Childe Harold,' from Falcon Court. At the sign of some celestial or terrestial object in this microcosm of Fleet Street, has been imprinted many a rare black-letter folio, beloved of bibliomaniacs. Every form of serial, from the one-paged broadside to the many-sheeted monthly, has been issued from the Fleet Street press. The genius and toil of four centuries have hallowed the precinct. A millennium hence, when the records of the nineteenth century come to be incorporated with the Chronicles of Old Fleet Street, it may be that many now among the latest will not then be the least of its literary shrines.

ROUND ABOUT LONDON:

City Men going to Business.

THERE is not in the whole scheme of London society, with its multifarious plans and arrangements, a daily proceeding more remarkable than that denoted by the title of this paper. City Men—who are they? Where are their homes? How far do they go to business in the morning, and to their own domiciles later in the day? How do they travel? In the old times, the distinction between the City Man and the West-ender was not very marked, for the nobles lived among the traders in the City, more unscrupulously than they do now. The trader, but not *as* a trader, now leaves his desk or his counter when his day's labours are ended, and bends his thoughts towards regions where gentility if not nobility is to be found. He is 'Mr' in the City, but 'Esq' at his home, his daughters call him 'papa,' and know very little concerning the City and its usages, City churches they seldom or never visit, and of the Bank some of them affect to know less than of that *other* bank 'whereon the wild thyme blows.'

It is curious to trace the changes in the mode and degree to which City Men have assorted with the aristocracy in the metropolis. Without going quite so far back as the time of our blue-skinned ancestors, we shall find the metamorphoses remarkable enough. In Fitzstephen's time, in the twelfth century, the nobles and the traders together lived in the great arteries of London, such as Watling Street, Chepe or Cheapside, and Bishopsgate Street, while groups of dealers in certain commodities, congregating somewhat in the same manner as the bazaar-holders in the East, gave names to many other streets still existing. The Thames was a better highway than any other; and was also a playground for water-quintain and other sports in which the youth of London delighted. In the next century the fishmongers occupied stalls up Fish Street to Grass Church (Gracechurch) Street, where hay was sold; and City Men had to work a passage among the fish as best they could, to get to the London Bridge of those days. If they sought to reach Gravesend, as the first stage in some long and venturous journey, they (in the time of Richard the Second) paid twopence for the boat-passage, including each man his truss of straw; for the boats had neither seats nor beds, and the passenger endeavoured to keep himself tidy and comfortable under circumstances of no little difficulty. There were no vehicles of any kind for luxurious, idle, or hurried people—folks either rode on horseback or paddled through the mud. After dark, the streets were not deemed safe for his Majesty's leges; for we find a statute in the time of Edward the First commanding 'that none be so hardy as to be found going or wandering about the streets of the City after curfew toll'd at St Martin's-le-Grand, unless he be a great man, or other lawful person of good repute, or their certain messengers, having their warrants to go from one to another, with lanthorn in hand.' Two or three generations later, Edward the Third caused faggots to be laid down in the streets when he went to Parliament, to prevent his horse from sticking in the mire. In the same reign a petition was presented to the king, complaining that the public way from Temple Bar to Westminster was so full of pits and sloughs, and so interrupted by thickets and bushes, that neither horseman nor pedestrian could travel safely. Let our City Man think of this when next he hurries from Fleet Street to Charing Cross. In the fifteenth century all the region from London Wall to Islington was a morass or fen, giving rise to the names Moorfields and Fensbury or Finsbury. In 1415, the Lord Mayor caused an opening to be made in the city wall, and a postern gate to be constructed

at the spot which we now recognize as Moorgate Street, to lead to a 'causey' or causeway extending thence to 'Iseldon' and Hoxton. City Men knew little about this region in those days, except to look at their apprentices engaged at archery and bowls in summer, and skating and sliding in winter, on the Moor or Moor-field.

About the year 1500, or within a short period on either side of that date, royalty and aristocracy lived in the City to an extent that we in our day are little in the habit of supposing. There was the regal Baynard Castle, near St. Paul's. There were other royal residences at Tower Royal, Bridewell, Old Jewry, and Fish Street Hill. There were the Earl of Westmoreland's residence in or near Monkwell Street, the Earl of Salisbury's at Dowgate; the Earl of Warwick's in Warwick Lane; the Marquis of Winchester's in Austin Friars, Earl Ferrers' in Lombard Street, the Earl of Northumberland's in Fenchurch Street; the Earl of Worcester's in Vintry Ward; the Earl of Ormond's in Knight Rider Street, the Earl of Arundel's in Token-house Yard. And there was a City mansion which a few years before had been inhabited by that special Duke of Clarence whom schoolboys always associate (sometimes almost enviously) with the famous butt of malmsey. Holborn and Fleet Street were rich in bishops' palaces; and, just outside the City, the Earl of Craven had a mansion in Wych Street—a region of very indecorous reputation in later days. As to the Strand, it became, during this (the sixteenth) century, almost a line of palaces and mansions on the south side, with pleasant gardens extending down to the river. While nobles were thus to so great an extent City Men, in relation to their dwellings, it is no wonder that merchants and traders made their domestic homes at their places of business. The Lord Mayor and aldermen thought not of suburban villas; their wives and daughters were in one part of the City house; their clerks, shopmen, workmen, and apprentices in another. They took a pleasure-excursion, perhaps, across the fields to Clerkenwell or Islington, but dreamed not of the days when those places, and others far beyond, would be absorbed in London. The main lines of City street were still filled with walkers, horsemen, and litters—not with carriages. When Catherine of Castile came to England to be married to Prince Arthur in 1501, she rode from the Tower to St. Paul's on a pillion behind a nobleman selected by the king, Henry the Seventh; when, some years later, Anne Boleyne rose to her perilous dignity, she rode from the City to Westminster in a horse-litter; and when, many years later still, Queen Elizabeth went into the City, she rode on a pillion behind her Chancellor or Chamberlain. City Men, in Elizabeth's time, not always finding it convenient to meet at their own shops, were wont to assemble in Lombard Street, to make their bargains and contracts, they met at noon and in the evening, but, as Stow tells us, 'Their meetings were unpleasant and troublesome by reason of walking and talking in an open narrow street' being there constrained either to endure all extremities of weather, or else to shelter themselves in shops' A very extraordinary place for business, at or soon after that time, was the nave of Old St. Paul's Cathedral; and pleasure and rascality, too, as well as business. Dekker says: 'At one time, and in one and the same rank, yea, foot by foot and elbow by elbow, shall you see walking the knight, the gull, the gallant, the upstart, the gentleman, the clown, the captain, the apple squire, the lawyer, the citizen, the bankrout, the scholar, the doctor, the idiot, the ruffian, the cheater, the Puritan, the cut-throat,' and others whom he queerly groups: 'and thus, while Devotion kneels at her prayers, doth Profanation walk under her nave in contempt of Religion.'

When we pass from the days of the Tudors to those of the Stuarts, we hear of a gradual migration of the nobility westward, leaving the City Men more to themselves. One

cause of this was, the introduction of coaches. Queen Elizabeth began the innovation; and her wealthy subjects were soon ready to follow it. The coaches were wide, the streets narrow; the coaches either inflicted or suffered much injury; the titled and courtly people therefore gave up their City mansions to merchants and traders, and went to live in the (then) genteel neighbourhood of Covent Garden and Leicester Square. The Thames had long been the favourite highway from east to west, and the boatmen were a numerous and flourishing fraternity, but the coaches, private and hired, now struck at the monopoly. Taylor, the 'Water poet,' in the time of Charles the First, ransacked the language to find words strong enough to express his hatred of them. He called them 'hell-carts.' At one time he would pity the riders, because 'It is a most uneasy kind of passage in coaches on the paved streets of London, wherein men and women are so tossed'd, tumbled'd, jumbled'd, and rumbled'd,' and where they meet with 'kennels, dunghills, and uneven ways.' At another he expressed a doubt whether 'the devil brought tobacco into England in a coach, or brought a coach in a mist of tobacco.' He told of 'Two leash of oyster-wives who hired a coach to carry them to the Green-goose Fair at Stratford-le-Bow. And as they were hurried betwixt Aldgate and Mile End, they were so be-madam'd, be-mistress'd, and ladyfied by the beggars, that the foolish women began to swell with a proud supposition of imaginary greatness, and gave all their money to the mendicanting canters.' The Londoners had been wont to cross the water by boat to the theatres in Southwark, but now they went by coach over London Bridge, and Taylor expressed his bitter scorn that—

> 'Fulsome madams and new scurvy squires,
> Should jolt the streets in pomp at their desires,
> Like great triumphant Tamberlaines each day,
> Drawn by the pampered jades of Belgia,
> That almost all the streets are blocked outright,
> Where men can hardly pass from morn till night,
> While watermen want work.'

The City Men, during the seventeenth century, had a reason of their own for disliking some of the features connected with coaching. The population grew in number, but the streets did not grow in width. There was more of everything, but the thoroughfares could not expand to accommodate the increase — more shops, more stall-keepers, more itinerant dealers (including, after the days of Sir Hugh Myddelton, water-carriers bringing New River water from the several conduits), more waggons and coaches, more horsemen and people. And the state of the best streets was then on a par with that of the worst and poorest at the present day — rugged and filthy. As to the roads in what were then the outskirts of London, they were mere sloughs in winter, scarcely passable by man or beast. There was a waggish theory entertained in those days concerning the long-legged lasses of Sussex—that the length of limb arose from stretching the bone and tendons in the tough pull required to drag the leg out of the mud of that county at every step, and there was a fear lest London legs should elongate from a similar cause.

City Men had thus little either of inducement or facility, in the seventeenth century, for residing far from their places of business. Nor were matters much altered in the eighteenth. In the first place, the streets were desperately infested with profligate characters. Addison, in the 'Spectator,' tells us of the ruffians who called themselves 'Mohawks,' and who were the terror of the streets during the reign of Queen Anne. George the Second's time was not much better; for in 1744 the Lord Mayor went up with an address to the king, praying for better protection of the City streets from brutal outrage. Highway robberies in Hyde Park and May Fair were frequent about the middle of the century; and at different periods in the reigns of the first three Georges the noted highwaymen—Turpin, Bradshaw, Duval, Macheath, Maclean, and the like—were virtually lords over the open places near the metropolis. The proprie-

tors of Ranelagh, Vauxhall, Sadler's Wells, and Belsize Gardens were wont to employ stout resolute fellows to protect the roads in the evening, as a means of guarding visitors to and from those places of amusement, which were in those days far away from town. In the next place the streets were only a little better than in the preceding century, in all that regarded facilities for movement. Kennels ran along the middle of every street; foot-pavements there were none; the roadway, if paved at all, was always rugged and full of hollows; posts and palings alone shielded the foot-passengers from the vehicles; crazy sign-boards swung uneasily overhead; spouts poured down rain-water on the unlucky wayfarers; bulks and shop projections narrowed the already too narrow way; and mobs filled the streets in search of the excitement caused by the pillory, the stocks, executions, and bonfires. Hogarth's pictures are full of such indications of blocked-up streets. London Bridge, the only land artery southward until the opening of Westminster Bridge in 1750, was such an artery as we can now hardly conceive. Lofty houses lined the bridge on both sides, with many ponderous arches overhead to prevent them from falling in; the width of the street-way was only from twelve to twenty feet, it was perilous to vehicles, owing to the lowness of the arches overhead; and foot passengers could only walk in safety by following in the muddy wake of slow-going vehicles. Charing Cross was a mud-pond. The Earl of Tyrconnel, in a speech in the House of Lords in 1741, adverting to the difficulties encountered by members going to and from the house, said: 'The filth of some parts, and the inequality and ruggedness of others, cannot but in the eyes of foreigners disgrace our nation, and incline them to imagine us a people, not only without delicacy, but without government—a herd of barbarians in a colony of Hottentots.' Caroline, queen of George the Second, was often mud-bound till extra help could be obtained, on her way from St. James's Palace to Kensington Palace. Lord Harvey, in the same reign, wrote from Kensington: 'The road between this place and London is grown so infamously bad that we live here in the same solitude as we would do if cast on a rock in the middle of the ocean; and all the Londoners tell us that there is between them and us an impassable gulf of mud.'

During the long reign of George the Third matters mended, slowly but surely The paving became better; the lighting improved, though the street-lamps were miserable affairs until the days of gas; foot passengers learned to know what flag pavement meant; scavengers became an institution; cobblers' stalls and projecting sheds disappeared a little from the fronts of houses, swinging sign-boards less frequently threatened to fall on the heads of those beneath; and the police obtained a better hold over street ruffians. Nevertheless, the width of street did not increase so rapidly as the number of vehicles; and there was a good deal of thronging and collision. Horace Walpole wrote to Miss Berry in 1791: 'I believe you will think the town cannot hold all the inhabitants, so prodigiously the population is augmented. . . . . Indeed, the town is so extended that the breed of chairs is almost lost; for Hercules and Atlas could not carry anybody from one end of the enormous capital to the other.' He probably did not dream how fully his hap-hazard prophecy was to be realized, that 'there will soon be one street from London to Brentford—ay, and from London to every village ten miles round.' Still, it is to be borne in mind that the villages so implied were really villages in those days, too far from the City to constitute convenient residences for City Men.

And this introduces us to one of the chief modern features of London life—the *vehicular*. The hackney coach, the cab, the stage-coach, the omnibus—what have they done, and what are they doing, for City Men? The first coach-stand was established in London about two hundred and thirty years ago; it was near the 'Maypole,' in the Strand. Just two centuries ago

there were three hundred hackney coaches; and by the lapse of another century their number had increased to nine hundred. They were, from the first, vehicles of a very doubtful character, ricketty and creaky in the joints, musty and fusty in the interior, and slow in their movements Ladies and old folks used them, but they were never largely patronized by City Men. In fact, City Men were plagued by them, for they blocked up the narrow streets in an inconvenient way; moreover, the fare charged was too high to be borne as a daily practice by the average of traders. Two or three years ago, the chiefs of the carriage tax department reported that there was still *one* hackney coach left in London. May its shadow never be less—may it live for ever, and be preserved in some museum as a memorial of the past! The swift-going single-horse cab has risen on the ruins of the old creeping pair-horse coach. It was just about forty years ago that the first cab (*cabriolet de place*, as their Parisian inventors called them) made its appearance in London. There are now more than five thousand of them. Queer-looking things some of them have been—such as the hooded chaise, with the driver sitting on the same seat as his fare; the chaise with the awkward little driver's seat sticking out on the right-hand side; and the shee from an omnibus, with just room for two persons sitting opposite each other, and the driver in front. We have, however, now settled down with the 'four-wheeler,' the most useful of the whole group; and the dashing 'Hansom,' the favourite of fast men, and the terror of women and children at the street crossings. The Jarvey of the old days was an irreclaimable fellow, the only way to polish him was to improve him off the face of the earth. Cabby is a little better; he is (sometimes) amenable to reason; and one cause of this is that City Men have taken him in hand. Such men, whose time is of much value, spend many a shilling in cabs while permeating the maze of streets in the metropolis; and the drivers, knowing that these customers are not to be trifled with, are learning to be civil, and to push along as quickly as the throng will let them. It is worthy of remark that no extension of railway and omnibus systems will destroy the usefulness of hired vehicles which may be ordered to any street, and through any route, at the bidding of the fare.

The stage-coach is another British institution which City Men know something about. In fact, the custom of City traders having suburban residences depended very much on the establishment of vehicles which would go and return at certain definite hours of the day. There are old bankers and bankers' clerks still living who remember when there were only two or three stage-coaches running from Paddington to the Bank, making one journey each per day in each direction, at fares of two shillings inside and eighteenpence out. It was only a few years earlier than the time here referred to that the Paddington trade was in the state described by Mr. Smiles in his 'Lives of the Engineers,'—a work that renders engineering almost as pleasant to read as a story: 'Paddington was in the country, and the communication with it was kept up by means of a daily stage—a lumbering vehicle, driven by its proprietor—which was heavily dragged into the City in the morning, down Gray's Inn Lane, with a rest at the "Blue Posts," Holborn Bars, to give passengers an opportunity of doing their shopping. The morning journey was performed in two hours and a half, "quick time," and the return journey in the evening in about three hours.' But better days were coming. By degrees, stage-coaches a little more rapid in movement became numerous, and most of the villages around the metropolis could boast of one or more of them. Quiet and cliquish affairs they were. On their journey up to town in the morning, the same City Men occupied the same seats day after day, and had the same kind of familiar chat with the same coachman. The insiders, paying a little higher fare, were more deferentially treated than the outsiders; and the driver would sometimes wait awhile to enable these

grand people to finish their breakfast and don their overcoats.

City Men first used omnibuses a little more than thirty years ago. Poor Shillibeer must rank with many other inventors who have drained their own pockets in schemes which eventually benefited the public. He put on an omnibus (people did not till long afterwards indulge in the pert abbreviation 'bus') from Greenwich to Charing Cross, and then another from Paddington to the Bank. How the stage-coachmen jeered him! How they 'nursed' him, threatened him, opposed him, obstructed his horses, injured his vehicle! He could not stand it; he withdrew from the contest, but not before the public had shown unmistakably that they preferred omnibuses to stage-coaches. The stage masters took the hint, and became 'bus' masters. Year by year did the number increase, as well as the routes which they followed; and now that they are fifteen or sixteen hundred strong, it requires a City Man to understand them all. *Punch* informs us that old women (of both sexes) are sometimes driven from Regent Circus to Chelsea as the nearest way to the Bank; and those who are not old women have sufficient difficulty in discriminating between the various groups of omnibuses. But City Men are seldom deceived in these matters; it is a part of their daily duty to know exactly where and when such and such 'buses' pass, for the knowledge saves time, and time is money. It is quite a sight to be near the Bank from nine to eleven in the morning, and from four to six in the evening. This wonderful heart draws in the commercial blood from every parish or hamlet, village or town, within ten miles' distance; and six or eight hours afterwards it sends forth the same blood through the same channels to the same places.

City Men also know what river traffic means. The steamers bring them to London Bridge every few minutes, and at very trifling charges. Kew, Hammersmith, and Putney, Wandsworth, Battersea, and Chelsea, Pimlico, Vauxhall, and Westminster —all pour out their living streams on the 'silent highway.' And so likewise do a multitude of places on the banks of the river below bridge — Gravesend, Greenhithe, Erith, Purfleet, Woolwich, Greenwich, &c. To see the steamers at the northern foot of London Bridge is almost as great a sight in its way as that of the omnibuses at the Bank. How the people press on, along the narrow gangway, over the dumb-lighter, up steps—a jam of humanity!

But who is to count the number of City Men who now come into town in the morning by rail, and the various arteries through which they flow? Dominie Sampson's exclamation is the only one applicable here. Let us see. The Eastern Counties Station in Shoreditch is not a loveable spot, nor is the Blackwall in Fenchurch Street much better; yet have they taught us to regard Essex as a suburb of London. A steamboat rapidly crosses the Thames from the great arsenal, and then the North Woolwich train starts; gathering up its people from different points on either side of the strange river Lea, it deposits its living burden at Shoreditch or Fenchurch Street, as the case may be, there leaving them to ramify throughout the City. Another steam-boat rapidly crosses the Thames from Gravesend, and then the Tilbury train starts; drawing in City Men and other men from Grays and Purfleet, from Rainham and Barking, from East Ham and West Ham, from Plaistow and Bromley, the train brings its stream to the great London vortex. Nay, even Southend claims to be a suburb of the metropolis; for one of the commercial magnates of the day—Sir Morton Peto—has built a bran new Clifton, or Clifftown, near it; and to induce Londoners to take these houses as family residences, he offers to bring the husbands up to business by rail every morning for something like sixpence per journey, and in something like an hour and a quarter, despite the distance of forty-four miles. He asserts that Paterfamilias will find it cheaper in the end to do this than to live in town, because wife and children will thereby patronize sea-air in-

stead of doctors. Then the Eastern Counties proper (sometimes improper) brings up its Barking and Ilford people, and the folks of Stratford and Bow—but, truth to tell, this is not a good City Man's line. A better is the Epping railway, which, though not springing from quite so great a distance as the traditional land of pork sausages, does nevertheless gather all the City Men from their smuggeries in and around Epping Forest and Woodford and Wanstead, and deposit them betimes in the morning at Shoreditch or Fenchurch Street. Then the Cambridge line begins its cheap trains at the stations near the source of the New River, about Ware and St Margaret's, and clears the country of its City Men from all the parts round about Waltham Abbey, Cheshunt, Enfield, Edmonton, Tottenham, and Lea Bridge.

Turning from the east to the north, and watching the two great stations which stand jealously near each other, at King's Cross and Euston Square, we find this fact made evident—that the companies owning the long lines do not much care for suburban traffic. Still, they help to fill the great metropolitan reservoir every morning. The one, starting its City Men's trains from about Welwyn, picks up from Luton and Hertford, from Hatfield and Barnet, from Southgate, and Hornsey, and Holloway, and pours out the passengers at King's Cross. The other, beginning its short trains (say) at St Albans or Boxmoor, finds that Watford and Bushey, Pinner and Harrow, Sudbury and Willesden, do their little best towards filling London every morning. Another vast concern, similarly struggling for the northern as well as many other kinds of long traffic, would know more about City Men if its terminus were not so far distant. The Great Western is of course the railway here implied. The regal Windsor, and many pleasant spots around it, together with the angler's pet places about Cookham and Maidenhead, and Uxbridge and Hanwell and Ealing, all help to swell the stream; but then it is hard work to get from the Paddington Station to the busy haunts.

What must we say, however, what can we say, of the roundabout line which deserves the name of the East West North Central Junction Continuation Railway? Not only does it carry a prodigious number of City Men to and fro between their homes and their places of business, but it seems ready to carry anybody anywhere. No sooner is a train started, than it stops, puts out three or four dozen passengers, takes in an equal number, and off again; stops again in three minutes, exchanges its dozens or scores, and again off; again stops in three or four minutes, and so on, over and over again. Its 'mission' seems to be to set all the northern suburbs into a ferment from eight in the morning till eleven in the evening. Every quarter of an hour throughout the livelong day, in both directions, are long trains engaged in this hurly-burly. Hampstead Road begins it; Camden Town keeps it up; Caledonian Road and Islington continue it; Stoke Newington and Kingsland do their part; Hackney and Victoria Park will not be forgotten; and so, after including Bow and Stepney, out pours the flood of people finally into the City. Thus is the busy half, but it is not the only one; for, by a most wonderful dispensation of engineers, Twickenham has been united with Fenchurch Street by way of Hampstead! Quietly going nearly eastward, over the Thames from Twickenham to Richmond, and thence to Mortlake and Barnes, the line suffers a painfully-sudden angular shoot towards the north-west, which carries it past Chiswick to Brentford. Here another dislocating twist turns it to the north-east towards Acton, where it receives a Hammersmith tributary in some mysterious way; it works past the Edgeware and Finchley Roads to Hampstead, where a tunnel allows it to find its way into low ground; and then, taking a resolute southerly bend, it proceeds to Kentish Town and to the North London line at Camden Town. It is an amazing affair, a sort of distorted figure of 5 thrown on its face; yet it appears to

have its merits, for City Men *do* work their way from Twickenham and Richmond by its means.

But the southern railways are far more remarkable than the northern as City Men's lines. One reason for this is, that Surrey and Kent are beautiful counties for suburban villas. The South-Western brings to Waterloo Station large numbers of morning passengers, who, if not all City Men, are business men belonging to the same general class. There is the Windsor line, accommodating also Datchet and Egham, Virginia Water and Staines; there is the 'loop-line,' as they call it, sweeping into its grasp all the City Men from Hounslow, Isleworth, Brentford, Kew, and Chiswick; there is the Richmond line, serving Mortlake, Barnes, and Putney; and there are other lines, by which Hampton Court, Kingston, Epsom, Morden, Mitcham, Wimbledon, and Wandsworth pour forth their morning passengers to Waterloo Bridge. This station is, however, not to be compared with the extensive group at London Bridge, where four companies have melted into two, which divide between them an immense station, now too small even in its immensity. Three or four years ago the South-Western were justified in boasting that *four million* passengers went to or from their Waterloo Station yearly; but then the group of north and east suburbs contributed *eleven* millions to the Fenchurch Station; and the southern counties *fourteen* millions to that at London Bridge! The Brighton Company, by possessing the Croydon and Epsom Railway, and also the branch past the Crystal Palace to Pimlico, have made Epsom, Ewell, Cheam, Sutton, Carshalton, Croydon, Norwood, Streatham, Sydenham, and Forest Hill virtually suburbs of London. Nay, Brighton is so likewise; for a morning express brings up its City Men to London Bridge in an hour and a quarter — insomuch that Brighton has become London-*super*-Mare. The South-Eastern probably beats even the Brighton as a City Men's line. If we trace on a map, or in Bradshaw, the Greenwich branch, the Mid Kent branch, and the North Kent branch as far as Gravesend, we shall find about twenty stations, every one of which is the centre of a district that pours forth its City Men in the morning. Country hamlets have become towns of villas; pleasant residential spots appear where fields and woods used a few years ago to reign in their loneliness—and all owing to the Railways.

There is no mistaking City Men at the London Bridge Station. Something in or upon them, something round or about them, marks them off as a special class. They are not to be confounded with the suburban people who come to London for pleasure, or to purchase goods for their suburban shops. Whether from the Greenwich line, or the North Kent, or the Mid Kent—whether from the Norwood and Streatham, or the Croydon and Epsom, it is all the same. the City Men are *sui generis*. They pour out of different doorways and gateways, walk determinedly on at a smart pace, descend by the sloping road to the clock-tower, disregard the cabs and 'buses, and so get upon the bridge. This is a fine place to see them. When the great fire at Cotton's Wharf occurred in June last, the City Men just glanced round at it as they came over the bridge; but it was only a glance, for they could not stop to stare. Whether with overcoats or Inverness capes, wrappers or mackintoshes, the City Men on the bridge are to be detected from the other wayfarers. Leggings, knickerbockers, sticks, umbrellas, small black bags (City Men have discarded carpet-bags), all may be seen worn or carried by the passengers passing over the bridge; yet even these do not disturb the special identity. Not so much in the things themselves, as in the way in which they are borne along, is the distinction maintained. The City Men—going to Mark Lane to attend to matters of corn and flour, to Mincing Lane for grocery and spice dealings, to the wine region around Trinity Square, to the foreign merchants' region in Winchester Street and Austin Friars, to the banking region of Lombard Street,

to the shipping region at the docks and wharfs, to the black diamond region at the Coal Exchange, to the speculative region around Capel Court, to the textile goods region about Cheapside and Cannon Street —they all cross London Bridge with an air and manner not to be misunderstood. The junior clerks and assistants are early; they may be seen by eight o'clock or so, in small numbers. Generally the mightier men are the later; but whether of ten thousand a year or of fifty pounds, they throng more thickly towards nine, and still more so towards the hour of ten. Every man has a watch which is tolerably reliable, but every man glances up at the clock as he passes, just to verify his own timekeeper. No one is ever too early at his office or counting-house, each generally cuts it pretty closely in meting out his time; hence there is no lingering on the way from the station. On the arrival-platform itself the bustle is so great that none but the initiated can tell City Men from other men; every one is scrambling past every one else; everybody wants to get out first; railway porters jostle and are jostled; if any cab-people are among them, they have to reach their cabs under difficulties; and quick-sighted quiet police, in plain dress or blue dress, are watchful as to the presence of any of those queer characters who sometimes look out for prey at these places. When, however, the flood is poured out into the open air, and reaches the bridge, then do the City Men show their force—separated by an undefinable personality from west-end people, country people, and leisurely people. The little black bag which some carry may contain professional or business papers, or a few articles of clean linen for special occasions, or perchance something in a sandwich-case or a sherry-flask for luncheon—we know not; but the bag has something about it which seems to say, 'I am a City Man's bag.'

There are some remarkable facilities yet in store for City Men, in reference to their means of going to and returning from business. The Metropolitan Railway promises to do much for them. At present we know of it only as a nuisance. We have seen Marylebone and St. Pancras churches on the verge of gaping precipices, Hampstead and Tottenham Court Roads in a whirl of confusion, King's Cross blocked up for months together, omnibus drivers hovering between despair and cursing, and Coppice Row really in a dangerous state for the ill-used inhabitants. All may, perhaps, be bright again after a time; and then, if promises should be fulfilled, the City Men from the Great Western region will plunge into the underground railway at Paddington for Farringdon Street, and from the Great Northern region at King's Cross. Then, when the Chatham and Dover Company's operations are finished, another stream will be brought to the same Farringdon Street Station from Kent and Surrey, depositing the City Men from their Cray, and Bromley, and Sydenham, and Dulwich, and Camberwell homes at a spot within two or three furlongs of St. Paul's.

Out of evil comes good. The South-Eastern Company has been hard-pressed by the Chatham line, but the pressure has been bravely borne. There is no calculating the flood of traffic that will pass over this Company's metropolitan lines by-and-by. An extension is being made from the London Bridge Station to Charing Cross, accommodating on its way the Borough Road, Blackfriars Road, and Waterloo Road, and uniting with the South-Western terminus at Waterloo. Then there will be another extension to Cannon Street, within two or three hundred yards of the Mansion House, the Bank, the Exchange, and the very heart of City business. The station hereabouts will be a good reminder of days long gone by, and of the contrast between the past and the present; for it will be close to that famous old London Stone which sixteen centuries ago served as a *milliarium*, or central milestone, from which all the Roman roads out of London were measured. Two entirely new and distinct bridges will be built across the Thames for these purposes. What prodigious

trade there will be! The City Men from Kent and Surrey will be brought almost to the doors of their business establishments, without being hustled on foot over London Bridge. No less than *two thousand* omnibus-loads of people now ascend or alight daily at the London Bridge station; or at least the omnibuses are there one thousand times in a day, whether laden partially or wholly; and City Men have to bear the difficulty of struggling against them on the bridge. Again: there are considerably more than a hundred thousand persons who cross London Bridge every day on foot; and on a bright Monday in summer, when excursionists and Crystal Palace visitors muster in great force, the number is swelled to a hundred and fifty thousand—to the discomfort of City Men, who desire to cover the distance between the station and their place of business in as few minutes as possible. Cannon Street will have something to say to this in a year or two. And then Cannon Street will also have its twopenny or threepenny railway ride to Charing Cross. Again: the business men of the West End—the thousands of clerks in the various government offices, and the thousands of well-to-do shopkeepers—will be brought from their suburban residences to the best possible spot for a station in the western half of the metropolis. We can fancy, too, the glories of Charing Cross Station on an Easter Monday, or Whit Monday, when holiday faces shine with glee; but it is business men only that are here talked about. The heart of City trade will continue to beat just where it now is for untold ages to come, unless reasonable prophecy be falsified by some agencies equally untold; and as the City really cannot give home-accommodation to the traders, even if they were disposed to accept it, the traders must e'en come into the City in the morning, and their transit must be provided for.

Note. The above sketch is complete for the purpose intended. If, however, any reader of 'London Society' were to dip a little beneath the surface, he would find the suburban railways to constitute a really wonderful system, such as has no parallel in the world. City men claim for *their* suburban London everything between Windsor and Gravesend, Waltham Abbey and Epsom, and even still further. Our map has no less than 170 little black dots to denote the railway stations within those limits; and even this prodigious number leaves a few near the centre unmarked for want of space. It may be worth while to mention the names of the companies to which the several lines belong, with reference to the numerals on the map:—1. *Great Western*; with branches to Windsor (2), Uxbridge (3), Brentford (4), and Richmansworth, now making (5) 6. *London and North-Western*; with branch to Richmansworth, now making (7). 8. *Great Northern*. 9. *Eastern Counties*; including Colchester line (10), and branches to Southend (11), North Woolwich (12), Enfield (13), Loughton (14), and Epping, now making (15). 16. *London and Blackwall*, with branches to Barking (17), and Bow (18) 19. *North London*; with the Hampstead Junction (20), the Kew Extension (21), and the branch to Finsbury, now making (22). 23. *Metropolitan* (underground); with Finsbury Extension (24). 25. *West London*; with a (proposed) branch to Brompton (26). 27. *Hammersmith Junction*. 28. *South-Western*; with branches to Chertsey (29), Hampton Court (30), Epsom (31), Windsor (32), Hounslow (33), and Kingston, now making (34). 35. *London and Brighton*; with branches to Epsom (36), Wimbledon (37), Crystal Palace (40), Pimlico (41). 35. *South-Eastern*; with North Kent (38), Greenwich (39), Mid Kent (46), Charing Cross and Cannon Street Extension (47). 43. *Chatham and Dover*; with Metropolitan extensions (44), and Farnborough branch (45).

G. D.

THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.

A TALE FOR MAIDENS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS; AND, INCIDENTALLY, FOR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN.

CHAPTER VI.

'A SYMPATHIZING HEART.'

'WHERE is Floy, Gussie?'

Mrs. Knightly asked the question of her eldest daughter, as that young lady entered the room, still equipped in habit and hat, where the comely widow sat in luxurious idleness.

'Gone to her own room, mamma, and Gerald has ridden off straight to Woolwich: he sent a good-bye to you by me, for he had no time to come in.'

Augusta stood looking absently out of the window. She had something to say, and she was not clear as to how she would say it. The knowledge that Gussie had something to communicate had dawned upon Mrs. Knightly from Gussie's manner; therefore she too felt uncomfortable.

'Whom have you seen this morning, Gussie?'

'Oh, several people.'

'Why don't you go and take off your things? I want you to go out in the carriage with me; I want to go into Regent Street.'

'Dear mamma,' began Augusta, turning round suddenly and facing her mother — a proceeding which made that good lady feel herself guilty of meanness, somehow or other, in having listened to anything against any one who was dear to Augusta; 'dear mamma, I will get ready to go with you anywhere, after you have answered me a question. Is my marriage to take place, as was arranged, in August?'

'What do you mean, Augusta?'

Mrs. Knightly always would try to gain time before she answered a straightforward question by asking another.

'Will you take measures—in fact, will you give me the fortune papa always promised me?'

Mrs. Knightly always had tears at command; three large ones rolled down each cheek.

'I have had a great deal to annoy me this morning, Gussie—a very great deal; don't ask me about such matters now; I don't feel strong enough to bear it; still, since you have spoken on the subject, I must say — No: not to marry Frank Tollemache with it and dissipate it in a worthless manner.'

'What do you mean, mamma?' Augusta sat down now and faced her mother; 'I very rarely understand you,—now less than ever; for you could not mean that I am not to marry Frank Tollemache; and you could not mean to apply the epithet worthless to anything in connection with him—or me. What *did* you mean?'

'Exactly what I said,' replied Mrs. Knightly, angrily, 'that I'll not give you a fortune—it's mine to give, remember, — to waste, yes, waste, on such a worth—— on a man who has boasted that he's going to right himself and get out of his disgraceful difficulties by marrying you. I hope you understand me now.'

'This is your final answer, mother? You will tell me your authority for these libels about Frank?'

'Yes, it is——, and no, I won't go betraying a confidence. I hope you understand that, though you do so rarely know what I mean.'

'Yes, I quite understand you, mamma,' said Augusta, quietly; and then rising she went to her own room.

Augusta was not a woman to attempt to melt a person's harsh resolve by tears; she had a deeply-rooted objection to public weepings; at the same time she was very far from being a hard woman. Florence shortly afterwards wandering restlessly into her sister's room found Augusta just rising from her writ-

ing-table whereon lay a note addressed to Sir Francis Tollemache, with pale cheeks and red rings round her eyes.

'Gussie, dear! what is the matter?' she asked anxiously, throwing her arms fondly round her sister's neck; and then Augusta, who was not a bit of a heroine when there was no occasion for it, burst out crying afresh; and after binding Floy down not to say a word to mamma nor to Baines, poured her sorrow into her sister's sympathetic ears.

'What a rage Rupert will be in, Gussie! he's so fond of Frank; do ask him to speak to mamma.'

'Has mamma shown herself so anxious to serve Rupert, Floy, that we could reasonably hope for his speaking to be of any use? Now let me bathe my eyes, for I'm going out with her, and I shouldn't like her to see that I had been crying.'

She did not look like a Niobe as she swept down the stairs and through the hall after her mother. Still less did she look like one as she took her place in the open carriage—one of those sloping carriages in which it is almost impossible for a woman to be anything but graceful—and shook out her voluminous skirts into soft, easy lines and folds. Some peculiar golden-lined flowers, which rested under the brim of her white bonnet at the top, and merged away into nearly white at the sides where they came in contact with her face, prevented the pallor of her cheeks from being conspicuously apparent; and a hazy veil concealed the redness of her eyes. She gave her mind to some silks at Swan and Edgar's in a way that enchanted her mother—for whom they were—and was so politely attentive to her mother's rather weakly nothings, that on their way home after a happy hour of shopping, out of the fullness of her heart that lady spoke:

'I am very much pleased with the way you take it, my dear; you're sure to do much better; and if you'll follow my advice, you'll at once send back whatever presents he may have made you.'

Augusta kept her head turned away while her mother was speaking, and for a minute or two after. When she did turn it round she brought on it the smile with which she had just greeted some acquaintance who had passed. She did not answer in words then—or at all—but that day at dinner her beautiful little hands were almost covered with rings—with rings that Frank had given her, as Mrs. Knightly angrily perceived.

Miss Knightly was not one to regard herself as an advertising medium or moveable placard; therefore she did not feel called upon to rush about and inform every person with whom she had ever held friendly communion, that the engagement between Frank and herself was broken off, or at the best indefinitely postponed. But it was a kind of thing that despite her haughty reticence, would get talked about. And one morning when Rupert, after spending an hour or two in Tollemache's rooms, said to him in a laboriously impromptu manner, 'If I were in your place, my dear fellow, I'd get out of this for a time—it's what I should have done myself if Georgie's father hadn't behaved so handsomely; couldn't you go abroad? you needn't fear to leave her; Gussie will be true as steel to you.' When Rupert said this Frank Tollemache knew that the brother and sister had talked it over, and that the suggestion that he should go away had been made by the lady to spare him possible mortification. And so with a faint but clinging reliance on that last feeble straw, time, which unhappy people so providentially hope is going to do much for them, Frank Tollemache and Augusta resolved to separate, until the mother's heart should be in the right place again.

Mrs. Vining had one of those dangerous little dinners which young married women will so recklessly persist in giving, regardless of consequences. Georgie Clifford was there, of course, and Rupert Knightly. They were a safe pair enough, for their wedding-day was settled; it was not to them that this dinner was dangerous. Nor was it so to Augusta and Frank Tolle-

mache, who, as he expressed it, was there for a farewell feed, previous to starting off to the Continent for a time. No; to them it was a tedious, distracting affair this elegantly-arranged little dinner. This spotless table, with its delicate white service and dazzling glass and silver, warmed and lighted up with red wax candles, seemed a mockery of the grief—the sad, helpless grief that was filling both their hearts. It was to radiant Florence—radiant though in simple white muslin, with an innocent row of pearls round her even fairer throat—that this social little meeting was dangerous, for Colonel Crofton was there; and the keen, polished man was ever keener and more polished at Harry Vining's table than anywhere else. He was a favourite of the hostess, too, and that always gives a man immense advantages.

He had been a frequent visitor at the Knightlys' house of late; and Florence could never sufficiently admire the refined tact which made him—though of course devoted to *her*—persistently endeavour to ingratiate himself with her mother—with her rich mother, on whom, as had been proved in poor Gussie's case, everything depended. Mamma cannot fail to like him, she thought, and if my wealth may be the means of his being enabled to marry me, how right he is to try and please her so as to insure it. Florence liked him too well to pause and consider how very unheroic such a proceeding was on the part of this idol of hers. He did not say much to her individually, whilst they were seated at table, for the party was too small for the conversation to be anything but general. And Rupert did no small service to Colonel Crofton's cause in the heart of Florence, by talking to him a great deal, and giving him the opportunity of saying a great quantity of clever nonsense, in order to cover Augusta's sadness and Frank's silence.

But when they had all reassembled in the pretty amber-coloured drawing-room, the party was not one in which conversation was likely to be general. Rupert and Georgie were in such a happy, tolerant state, that they would have talked to any one who would have listened to them; but only Mr. and Mrs. Vining were inclined to listen to them. Miss Knightly had seated herself in the back drawing-room, which was faintly and softly lighted; and Frank stood by her side, leaning over the back of a high chair, and they were speaking in low whispers. And Florence, sitting at the piano, played little dreamy pieces, that did not disturb the melodious flow of words which Colonel Crofton, sitting by her side, poured into her ear.

'We have not been to Greenwich once this season,' they heard Mrs. Vining say to Georgie, after a time.

'Would you like to go?' said Colonel Crofton in a low tone to Florence. 'If you would, in a short time I could make one of your party; but it must not be just yet, as I am bound for every evening for some time to come.'

He wanted Georgie Clifford to be off and away before that excursion came to pass.

'I should like to wait until you can go with us,' Florence answered with a warm blush; 'but you see we are dependent in a measure on Mrs. Vining.'

'Nonsense, excuse me, but if that is all, I will undertake to persuade Mrs. Knightly to go, and then you can fix your own time. Perhaps we had better not say anything about it until your brother is married. Gerald will meet us there, no doubt, and we'll have a delightful family party.'

He said the words designedly; and for many days—till the Greenwich day was among the things of the past indeed—they were meat and drink to Florence; and her eyes at once told him that they were so.

'Dearest, dearest! then your silence means that you wish my suit with your mother success,' he said, bending down and lightly touching her hand for one moment, as he affected to turn a page for her. Florence, lowering her golden head to avoid his too earnest gaze, made a short speech, but one that was very much to the purpose.

'Yes;' and then as she dashed off

a difficult piece, felt rather ashamed of herself for being so very happy, when poor Gussie's heartstrings were being so strained at. She could almost have laughed (she said this to herself, though in truth she could have hit Georgie with pleasure), when Miss Clifford, on saying good night to Colonel Crofton as they all stood cloaked and hooded in the hall, remarked that he looked almost as sentimental as he had done on the last occasion of her having met him there. It was very spiteful of Georgie, she thought, to refer to his passing admiration for herself in that way; for of course it was only that. She could almost have wished, too, that he had chosen other words for his answer than,

'And I cannot plead a fairer cause, Miss Clifford.'

But, altogether, she went home very happy indeed, and understood perfectly now why people liked dinner parties.

She did not condole with Gussie—she did not, indeed, remember that Gussie stood in need of sympathy and condolence—until she had removed the filmy muslin and pearls and ordered her maid away. Then she flung on a white dressing-gown, and ran to Gussie's door.

'May I come in, Gussie? Do let me.' On her sister admitting her, she proceeded to explain how sorry she was that she had forgotten to say good-bye more particularly to Frank, who was going the next day; and as Augusta acquitted her of all blame, and rather absently accepted her excuses, she went off into a discursive canter through the wide field of Colonel Crofton's merits, and was brought up at last by Augusta saying languidly, and in a manner that clearly proved she had not been listening to a word Florence had been uttering—

'Whom are you talking about, Floy? Colonel Crofton? Oh, I hate the man; he's so deceitful.'

Floy had to make great allowances for Gussie's state of mind in order to curb her wrath; she said good night to her sister rather coldly, and went off to a happy solitude.

Though Frank is going away, and though he was stupid enough to lame a horse that had once belonged to Colonel Crofton, Gussie needn't have said that, was her thought as she stood before her mirror brushing out her bright hair; but when they come to know him better they'll all do him justice, I'm sure. How I hope mamma will like him!

'And where do Rupert and you mean to live, dear?' asked Mrs. Knightly of her future daughter-in-law, as she was preparing to leave the room in Lord Clifford's house which had been devoted for some days to the reception of all the new dresses for the great occasion. Gussie and Floy had been with Georgie all day deciding the question of what the bridesmaids should appear in; and Mrs. Knightly had just driven over to fetch them according to agreement, and to inspect preparations as far as they had gone.

'Where do Rupert and you mean to live, dear?'

'Well, Mrs. Knightly, I've rather wondered that you haven't asked that question before. Where should you think would be the most proper place?'

Georgie was on her knees before an artificial flower box, and she dropped a wreath into it as she spoke, and looked up straight into Mrs. Knightly's face.

Mrs. Knightly, aided by her conscience, read in Georgie's eyes, 'Don't you think the house in Piccadilly, where you have stationed yourself, would be the most proper place for Rupert Knightly, Esq., and his bride to take up their abode?' and the reading displeased her.

'I don't know, I'm sure,' she answered, rather shortly. 'If I had been consulted, which I haven't been, I might have an opinion to offer; as it is, I have none.'

Georgie, sweet and dear as she was, rose freely if the least slight was put upon her; the laughing light went out of her eyes in a moment, therefore, as she stood up suddenly before Mrs. Knightly and answered—

'Consulted you! Considering that my father has settled house, lands, everything that he has upon dear Rupert, there was small occasion for



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us to consult you about our future residence. We shall live here, Mrs. Knightly, here, in this house, which will be Rupert's on the day he marries me.'

'And very kind it is of Lord Clifford, I'm sure,' said Mrs. Knightly blandly, for Georgie had frightened her a little; 'but not more than any parent would do for a child. Your papa isn't in, is he, dear? or I'd go and tell him how pleased I am; we're kindred spirits in fact. I always used to say to dear Mr. Knightly, fathers can't do too much for their children.'

'They cannot, indeed, Mrs. Knightly,' replied Georgie; 'for we know, don't we, that the children very frequently go to the wall when their fathers no longer live to take care of them? No; papa is not at home; it's a great pity, as he would, of course, be happier if he knew that you approved so heartily of what he has done; however I will be sure to tell him.'

'My dear,' she said afterwards, in talking to Gussie about it, 'papa was in his study the whole time, but something about the Channel fleet, or iron-clad ships, or manning the navy, that he'd seen in the "Times" that morning, had put him out dreadfully, and if your mamma had gone obtusely congratulating him and herself on being kindred spirits, I really believe he would have blown her up, as he calls it; and, Gussie, I'm not sure that it would not have served her right. She sympathize with papa, indeed! Nonsense.'

CHAPTER VII.

MRS. KNIGHTLY PARTAKES OF WHITEBAIT AND OTHER DELICACIES.

There was a fiery heat in the air, and the languid wind, when it could be caught, warmed more than it refreshed. The heat came throbbing down in fierce waves upon the heads of all who had rashly ventured out from beneath the sheltering roof. It was the day of all others to make thoughts of Greenwich, of dining by the river, acceptable; and fortunately it was the very day selected by Mrs. Knightly for that excursion which had been first spoken of at Mrs. Vining's dangerous little dinner.

Colonel Crofton had been the moving spring of everything. He had made himself invaluable. The day had been suggested by him, though I have said Mrs. Knightly selected it; so she did, nominally, but Colonel Crofton had instructed her, although she was scarcely aware of it. He had himself indited the directions to Mr. Hart which made the latter determine to excel himself, and give them the room with the large balcony facing the Royal Hospital, as the river was not quite all that could have been wished. Colonel Crofton had graciously allowed the Vinings to be asked to join them, because he wanted Harry to drive him down, and because Mrs. Vining, an unconscious ally, might be useful to him while they were there. But with the exception of the Vinings (and himself, he observed parenthetically) the party was strictly a family one.

Rupert was married. Georgie was Mrs. Knightly now; and they were away in Paris with Frank Tollemache, who had only been too glad to join Gussie's pet brother—to the great relief of Colonel Crofton. He could not depend upon himself to do a decidedly base and mean thing immediately under Georgie's eyes. So the party was not a large one—Mrs. Knightly, her two daughters, Gerald, the Vinings, and himself.

The Knightlys reached the Trafalgar first; for the Knightly horses were fleet and strong; besides, Mrs. Vining was rarely ready at the appointed time; therefore the graceful britzka had drawn up, to the admiration of numbers of old pensioners and small boys, some time before there appeared the dashing mail-phaeton in which Colonel Crofton came, but did not mean to return. Three prettier women had never stood upon that balcony, which has held so many pretty women, than the three—the mother and her daughters—who stood there under that summer sun, waiting the arrival of the mail-phaeton. Mrs. Knightly's were autumnal charms, or rather Indian-summer—second summer charms.

She was a woman who united a fragile appearance and tender, delicate tints, with the most perfect health and the hardest of constitutions. There is an old Eastern Counties phrase that is often used with reference to people who preserve an appearance of health, who hang out flags of salubrity in their cheeks, when they are, in truth, far from being robust: 'He is ill,' they say, 'but his looks don't pity him.' Now Mrs. Knightly's looks did pity her immensely. This hysterical, delicate woman, who had kept up a running account with a doctor from the time she was sixteen—which fact alone proves her strength—was in reality very tough indeed. Hers was the class of beauty that ill-health would have utterly destroyed; a headache would have diminished her bloom in half an hour, and a serious indisposition have ruined it for ever. But she never had either one or the other; and in this her second summer the rose bloomed brightly as of yore.

She had nearly left off shamming mourning now—thus idolized wife, upon whom had been heaped by her dead husband every imaginable mark of love and confidence. Silvery grey predominated, to be sure. Her dress was a cloud—a cloud with fourteen small flounces on it, and her gloves were of the same hue; but the bonnet of black Maltese lace, to match the shawl which she wore like a Frenchwoman, had a crimson rose like a cockade on the outside of the brim to the left, and youthful buds of the same clustering upon her soft dusky hair. And the cameo brooch, and the bunch of charms, and the jewelled buckle which clasped her waist rather tightly—none of these looked like mourning.

They looked, however, as much like it as her face did; as her bright eyes, and softly smiling mouth, and dimpling cheeks. She had come there last to eat whitebait with the father of her children—with the husband, who was dead and——nearly forgotten. And now, before the last word had been chiselled on the elaborate monument she had ordered to be raised to him, while he was fresh in the memory of a little French poodle, who still would wait patiently and faithfully for hours at the door of the room from which his master would never again come forth, —she, the widow, was on the alert to catch the faintest sound of the wheels which were bearing towards her another man; and—alas for the daughter! — Florence's ears were strained to catch the same sound.

Augusta, who had not cared very much how she looked, and Florence, who had cared very much indeed, had for once dressed alike. They had put on blue grenadines, covered with wonderful puffings, and pretty white hats with drooping white feathers, and bands of black velvet round them.

Gerald from Woolwich, and the Vinings and Colonel Crofton from London, arrived at the same time; and then, as it was too early to dine, they decided to go into the Hospital and see the well-worn lions there.

Putting out of the question the Chapel, which is a gem, and the Painted Hall, which, in spite of its beauty, is a trial to every one who cares about pictures, the light being so ingeniously contrived, that, stand where you will, it does not fall upon a single painting; and the Charles's Ward, and the long, wonderfully clean dining-rooms, and the glass model of the battle of Trafalgar, where all the ships are blazing away fiercely in cotton-wool; putting all these, together with the beauty of form of the building as a whole, out of the question, the colour of it alone is worth going any distance to see it. The whole of the two blocks that face the river is of the uniform Danish crow tint—a deep, time-painted grey. It was in one of these blocks that Nell Gwynne had a suite of apartments; and here, so lately as 1853-4, might still be seen hanging from the wall the faded drapery which had once fluttered over her couch. Time's changes—how wonderful they are! This same room has seen many of them, from the day the foundress of the St. Alban's family rested there, when Charles held court at Greenwich, up to the present time, when it is the drawing-room of one of the private families residing there.

It was too hot on this especial July evening to stand outside on those bright yellow paths between the velvet-like plots of grass and admire the colour of the building. As Colonel Crofton suggested, they could do that more comfortably from the Trafalgar balcony after dinner, when it was cool. So they went into the Painted Hall; and while Florence stood at the outer end, making a rapid sketch of the head of Vasco de Gama, and the others wandered about trying to make out what it was all about on the ceiling, Colonel Crofton and Mrs. Knightly went on into that little room at the top, where florid angels with stout wings are bearing aloft a gashed and pallid Nelson. When they came out and joined the rest of the party, Florence, who had learnt to study every look of Crofton's, saw that he wore a rather pleased and triumphant expression, while her mother looked pale and agitated, happy and uncomfortable all at once.

'He has spoken to mamma before he does to me,' she thought. 'How noble, how thoughtful, how like him!'

So he had, Florence, but not about what you suppose.

'And now let us go and dine; I'm sure it must be time,' said Gerald, who had no thoughts of ideal heroes to nourish, while he sketched heads of very real ones, and who had not looked at the 'Immortality of Nelson' through rosy glasses.

'Yes,' replied Colonel Crofton, 'we've seen everything that's worth seeing, and done everything that's worth doing, and now we'll go and dine'

Ignorance was indeed bliss to Florence that night. How thoroughly she enjoyed the brown bread and butter and the little silver fish which have obtained for themselves such a name; and how thoroughly she enjoyed that hour or two on the balcony when dinner was over, and the delicate odour of coffee, mixed with the fragrant breath of some unexceptionable cigars, were stealing over her senses. Little steamers kept shooting up and down the river, with their star-like light at the bow. They had on board generally some painstaking musicians, who were wafting abroad on the sleepy summer air their belief in the 'Power of love,' and in the fact of Britannia being the pride of the ocean; and those airs mingled with the coming darkness, and with the incense of flowers and flattery from Colonel Crofton, who was by her side, and made an atmosphere of perfect happiness around her. Colonel Crofton gave them various historical details connected with the vast pile that loomed grandly before them; and he had the art of rendering his historical details other than dry, and at the same time imparting information. Mrs. Knightly's mistakes with reference to the present occupants of the building were rather humorous. Some fair young faces and graceful forms, habited in the orthodox costume of this period, appearing at a window in the eastern quarter of the Hospital, she, after looking at them through her opera-glass, expressed some little horror and some slight surprise at the nurses being so young and so gaily dressed. It was not until Colonel Crofton assured her that he was on visiting terms with some of the officers' families residing there that she could at all realize the fact of people being in society, and at the same time living in an hospital.

By and by darkness fell upon everything,—'as a feather is wafted downwards from an eagle in its flight,' softly, gradually, entirely—fell upon the mighty river, and upon that colossal pile, that best, noblest monument to the memory of Queen Mary, William the Third's consort, which rears itself on the banks of that river: and that wonderful little rattling noise had been made, which announces that it is sunset; and policemen had gone the rounds to clear out all the strangers from the Hospital. And as they had more than a seven-mile drive before them, it was time to think of starting for home.

So Florence tore herself away from the contemplation of swift-flowing river and time-honoured building, from thoughts of naval greatness and memories of the golden days of that Hospital which was once a palace, and blessed her mother for saying to Colonel Crofton—

'You will return with us, I hope. Mrs. Vining must not monopolize both our cavaliers.'

That drive home was an hour in paradise. The Old Kent Road may not be every one's idea of paradise, but it was Florence's as she sat by his side on that lovely summer evening and heard her mother talking amiably to him. The only drawbacks to this paradise were, that it would soon end for to-night, and that Gussie was not in an enjoyable frame of mind. Florence made the most magnanimous resolves relating to Gussie. When I am married, she thought, I'll get him to talk mamma over to let Gussie and Frank be as happy as I am myself.

Then, as it grew later, the jewelled points that came out in the sky seemed less bright than her own future—less bright than the fate which was surely going to be hers. Once the wife of this man, care, sorrow, doubt, difficulty, could never assail her again; and though the thought, 'What wonder that he thinks me fair?' rose occasionally, deep in her woman's heart, there lurked another which took the form of a prayer—'God make me worthier the love of such a heart as his!'

And so, while Florence dreamt away the time, and prayed to be rendered more worthy of him, her mother sat pondering over the difficulty there would be in communicating her plans to her children; and Crofton thought gloomily, 'If Gussie had but given me a third of the love and devotion her mother and sister so freely waste upon me, I should not have perjured myself in this way.'

'Whoever made dining on whitebait at Greenwich an institution deserves to be publicly thanked, I think,' Florence said as they drew up at their own door; 'it's the happiest day I ever spent in my life.'

'And I have enjoyed it for the first time in my life,' replied Colonel Crofton, as he held her hand for one moment in adieu.

'I won't ask either of you tired girls to come to my room to-night,' said Mrs. Knightly, as she kissed her daughters on the landing, 'but I want you both early to-morrow—I have something to tell you.'

Florence blushed, and cast her eyes down; and Augusta slightly opened hers as she replied—

'Oh! indeed, mamma, something to tell us, have you? Well, we will be sure to come.'

'Gussie,' asked Florence, rather piteously, as they were separating at the door of the elder sister's room, 'Baines will remain with mamma, so she won't interrupt us; may I come in and speak to you for a minute?'

'Yes, dear,' replied Gussie, rather wearily; 'though what can you have to say that won't keep till to-morrow? However, come in by all means and—say it.'

It was not an encouraging opening, but it was enough for Florence, who forthwith poured her tale of love and hope into Augusta's ears.

'And you really care for Colonel Crofton, Floy?' she asked, when her sister had brought her narrative to a conclusion.

'Gussie, how would it be possible to help it?'

'Well, dear, I am not going to say anything about him, as you wish to marry him, it seems; only I hope, if you do marry him, he'll make you happy. We shall do no good by talking about it to-night, Floy. Go to bed, dear, and believe that, however it may end, I shall only be anxious that it may end happily for you.'

Well, thought Augusta after Florence had left her, as she won't be happy without him, I hope mamma will let them marry. He's not the man I should have selected to put upon a pedestal and fall down and worship; but Floy has done it, and will break her heart if she's thwarted. I dare say, after all, he's not all bad, though he does pass off a screwed horse occasionally upon his friends; he can't be, indeed, or Floy would not care for him.

Long into the hours of that soft summer night golden-haired, light-hearted Florence sat finishing off that head of Vasco de Gama which she had commenced sketching that afternoon, in order that she might have in her possession a perfect memento of that happiest of days.

It was not till her candle had burnt out, and she had nearly concluded her task, that she flung herself upon her bed, and being regularly overtired, straightway began to dream that she was being cooked in biscuit crumbs for the dinner of Colonel Crofton, who had lost two legs and an arm, and who was sitting up to eat her in one of the little cabins in the show ward. When she awoke with a cold thrill of horror at this state of affairs daylight was faintly struggling into her room. Disappointed at not finding it time to get up, she turned round and went to sleep again, and did not wake until Baines roused her at eleven o'clock, to go to her mamma.

CHAPTER VIII.

'Cruel love, whose end is scorn,
Is this the end,—to be left alone,
To live forgotten, and die forlorn.'

The room to which Florence went, in obedience to her mother's message, was a luxurious little apartment, half boudoir half dressing-room. It was octagonal in shape, and pale green in hue. Mr. Knightly had spoilt a fine large square room by having a partition put up, because his wife had desired an octagon. The walls were draped with fluted green silk; the carpet was a capital imitation of moss, with a rich gold cord coiling over it. The dressing-table was richly draped with green silk and lace. Two pier-glasses at opposite corners, resting upon small console tables of malachite; a cheval in a handsomely carved frame, and a large swing glass on the dressing-table, reflected all this tasteful elegance, together with the fair form of the mistress of it all, who was lying on a little couch robed in a white Cashmere morning dress with broad facings, and a girdle of cerise silk. She was a fair woman, with just enough complexion to stand green surroundings without looking yellow herself; and she looked particularly well this morning, as she perceived on glancing at the glass directly opposite to which her couch was placed. The little excitement of the forthcoming communication she was about to make to her daughters, and the little shadow of distrust as to how they would take the same communication, made her look pinker and more limpid-eyed than usual.

She had in a weak moment made her confession to Baines the previous night, on her return from that delightful whitebait dinner. But Baines had not given her cordial approval to the scheme as yet, and had borne herself rather hardly to her mistress, over whom she exercised power; that is, she had carried her nose in the air far above any conversational level, and she had sighed a great many times. Mrs. Knightly had trusted sincerely, she said to herself whenever she awoke in the night, that Baines would be brought to see things in their proper light, that is, as she, Mrs. Knightly, saw them; for though she was capable of doing great things in the way of making her own family miserable, she was not capable of running decidedly counter to Baines. That Baines had not relented in the morning she felt sorrowfully sure, for the dusky, soft brown hair had been severely arranged in plain tight bands, instead of being tenderly adjusted in the easy flowing style that Mrs. Knightly loved.

But now Baines had retreated to think sulkily over the proposed alteration in the household in the privacy of her own chamber. And the daughters were alone with their mother.

'Dear children,' began Mrs. Knightly emphatically, squeezing their hands as they bent over her to kiss her, 'I have been so anxious to see you. There, take a cup of coffee both of you—do, and then sit down and I'll tell you quietly.'

Fortunately for Florence she had stationed herself in a low chair, in a part of the room where her mother could not see her without turning her head further round than suited pretty, comfort-loving Mrs. Knightly. Therefore, the deadly paleness which overspread her countenance when, at the conclusion of a long, rambling, egotistical speech, Mrs. Knightly announced that Colonel Crofton had proposed to her—asked her to be

his wife—passed unnoticed save by Augusta.

The blooming widow, the expectant bride, put her handkerchief up to her face to dry the meaningless tears when she had quite finished. Neither of her daughters spoke; so presently they had a gentle reminder from behind the embroidered bit of cambric.

'You don't wish me joy, then?—you don't even pretend to hope I may be happy.'

'Mother! what would you have us say?' asked Augusta, as Florence, in obedience to a sign from her sister, passed swiftly out of the room.

'Wish you joy of such a marriage?—No; but I will at the risk of angering you, dearest, dearest mother, pray you, beseech you to pause before you take such a fatal step.'

'How can you be so cruel, Gussie? My own children—my own flesh and blood—to turn against me in this way because I—because I am sketching out a line (a path, that is) that will lead me to happiness independent of them.'

'That is one of Colonel Crofton's phrases, mamma,' replied Augusta, quietly; 'in spite of your so unjustly attributing such a motive to me, I must repeat what I said before, that to marry Colonel Crofton would be fatal to you, fatal to your dignity, fatal to your happiness.'

'Why?—I'm sure I've every reason to think he's devoted to me, Gussie.'

'So he has been to me, and to Georgie, and to Florence,' Augusta could have said with right goodwill, but the consideration that she might injure the cause restrained her. She contented herself with saying earnestly—'Dearest mother, let me entreat you for our, for your own, sake, to keep this matter strictly private until Rupert's return. Do promise me this, mother, at least; do not even even tell Baines.'

Now it is excessively disagreeable to be cautioned against informing the particular person you have sagely selected to be your confidante. Mrs. Knightly had already told Baines, so the consent which Augusta wrung from her, that it should be kept strictly private, was a waspish one.

And then Augusta went off to give her sister that comfort poor Floy so sadly needed. How will she take it I wonder? she thought, as she walked slowly along the corridor to her sister's door. I know how I should. I should hate him so for putting such a slight upon me, that it would crush all the love out of my heart at once; but Floy is different.

How could she take it, poor child? It had stunned her at first with a dull, numbing sense of pain. And then she had found herself sitting in her own room, hearing every word he had ever uttered to her with horrible distinctness. The strains of the opera she had heard on that night, when she had first met him, came sweeping over her ears in a flood. The perfume of the flowers that had been on Mrs. Vining's table that evening—she could have sworn it was the perfume of *those* flowers and none others—were wafted in on the light breeze that lifted the hair from her hot, throbbing temples. And above all, every event and circumstance of the preceding happy day at Greenwich, stood out before her like a frightfully vivid dream.

How could she take it? She was moaning like one in a fever, when Gussie joined her; and after some long period of ineffectual soothing on Gussie's part, poor Floy laid her bright head—the head on which such a cloud had fallen—upon her sister's shoulder, and went off into a half-fainting doze. Looking at Floy's pale cheeks, and the sorrowful knitting of the forehead, active hate for Colonel Crofton took the place of the passive contempt she had lavished upon him previously. But she knew Florence's nature well, and she said to herself, 'This infatuation of poor Floy's will be a life-long grief to us all, unless some one or other can influence mamma to make it worth that mercenary wretch's while to marry the poor child, and that isn't a bright side of the picture; for a marriage with him would be a life-long misery to her; I don't know what to wish.'

She knew even less what to wish an hour afterwards, when Florence raised her feverish head from her shoulder, and went and flung herself upon the bed, murmuring—

'Gussie, it's all so black; it will drive me mad, I think.'

'Isn't Florence coming down to luncheon, Gussie?' asked Mrs. Knightly of her eldest daughter, as the latter took her place at the table that morning.

'No, mamma; she's not well; and I have advised her to be still and get some sleep.'

'Not well, indeed,' replied Mrs. Knightly, petulantly. 'All my children seem to be turning against me; it's high time I had some one else to care for and be kind to me.'

Augusta made no answer, for her eyes were raised to her father's portrait; and she felt at that moment that she could not speak.

'I suppose you'll have no objection to go into the park with me, Gussie?' her mother said after a short time.

'None whatever, mamma; Florence will be better alone,' she replied, remembering that Colonel Crofton would probably ride by the side of the carriage, and that it would look less particular if there were two ladies to be escorted. How shall I give that man my hand, she thought, as, according to her anticipation, he rode up and saluted them. How shall I give him my hand, knowing what I do? But I must be careful above everything to guard the secret of poor Floy's weakness.

Mrs. Knightly was a great fool, but she was not fool enough to affect to be in love. She was only flattered at Colonel Crofton having elected to raise her to the honour and dignity of being his wife, when so many younger women had, as she knew, sighed for him in vain. But she was a great fool nevertheless, for she thought it was herself he wanted, and not her money-bags. She was weak, too, in supposing that Colonel Crofton would play the part Mr. Knightly had delighted to play, and allow her to worry him, and monopolize, and harass him with small attentions, and generally drive him to the verge of mild madness, as had her first husband.

Colonel Crofton, too, was the reverse of weak; therefore he did not act the sentimental lover to the mother of the woman he had really loved—when that woman was present. Therefore her drive was simply unpleasant—not unendurable, as she had feared it would be—to Augusta. Colonel Crofton talked more to her than he did to her mother, and though Gussie felt dreadfully indignant with him for doing so, she was, out of common politeness, compelled to answer him. The result of that conversation was, that she no longer wondered at Floy's infatuation, for he charmed her in spite of herself. And he determined on using his influence with Mrs. Knightly, as soon as they were married, to punish Gussie for having refused him, by settling her fortune upon her in such a way that if she married Frank Tollemache she would lose it.

'Does mamma know anything?' Florence asked, as her sister bent over her anxiously on her return from that drive.

'No dear, nothing; try not to fret, Floy; I have sent for Mr. Weston, and if he can talk mamma out of this projected marriage, which under any circumstances would be so dreadful—why there's no saying what may follow, Floy.'

'Oh, Gussie, Gussie! do you think he will? then I may be happy after all.'

She must be fond of him indeed, if after all she can consent to be made happy by him, thought Augusta; but she only said—

'Yes, Floy, dear; as there is no accounting for taste.'

Now Mr. Weston was the old lawyer who disliked his friend's will, which he had been compelled to draw up, however, in spite of disliking it, and despised his friend's widow.

Woe for the woman who loves, and has no mother, says a writer in whose works Florence was deeply read; but as she lay tossing feverishly on the couch in her room, alone, sad, sick, and solitary, when Gussie had departed to waylay and instruct Mr. Weston, she might have been forgiven for thinking—Woe

for the woman who loves—and has a mother who is matrimonially disposed.

He might not be worth all this suffering and sorrow, all these heart-burnings and brow-burnings that poor Florence was undergoing on his account; but not the less did she suffer, and would continue to suffer. She loved him very truly, and dearly, and devotedly, whether he was worthy of it or not. If he had been proved guilty of a thousand faults, and these had all been carefully collected and spread out before her, she would not have loved him one whit the less. She would have trailed her golden head in the dust at his feet, at his bidding—she, who would have put her little foot remorselessly on the neck of all the rest of the world. She was not one to love to order, and leave off doing so directly circumstances would have rendered it advisable. The strings of the harp of her life had been swept by too strong a hand for them ever to cease to vibrate. So under the present aspect of things, poor Florence was utterly miserable.

'You will be careful, very careful, Mr. Weston, that you say nothing mamma can feel hurt or offended at,' Augusta said, as Mr. Weston was quitting the room where he had had half an hour's undisturbed conversation with her.

'My dear Miss Knightly,' he replied, tremulously, wiping his spectacles, which had got slightly dimmed during the interview with his old friend's daughter, 'My dear Miss Knightly, I will be careful; depend upon my prudence and discretion. I will put it to her calmly and dispassionately, that—she can't be such a fool.'

Oh dear! oh dear! thought Augusta, as he walked away up to the drawing-room, if he says that, we are lost, lost. I had far better have waited till Georgie and Rupert came home.

She sat anxiously in that dark lofty dining-room, where her father had sat and been hospitable for so many years, waiting for the sound of Mr. Weston's anything but fairy footfall; meanwhile there was a stormy scene upstairs.

On being told, judiciously, by Mr. Weston that Colonel Crofton only wanted her money, Mrs. Knightly had tearfully repeated the offer she once made Gerald, namely, of giving them everything; but when Mr. Weston had expressed himself delighted to accept these terms on behalf of her children, Mrs. Knightly had hysterically refused to stand by her offer, or hear anything more on the subject; and the end of that meeting was anger.

'Letting Rupert marry in the way he has, was a disgrace, yes, a disgrace to you, madam; but if you marry that sharper, you'll be a disgrace to your whole family.'

Mrs. Knightly comforted herself under this speech by mentally stating that she had always said Weston was a brute.

'She must go her own way, and a bad one it is, I fear,' he said to Augusta, when he came down. 'I shall have nothing more to do with her, or her affairs.'

(To be continued.)

ENGLAND'S WELCOME. · May-Day Anno Domini 1862.

THIS day my portals wide I fling,
Oh, Nations!—and with open hand
I greet you all, who, coming, bring
A Festival throughout my land!

I greet you—from whatever shores!
From where the Ganges' billows toss—
From where Niagara's torrent roars—
Or Austral waves reflect the Cross:



awn by William Harvey. p. 349.

And nearer—where the turbid Seine
Or yellow Tiber rolls along—
From Southern Sea or Northern Main,
I greet you, whencesoe'er ye throng!

Yet must my words of greeting fail!
The hand that forth should welcome hold—
The lips that should have bid you hail—
Alas! the lips and hand are cold!

And She—the Lady of my Land—
Sits sorrowing—nor can bear her part
In this great triumph, which He planned
For Skill—for Industry—for Art!

Forgive me! though this Morn of May
Should give to such sad thought a birth!—
I see through tears a brighter day—
A grander Future for the Earth!

I see a Time—not far away—
Whose Herald now convenes us here—
When Peace and Freedom shall bear sway
From hemisphere to hemisphere:

When link to link shall nations bind
The golden chain of Common Good,
To girdle all of human kind
Into one mighty Brotherhood!

Then, when War's ensigns shall be furled,
And better times bid Arts increase—
Here shall be victories for the world,
And bloodless battle-fields for Peace!—

A Friendly Strife—whose wiser plan
Shall emulate a pure Renown
For benefits bestowed on Man—
Whose meed shall be the Olive Crown!

Unfettered Commerce, and the light
Of Freedom broadened into Day—
Brute Force and Statecraft merged in Right—
And Wrong's traditions swept away—

All these I see!—and know that higher
This day on those gold rounds we rise,
Whereby Earth's peoples must aspire
And struggle nearer to the skies!

Thus, Nations, with grief-chastened mirth
I bid you welcome here to-day—
With solemn prayers for 'Peace on Earth,
Good-will to Men'—this First of May.

THOMAS HOOD.

FLOWER MARKETS.—FLOWER SHOWS.—NEW FLOWERS.

FEW, perhaps, of the readers of 'London Society' know all the charms and all the bustle of a crowded flower-market, at four o'clock in the morning of a fine spring day. It does need some enthusiasm in the cause of flowers to set off to seek them at such an early hour; and my own experience would lead me to imagine that it is a vagary not often repeated. Perhaps when we arrive there is not very much to see—great waggons unloading still, and empty ones moving off; a great many coffee-stalls in apparently good request, and a rush and bustle worse than any railway station.

Still the scene is in some manner pleasant; there is a sort of profusion, which we do not see elsewhere, and it is delightful to see the freshness of the flowers that come from close round London—fruit and flowers all bathed in dew, and from which the perfume has not yet exhaled.

I don't think, however, that it is exactly a time for ladies to do much business. I remember vividly being put for shelter behind a stall, in an ignominious manner, while the purchased flowers were just put together, and it was with a sense of keen regret that the friendly haven was at last deserted. Covent Garden Market, early in the morning, is pleasanter to write of, it may be, than to undergo.

What changes that spot has seen since the days of the 'Convent Garden,' from which it derives its name, with the old pleached walks and the cloistered shades, the sheltering walls and the thickets with wild birds singing! Who at present could picture it as it used to be? and who of the former days would ever have dreamt the change?

Suppose we glance back for a moment, some six hundred years, and trace out the ancient boundaries of the said herb garden and the green orchard alleys of the old Benedictine monks.

In the thirteenth century the ground was still thus employed, and so slow were the changes in the years that followed, that even after three more centuries the record still bears mention of the 'oblong walled space,' sprinkled with trees and cottages, bounded by open meadows, and footpaths leading north; gay gardens mingling with green embowering trees, on the south and east; and, on the western side, the pleasant hawthorn hedge of St. Martin's Lane.

How strange it seems, too, in reading of those old days to meet the familiar name of 'the Seven Acres,' and thinking of dairy-farms, and of pleasant rambles in fields with 'cowslip gatherings,' or with heaving swathes of fragrant falling grass,—to see the name applied to Long Acre, as *we* know it!

The market at Covent Garden grew up, as most markets do, by slow degrees at first. The large square I mentioned being left a good deal open, tempted people to stand with baskets there to offer their wares for sale, and thus at last it came to be established as a known market-place.

A century later the removal of the Stocks market gave an added impetus to this already flourishing rival. The old Stocks market seems, however, not to have left itself without a 'household word'—it gave its name to one of our most fragrant and of our best-known flowers, which has long conveyed it to many a far-off land, and which still keeps its place on Covent Garden stalls on every market day. Few flowers are pleasanter than those old-fashioned stocks, and very few indeed are more largely purchased. Musk is, however, a successful rival — so many close, dark rooms owe to the hanging musk-plant all that they have of green or of sweet scent. It is quite pleasant to read the statistics of flower-markets in London; though they make little show, it is evident that such thousands of narrow courts must still share at



n by I K Johnson p 350

THE ARTIST IN THE LONDON STREETS

least in the pleasure that flowers impart. Maid-servants and needlewomen are said to be among the most constant purchasers of single pots or bunches of spring flowers, but this is chiefly in the shape of a penny plant, or of a bunch of primroses, or of mignonette or wallflower, to bloom for many a day in the little window whereby the owner sews.

Amongst all ranks, indeed, the taste for flowers seems rapidly on the increase, and year by year they and their belongings take up a larger space.

Last year the Floral Hall was a grand advance, viewed as a mere beginning, though very far at present from the gay mart that it will doubtless become in time. And this year already, a new spot in front of it is given to the display of flowers. This must be pretty—a square enclosure divided into beds, devoted entirely to different kinds of plants. How elegant and sweet such mosaic will surely be, as summer brings in its squares of red geraniums, and its masses of white petunias; its clumps of fuchsias, and its long, thick lines of the fragrant heliotrope; noble begonias, massing their leaves together; and graceful standards rising up majestically;—with all the flowers there met, what a brilliant patch it may be, and what a study of colour to arrange its pattern!

Perhaps, however, we are hardly adepts in general effect at present. Each individual will settle his own niche, and patchwork results will possibly ensue.

Our Parisian neighbours understand much better how each separate stall may set off the next, or be set off by it; and though at the Madeleine—that narrow street of little, tent-like stalls seem really made to hold each its single group, there still is a pleasing quaintness, and a gay tout-ensemble which is very French. And the people's heart is so in their flowers! See that old market dame, who looks far from poetical, how eagerly she discusses artistic effects of colour with a kindred soul met amongst the crowd! She is engaged just now in making up a bouquet, talking all the while of every flower's effect; and, growing beneath her fingers, it makes good her theory, and comes forth very lovely. Some one is anxious to purchase that pretty plant; but no—it is not the time. She is a real artiste, and far be it from her to interrupt her work.

A good many contrasts are to be seen at once between French and English markets, as well as a few strong likenesses. We do not often see a couple of flowerpots pounced upon, and carried off forthwith by a determined and well-gloved purchaser, regardless of weight, and yet more of dignity. But we do, now and then, see Paris fashions followed, so far as asking double price, and a good deal of bargaining consequently goes on.

Ferns and Begonias are popular things in both markets; but I think in Paris they make more account of trifles. The forced white lilacs even, that go on from Christmas—little bushy plants, all covered with white blossoms; pretty little bunches of common garden flowers; violets in all months; the sweet mignonette, and the China roses. Now in England, doubtless, in the great country houses, all these things abound; but in London markets they are not much affected by the purveyors generally—I mean to such extent as to place them within reach of every one.

The actual experience amongst ladies, of an English flower market, is chiefly, no doubt, confined to Covent Garden, and to the central avenue, in the afternoon, with the array of pots containing flowers which stand along the sort of covered way. The Arums and roses, geraniums and Begonias, that figure in the sketch of the flower market to-day are very fair specimens of the best of these.

I wish we could follow some of those flowers home, and see the fate they meet with. Will that Begonia Rex go outside a window? or is there a hope for it of filling, as in Paris, the pretty carved oak boxes and the bracket slabs, and even the stands of dark artificial 'carving' which would mutually show, and be

shown off by, the beautifully marked leaves?

A dusty window—a sunny aspect—and a box that is only just overstrewn with moss, will be, I greatly fear, amongst us, a more frequent fate for them; and the bright geranium will stand on a pretty plant-table; and, it may be, some charming climbers will droop in ormolu stands just by the drawing-room door. But perhaps if those dark Begonias were to fill *that* post, in a carved box of sand;—if those gay geraniums stood outside the windows, mingling with many Arums (lilies of the Nile), and with climbers there, the general aspect would be much improved, and the next drive to the market for a new stock of plants would be delayed much longer.

It always, however, surprises me exceedingly that azaleas and rhododendrons are not ten times more common. The first, indeed, do require a little shelter sometimes, and their leaves are in some ways more difficult to keep clean; still, any one possessed of any sort of glass, or even of a good window, can easily grow them well; and when they are grown, they are so very charming The scent, and the shape, and the colour of their blossoms seem to be really perfect, and, besides, they last very long if watered and shaded properly.

The azalea 'magnificent' is one that I recommend most urgently. It is snowy white, with sometimes a cerise streak; and, indeed, the flowers now out upon my plant are fully two inches wide. There is of this also a double variety. Azaleas should, after flowering, have their roots protected from becoming dried, and be placed out of doors to ripen the young wood. In winter the plants will look green and pretty long before the flowers come out in spring.

The rhododendrons, however, are almost all hardy plants. Their thick evergreen leaves look well at all times and seasons—filling up and backing boxes of other plants.

They may be kept in-doors in any aspect, so that they have in summer a time of good strong sunshine; and, with occasional sponging, the foliage will keep always very green and beautiful. Rhododendron sesterianum is a noble white and very sweet-scented flower, of enormous size; and 'Princess Alice' is an exquisite plant, also sweetly scented and covered with flowers of a beautiful rosy-white colour, somewhat resembling in form and foliage the pretty 'ciliatum'—a well-known favourite, with its white, early blossoms.

I must not forget, too, the pretty and fragrant Cytsus, of which a single plant is enough to perfume a greenhouse. Here I must give a caution. There is a little yellow flower—I believe a kind of genista—which looks so nearly the same, if not seen together, that I was reminded lately of the many times that the one is bought for the other, under the assurance that 'the scent will come out in the warmth.' This, however, is apt not to take place; and the proper Cytsus is most charmingly fragrant at all times and seasons, as far, at least, as my knowledge of it extends. It is an easy plant to manage in a drawing-room plant-stand—blossoms very early, and even when not in flower is attractive from the gracefulness of its growth.

And then comes another and a very important branch of the market trade—the many bouquets bought to adorn a room, and the many more meant to be worn that evening. I don't know that a gossip on arranging nosegays would be just here of service. One can only wish that all the flower-sellers were like the artistic Frenchwoman, and thought a little also of *la gloire*; for very rare and costly are the few English bouquets which could bear comparison with those of the Paris flower-girls.

One thing, however, we have in our hands. When we want knots of flowers to wear in the hair or dress, or just to make one of the lovely vase sprays, so far more pretty generally than any massive bouquet, we can then surely think a little of what will be pretty when it is in its destined place, instead of only what is in itself attractive.

As far, I think, as my own ex-

perience goes, it is for this a question more often of *style of growth*, than either of shape or colour, of course supposing that these are not objectionable. A little delicate spray, such as the exquisite orchid Odontoglossum pulchellum, is far more beautiful than many more showy things. The coral shreds of some of the red Begonias, the little sprays of the pretty white Eriostoma, and many slight graceful heaths, are also a great deal more valuable than we often think them: they make a knot, or lighten one, in a very charming fashion. After all, we need only think how things would grow. Matted together, as we thrust flowers together, they could not live a day. Intertwining each other gracefully, they are really lovely, and for small demands of this kind, nothing, I think, is pleasanter than having the living plants, and gathering when we want one, just a single flower.

The outer market is chiefly for popular country plants, and those of a hardier class; — its charm lies mostly in their great profusion, and in the many groups which give such picturesqueness. The choicest flowers, however, lurk chiefly under glass — some on the stalls of the Floral Hall, some in the large conservatories. It is, however, at the exhibitions of May flowers at Kensington, and in the Regent's Park, and even at the private nurseries round London, that the plants are best displayed; and there, indeed, they are something so bewilderingly lovely in their masses and clumps and banks of expanded blossom, as to leave one fairly lost in such a maze of beauty

The flowers, too, seem fresher at home in their own abodes—and if we want to grow them we can see how they *are* growing; while the exquisite gardens, and the scenery of such ferneries as some of these present, is indeed a setting worthy of such flowers.

But of what special things shall I write? I set down, indeed, the names of a few great favourites, which I thought would be all one wanted. But then came a raid amongst Mr. Veitch's orchids, he too most kindly affording me all sorts of information—gathered from their collectors—as to the native ways and the natural growth of these floral jewels—gems, indeed, of every brilliant colour, forming groups of loveliness such as one rarely sees, and perfuming whole conservatories with their peculiar and delicate kind of scent.

These plants, I hear, have of late greatly increased in number and in importance, and they will thus appear this year in unusual force at the horticultural fêtes, for which some new and amazing beauties—including a rose-butterfly—are said to be preparing.

But how shall I describe even the flowers I saw?—such scent and such variety—such colour and such grace! One no longer wonders at the days and weeks that travellers spend contentedly seeking out the hiding-places and studying the 'home ways' of such a brilliant tribe—roaming amidst the forests, and on the cloudy hills, and amongst the steep high rocks, on which they wave their wreaths.

Exceedingly various are the habitats of these flowers, some rejoicing in the fierce tropic heats, and others again discovered, as the Lycaste Skinneri, with all their blossoms covered with the snow and rime of the early morning in the Nubes of Mexico; thus exposed by turns to the damp and heavy clouds and to the brilliant rays of a Mexican noontide sun.

Very faint indeed is our English sunshine compared with the ardent rays that there fall on the banks they haunt;—great banks with steep sides covered for many a yard around with the waving leaves and the lovely rosy flowers of these charming things. Mr. Skinner observed the flowers first displayed upon the altar of one of the churches in Mexico; and seeking eagerly for so beautiful a new plant, he found it to be of a very local growth, the banks I describe being mostly all contained within the circuit of perhaps ten miles.

Many new varieties are, however, likely to be obtained from those we already have. They vary now in

colour from very deep rose to very nearly white, and with their increasing popularity they will doubtless grow more numerous. They seem, indeed, made for drawing-rooms, not too hot. Very few are the room-plants that will last four months, and always look so beautiful as these, and the flower-buds expand so rapidly in a bright warm gleam even of winter sunshine, that it is truly *pleasant to watch how they unfold*. The more light the plants have the more rosy their hue becomes; and yet, perhaps, the pearly colour of some that are almost white may be thought to surpass in beauty the brilliance of the rose. Brilliant sunshine by day, absence of heat by night, careful watering *at the roots alone* two or three times a week, and an occasional sponging of the leaves if dusty, with a peaty soil and a well-drained flowerpot, are the chief points to be considered in the way of culture. The Lycastes indeed are said to be amongst the most easily kept of orchids. Dr. Lindley has predicted for them a future like the tulips; and truly if tulips were introduced under some unfamiliar name, and with many cautions, we can well conceive *their* seeming to require a great deal of care and attendance, with their summer's moisture and their autumn's dryness; while the delicate beauty of some of the pretty cup-shaped white flowers, tinged with their rosy blush, might well deserve the care which they would then meet with.

A delightfully sweet-scented orchid is the Vanda suavis, the perfume being very subtile, and penetrating the atmosphere without being so oppressive as some flowers become when in great profusion. I remember hearing of a Vanda found some years ago at Sarawak by Mr. Low (a well-known collector), the flowers of which were described as hanging down in chains of ten or twelve feet long, the many branches being suspended by the arm of a large tree;—those chains of flowers, all cinnamon colour, and purple, and pale yellow, dropping down from each, forming a wondrous sight. These amazing quantities of flowers waving so high amongst the leaves must have an effect upon the traveller's eye more strangely beautiful even than we think; for it should be remembered that in our flowering trees the blossoms are all above—we do not see, as they do, the canopy of flowers as we walk below.

But I must go on to mention some more of the lovely orchids that are now in bloom at Chelsea What can be lovelier than the Dendrobium *racemes, nobile*, with its bunches of waxen flowers hanging from overhead, lips deep-lined with a purple glow, and the expanded petals catching reflected lights, tinged with a rosy shade, as though the half-closed flower had stolen the brilliant dye before it yet opened wide. Picture the *tortile* with its ivory horn, forming a fairy cup of such matchless grace, stained deep within with purple and rosy hues, like drops of some brilliant wine, left by the fairies there, and spreading its fine fair wings—shreds of a fabric that is beyond compare. Others, again, are hanging in lovely drooping clusters as of white sea-shells strung, and in each it seems that a mantle of softest velvet is left by its absent occupant, flung loosely down within.

Very unlike these, in all but the beauty shared, is the Cattleya Skinneri, all of a brilliant mauve, its surface sparkling as with silver dust, or with perpetual dew, while it hangs its gay wreaths down. More of the pendant clusters fall round Dendrobium baskets, and the crimson tubes unite in their own deep bells the royal purple's richest and rosiest hues.

I cannot, indeed, describe the loveliness displayed when these most glowing crimson and white flowers hang down low in wreaths, gleaming amidst dark ferns. The group is indeed so exquisite, that without first seeing the flowers thus arranged, it would be hard to picture them; having seen them once, yet harder to forget them. No centre flowers are wanted, only spreading ferns, and orchid sprays drooped down from the side of some open vase. Yet, if centre flowers there must be, suppose a small flight of white 'East Indian butterflies'—of Phalænopsis amabilis—to call the lovely flower

by its own long name. A wood full of these flowers was the other day described to me in a most graphic manner, as in the Eastern islands they hang in glimmering clouds, all quivering and waving, as the wild bird's wing sweeps by. I was bid to picture the bough of some great tree in the densest forests of the Philippine Islands. High up on the drooping branch hung whitely myriads of spread wings, a very cloud of large pure 'white butterflies;' and, as the branch swept down, the streaming flowers rolled on the waves of their lovely wreaths, dark green leaves supporting the hovering flowers, till, as they drooped down lower, the white shining stars grew fewer, and only drew scattered brightnesses from the dazzling cloud that hung so high above.

To see such sights as these is enough to tempt a traveller to plunge with boldness into those strange shades where Nature seems so lavish and so exuberant in her beauty.

Still, clouds of orchid flowers are not the only things of beauty that may be 'joys for ever.' Wordsworth would tell us all another—a most true tale—from the banks of our own lakes, where he sat one day and watched the daffodils.

'I gaz d—I gazed—but little thought
What wealth to me the show had brought;
For oft, when on my couch I lie,
In vacant or in pensive mood,
They flash upon that inward eye,
Which is the bliss of solitude
And then my heart with pleasure fills,
And dances with the daffodils.'

A MAY CAROL.

IN IMITATION OF THE OLD POETS.

THE lark's aloft—the wind blows soft—
The merry maids are straying
In open glades, 'mid verdurous shades,
To list what Love is saying.
Should we be longer staying?
Let sleep be shut from each dull lid,
And let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

The hawthorn white bursts into sight
'Mid forest's green arraying:
And perfume rare breathes on the air,
Hid violets betraying.
We brook no more delaying!
Up—up! Away! while breaks the day!
And let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

We wait—we wait beside your gate—
On pipe and tabor playing;
With garlands, boughs, and wreathèd brows,
Our chosen Queen obeying!
We suffer no gainsaying!
We summon you to join our crew!
Come let us go a-Maying—Maying—
Let us go a-Maying!

SOCIAL CONTROVERSIES: THE LAND OF THE GORILLA.

'Sein Vaterland muss grossen sein'—German Students' Song.

'The facts we deliver may be relied on, though we often mistake the age and country where they happened.'—Fielding.

A MAGAZINE, the object of which is to sketch for our edification and amusement the various phases of London Society, would be incomplete without an occasional reference to those entertaining controversies and discussions with which it is the habit of that great world to vary the tedium of its severer labours of pleasure or business. Seldom without one of these upon its hands, the style of a player or a preacher, the invention of a novelist, or the veracity of a traveller, will often afford to it material for a very pretty quarrel, wherein a certain amount of combativeness, a little vanity, a partial knowledge of the question at issue, and a considerable admixture of positive error, will combine to impart to the question that *soupçon* of acerbity which a great poet has assured us is an essential in the composition of human life.

Of a quiet and peaceful temperament—

'Averse from rows and never calling watch,'

and dissenting altogether from the dictum, in this particular, of the philosopher in question, it will be my desire, if I should occasionally seek to examine into and set society right on such matters, to proceed in a spirit of candour which those more immediately concerned in the question are apt to pretermit, and as a friend of the common family,—for as such I shall hope to show myself worthy of being regarded,—to help to subdue the conflagration, and even to rescue out of the fire some small salvage of good.

In this spirit I have had under dispassionate consideration the controversy which lately engaged the attention of the town upon M. Du Chaillu's narrative of his travels in 'Equatorial Africa;' and have the satisfaction of being enabled to submit to society three entirely new and original conclusions in regard to it, all of which, though entirely different one from the other, I believe to be correct; and any one or all of which may be adopted by both contending factions without any sacrifice or compromise of their honour and dignity.

The interest with which this work has been received would seem to have been attributable partly to what was considered the novelty and freshness of its details, and partly to the imputations which have been cast upon its veracity. For my own part, I must confess that I rose from its perusal with totally different views of the matter, having satisfied myself that there was much in it that was within the knowledge and experience of us all, and that it was characterized rather by absence of novelty than by want of truth.

It is remarked by Fielding, in his 'History of the Adventures of Joseph Andrews and his Friend Mr. Abraham Adams,' from which I have derived one of my epigraphs, that notwithstanding the preference vulgarly given to those romance writers, as he terms them, who entitle their books 'The History of England,' 'The History of France,' &c., it is certain that the truth can be found only in the works of those whom he calls Biographers, and the world, writers of fiction; that the business of the former is chiefly to describe countries and cities, their statements of *facts* not being by any means reliable, so that they may be more properly designated Topographers or Chorographers, whereas with the writers whom he terms Biographers the facts they deliver may be relied upon, though they often mistake the age and country where they happened.

I have often thought that the writers of works of travel might likewise be divided into the Topographers and Biographers. Of the former, who devote themselves chiefly to describing countries and cities,

many notable examples, which it would be invidious in me to particularize, might doubtless be discovered by the curious in that list of books for sale at greatly reduced prices which occupies the fourth page of Mr. Mudie's monthly literary programme. Of the latter, the less common but more reliable works of travel, may be instanced those of the late Don Manuel Esprielia, the Spanish traveller, for whose interesting letters we were indebted, some thirty years ago, to the late Mr Southey; of Lieu-Chen Altangi, the eminent Chinese traveller and 'Citizen of the World,' introduced to us by Dr Goldsmith; of Rasselas, Prince of Abyssinia; and the late Captain Lemuel Gulliver—works of travel in the great world of human nature of which we never tire.

In investigating, therefore, the claims to authenticity of a volume such as that under consideration, the discriminating critic will not fail to regard it from the biographical as well as the topographical point of view; since, if it fail to give satisfaction in one, it may nevertheless prove most valuable and reliable in the other.

As I accompanied M Du Chaillu in his narrative, I could not help remarking whatever might be its *topographical* inaccuracies, it appeared to be, in many particulars, *biographically* correct, that the nations which he had visited appeared not wholly unknown to me; and that the creeds and customs which he represented as prevailing among them had either fallen under my own observation or been described in works with which I was acquainted of previous authors. This circumstance appeared the more extraordinary, as I had certainly never visited 'Equatorial Africa,' or perused any descriptions of it, my travels, either of flesh or spirit, never having extended beyond the shores of that people which the short-sighted civilization of a bygone age irreverently characterized as 'ultimâ orbe Britannos;' or, at all events, those of the nations with which that gifted race is more immediately associated.

Yet, wherever I accompanied the traveller, I seemed to find myself 'en pays de connaissance.'

There were the Mongpwes, for instance, the leading tribe of the Gaboon, as they are described by the writer, who, he tells us, are so much divided into classes, whose characteristic is their great eagerness for trade, and whose ambition it is to possess vessels, and place their factories on out-of-the-way points of the sea-shore. I admit that their name was not familiar to me, but I found it impossible to resist the conviction that I, too, knew, and had even dwelt among them. As for those unprincipled Mongpwes whose great aim, we are told, it is to get trust; who enter into reckless speculations, without capital upheld by their 'Books,' and, using the reputation for honesty as an aid to fraud, develop all kinds of overtrading and rascality, I was peculiarly impressed with the absence of novelty in their characteristics; and I could almost fancy that I had had my memory refreshed in regard to them even recently, though it is some time since I taxed my brain with reading more profound than the telegrams or the 'London Gazette;' or extended my wanderings in search of knowledge beyond an area of a couple of miles from my home, which would scarcely include Basinghall Street or the Old Bailey.

Suspending final judgment, however, until I had proceeded a little further,—for it is not wise to attach too much importance to isolated coincidences,—I found myself among the 'Camma' people, those smart traders, who, our traveller tells us, are very like the Mongpwes, and have the same language, with local variations, who are divided into two tribes, one owning the shipping trade, and the other engaged in producing and sending its goods to its neighbour to trade off; among whom the wayfarer settled down for a time in a village which he christened 'Washington.' Those 'Cammas,' who were some years ago, it appears, under the rule of a great king, but who now own no monarch or head chief, having split into two factions headed by two leaders, Rampano and Sangala, who

at the time of our narrator's visit were at war with each other upon some fancied grievance. I must confess that the names of Rampano and Sangala are entirely new to me; but if M. Du Chaillu had not assured us that he had himself arbitrated between them, and settled their dispute, I could have averred with certainty that the Cammas were at war at this very moment, and were very much in need, indeed, of some friendly intervention to compose their differences.

Wandering on as though in a dream in which combinations the most novel and unexpected occasion no surprise to us, I found myself with M. Du Chaillu among the Orungo tribe, with their middle-sized monarch, King Bango, who spoke French, and whose vanity was gratified by a salvo of musketry. That powerful despot, as the traveller describes him, who rules by his personal influence, in a uniform with gilt embroidery over it, with a tinsel crown which had been given to him as a special gift by a notorious slaveholder named Don Jose, with whom he had had large dealings, King Bango, who complained of the English, and was quarrelsome with the traveller, professing to believe that he intended to insult his crown Surely, even with my limited experiences, I had some knowledge of King Bango and his dominions before I became acquainted with Equatorial Africa, though I am bound to confess, in this instance also, that I do not remember their names. I suspect I know something, too, of the potent slaveholder to whom King Bango is indebted for his crown, though I never heard him named to 'ears polite' as Don Jose; but as I desire to speak or think of that personage as little as possible, I shall not further expatiate in regard to him.

In many of the more minute details of the habits and manners of these savages as given by M Du Chaillu, the absence of novelty was so noticeable that the descriptions of them might almost have been borrowed, as I have said, from well-known works of previous authors. For example, the ridiculous fetishes which the traveller describes these tribes as hanging about them, and to which they attach such great reverence, were referred to more than a century since by a philosopher and traveller named Shandy, whose adventures have been handed down to us in the writings of one Sterne. Speaking of a tribe which he names '*Connoisseurs*,' he says 'The whole tribe of them are so befetished with the bobs and trinkets of criticism, their heads are stuck so full of rules and compasses, and have that eternal propensity to apply them on all occasions, that a work of genius had better go hang than stand to be picked and tortured to death among them' This tribe is known to exist at the present day under the name of '*Critics*' or '*Reviewers*;' and may very likely be found to be identical with the Balaku and Apingi of M Du Chaillu.

Again, there is nothing new in the description given by the writer of the judicious system which prevails among the aristocracy of 'Equatorial Africa' in regard to the culture of the marriage relations, where, by numerous family alliances, a chief is sure of influential connections upon whom he can call for help in any emergency, and where, in consequence, women are mainly valuable as a means of such connexions; where, upon this system, young girls are actually married to old men for political reasons, where conjugal infidelity is compensated for in the current objects of barter of the tribe, and a lover can secure the wife by a payment to the husband. All these circumstances are so well known as to be scarcely deserving of repetition; and undoubtedly a traveller is bound, if he have nothing new to tell us, to reproduce, for our amusement or instruction, something of the old that has not been recently under our notice, which can scarcely be said of the customs and practices referred to. Indeed, much more is known on the subject than our traveller has told us. This suppression may have originated in a consideration on his part for public morals, but having said so much, I cannot but think that he might have completed his picture by noticing that so common

are cases of conjugal infidelity in 'Equatorial Africa,' that a separate court of judicature is appointed to deal with them, the chief judge of which is more hardly worked than any of his brethren, and that all the details of the evidence are printed and published, without any interference on the part of the head men of the tribe, and are purchased by the natives and perused in their families with the utmost avidity

One more example will, perhaps, suffice to satisfy a candid reader that whatever may be the defects of M Du Chaillu's narrative, it bears many evidences of truth, if not of novelty In his description of the position of woman generally in 'Equatorial Africa,' he notices particularly the manner in which the men, reserving to themselves all occupations and privileges by which honour and distinction are conferred, content themselves with carrying only their spears and guns, consigning to their women the pots and pans and other culinary utensils necessary to make them comfortable In a recent excellent *brochure* entitled 'Remarks on the Education of Girls, with reference to the Social, Legal, and Industrial Position of Women in the present day, by Bessie Rayner Parkes,' the identical state of things described above is thus referred to -' Unskilled in the peculiar mental weapons of the other sex, women now appear to stand towards men in a position parallel to that of the churl or bourgeois of the middle ages, to whom the arms and accomplishments of knighthood were denied'

Not to weary the patience of my reader with further illustrations, I will proceed to my conclusions, which I will arrange, as I promised, under three heads either that 'Equatorial Africa' is a much wider region of the inhabited globe than it has hitherto been supposed to be, comprising many more nations and tribes than has been imagined, and the tribes and nations inhabiting it have been and are known by other names than those by which they are described by M Du Chaillu, or that the work is an ingenious parable or allegory, wherein, as dear old Sir Thomas Browne hath it, 'things are set down not truly, but as it were in a picture or similitude,' or, thirdly and lastly, that it is not so difficult to prove black to be white as has been contended by logicians, that there is more in common between civilization and barbarism than the former would, perhaps, be prepared to admit, and that all human nature is much the same, either in the life within or the life without, unless tamed and softened by a nationality more universal and all-comprehending than that of country or colour – a civilization of a deeper, truer, and purer source than that of mere external knowledge and conventional refinement.

As there are no conclusions, however well demonstrated, which are not subjected in these days to the cavils of the uncandid and illogical disputant, it is possible that an objection may be raised to mine that they leave the actual question at issue between M Du Chaillu and his critics very much where it was before. Not to waste time in profitless discussion, I would submit that if this were so, it would be their greatest merit, and under any circumstances it is to be borne in mind, that such is not infrequently the effect of the highest judicial decisions, and is, indeed, generally the ultimate and only end of disputations and controversies on all subjects—a consideration which might almost suggest to the philosophical mind the avoidance of them altogether.

If my laborious investigations should tend in any degree to promote this desirable object in London Society, I shall not in vain have accompanied M Du Chaillu in his perilous travels in the regions of 'Equatorial Africa.'

THE CHILDREN OF THE NEW FOREST.

IT was a delicious summer evening, the fresh breeze pouring new life into lungs choked with thick London smoke, and the setting sun darting its last red rays through the waving corn, when we issued from the station door, wearied and cramped with long sitting in a crowded carriage, and were heartily greeted by our host, whose domains we were about to invade. A few minutes served to settle us on the vehicle in waiting, and the train had hardly proceeded on its course when we were merrily bowling along towards our home in the New Forest.

Even the country drive was a luxury to those who had for months been penned up in the very heart of the metropolis, and after a mile or so had been passed, proved to be not without its excitement. The favourite old horse—hight Rufus, in honour of the second William, and in allusion to his bay coat—trotted off in great spirits, knowing that every step took him nearer to his stable. His owner, however, not wishing us to be taken by surprise, told us casually that Rufus generally fell down when descending a hill, and that he always liked to have the vehicle pushed behind him whenever he came to an ascent; but that those who were used to him knew what to expect, and did not object to these trifling failings. As, therefore, the road consisted, on an average, of six miles of hills and two of level ground, it may be imagined that mental excitement was combined with physical exertion in a degree rarely witnessed. However, we have started with the intention of taking everything as it came, and therefore watched Rufus carefully as he went down hill, and pushed behind when he went up hill, until we arrived at our intended domicile; the vehicle having been very useful in holding our baggage, but as far as ourselves were concerned, rather an honourable appendage than a personal conveyance.

Evening had set in long before, and the glow-worms had started one by one into their full beauty as they lined the forest pathways like mundane stars shining in imitative rivalry of the glittering points in the dark dome above. One of them we placed on the splashboard by way of a lantern, and on our safe arrival laid it carefully among some herbage just outside the door, a position which it held for three days and nights.

Such a lovely spot is the New Forest; the soil so various, the trees so magnificent, the flowers so perfumed and luxuriant, and the birds so plentiful and musical. May the Enclosure Act, that has turned many a mile of grand forest into base turnip land, never lay its withering grasp on the New Forest! and far be from our eyes the chilling sight of the splendid oaks, which we have so long loved, lying like murdered corpses on the ground, their white and gnarled limbs stretched out as if stiffened in deadly agony, and their rugged bark, erst rich with moss and lichen, stacked in heaps by their sides.

Some unimaginative persons talk of the dull uniformity of the forest—you might as well talk of the dull uniformity of the Strand or Regent Street, and with much more reason of the dull uniformity of Rotten Row. The real, deep, primitive forest is ever changing, and in one day may pass through a thousand phases. Putting aside the two great epochs of summer and winter, of leafless branch and wealthy foliage, of green-clad boughs and snowy shroud, together with the intermediate state of spring's delicate green and autumn's rich ruddy brown, there is hardly a day when the forest does not assume a new aspect as each hour passes away, and in which its threefold harmonies of sight, sound, and scent are not woven into a thousand varied modulations, like a fugued melody of some great master in music. Mendelssohn always reminds me of a forest. No one can appreciate a forest who has not passed whole days in its solitary depths, and watched it from the early morning hours to the

deep, dark shades of night. Different birds, insects, and flowers make their appearance at their chosen hour, and there are many creatures which emerge from their hiding-places only for a brief space, and then return into darkness and solitude for the remainder of the day. The sweet voices of the song-birds have their appointed times, and the perfume of flower and leaf changes with the march of the sun.

Full of pleasant memories, and gay with anticipations for the morrow, we, two old foresters, flung open our window to the utmost, so as to be lulled to sleep by the owl and the silence, and to be awakened by the merry songs of the morning birds. We awoke at the intended hour, but heard no birds, nothing but a rushing sound as of rain on leaves. Horror! the sky is of one uniform leaden tinge, and the rain is pouring in steady perpendicular torrents, as if a second deluge were impending. What shall we do for the next few hours, while the household is asleep within and the rain pouring without? Let us brave the storm, accept a thorough soaking as an inevitable fact, and sally boldly into the forest just to see its aspect after a wet night and during heavy rain.

A few minutes served to encase ourselves in the very oldest habiliments that our wardrobe could furnish, and to see us on our way. Twenty yards sufficed to drench our clothing as effectually as if we had just emerged from the depths of a river, and from that moment we became delightfully indifferent to the rain, having a kind of wild exultation in the feeling that we could walk about in the midst of the watery torrent without seeking shelter or needing an umbrella. I have seldom enjoyed a walk more than that saunter in the forest glades, with the noisy patter of the rain-drops on the leaves overhead, the pleasant smell of the crushed fern, the primitive independence of being thoroughly wet and caring nothing for it, and the plash-plash of our feet as every step pumped water out of our boots. Back to the house, through the rude path, now some six inches deep in red mud, a brief toilet, and a very welcome breakfast.

Still rain, rain, more rain; and what shall we do? Cats'-cradle afforded a little amusement, uniting the advantages of adventurous combination, unexpected results, and the least possible bodily exertion. Even this recreation, however, is scarcely exciting enough to be continued for any lengthened period; and after a desperate but abortive attempt to play at fives in an empty garret, we extemporized a game at bowls on the floor, the 'jack' being represented by a bradawl stuck in the boards, and the bowls by two india-rubber balls, one solid and small, and the other hollow and large.

The beauty of the game was enhanced by the sloping nature of the floor causing the balls to roll away until they were either checked by the wall or fell down the staircase. This difficulty, however, was overcome by the inventive genius of one player, whom modesty forbids me to particularize, and a few handfuls of oats scattered over the floor served at once to arrest the ball and to test the player's skill in guiding his bowl neatly into the little hollows left here and there by the grain. This absorbing pursuit carried us over three or four hours, when its course was suddenly arrested by a summons to dinner, the greater part of that refection having been cooked in the solitary sitting-room of the establishment

Rain still heavy, if anything heavier than before, and what shall we do? Let us throw knives at a mark like Ho Fi, the Chinese juggler, whose portrait we had lately seen, represented as in the act of aiming a broad-bladed knife at a fellow countryman standing spread-eagle-wise against a board, and whose outstretched limbs and rigid head were encircled with similar weapons.

No sooner said than done. A target was rapidly improvised, a stout board fetched from the shed, a couple of 'rymers' sharpened, and in a few minutes all hands were deep in this most absorbing pursuit, which, when afterwards imported into the metropolis, proved of so fascinating a character that I have known the whole male population of a drawing-room desert their fair

companions and give themselves up an unresisting prey to 'pegging.' Nothing is simpler than this game. You take a sharp-pointed knife, chisel, or other implement, lay it flat along the hand, the point directed up the arm and the handle just projecting from the finger-tips. You take a good aim at the target, fling the knife so as to cause it to make one half turn as it passes through the air, and if you have performed all these actions correctly, the knife darts into the target with a heavy thud, and there sticks quivering with the violence of the blow It is, in fact, a refinement on 'Aunt Sally,' quite as exciting and not half so fatiguing.

Night again drops her dank, wet veil over the scene, and our visit to the New Forest bids fair to be a total failure.

Brightly shone the sunbeams on the following day; the dismal splash of rain had ceased; the black, cloudy sky had changed to deep blue; the breeze was charged with perfume, and the air filled with melody. A host of chaffinches were congregated in front of the window, pecking about among the grass and twittering merrily with their sweet little chatter All nature seemed to rejoice in the sunshine, and the deep glades of the forest, broken by sundry gleams of golden light, invited us to its presence.

The ground was still wet under our feet, the heavy ferns dropped showers of moisture as we brushed against their wide fronds, and as the wind stirred the branches above, occasional shower-baths came pattering on our heads. But how changed was everything around The birds flitted from bush to bush, heedless of the raindrops scattered by their rapid movements; the air was filled with glittering insects, and the busy hum of many wings gave light and brightness to the scene. The long avenues of oak and beech produced effects of brilliant many-coloured light and deepest shade that no painter could hope to imitate; the heavy masses of holly that studded the forest gave a mysterious darkness to many an inlet, while the wide clusters of foxgloves reared their tall heads in the patches of sunshine and waved their lovely petals in the breeze. Foxgloves, indeed, seem to be the leading characteristic of that part of the forest, for it was impossible to look down any avenue without seeing a cluster of these magnificent flowers shining out against the dark masses of shadowy verdure, and giving wondrous effects of colour just where an artist would most want them.

It was most beautiful, too, to watch the golden-winged insects come darting across the sunbeams, issuing like visions from shrouded darkness, glittering for a moment like living gems as they shot through the narrow belt of light, and vanishing into the mysterious gloom beyond, as if suddenly annihilated by the wave of a magician's wand. More pleasant to the sight than to the touch, particularly for persons endowed with a delicate skin. I never thoroughly appreciated the exceeding torture that the plague of flies must have inflicted on the Egyptians until I had passed a few hot summer days in the New Forest.

Flies of all sorts, sizes, and colours surround the hapless victim, and render existence a burden and a torment Great, buzzing, wide-winged, large-eyed flies charge at him with a trumpet of defiance, and, in spite of clothes, find some weak point through which they may insert their poisoned dart. Tiny flies, too small for audible murmur of wings, and too gentle of movement to be noticed, run nimbly about his person, creep up his sleeves, slip down his neck, get into his eyes and nostrils, and leave memorials of their presence in a series of little angry red pustules like those of nettle-rash, and quite as annoying. Others, again, will set to work in a calmly composed and business-like style, alight on his hand or wrist, produce a case of lancets from their mouths, and bleed him with the practised skill of an old surgeon.

Besides all these foes, the forest is haunted by myriads of horrid ticks—flat-bodied, active little creatures, with legs that cling like burrs, and heads barbed like the point of a harpoon. These insidious animals

swarm upon the passenger, and are sure to discover some method by which they may creep through the clothes and operate on their victim. Imperceptibly the barbed head is thrust under the skin, and the creature begins to suck the blood of its human prey with such voracity that before long its flat and almost invisible body swells into a blood-distended bag, and the tick looks more like a ripe black currant than an insect. If it should be discovered, it must in no wise be torn away by violence, or its barbed head would remain in the wound and be the cause of painful inflammation. There are two modes of ridding oneself of ticks. One method is by lighting a large fire, taking off all clothing, and rotating before the blaze as if attempting suicide by roasting. The ticks cannot endure the heat, and soon fall off; but as this process is hardly feasible in an English forest, it is better to have recourse to the second method, which is simply to brush them with a feather dipped in oil.

As for myself, in spite of wearing large gauntleted leather gloves, and tying the wrists and ankles with string, the insects led me such a life that I hardly dared enter the forest. At last a bright idea struck me. I rubbed my hands, ankles, face, and neck well with naphtha, and kept a little bottle in my pocket for renewal whenever the odour seemed to become faint and ineffectual. After taking this precaution, I enjoyed a delightful immunity from insects, which more than compensated for the very unpleasant scent of the naphtha. Even in the course of a long day's sojourn in the forest depths, not a fly dared meddle with so potent an odour, and it was most amusing to see a great loud-winged insect come charging along, ready for action and thirsting for blood, and then to see it pause in full career, balance itself for a moment on quivering wings, and dart off at an angle from the hateful scent.

Upon many a tree were the nests, or 'cages,' of the squirrel, denoting the abundance of those pretty little animals in the neighbourhood. Before very long, a reddish dot was seen moving among the grass, and we immediately determined to 'stalk' up to the creature and to watch its habits. Being accustomed to woodcraft, and knowing how to take advantage of every cover, to pass among branches without noise, and to avoid snapping dried sticks with the feet, we crept to a tree-trunk within six yards of the squirrel, and there sat quietly looking at him.

There he was, blithe and joyous, totally ignorant of our presence, but still watchful, raising himself occasionally so as to look over the tops of the grass blades, but never seeing us on account of our rigid stillness. It was most interesting to watch the pretty little animal as he went skipping over the ground in little hopping steps, now stooping to feed, picking up something in his paws, holding it to his mouth in a dainty and well-bred fashion, tasting it, and then throwing it down in disdain. Then he would disappear entirely below the grass, and next moment he would be sitting upright, his bushy tail curled over his head, and his bright eyes gleaming as he looked around.

Suddenly a lad came running towards us, making much more noise in crashing through the fern than a dozen full-grown elephants would have produced. Up jumped the squirrel, glanced hastily towards the spot whence the unwelcome sounds proceeded, and dashed off for the nearest tree, looking wonderfully like a immature fox as he scudded over the ground, his body stretched to its full length, and his bushy tail trailing behind him. A long leap, and he had jumped on the trunk of the tree towards which he was running, and, according to the usual fashion of squirrels, slipped round it so as to interpose the trunk between himself and the supposed foe. But this manœuvre exactly brought him face to face with us, and at the distance of only a yard or two, and I never saw a squirrel look more bewildered than he appeared on making this terrible discovery. He never stopped for a moment, however, but fairly galloped up the tree, ran along a projecting branch, made a great leap into another tree, traversed that also,

and in two minutes was fairly out of sight.

Here let me offer an indignant protest against two subterfuges under which the destroying nature of man hides its ugliness.

There are some persons in whom the destructive element is acknowledgedly developed in all its fulness, who live but to hunt, to shoot, and to fish, and who really seem to have gradually drilled themselves into a heartfelt belief that to destroy the furred, feathered, and scaled inhabitants of the earth is the noblest aim of man, and one to which every other object must necessarily be subservient. As a natural corollary of this proposition, follows the extirpation of every living creature that can interfere, either actively or passively, with their sport, the result being to depopulate the country of every being in which is the breath of life.

All the beautiful and truly useful weasel tribe are to be killed because they will eat hares, rabbits, and feathered game; all the hawk tribe fall under the same ban; the ravens, crows, and magpies are to be killed because they are apt to rob the nests of partridges and pheasants; the little birds because they eat the corn on which the pheasants might feed; and even the squirrel is now reckoned among the vermin because it is known to regale itself occasionally on young birds, and possibly on their eggs. The keeper who destroys the greatest number of these 'vermin' earns the highest praise from his master; and, to all appearances, the very perfection of a forest in the eyes of a sportsman would be that it should not harbour a single creature except those which are dignified by the title of game, and thought worthy of death from the hand of their owner.

It is a pitiful sight in this grand forest to view the handiwork of the keepers in the shape of noble hawks, ravens, martens, squirrels, and other wild denizens of the woods nailed on the trunks of trees or hung in withered clusters from their boughs. I do not believe that a true sportsman would find his amusement curtailed by their life, feeling sure that nature can generally keep her own balance, as is exemplified in countries where the Game Laws were never heard of, where game preservation has never been dreamed of, and where the game abounds in spite of the swarming 'vermin,' far more numerous and powerful than those of our own country.

Another, and more noxious kind of destroyers, is found in those pseudo-zoologists who hypocritically conceal their love of slaughter under the guise of science, and, necrologists as they are, never can watch an animal without wanting to kill it. The daily papers afford abundant instances of such mock science; and it is well known that even a parrot cannot escape from its domicile without running the most imminent risk of being shot. Not a rare bird has a chance of escape if it once shows itself within the limit of the British Isles; and I can but think with exultation of those deluded individuals who spent much powder and shot, and more patience upon some rare sea-bird which had settled in a lake, and which afterwards proved to be nothing but a stuffed skin ingeniously anchored by a long line. Such persons never think of watching the living being in order to learn the wonderful instincts with which its Maker has gifted it, and the interesting habits and customs belonging to the individual or the species. Should they come across a rare bird, their first regret is that they have no gun with them, and instead of feeling delighted at the opportunity of gaining further knowledge, they only lament that they cannot take away from the bright being that life which it is so evidently created to enjoy, and the causeless deprivation of which is literally a robbery of its birthright.

One of the principal objects of our expedition was to ascertain the mode in which the snipe produces the remarkable sound called 'drumming,' from its fancied resemblance to the distant roll of the military drum. To my ears, however, the mingled whizz and hum of a slackened harp-string gives the best idea of this remarkable sound.

It must be premised that, during the breeding season, the male snipe,

like many other creatures, assumes new habits and utters new sounds. Generally, the flight of this bird is short and fitful, as is well known to all sportsmen, and seldom lasts more than a few minutes. But during the breeding season the snipe becomes an altered being. Towards evening, it leaves its marshy couch, and rises to a great height in the air, where it continues to wheel in circuitous flight for a considerable period, mostly confining itself within the limits of a large circle, and uttering almost continually a loud, sharp, unmusical, and monosyllabic cry, which may be roughly imitated by the words 'chic! chic! chick-a chick-a, chic! chic!' &c. At varying intervals it sweeps downwards, making a stoop not unlike that of a hawk, and producing the sound called drumming, during the stoop.

How the bird drums has long been a matter of doubt, some naturalists attributing it to the organs of voice, others to the wings, and others to the tail. To set this question at rest was therefore an interesting pursuit, and to that purpose several successive evenings were devoted.

As soon as the snipes began to drum, we set out for the marshy ground over which they flew, and by dint of cautious management succeeded in ensconcing ourselves in a dense thicket of thorn and blackberry, where we were perfectly concealed, but whence we had a thorough command of the sky. Not choosing to trust to my single observation, I had two friends with me, one of whom is a well-known bush huntsman of Africa, and the other an old and observant inhabitant of the forest. We were also supplied with powerful glasses.

Before we had lain very long in ambush, the desired sound struck our ears, proceeding from a snipe that was circling high above us. We watched the bird for a long time, but he never came near enough to give a good view. Several others afforded us much disappointment, but at last all our trouble was fully repaid. A fine snipe arose at no great distance, and just as if he had known our object and intended to give us his best aid, began to cry and drum just over our heads, and at so small a height, that as he wheeled in airy circles, his long beak and bright eye were clearly seen even by the unaided vision, while the double field-glasses with which we were supplied gave us as excellent a view of the bird as if it were within two yards.

It was, then, quite clear that the drumming sound was not produced by the voice, as the bird repeatedly uttered the cry of 'chic! chic! chick-a!' simultaneously with the drumming. Without offering any opinion, we repeatedly watched the bird, and then compared our observations. They were unanimous, and to the effect that the sound was produced by the quill feathers of the wings. The bird never drummed except when on the stoop, and whenever it performed this manœuvre, the quill feathers of the wings were always expanded to their utmost width, so that the light could be seen between them, and quivered with a rapid tremulous motion that quite blurred their outlines. Our observations were repeated during several successive evenings, and always with the same result.

There is perhaps no locality in the whole of this country so well adapted to the natural historian as the New Forest, the conditions of soil, elevation, and foliage being so prodigally varied, that almost any creature can find a refuge in some portion of its limits. Take, for example, the spot on which we resided, but which I do not intend to particularize, lest its sacred recesses should be profaned by the step of outer barbarians, and its wild glades polluted by empty porter bottles, broken crockery, and greasy sandwich papers.

The cultivated ground in front of the house reached a rapid and narrow brook. Beyond the brook was a large expanse of marsh and shaking bog, harbouring multitudes of snipes. In the middle of this swamp our drumming observations were made. The ground suddenly rose beyond this bog into a wide but not very high hill, covered densely with heather, and giving

shelter to grouse and pheasants. About four miles further the heath was abruptly ended by a large fir-wood, in which the deer loved to couch. We once devoted a whole morning to tracking a deer by its footsteps or 'spoor,' and after some three hours' careful chase, found the creature lying couched among the fern. Ravens were often seen heavily flapping their way over the heather, and on one or two occasions our eyes were gratified with the grand sweeping flight of the buzzard, as it soared on steady wing, inclining itself from side to side like an accomplished skater on the outside edge, but appearing to make its way through the air as if by simple volition. Bright-plumaged woodpeckers fled screaming through the forest depths, and many a tree-trunk bore witness of their persevering labours.

The human population of the forest have, in course of time, become deeply saturated with the wild, uncultivated air of the region in which they reside; and many an aged man has never seen a town in his life, or ventured beyond the limits of the familiar forest lands. A practised eye can mostly detect a forester at a glance, a strange family likeness being observable in all who have passed their existence in this place—probably owing to the continual intermarriages which necessarily occur among them. Even the tone of voice is of a peculiar nature, and the drawling, high-pitched chant of the thorough-bred forester is not likely to be forgotten when once heard. In fact, the forest is to its aborigines what the desert is to the nomad Arab; and the wild Bedouin can hardly feel more terror at the idea of entering the habitations of civilized man, than does the forester at the notion of exchanging the trees for houses.

I remember that on one occasion, after the hay had been got in, a cart-load was destined for some stables at Southampton. The fragrant trusses were placed on the waggon, the horses harnessed and all was ready for the journey, when an unexpected difficulty arose in the person of the carter, a fine young fellow of six-and-twenty, one of the first in the field and all the rustic sports. After a vast amount of prevarication, he flatly refused to leave the forest, and when peremptorily ordered to do so, he sat down on the roadside and sobbed like a child with sheer terror of the unknown regions beyond his ken. An exact parallel to his despairing fears may be often seen in the crowded thoroughfares of London, where a child has lost its way, and stands weeping in the depths of its misery, beset on all sides by vague fears, and as hopelessly bewildered as if it had been suddenly transported to another planet. Take such a man out of the forest, run him off by express train to London, put him down at London Bridge or Charing Cross, and he would become a maniac from the rush of ideas to the brain, like that Kaffir chief whose head was turned by the engines of a steamer, and who deliberately hauled himself to the bottom of the sea by means of the chain cable.

There is also a strange race of beings called the woodmen, who possess certain prescriptive rights from time immemorial. They are the most independent set imaginable, and laugh at law or justice. Their carts are at least two feet wider than is allowed by legal authority, and while driving along the road they are totally regardless of the right and wrong side. Those who meet them may turn aside if they like, but they proceed on their course without paying the least respect to the tacit regulations of the road. One Saturday, while driving on the high road, we met a long string of wood-carts, all on the wrong side, all straggling in such a manner that we were fain to draw our vehicle into the ditch, and on every cart were one or two woodmen, lying in a state of senseless intoxication, and leaving their horses to find their own way home—a task which they certainly performed with an accuracy that warranted the confidence reposed in them.

Many of these men would not be sober until the Tuesday; they would sleep off their headaches on Wednesday, on Thursday and Friday

they would earn a week's wages, and on Saturday they would set off to the public-house and renew the last week's scenes. This kind of life suits their lawless natures, and they would rather lead this wild and reckless existence, than become honoured and useful members of society, as they might easily do, considering the wages which they can earn. Perhaps their wives and children might hold a different opinion, especially from Saturday evening to Wednesday morning.

Vipers are delightfully plentiful in the New Forest, and during our limited sojourn I saw three distinct varieties, the common, the light grey, and the yellow, the last mentioned being the largest living viper I ever saw. Apropos of vipers, it so happened that some farmers were paying a passing call, when a labourer brought me a moderate-sized viper hanging to a string. Acting on the impulse of the moment, I flung my knife at the reptile, and by a wondrously fortunate shot, drove the blade fairly through the spine just behind the head. My friend followed suit, and transfixed the snake about the middle of its body. The farmers were quite aghast at our skill, and it may be imagined that we did not disabuse them of their good opinion by attempting a repetition of the feat.

After a number of experiments on the living viper, I found that the reptiles could never be induced to bite at a stick, however great the provocation might be, but that as soon as any living creature came within reach, they were sure to strike. The foresters were actuated by a wholesome dread of the viper, but feared the harmless blindworm far more than the really venomous reptile. One of the labourers brought to me the upper half of a blindworm squeezed tightly in his cap (the creature having thrown off its tail according to custom), and was almost pale with horror when I took it from the cap with bare hands. Mr. Waterton's feat of carrying twenty-seven living rattlesnakes from one room to another afforded a sufficiently terrifying spectacle, but in the eye of a genuine forester could not compare with the prowess displayed in seizing a blindworm with the bare hands.

Perhaps the night walks in the forest afforded the most pleasant reminiscences of our visit. At nightfall we used to put a compass and some matches in our pockets, and start off for the depths of the forest, taking care to step very gently so as to give no audible alarm, and to keep ourselves well in the shade, so as to avoid detection by sight. It was most delightful to wander thus into the heart of the primeval forest, among the great oaks and beeches, to seat ourselves face to face on the soft moss at the foot of some tree, and listen to the weird-like sounds alternating with the solemn stillness of the woods. At times the silence became almost audible, so profound was the hushed calm of night; while at intervals the sharp yapping bark of a fox might be heard in the distance, the drowsy hum of the watchman beetle came vaguely through the air, and the locust-like cry of the goatsucker resounded from the trees. These curious birds were very common and quite familiar, allowing us to approach within twenty yards of the branch on which they crouched, or sometimes sweeping with their ready flight to the ground in front of us, and then peeking merrily away at the various insects which traversed the grass. There is, by the way, a curious superstition about these birds. If they come close to a house and sing three times, they prophecy a death in the family; if five times, a birth; and if seven times, a wedding.

It is strange that man and animals should fall so readily into the primitive life, and allow the instincts to regain their original and legitimate sway over the habits. Even the very cows learn the customs of the bush in a marvellously short time, and walk with the same lifted step as the antelope that has spent all its life in the forest. One night, as we were standing under the shade of a tree, a slight crackling of dry sticks was heard. We drew deeper into the shadows, assured ourselves that nothing white was visible in our dress, and that our sticks were well grasped; for a

night walk in the New Forest is not without its perils, the poachers being perhaps the most crafty and desperate in England. Man or beast however, the creature passed by, but kept so closely in the shade, that we could not even catch a glimpse of its form. Stealing gently to the spot, we felt the ground carefully, and soon found the fresh spoor of a cow, which had got into the forest and instinctively moved as if it were liable to be hunted as soon as seen.

After a number of experiments, we found that nothing is so utterly invisible in a forest at night as darkish grey, but not too dark. Black is seen with comparative ease, red is nearly invisible, and so is brown; but with dark grey the only visible portions are the hands and face, so that a pair of dark gloves and a dark mask would render a human being quite undistinguishable at two yards, provided he remained in the shade, and did not allow his form to be defined against the sky.

One night was truly memorable. We had started as usual, when we saw an odd kind of light among the trees, for which we could not account. First we thought it was a paper lamp hung up by way of a trick, but soon found that it was far beyond the trees. Surely it must be Capella shining dimly through a fog; but on looking more carefully, Capella was discovered without any fogginess about it. Suddenly my companion gave a hideous shriek, executed a pas de seul expressive of astonishment, and employing, as is his custom when excited, language more remarkable for energy than elegance, cried out that 'it was a thundering big comet as safe as the bank!' And so it proved to be. No more forest for us that night, but out came the telescope, the sextant, and the note-book, and the whole evening was passed in taking observations and running into the house to record them. As the mighty comet stretched its fiery train over the zenith, great was the excitement as its vast proportions expanded with the darkness of night. 'I'll get its angles between the stars,' cried my friend, 'and you measure its length.' Off to the house at full run.

'How many degrees?'

'Eighty-two and a half.'

'Humbug! I don't believe it.'

'Look for yourself, then.'

'Must have been wrongly handled; I'll measure it myself.'

Off rushes the excited astronomer, sextant in hand, and in five minutes is back again.

'How many degrees is it now?'

'Eighty-six I make it.'

And in this manner we spent the greater part of that night, the comet seeming to lengthen with every hour. It was certainly a most startling occurrence. No one expects to walk out of a house, according to usual custom, and to meet a full-blown comet in the face. But here was the stranger, waving its flaming sword over our heads, and stretching its vast length over a greater space of sky than was occupied by the great comet of 1858, which had spent so many weeks in attaining its full size.

Much more is there to say of the New Forest; of its many-tinted flowers, its wealth of insect life, its wild and piquantly-flavoured fruits, and its wonderful depth of foliage, its grand old trees, among which the 'king beech' raises its royal head in acknowledged superiority. It is indeed almost a new world; and to a Londoner affords a fresh current of ideas that regenerates the mind like fresh blood to the heart. Here all conventionalities cease: Mrs. Grundy could not live for five minutes in the forest depths, there are no neighbours to criticise the appearance, no gossips to decry the character. Man lives for a while the real unsophistical life of Nature, and, it may be, will learn many a lesson for which he will be the better until his dying day, and perhaps after it. And these privileges may be gained by just taking a railway ticket for the nearest station to the Forest (say Southampton) where the traveller will be deposited in less time than is often occupied in getting to an awkward suburb of London. But our space is at an end, and we must reluctantly bid a farewell to that valued spot, hoping soon to visit it again. J. G. W.

THE MYSTERY IN DAFFODIL TERRACE.

I.

THE house was pointed out by a young Arab of the crossing, who had been skipping on before the decent inquirer in black, as the manner of his tribe is. And he pattering away to his Augean beat, the decent stranger looks up through his glasses at the house with much relish—as though it were a ripe and luscious fruit. He seemed to have ample value for his money, and literally gorged his eyes with the prospect.

Had he been a miser he might have groaned over his misspent pennies: for the spot was advertised ever so conspicuously by a group of the great unclean—men and women of the broad rag world hanging about, in the middle of the road—leaning on the rails, and on the gate, kept fast locked, to have their full of staring. Scraps of this shabby community dribbled away at one end, while other scraps came and restored the fit balance at the other. And though no one of them could say that they expected the front to tumble flat like a 'practical' scene out of a pantomime, or that the doors were to be flung open and they were to be invited in to hospitality, and be otherwise handsomely treated, still they all had some good purpose in staring at the house, and found the process satisfactory. They had been staring since eight o'clock on that morning, and would stare on until dark. And, it may be repeated, they had good method in their staring.

II.

The next question is—for those not of the locality—what these units of the great corps of the unwashed were staring at. At a house; but this is too general. At number five, then, Daffodil Terrace—number five being but an inch out of so many hundred yards of neat, bright-red brick ribbon, reeled off in a terrace *ad infinitum*—a row of pantomime houses projected *in æternum*—beautifully chastened, and in a manner Ruskinized by little edging and confectionery work of parti-coloured bricks, mainly mustard colour, and producing a very 'tasty' effect. Contractor had done his work nobly and was actually reeling off miles of a similar pattern, just like an expert shopman at his counter—on the new building grounds out towards the country. But why should the unwashed, and the butcher-boy element, and the strap-and-pot element so fancy this special number five, particularly when they had a whole file, stretching to number two hundred and eighty or so to pick from? Why the fact is, it was whispered that a very ugly business had taken place there that morning—very painful for the immediate family, and most undesirable for the neighbourhood in reference to a letting or other view. The life of a line of respectable tenements should move in smooth, equable course, and should not be disturbed by vulgar spasmodics. As it is with your true persons of quality, who have nothing marked in dross or manner, so with your true houses of quality. And yet here was nothing short of suicide, gross, flagrant, outspeaking suicide entailing a distressing publicity—and the whole notorious train of coroner, police, doctors, post-mortems, and the other disagreeable incidents. The curious part of the business was, that this was about the last sort of catastrophe mankind, in that neighbourhood, might reasonably have looked for. For only a few days back they had been very busy with an expected nuptial rite, whereof the scene was to be in that very house. The actors, properties, incidents, and decorations of that ceremonial had all been in possession of the public for some time. The neighbourhood had been rife with the particulars. It was a common fund, in which all had a common interest. They knew the name of the man, the woman, his substance, her substance, what difficulties lay between—in short, the whole prelude of the thing. It was to be a very gay thing, and a very happy thing; much desired too by

all parties. The name of the woman or girl (so people from within the rails told it to those without) was Margaret—Margaret Joy—an only daughter. The house was the house of the Joy family, father and mother: the name of the man, who was to take this woman for his wedded wife, was Mr. Hengist, a City person who had travelled, and the name of what lay up stairs, covered up with a sheet, was Martha Joy, wife of the house.

Now for this marriage, and this suicide, and the tangled yarn that led to both. Suicide lies up there in ghastly reality: marriage is scattered to the winds now beyond hope of re-establishment.

III.

To begin by looking back a few years or so, when the Joy family first came to the decent neighbourhood, and the placid respectability of speckless brickwork The head of the Joy family, then about forty-five; the gentlewoman who was titularly mistress, but in plain fact, a sort of lady-like upper-servant, ordering meals and looking after all things—about eight-and-thirty. She, and the bright brick house had about come together; for Joy, elderly as he was, had married and moved into the neighbourhood almost simultaneously. House and wife came together; house quite new and brilliant; wife second hand and a little worn—nay, bringing with her drags *impedimenta* in the shape of human baggage—a growing youth—her only jointure as a widow. Joy, this ripe bridegroom of forty-six, was a quiet, placid merchant-man, with a cold, dry, calm face, not overcharged with blood;—one who crept along the walls and dark lanes of life, keeping out of the light, and avoiding brushing skirts with all he met;—a tall man, a bent man, a slight man, a silent man;—a man that had made money silently; without emotion or agitation had married, and moved into the staring brick neighbourhood almost simultaneously;—a man that had been perhaps proved by fire in the earlier portion of his days; that had been wrung and wasted by the hot winds of tremendous domestic tribulation. It was said, indeed, that his whole family, mother, sisters, and one brother had been swept away suddenly—in about a week's time—by a destroying plague, then epidemic. Such a bit of tragedy was in good keeping with that sad and impassive face, and might be read there in plain bold figures. Some sort of tragedy had been scorched and seared into his face, and he wore the scars very palpably.

He then wandering along this sad sea-shore, fell in with this Calypso of a widow, and finding she had some sort of balm, which, without curing, did somewhat allay the pain of his open wounds, took her in—love they were both past — she, perhaps, more moved by a sort of compassion or sympathy for the poor silent wayfarer. However, on whatever pretext, they were joined, and came to the house together, taking with them, too, her daughter, soft Margaret—a sweet, milky-looking child, whose destiny it was to be passive in every possible relation of life. The son was an evil scapegrace, who had rushed away into open wickedness, and it had been well had he been never more heard of. But, unhappily, he showed himself, comet-like, at irregular intervals, and always under circumstances of dubious colour, in a sort of disreputable halo; so that this fitful manifestation, though satisfactory as allaying any personal fears that might be entertained as to his safety, was attended with such pain and discomfort to his surviving relation, that on the whole it had been better he had sunk at once for ever into the limbo or worse place prepared for such disreputable meteors.

On the new Mrs. Joy these wearing sorrows told with nearly the same characteristic handwriting as on her husband's features. They had each their own private store of affliction; and what little balance of cheerfulness was over and above they spent with all good heart upon each other. And so they made their lives somewhat sweeter—after a fashion.

IV.

He was in a sort of traffic or business, as has been already mentioned,

still had brought together a decent sufficiency, to which he was daily adding. Thus the true bitter of sorrow, poverty, had not oozed into their cup. Grief is more tolerable when it can sob on soft cushions, and recline undisturbed, without work or labour, in handsome apartments. For such sorrows there are luxuries. And so they moved forward upon the even tenour of their way, inhabiting the bright vermilion house, and, in some sort, one of the pillars of that select villa neighbourhood. Naturally all persons round took pride in denizens of such position; and thus they moved forward steadily and peacefully—impelled by the sure hand of destiny—on to the fatal beginning of that end which has been shadowed at the opening of this story. For though we know that grim and pitiless Greek notion of fate has been swept away, still to us, who look down at the march of a story and its characters, it has very much the look of that old cruel force; and we see the men and women of the piece walking on unconsciously to their doom; and as they walked, the Chorus in those old Greek plays chanted Ai! Ai! compassionately bewailing their fate in, as it were, a monk's hymn.

V.

There had come to live, some few doors below them, a wealthy man called Hengist, but of a somewhat curious nature. A man touching five-and-thirty, solitary, and hurrying with extraordinary swiftness down the headlong montagne Russe of old bachelorhood. He would have been at the bottom and lost irretrievably had not some one laid hold of him and checked him.

But of a very curious nature—suspicious, and slightly eccentric, which comes of living alone—an avaricious creature, which was strange in one so young; who had been abroad in India, and come home invalided, and tolerably wealthy; had been left more moneys; and now, too delicate to add more moneys still to that, had retired to watch life and look on jealously. Everybody, of course, had designs against his personal liberty; all—more particularly the women—were banded together to suspend the Habeas Corpus specially in his behalf. Along these trimly carved walks female bandits were abroad. They lay in ambuscade.

And yet he was amiable in his character; full of charities, and the tests of charities, local subscriptions. For him kept house a matron of tolerable and satisfactory antiquity. He read of the long evenings by his shaded lamp; walked abroad during the day; went into London now and again, but with terrible reluctance; and fancied he was killing weary days with good effect. So *he*, too, moved forwards, slowly yet surely, to whatever crisis our modern Fate kept in store for him.

This was not so very long arriving. We may guess easily enough. These lonely wrecks are easy spoil. Betimes every morning, the soft, milk-faced girl used to go forth to take her country walk, as she fancied it, and inhale the morning air well charged with copious villa particles. Regularly would she flit by the window—somewhere near the same hour—where this Hengist would be seen framed in his huge sheet of plate glass, in a miscellany of urn and teapot and rolls, and the newspaper in full sail, making his lonely breakfast. Regular, too, used this Hengist lift his head, and look out on her as she passed. The true charitably-minded will see a purpose in this steady morning, artful baiting of traps, and such unhandsome hints. But she was wholly innocent of any such purpose. In the long file of shining brick mansions there was much more company, just as busy, and with about the same unflagging regularity. That breakfasting behind plate glass was an ordinary ceremony enough along the line of villas.

The course of these things we may all guess out pretty easily. In what comes by custom we take interest. This strange suspicious Hengist began to look for her regularly, as he did for his rolls and newspaper; and if rain or other reason hindered her coming, became uncomfortable, as though he had been defrauded of a portion of his breakfast. With him all women

were more or less marauders—in respect to monied men at least; but here he was impregnable, and perfectly secure, for he could look on unperceived and unsuspected. By-and-by came opportunity, as opportunity will come always. The 'administration' charged with the arrangement of such little matters contrived it by the agency of a lost dog, or bird, or kitten. Bird it was. The young lady's parrot had one evening fluttered away, having a chain to its foot, taking the intervening walls like fences, and hotly pursued. Mr. Hengist was in his garden at the time, and captured it promptly. Presently the sad-faced parent comes and knocks, and to him the prisoner was handed over—not, however, before he is bidden to sit down and rest, though he be not tired, and they condole with each other on some district grievances—ill scavengering, inefficient watering of streets, and the like. Then he goes his way. Such a foundation the other is not slow to improve. Sometimes they meet going in to London, by rail or stage, sometimes along the public highway; the sad-faced gentleman accepting tolerantly rather than seeking him. By-and-by he gets on a stage further—still in his old cautious way; receding now with mistrust—now advancing—until at last he has entered, has been made known to the sober, sorrowful mistress of the mansion, and to the damsel that was wont to trip past his window as he breakfasted.

He was not unamiable, this Hengist, and soon domesticated himself readily enough. Not one of them sought him. The parents were glad because they thought such an acquaintance would vary the somewhat monotonous existence of their daughter's life. For, odd as he was, his oddity came not of vacuity. He had seen much and travelled a good deal, and was ready enough with a dry speech and caustic remark, not altogether unamusing. So he was very soon dovetailed into their course of life: came in of evenings when it suited him, played cards, read books to them, or to himself when it pleased him, and on the whole found it a rather agreeable sort of club.

There was a cousin, too, who came out occasionally from London; a gay, open-faced, open-mouthed carle, rather boisterous, and wearing his heart, not exactly upon his sleeve, but displayed conspicuously upon every part of his person. The cousin, Wilsden by name, came out in rather conspicuous contrast beside the somewhat crusted nature of the other. He, in truth, rather looked down on him, as deficient; was merry at his expense, and gave him a private nickname. But he could rarely come of evenings; so that Hengist had a tremendous advantage over him. Night, after all, is the true season for social business.

Sometimes it flashed upon him that he was standing on the edge of a precipice—that here was a band of insidious plotters, artfully leagued against his person and liberty. At this notion he would take fright and stay away a week, sometimes two; until, as they made no sign, and did not come with violence to storm him in his castle, he was much relieved, and came back of his own motion, with a sort of penitential air. Then he would find the loud cousin in firm possession, and feel a sort of curious resentment within himself for having given him such an advantage. Perhaps it was a diluted jealousy.

So he came and went, and stayed away, and came again; and all the while was growing rather fond of this white-faced girl. The sad-eyed parents looked on from afar, and let him have his way. They did not see into these things; they did not heed them. The pale-faced child did not consider him much in any light whatsoever—just tolerated him; but it is to be suspected, was seriously inclined to the boisterous cousin. So the thing went on, but growing, in some shape, all the while.

The wild comet still reached its perihelion occasionally, and flashed upon the horizon as usual; but latterly with a steadily increasing recurrence. Every six months there was some fresh disgrace—every month—and presently every fortnight, or so. And for all these rescues had to be found. By-and-by came bill transactions, ugly in cha-

rester, and all but reaching to an *exposé*, but happily warded off at a large sacrifice. There was no end to these trials. The worn face of the parent became yet more worn.

VI.

With her husband, also, things had not gone so prosperously of late. Real languid *insouciance* of affliction and *cœur brisé* does not do for the world of business. A heavy loss came, and he looked on insensibly. He set himself, without much exertion, to repair this casualty, and did not succeed. Thus was much capital being nibbled. After all, what was dross to the poor *cœur brisé!* He only followed the thing for distraction's sake. And so the money began to drip—drip away through his fingers—like so much water. One evening he told his wife quite plainly that they should have to live very savingly now, and stint themselves a good deal; for that he had met with very heavy losses, and nearly all his money was gone—a statement which she accepted, with more trepidation and alarm than one would have expected from her dulled nature. But the fact was, at that moment it came most unfortunately, and she was thinking, not of herself, nor of that pale-faced girl, but of the wild, erratic comet, then gyrating with its most tremendous velocity, and committing the worst extravagances in its course. All along she had furnished secret supplies; fed its fires from her own private stores; pinched her own moderate expenses to have yet a greater surplus. And yet the drain seemed endless. It lay upon her as a tremendous weight, that this lost youth would one day break out into some great and indelible disgrace, such as would fix upon him the attention of the kingdom. And to avert some most horrible catastrophe, by evoking pecuniary emollients, was her pious aim. That destiny would bring such a thing about before the end came, she firmly believed; but her wish was to avert as long as possible what was to come inevitably. It was before her of nights; and disturbed even such unquiet dreams as she had. It made her restless during the day; and, above all, she had to carry this about within her, unsupported—for her husband had troubles sufficient of his own: and, indeed, had the errors of this scapegrace never very glaringly laid open before him.

Thus it will be seen what curious elements were all working together simultaneously within the spick and span red-brick house, each in a channel of its own, and mostly unsuspected by the others. The father had his private tribulation — the mother hers; the visitor, his little bit of disquietude; and the pale-faced daughter, such sorrow as she found in her parents' sorrow.

It was found, after some fruitless efforts to retrieve his ill luck, that they had barely sufficient for a contracted existence, and that they must before the end of the year actually quit the staring brick house, and seek some more suitable residence.

On this there came a visible change in the pale-faced girl. She was gracious to the visitor; soothed his dudgeon; all but broke with the cousin. It looks doubtful, yet it came from the best of motives. She would save those she loved from shipwreck, at whatever risk or sacrifice. Cousins' loves must all go overboard when wreck is at hand.

VII.

At last it came to one gloomy evening in the month of misfortunes, November—or at least that month which supplies fitting scenery and furniture for troubles of all kinds—when the two are sitting in the shadow, each with their own private weight of care upon their hearts. Things were coming to a yet poorer pass. The world was using them yet more and more cruelly still. Something like a catastrophe was impending over their heads, and could not be delayed more than a month or so. His was not the mind for a crisis, and therefore ill-suited to finding out a remedy. His was not a bold, fighting nature, that would struggle before it would die, but would surrender tamely, and without a blow.

To the door then comes the scarlet postman of the district, and a letter is brought. In troubled times all

letters bring evil news, or, at least, are expected to do so. This one was opened by Mrs. Joy, and read privately in her own chamber:

'MADAM,—I am sorry to be obliged to communicate to you so unpleasant a piece of intelligence as this letter contains, but it is better for you that you should learn the worst at once. A bill was presented to me for payment a few days since, bearing what appeared to be my own signature. I saw at once it was a forgery, and had no doubt whose was the hand that did it. As you are aware I had been obliged to discharge your son from my employment about a month ago; but he was very soon discovered, and admitted the charge.

'I have long hesitated between my duty to public justice and to friendship, as to what course I shall take in this matter. However, feeling for your situation acutely, and knowing that you have other troubles sufficient, I would be willing on receipt of the sum (150*l.*) to forego any further proceedings in the business. I hope it will be a lesson to the young man.

'The money I must have in a few days, as the bill must be taken up.

'I am, dear madam,
'Yours, &c.,
'JASPAR BROWN.'

This was a terrible stroke—both the moral blow, as well as the physical inconvenience. Moneys were not to be found now; and this was truly the last straw breaking the camel's back. And yet it did not come with such a shock; for previous misfortunes had toned them to a suitable frame of mind. And so they sat on, in the gloom of that miserable evening, without proposing remedy or relief, until their daughter, now out for some time, came in.

VIII.

She was nervous and shy, and somewhat flurried. She had a wonderful piece of news to break to them which she did almost joyfully. She had been out walking; had met Mr. Hengist, who had turned round and walked with her; had spoken with her seriously, and in that odd, jerky way of his had actually proposed to her. He was very good, very generous, and all the rest of it; and she was sure in time she would come to like him. So for that night, at least, the angel of trouble folded up his wings. The clouds were dispersed, the mists and unwholesome damps of pecuniary embarrassment were shattered. There was jubilee in the bright brick house. Still, for the present, money was lacking; and though things pointed to the new bridegroom as deliverer, there came difficulties in the way which effectually cut off that hope of rescue. For this curious nature of Hengist was so strange and flighty, there was no knowing at what turn it would be scared and take flight. And in an early interview with the father, it was very soon apparent that this was dangerous ground. For when it was told to him, that no fortune could be offered to him with the girl, he fell into great disorder, and spoke of mistakes and misapprehensions, and finally said he had been deceived, and went his way, leaving them with the impression that all was over. There are rich men who think it due to their dignity that riches should be brought to them. So for three or four days he was not heard of; but then reappeared as usual, and made no further allusion to the money question. Then came another difficulty. From him had to be concealed the whole of the pecuniary difficulties; for he often made loud proclamation that he had a horror of bankrupt men and women—that such persons seemed to be decayed and mouldy, and to be eaten away with the leprosy of debt. He used to add, too, that he took such pride in his father-in-law being a sound, substantial man; and that hereafter they would one day join their capital and work wonders in the fiscal world. This was a favourite theme of his, and he laid out grand schemes sitting with them over the fire; and pointed with unutterable disgust to such and such a one who had broken down and failed. All the while they listened ruefully, and with a flutter at their hearts. Pity them we must, for they knew not where to turn: and the girl herself was wholly innocent, for they had been careful only

to let her know in a misty way of their embarrassments. Then there was another and last difficulty. For a few weeks, indeed, by desperate exertion, they might tide over the danger: but here was this man very slack indeed about his nuptials. He must have time to wind up his affairs. He must go up to the North to sell houses or lands; in short, there must be a couple of months, or six weeks at the least, before he could be ready. And his humour was so fretful; it was dangerous to press him much by way of remonstrance or argument. And by-and-by, he gave up that shiny brick house of his in the Terrace, meaning to take one in London—and went away, as he said, to wind up his affairs for matrimony.

IX.

The business of the scapegrace son had been tided, though temporarily, by the agency of a short bill at three weeks. Mr. Jaspar Brown, a matter-of-fact, business man, had agreed to stay destiny by execution, for that brief span. But thus they knew to be but a poor shift—a mere staving off, by the very frailest barrier. And though here, a sort of delivery was held out to them with one hand, there was a certain inevitable thunderbolt of destruction menacing them from the other. No possible mode of extrication could they discover. Poor suffering souls! There was not the spirit of youth, fertile in devices, daring and vigorous. Misfortune had made them sluggard. And so they were hurried along through the gloom and shadows to the day of reckoning, for sins scarcely their own.

And the day of Joy, too, drew on with equal speed. Hengist, the bridegroom, reappears by-and-by, elated, buoyant, having wound up all things, but more than ever repugnant to broken, bankrupt men. Joyful too was the girl, for she saw deliverance from these gloomy times close at hand—deliverance for herself and parents. Dark care sat beside them alone, and yet they told not of the Nemesis that hung over them. And so the days wore on.

All this time the future bridegroom stopped with them, for his home was gone, and he was shrewd and saving, like all rich men. He had the best bedroom, and was made much of, as was only fitting—at least for the short span the thing would hold out to. Often he said to his future father, regretfully, 'Could you not make me out some little money—say five hundred pounds—three—two—one hundred?' And the other had to take refuge in some poor weak pretence about a vow, and about all coming to her eventually, after his death. And the marriage-day was now good three weeks away, and Nemesis but a day or two!

From Jaspar Brown delay had been begged, nay, implored, in piteous letters from Mrs. Joy. Which procedure rather fortified that gentleman in his stern denials; all humblings and self-abasements in money matters being, as is well known, the most fatal instruments. They are confessions of weakness and danger. In a stiff letter Jaspar Brown buttoned up his pockets and refused an hour's delay. He was astounded at such ingratitude; disgusted, perhaps, at a man reputed wealthy breaking up so disreputably. The law should take its course. Not an hour—not an hour. Nemesis advancing slowly.

X.

Of a Saturday evening Mrs. Joy is sitting dismally over her fire; the others have gone out, and will be in by dinner-time. A weary Saturday; always a day of battle, of siege, of expostulation and entreaty. The gates and approaches were now tolerably clear, and Mrs. Joy sitting over her fire. Suddenly a knock, and she draws a deep sigh, for she knows here is yet another battle to fight, when she thought all was over for the day. She goes out wearily on the old errand, and is face to face with two shabby, scrubby fellows, whose type proclaims itself even to those who have never before been acquainted with it. The flaming red muffler and heavy sticks were sufficient. *We* know this sort of men, and their errand. So did the poor woman then, without the aid of that fluttering piece of paper. They were sheriffs' men, and they were

now in possession. These were civil and considerate fellows on the whole, and gave no pain in working out their dirty work.

Her wits nearly deserted her at the first, then came back to her with an extraordinary force and vitality. What *was to* be done? What *could* be done? Time but a few minutes; for they might return at any moment. Servant abroad, in garden or yard, so that exposure was happily spared. At this moment not a soul in the house but she herself and those earthy emissaries. And there was twenty pounds or thereabouts —about as much use as twenty pence;—a mere scrap. *But there was more money than that in the house!* There was absolutely no help near. The very sight of those sheriff's aides-de-camp—in their drab uniform—waiting in the hall, scared her. The bare notion of that process of the law maketh the heart sink; and praying to these coarse emissaries for a few moments' grace, she fled away, shrinking, fluttering, and almost gasping with terror, to her own room, there to strive desperately and see if anything in the world *could* suggest itself. At such a crisis, hemmed up into a moral corner, with such cruel wolves at the gate, no wonder if the wildest, even the most unlawful thoughts of extrication suggested themselves importunately. Some one had received moneys for sale of interest in lease—or lands—and had gone to London too late for banking hours, and had brought his moneys back, and had surely not taken them out with him on his walk. They were lying, in all probability, up stairs in that leathern case of his, in the best bedroom—good yellow gold and notes. We must not judge this poor broken soul too harshly. Think of the two figures before her, now masters of the house; think of the foul associations connected with such ministers; think of those who were walking home with sure steps, and perhaps now not a hundred yards away; think of the fair marriage hanging on a thread; think of black despair at her heart, clouding her eyes, and senses, and moral conscience; think of these things, and let us pity—if we must condemn—that poor frail creature now stealing up stairs.

XI.

There, the air is cleared; the foul sheriffs' ministers are gone; but not a minute too soon, for here return the trio from their walk, two very gay and cheerful. That evening passes by; so does the Sunday morning, and public worship, at which all attend. Not until the noon of Sunday does Mr. Hengist come tearing down from his room crying aloud that he has been robbed; that he is undone; that he is ruined; that he will bring every one to justice.

There is the usual *esclaundre* and hubbub. Policemen enter; search, and inspect, and inquire. Three hundred pounds nearly. It is a heavy loss. On whom does suspicion naturally rest in such cases? On the servants. Call them up: and some wretched trembling Susan, or Mary Jane, is brought in and put to the question. She cries and sobs —circumstances of strong suspicion. Strange to say the box had been neatly opened with a false key; but no key could be found. Still there was nothing beyond suspicion, until in the passage leading to the kitchen, or scullery, or outhouse was found just such a little Bramah key, which Mrs. Joy identified as hers. This was enough; and Susan or Mary Jane was led away disgracefully in custody.

All this while Mrs. Joy said not a word, looking quite stony and immoveable. Her eyes had a cold, glassy stare. She was as that Nemesis of whom we have been speaking. She was determined to go through with her part, whatever she had undertaken. And she did it bravely; for it is a painful and unpleasant thing to have such a scene in a respectable family. Then when all was over, and the purloining maid taken away, she passed up stairs to her own room.

Hengist was nigh to being distracted, and sat at the fire moaning over his lost treasures. Mr. Joy took his daughter into another room, and told her wearily of what she had not known before. He was tired of the struggle, he said. It must end in

a day or two. He could fight it off no longer. It was better that she should know all at once. This unfortunate business of the robbery would finish it. To-morrow, he saw, would bring the end. She was much confounded at such speeches, yet soothed him affectionately, telling him that all would yet be well. He was to cheer up, and all would yet be well. Ah! vain, but fond speech! There is a day when all will yet be well—yet how far away.

She trips off, and passes into the parlour, where there is the other still moaning over his lost ingots. She sets herself to soothe him, humouring him, encouraging him with hope that they will be found. He is at first sour and pettish. But it is hard to resist that sweet face and voice. It was thus man's bent of mind to be cheerful, and before very long she had brought him to be tranquil, to say, what did he care for a few guineas? that he had plenty more as good; with other speeches to the same tune.

Then on this favourable basis she went something further. She brought him to remark what dismal downcast faces her parents bore, and to ask what sorrows troubled them. Gently she broke it all to him, saying it in a sweet voice, telling him even of that immediate danger which was to come to-morrow. 'It is better,' she said, 'that you should know these things now than later; I myself have only learnt it this evening. I thought we were rich and flourishing; it has turned out otherwise. It is not fair to you that you should enter into our family not knowing of these things; and therefore it is only right that you should be set free.'

Hengist was much astonished at this straightforward proposal. That it should have come from him, he could understand; but from her, it was utterly incomprehensible. He was troubled. At first he almost thought there must be something behind, some little plot or deception. Then he became aggrieved. Why did she treat him in this way?—what had he done? It has been mentioned that his was a very curious nature; not very firm or vigorous, and full of contradiction. Presently he had forgotten his money losses, and had fallen into a generous mood, and was ready even to furnish such aid as might ward off present difficulties.

XII.

With a light heart she flew to her father. He took it placidly: he was past any violent emotions of joy or sorrow. 'You have saved us,' he said; 'you are an angel. But run now and tell your poor mother; she is in her room up-stairs, and takes this to heart more than any of us.' The angel kissed her father's pale forehead, and bade him be of good heart. 'We shall all be very happy together yet,' she said; 'bright days are in store for us.' And she glided away very softly up stairs. That sweet-sounding but delusive anthem has been sung over and over again. The night of troubles in this instance was passing away, and it did seem fairly open to them to suppose that here a glimmer of dawn was breaking. It *was* likely they were all going to be very happy.

From many weary and wakeful nights it was natural that the poor woman of sorrows up stairs should be seeking a little rest during the daytime. And so her daughter entered cautiously and on tiptoe, fearing to disturb her. It was growing on to very dark, and through the window came but a half light. No doubt she was sleeping profoundly. And yet dark as it was there was light to perceive that on the table lay a letter or packet newly folded and directed. There are occasions when there will be a chain of arguments in the sight of a straw; and a sudden instinct made her turn to the bed where the dark shadowy figure was lying, in her daily dress, so profoundly still and motionless, that——

She darted to the bedside, and then she saw it all.

* * * *

Now we can guess at the secret of that crowd of unwashed waiting outside the railing of the bright red house on that Monday morning. The coroner came that day; and his jury came; and policemen came. There was not much investigation needed.

There was the unfailing little phial, with the strange scent; and the doctor came and told *his* story. It was very clear. The packet, however, was not submitted to those intelligent persons, for it contained a confession so piteous and dismal—the last outpouring of a heart broken, and a spirit crushed. Well might the old formula of insanity—temporary or not—be read in the daily papers; often but a fiction soothing to afflicted relatives, but in this instance to be regarded with all indulgence. Decayed and deserted, the whole story may be now read in that tenement itself! A blight has seized it, and I do not believe that any projected marriage ever took place.

London Societies.

No. II.—A CONVERSAZIONE AT WILLIS'S ROOMS.

THE ARTISTS' AND AMATEURS' SOCIETY.

THE 'Artists' and Amateurs'' is perhaps not the most brilliant of London societies; nor are its conversazioni more remarkable for vivacity and ésprit than other entertainments of the kind. But as the last of that society's 'evenings' takes place this month (May), and will not be resumed till next winter, now or never must they be immortalized. Besides they do happen to have one distinguishing merit of their own, viz., variety. They are not mere mobs of fine ladies and gentlemen: lovely Belgravian nymphs, 'a *little* squeezed, but *very* charming,' on the right; used-up swells on the left; fashionable dowagers behind, and more fashionable dowagers in front—all exactly like the nymphs, swells, and dowagers you met last night at Lady Lionne's, and exactly like, if not actually the same, you will meet to-morrow at Mrs. Bagoni's soirée. No! Here, at least, is individuality; and without being guilty of the horrible vulgarity of quizzing, one may be excused a smile at the odd characters brought together for the professed worship of Art. There is no great blaze of beauty: the shaded lamps and far-off chandeliers of nearly a century's bygone fashion give but a subdued tone to the fairest complexions. Neither are there many exquisite toilets. The few ladies of *ton*, who graciously walk through the rooms (on their way to some more congenial scene) almost invariably enshroud themselves in their flowing burnouse, which leaves the splendid butterfly within wholly to the imagination. Not that there is any lack of gorgeous apparel either. My friend Stipple, who stands high in his profession, and whose *forte* is colour, brings his wife in a scarlet opera cloak, pale pink dress, and magenta and yellow flowers in her hair, which is—ahem! auburn, *bright* auburn. How is it that my friend Stipple can gaze complacently, even admiringly, on his womankind arrayed thus, when the same arrangement in a picture would put him in a positive frenzy? This couple belong to a class who thoroughly enjoy such entertainments. They come so early, that I am almost tempted to believe they don't *come* at all, but bivouac in the rooms from one conversazione to another. They shake hands with their acquaintances repeatedly during the evening, and accompany them severally on each occasion to the refreshment-room, where their experience on the subject of tea and thin bread and butter *versus* coffee (?) and biscuit becomes valuable. When Stipple lends the society one of his 'works,' it is delightful to see Mrs. S. hovering continually round it, smiling benignly on those who remark favourably upon it, and becoming as suddenly offensive in her manner towards less discriminating individuals—I must add, to



the confusion of all parties. These persons, with a fair sprinkling of 'country cousins,' who have been presented with tickets, and who think an old country ball-dress just the thing to appear in at a London soirée; half a dozen picture-dealers, and a score or two of quiet nobodies, fill the rooms more than comfortably from nine to half-past ten, after which hour the crowd rapidly thins; and I, in concert with a few more misanthropical old gentlemen, prepare to enjoy the *chefs-d'œuvre* on the little easels placed round the walls. I suppose no one wishes to obtain my opinion on the handling of this, or the *chiaroscuro* of that work of art. No one would take the least interest in the conflict between M'Kewan and Richardson in my mind; nor can I disguise from myself the melancholy fact that the British public would probably consider itself bored by any lengthened critique of mine: therefore, in a literary point of view, I hail cabby, and make the best of my way home. But, first, is there any explanation of the engraving on the following page necessary? That little artist stooping over the portfolio stand, for instance, what is there to be said of him, save that his hair, his coat, his boots, his general tournure, cry aloud, 'a person not in society?' That strong-minded looking lady next him is undeniably a member of the same profession; but I object to her myself as conventional. Why should people refuse to recognize the 'female artist' unless so cruelly caricatured? She is introduced, no doubt, as a foil to that pretty creature in the centre holding the opera-glass; she who has ventured under the wing of her mamma and elder sister so far into Vanity Fair. Further in the shade, I see a young Israelite has affably addressed a couple of swells, whose names you may be sure are enrolled among the hon. members. They are grandly amazed at the presumption of the 'confounded little snob,' who is good-naturedly letting them 'behide the sceeds' of picture dealing, and who will dexterously insinuate a card into one or both of their waistcoat pockets before he suffers them to escape. 'Cub dowd to our place id Wardour Street. Fide old basters from sisks poundsh: cub ad see,' methinks I hear proceeding from his lips. As for the be-flounced lady in the foreground, she is evidently one of those profound connoisseurs who 'adore painting and genius, and all that sort of thing, you know,' but would feel faint at the bare 'ide-aw' of bowing to an artist, which reminds me it is time to make my obeisance to the readers of 'London Society,' and retire into private life until next month.



OPERATIC NOTES AND ANECDOTES.

Part II.

Caffarelli followed in London to Farinelli—a vain and capricious fellow—only in self-esteem equal to his predecessor. When told on one occasion that it was not thought possible any singer could please after Farinelli, the coxcomb exclaimed to a royal highness: 'To-night you shall hear two Farinellis.'

At sixty-five Caffarelli was still singing, but he was thrifty as well as musical, for he not only coined his notes into sterling moneys, but he had the good sense to husband his coinage. He made an enormous fortune, purchased a dukedom for his nephew, and raised a palace for himself, with the inscription on its front:

'Amphion Thebas, ego domum.'

'Amphion's voice and mine win like renown,
My notes this palace built, and his Thebes' town.'

Beneath this vain-glorious parallel a wag wrote—

'Ille cum, sine tu'

'Amphion's Thebes, with thine compare not it,
Thebes showed his wit, thy Thebes thy want of wit'

Guadagni was another celebrated singer in succession to Caffarelli He sang in London in 1766, and amassed during his career a large fortune, which he used generously in the relief of distress. He professed to lend, but order not to wound sensibility, but he virtually gave. 'I only want it as a loan,' said an impoverished gentleman on one occasion, whom he had accommodated with a considerable sum. 'That is not my intention,' replied the singer, 'if I wanted it back, I should not lend it to you.'

Gabrielli, a prima donna, 'the most dangerous siren of modern times,' in 1768 went to St. Petersburg, on the invitation of Catherine II. When the empress inquired what terms the singer expected, she named the sum of five thousand ducats.

'Not one of my field marshals receives so much,' said the empress.

'Her Majesty had better ask her field marshals to sing,' replied the undaunted Gabrielli

The singer carried her point, and gained her wage.

Madame Mara, of Berlin, follows in almost direct succession to the last-named lady: less fortunate, however, in the sovereign she had to deal with, for Frederick the Great was as absolute on the stage as on the throne. Before she was patronized by that German *rex assoluto*, he expressed his disgust at her pretensions, having been furnished with the report that she sang like a German, as well she might do, being a daughter of Herr Schmaling, of Berlin. To his very refined and flute-playing Majesty, all of whose tastes were formed on French models, the neighing of a horse was as agreeable as the singing of a German. Having conquered, however, a place in the king's patronage, she practised all the airs and caprices common to singers from Horace's time till now: 'Omnibus hoc vitium cantoribus.' She would only sing when she was inclined. On one occasion when the Cesarewitch was in Berlin, she was ordered to take the principal part in the opera for the prince's entertainment, but my lady was indisposed and pettish. She could not go, she was ill Frederick sent her word that she had better get well in time, for sing she should—will she, nill she Two hours before the hour of commencing the performance, a carriage drove up to her door, escorted by dragoons, the officer of whom said he came to escort her to the theatre.

'But you see I am in bed, and cannot get up,' remonstrated the vocalist.

'In that case I must take the bed too,' was the curt reply.

Madame Mara made a grace of necessity, and sang, after a pretty pout or two, with all possible brilliancy, charming Slavonic ears, and probably pocketing some Slavonic roubles.

Madame Mara, after this exploit, was well known in London and Paris. Her rivalry at the latter city with Madame Todi, gave rise to the following wretched joke:—

'Quelle est la meilleure?'

'C'est Mara.'

'C'est bientôt dit (bien Todi).'

Something better in the shape of verse appears to the following effect:

'Todi, par sa voix touchante,
De doux pleurs mouille mes yeux;
Mara plus vive, plus brillante,
M'étonne, me transporte aux cieux.
L'une ravit, et l'autre enchante,
Mais celle qui plait le mieux
Est toujours celle qui chante.'

She sang at the second Handel Festival, in 1785, in Westminster Abbey.

On the King's Theatre having been burned to the ground in 1789, not without strong suspicion of having been maliciously set on fire, the company moved to the little theatre in the Haymarket, and eventually to the Pantheon, 'the largest and most beautiful room in London,' fitted up with a stage and accommodation for the public. Unsuccessful in a pecuniary point of view—for the first season accumulated a debt of 30,000*l.*—the enterprise was nevertheless, in the sense of pleasing the public, a success. But the theatre was small and the expenses heavy. Madame Mara was here prima donna. She died at last on the Continent, at an advanced age, in no good circumstances.

Madame Banti was the next great celebrity in this country of female singers. She was gifted with a sweet voice, but had no musical science, nor would she submit to the drudgery of practice. In a fit of inadvertence or carelessness, when singing in public, she would execute an air through the first part faultlessly well, and then, instead of proceeding to the second part, would begin the first, and repeat it more than once, warbling over the same set of notes as innocently of wrong intention as a bird.

When this child of nature died, at forty-nine years of age, she bequeathed her larynx, one of extraordinary size, to the municipality of Bologna (all she had to leave them), and there it is duly preserved in a glass bottle.

Our English Billington was as celebrated at home and abroad as her contemporary Banti. When Mrs. Billington was at one time on the stage at Naples, the gross superstition of the audience led them to charge the foreign heretic with causing the violent eruption of Vesuvius, which occurred during the performance; but the mountain behaving better before the performance was done, the audience changed their opinion, and applauded the heretic player freely, notwithstanding her misbelief.

Braham appeared at the beginning of the present century—Braham, well recollected by most readers of our magazine, gifted with a voice of the finest quality, and yet not always governed by the best taste in the use of it.

All voices of men and women alike were eclipsed by that of Catalani, who in 1806 reigned in English song without a rival. Her voice was beautiful, energetic, expressive, 'uniting the delicious flexibility of Sontag to the three registers of Malibran.' Brilliancy was her merit as a performer; covetousness (but this she shared with most pets of the public, even tragic Rachel, and others) her great fault and demerit. How she and others like-minded with herself could imagine that impresarii could list and pay other performers is rather hard to conjecture. Her terms, proposed by her husband to Ebers of the King's Theatre, in 1826, were, that she should share half the gross receipts of every performance, while the lessee should pay out of the other half the rent of the theatre, the performers' salaries, the tradespeople's bills—and, in short, every expense. One can readily understand how, by such a scheme as this, the exorbitant Madame should net 10,000*l.* in London in a season of four months, and as much more in a subsequent tour in the provinces, in Scotland, and Ireland. Much of her earnings it must, nevertheless, be added, she dispensed in charities like the Swedish Nightingale of our more immediate day.

Since its earliest adventure in the metropolis of England, Italian opera has maintained its ground with more or less of perseverance—the most costly theatre, the most brilliant performers, the most astounding remuneration for artistes being ever found here. But the ridiculously high rate of wages for stars, paid in London alone of all the cities of Europe, has made the enterprise of keeping open a King's Theatre most hazardous to the lessee, and more frequently ruinous than remunerative. The history of the opera thus becomes with us a history of bankruptcies rather than of art—of penalties for trying to please the public rather than of rewards for success in doing so.

The expense of the opera can only be met by royal or imperial purses; hence this costly kind of entertainment thrives best where monarchs directly patronize it with subsidy and countenance. In London, its exclusiveness, arising from its absurd regulations respecting dress—which we know by personal experience do not prevail in France or Russia—and its high prices, will never, perhaps, make it a profitable commercial undertaking; while at the same time, it is by many causes thrown amongst us beyond the precincts or direct influence of the court. Besides, the repertoire of opera will never admit of the variety of the theatre—good and popular operas being, like the singers thereof, too rare to admit of much diversity or frequent changes of performance. The enormous expense entailed on lessee and manager, moreover, by the *mise en scène* of each successive play—that of 'Les Huguenots,' for instance, not remarkable for display, in the French Théâtre des Italiens, being upwards of 60,000*l.*—forbids the variety for which the middle-class public craves. Hence with us opera can scarcely be called popular in its proper sense (although highly appreciated by its *habitués* and the higher classes), and as a speculation has been too commonly ruinous to the enterprising but infatuated men who have brought the foreign sons and daughters of song to our shores. Taylor, the proprietor in 1793, Waters, Ebers, with the successive managers since, have all been made bankrupts, or impoverished by their enterprise; not from lack of spirit and adventure, but, as it would seem, from inevitable fate. Taylor spent much of the time of his management within the rules of the King's Bench prison.

'How can you conduct the affairs of the King's Theatre,' asked a friend one day, 'perpetually in durance as you are?'

'My dear fellow,' he replied, 'how could I possibly conduct them if I were at liberty? I should be eaten up, sir—devoured.' Taylor died in prison.

Waters, his partner, succeeded him, buying the whole concern out and out, by direction of the Chancellor, in 1816, for less than 8,000*l.* Ill success drove Waters to the protection of a foreign residence. But his interest in the theatre was bought up, with a frantic mania for speculation such as never fails to attend all its vicissitudes, for 80,000*l*; so that Waters made more by giving it up than any proprietor ever gained by retaining it. Ebers, who managed it from 1821 to 1828, lost every year, deeming himself fortunate that the deficit of his last year, being less than that of every other, should have been only 3,000*l.*

The more recent history of the house requires neither detail nor comment.

As little call is there for a discussion of the merits of modern composers or singers: Rossini, with his floridity and sweetness, whose choice 'Barber of Seville' was nevertheless hissed at Rome, on the first night of its performance; Meyerbeer, with his decidedly German cast of thought; Donizetti, the graceful, melodious, and sentimental in style; and Bellini, the author of 'The Somnambula,' the 'Norma,' and the 'Puritani,' works of undying popularity and interest. Auber, of Paris, belongs to a totally different school from these; while Germany in successful opera has not been fertile.

Of all modern musicians, Rossini is the unquestionable chief. The entire form of the opera during the last

half-century has been remoulded by him. To him we owe the accompanying of the recitativo by a full band; the complete musical setting of dialogue; his rich finales; his making basses and baritones as eligible for first parts as tenors; and the important part he assigns to the chorus according to the nature of some of the plots of his plays. Mozart, indeed, led the way in many of these things, but Rossini gave them prominence, permanence, and development.

Finales once were nothing; now that of 'Don Giovanni' requires fifteen minutes for its execution; that of 'The Barber of Seville' twenty-one; that of 'Othello' twenty-four; that of 'The Gazza Ladra' twenty-seven; and that of 'The Semiramide' half an hour.

Singers, musicians, and dancers have been a witty, humorous, and self-willed, as well as an ingenious race. Collections of their bon mots are common; we quote one or two. The notorious Sophia Arnauld of Paris, said of Mademoiselle Guimard, the dancer, who was very thin and light—'This skinny little silkworm ought to be fatter, considering the very fat leaf she feeds upon,' referring to one of the French bishops who was professedly the admirer of the ballerina.

When Mademoiselle Laguerre appeared one evening on the stage as *Iphigenie*, she was beyond mistake intoxicated. 'Ah!' interjected the lively Sophia, 'this is not Iphigenie in Tauris, but Iphigenie in Champagne.'

When this witty lady had grown old, and continued to sing, a certain brute of an abbé declared 'she had the finest asthma he had ever heard.'

Of Larrivée, the French singer, who sang overmuch through his nose, it was customary to say, 'That nose has really a magnificent voice.'

One of Rubini's earliest achievements in song, was the high B flat, for which wonderful note his audience used to listen with intense excitement, and always encore it when heard. Once he failed in his attempt—*vox faucibus hæsit*. He made a prodigious effort to rescue his endangered laurels, and conquered the reluctant notes, but at some damage to his physique. Nature rebelled against the attempt, and the singer snapped his clavicle.

'How long would it take to mend it?' asked he of the doctor.

'Two months, if you remained perfectly quiet during that time.'

'Two months! . . . . Can a person live comfortably with a broken clavicle?'

'Very comfortably indeed. If you take care not to lift heavy weights, you will experience no disagreeable effects.'

'Ah! there is my cue,' exclaimed Rubini, 'I will go on singing.'

And so he did; Rubini, the man in London, as well as Rubini, the youth in Milan, sang with a broken clavicle.

> 'Ah, little they thought as they thrilled to his strains
> That the clav of the minstrel was broken.'

Rubini was fortunate that it was no worse with him. Fabris in St. Carlo, and Labitte at Lyons, both died on the stage in consequence of their vocal exertions. But from the occasional ages mentioned in our paper, vocalists will be found to be by no means a short-lived race.

If the strength of muscular action is shown in this anecdote, that of vocal action appears in the feat of Chéron, the celebrated French bass, who was able to burst a tumbler into a thousand pieces by sounding within the glass a particular note. With the wonderful resonance of the late Lablache, his singing in a greenhouse at the full pitch of his enormous voice might have endangered its stability.

Farinelli's success originally owing to his one great note, is amusingly parodied in the burlesque comedy of the 'Saltem Banques,' wherein one of the characters practises on a trombone, but can only succeed in producing one note. His friend encourages him by saying, 'Never mind, one note is enough; keep on playing it, and people who are fond of that note will be delighted.'

Caffarelli hearing of Farinelli's success at Madrid, expressed a professional estimate of artistic merits.

'He deserves to be prime minister; he has an admirable voice.'

Napoleon Bonaparte was as arbitrary with singers as Frederick the Great, and more successful in his measures. At Dresden, in 1806, he laid his embargo on the best artistes of the King of Saxony's opera, and took them away by force.

'You sing divinely,' said he to the prima donna, Madame Paer; 'what do they give you at this theatre?'

'Fifteen thousand francs, sire.'

'You shall receive thirty. M. Brizzi, you shall follow me on the same terms.'

'But we are engaged.'

'With me. You see the affair is quite settled.'

Napoleon took away with him in this curt, kingly fashion, the whole opera from the Saxon city, to follow the fortunes of war, and attend him in his camp.

This style of procedure has succeeded in enlisting many singers, but the members of the ballet have always shown more independence.

Madeline Guimard, forced on the stage by the Minister of the Police, exclaimed: 'Thé minister desires me to dance,—eh, bien qu'il y prenne garde, je pourrais bien le faire sauter.'

Vestris, the elder, had a due appreciation of his consequence. When his son had offended the court by refusing to dance on some occasion, he was magniloquently reproved by his father in these terms:—

'I will have no misunderstanding between the house of Vestris and the house of Bourbon; they have hitherto always lived on good terms.'

This is almost as fine as that of Rameau, when offered a patent of nobility by Louis XV. 'Letters of nobility to me? *Castor* and *Dardanus* gave them to me long ago!'

LONDON SOCIETY.

JUNE, 1862.

ROMANCE AND A CURACY.

A Tale in Five Chapters.

CHAPTER I.

It was a pleasant room enough, considering that it was about ten feet square; the bow window might have been a little larger, and a little less like an oven in shape, but it commanded a fine view of housetops and chimneys up in the town on one side, and there was a rookery opposite, and a peep of the river beyond. Altogether it did well enough for the lodging of a poor curate.

At present there were two persons —decidedly one too many—in the room—a stout, bald gentleman, who had struggled to the bow window, and sat there panting; and the curate himself, who was not bald, nor stout, nor panting.

And the stout gentleman was saying, 'So, you wouldn't change professions; even with me, for instance, eh! Thorpe?'

'No, Dr. Grant, I would not.'

'Ah! the gloss has not worn off your black coat yet.'

'It has been rubbed pretty hard, too,' was the response.

'Umph! You should look out for a living, Thorpe.'

To which the Rev. Martin Thorpe made no answer.

'There are so many of you curates; however, you must wait till your turn comes. Lady Arden sent me to tell you that she did not accept your excuse.'

'Indeed!'

'Yes. You see she makes an annual thing of this conversazione, and everybody goes. Sir Reginald is not a rich man; but it won't do for you to offend Lady Arden.'

'I don't want to offend any one; but I have got a sermon to write, doctor.'

Dr. Grant made a grimace. 'Put it off. Take my advice, Thorpe, and don't pull the reins too tight. We suburbans are used to take things easily.'

And the doctor nodded with much satisfaction at a neat brougham which drove up lazily, and waited before the railings of the small lodging in Clarence Terrace. The doctor himself lived in Belgrave Place, and his house would have swallowed up the whole six dwellings in Clarence Terrace; a fact which the gentlemanly coachman seemed to be speculating upon and rather enjoying, as he looked at the row of modest brick buildings.

'Well, doctor,' said the curate, 'I'll think about it, as everybody is to be there.'

'As for me, you know—a busy man like I am, can never reckon upon his own time.'

And the doctor rolled off in his brougham, and the Rev. Martin Thorpe stood meditatively on the spot where his friend had left him. Not that he had much choice as to standing room, for small as the table was, it was a nervous thing to get round it without twitching the

red-checked cloth off. Something had come over Martin like the sudden shadow over an April sky; in spite of himself, the doctor's words had put a little prickly point into his heart. Though the people had hardly yet left off calling him 'The new Curate,' in the parish of St. Mark, in the east suburb of that many-chimneyed town, he had passed his thirty-third birthday, and had been ten years a curate. For the first time he took out that queer feeling between discontent and anxiety, and looked at it boldly.

Dr. Grant was mistaken. The gloss had worn off his black coat; it had worn off many since first he stood up with trembling knees to read the lessons before the congregation in his last curacy; and he knew that the gloss was not so easy for him to replace as it would be for the stout doctor. A little while ago this reflection would have cost him a grimace perhaps; he would have shaken his head at the shabby coat, and gone to his work cheerfully; but somehow he had begun to feel differently about it.

He held a forlorn position in the world, inasmuch as he was penniless and kin to no man. That is to say, he had no near kinsman, none at all, he believed, that would acknowledge him. He believed himself to be an offshoot of the great Blankshire Thorpes, Barons of Waddensterne; but so, no doubt, did many other Thorpes, and what did the great Thorpe of all know about them?

So the Rev. Martin never boasted of his illustrious kinsman, even to those of his new parishioners who affected intimacy with noble families, and who were especially devoted to Lady Arden. For Lady Arden was the great pole-star of the east suburban world. Even the vicar's wife became pale and of small magnitude beside her, for she was 'My lady;' and, moreover, not at all haughty or supercilious, but ready to meet the advances of her neighbours who were not 'my lady,' as though they had been her equals. Was any subscription wanted? Lady Arden must head it; and to do her justice she was ready enough, according to the extent of her means, to do such things, which is more than one can say of all pole-stars. They like to shine, generally; but it is another thing, and not so pleasant to pay for shining.

But it was not his friendlessness that troubled Martin Thorpe just now, nor altogether his poverty, though indirectly that had to do with his unusual state of mind. Something else was the matter with him. Thinking of that something, would it be quite wise of him to attend the party of Lady Arden? For he knew pretty well of whom the party was to consist, and he knew he would be nearly certain to meet there one whom he had decided it was better he should meet as seldom as possible. And then he had not written his sermon. He eyed the heap of papers irresolutely; not that he really felt irresolute, for the more he argued with himself against the visit, the more unanswerable seemed the arguments for it. First he had promised, and then sent an excuse: he had no business to do that; it would be quite right to keep his word if possible. Then he really required a little relaxation, for he worked hard: next, it certainly would not do to offend Lady Arden, who had been kind to him. Lastly, it was just possible he might see something which would show him the folly of certain thoughts he had lately indulged in. He was far from wishing that lastly, though he tried to persuade himself he did.

Our bits of romance are very brittle and tender. We hide them away jealously enough, for fear some rough hand might dash them from us with a sweep, or a matter-of-fact voice cry out that they are cobwebs. Whatever they are, we prefer to keep them as long as we can; and who knows how lovingly they are taken out and pondered over when we are alone; when there is no curious eye to see, and no one to disturb the thought?

Lady Arden did not live in a terrace, or even a place, but in a large house standing in a shrubbery of its own, and retiring from public gaze at the end of a tortuous drive. This house rejoiced in the name of Castleford, and was pretty generally spoken

of as Lady Arden's, for Sir Reginald was peculiarly and essentially nobody. He was a little man, and before he married, had been miserably poor. Now he was called eccentric; he rarely left the house, gave nothing away, and always threatened to horsewhip a beggar if he saw one. People said that the marriage was a piece of romance on Lady Arden's side, expediency on her husband's; every one knew it was a hasty one, and of course every one pitied Lady Arden, or would have done so if she had allowed it. But whether she had indeed found out her mistake or not, none of her neighbours knew. If she had a skeleton it was very tightly locked up, and none but herself knew the key of that closet.

Martin had not stopped to write his sermon; but he arrived late, nevertheless; also he was hot and tired, and made his excuses absently. He was, however, still new enough to be rather a pet amongst the great ones of the parish, and when the hostess had done with him, some half-dozen ladies made a circle round him, so that he could not get out.

There was music going on at one end of the room, which seemed to have the usual effect of making people talk louder and faster; and Martin, resigning himself with a good grace, talked pleasant nothings to the group around him till it opened, and he had a chance of escape. Then he wandered slowly down the room, and tried to look as if he were not searching for any one in particular; and presently the stout doctor bustled up to him.

'Ah, Thorpe, you took my advice then. Quite right.'

Martin smiled, thinking how wonderfully little the doctor's advice had to do with his appearance.

'A busy man like you now, doctor——' he began.

'Yes, yes I was obliged to come with Margaret; I mean my niece, Miss Foster. At least Foster asked me, and I couldn't refuse. They are not very well there—seldom are.'

Martin's eye did not follow the doctor's, neither did the busy man see any change in his face, but there was one. Not a flush, but an increase of whiteness, a slight dilation of the nostril, and a drawing in of the lips.

'Pleasant rooms these, but very warm, Thorpe.'

'Very,' responded Martin, ambiguously, and the doctor passed on. Even then the curate did not look up for a full minute. When he did, his eye fell at once upon the person he had been seeking, and though the colour came back to his face, there was the same troubled look upon it as the doctor had left behind him in the lodging in Clarence Terrace.

He thought to be contented with looking, and he was not. He had told himself that it was only necessary to look, in order to abandon the absurd thoughts he had been indulging, but it was not so. He wanted to go up and speak to 'My niece, Miss Foster,' whom the doctor had brought, or at least he would like to be near her So he reasoned about it, and decided that although he had perhaps been foolish for coming, yet now that he was come, she would think it strange and rude if he did not do as he wished.

Lady Arden happened to be standing near the doctor's niece when he went up, and she introduced him gravely, forgetting or not knowing that it was unnecessary.

And Martin bowed, and said he had had the pleasure of meeting Miss Foster before—he might have added, mentally, in the slang of the day, 'rather!' but that he had left slang behind him at Ch. Ch. Oxford. —Then he held out his hand, for he was not going to be cheated out of a legitimate greeting. And Lady Arden began discussing a plan for a local book club which had just been laid before her for approval.

'You know the people make a sort of referee of me always, Mr. Thorpe,' said the pole-star, a little wearily. 'I wish they would not do it.'

Martin was about to utter some platitude about influence and the duties of position, when Lady Arden turned quickly to her companion.

'Margaret, sing something for us, will you? Sir Reginald—where is he? Please take Miss Foster to the piano, she is going to sing.'

Sir Reginald obeyed with much pomp. 'Now, Mr. Thorpe, if you

will come with me for a moment, I can show you the list of rules. You see one is compelled to give an opinion on the subject, and I should like to have yours.'

Martin was very angry. At that moment what did he care about lists of rules for a stupid book-club? No one would keep them if they were made. If Lady Arden wanted Miss Foster to sing, she might as well have fixed upon him to turn over the leaves. Everybody knew the baronet hated music.

He looked at the rules, however, and pretended to talk about them with interest, but he was listening for the song, which did not come. Perhaps Sir Reginald was going to lift up his voice in harmony.

'You see, Mr. Thorpe, I can't help them applying to me. If Sir Reginald could be persuaded to take the lead in these things he would be so——'

'Like a peacock,' muttered Martin, who was probably thinking how the baronet would sing.

'What did you say?'

'I beg your pardon—nothing. But I thought some one was going to sing.'

To this Martin got no answer; and when he turned to look at Lady Arden she was gone.

'I cannot have offended her,' he thought. A carriage had just driven round the sweep, and Martin stood twisting the list of rules about, and thinking some one was going away early, and he might as well go too. Presently he heard the carriage drive away again, and a voice near exclaimed—

'Dead! how dreadful!'

He concluded that Dr. Grant had been sent for to some patient; and if so, probably his niece was with him. After a while Lady Arden came up—very white, very hurried, very unlike her usual self.

'Mr. Thorpe, Dr. Grant has just been sent for, and Margaret. Mr. Foster is dead—suddenly.'

Martin was roused at once. Could he do anything? Lady Arden was faint, should he get anything for her—help her in any way?

Lady Arden owned she should be glad if every one would go. It was foolish, perhaps, but then she really felt quite unfit for company.

Margaret had overheard the man's words to her uncle, and the shock was so sudden. They did not mean to let her know the worst at once.

Martin ventured to ask how she bore it, but Lady Arden did not seem to be listening, and he thought the wisest thing he could do would be to go away himself and tell every one why he was going, that they might follow his example.

And the curate went home to the little lodging in Clarence Terrace, and sat down before his writing-table. He knew that sermon of his ought to be finished before morning; but he sat there an hour or more and never wrote a word, or moved from his position, for all the while he was thinking of Margaret Foster and her dead father.

Then he got up, tied a wet towel round his head, and took the pen in his fingers resolutely. It was of no use. He could have written nothing but 'dead.' The word was staring at him already from the sheet, dancing up and down in all sorts of letters and shapes. And finally he gave it up in despair. There was nothing for it but to give his parishioners an old sermon.

CHAPTER II.

When the funeral was over, and the people had nearly done gossiping over the sudden death of Mr. Foster, a rumour went about that he had not only died poor, but actually in debt. And it was astonishing to find now how everybody had thought it would be so, in fact quite expected it. They were very sorry of course, very sorry; for the widow especially. As for the daughters, they must exert themselves, and it would do them good—it is astonishing to reflect on our aptitude for finding out what will do other people good—the one had always been a puling thing; and perhaps this was the greatest blessing that could have happened to her, because it would force her into exertion. As for the other, Margaret, see what comes of

setting up for a beauty. 'What would it do for her now?'

This from some of those who had been most anxious to parade their intimacy with 'poor dear Mrs. Foster, and that lovely Margaret.' But then, if they were going to be poor, and that sort of thing, there was an end of the intimacy of course. Also some of the gossipers forgot the maxim, 'De mortuis nil nisi bonum,' or else they did not hold with it. In one sense, perhaps, no one could; since if a man has done evil, it would be hardly fair to speak nothing but good of him; but until the evil is something better founded than idle report, it is a safe maxim. A dead man cannot rise up and confront his accusers, but surely the ninth commandment must be as binding when our neighbour is dead as when he is living. And Mr. Foster did not die in debt. Then, said gossip, it was a wonder he didn't, but one never knows what to believe.

Martin Thorpe heard the rumour in silence. Not that he was without an irritated desire to know its truth, but he could not gossip about it. He went to call at Castleford, but though Lady Arden spoke of the Fosters, she only said how sad it was, how awful; and that Margaret would feel the loss terribly. She scarcely seemed to be concerned for the others, but then she had always made a pet of Margaret.

There was something in that, too, which Lady Arden kept quiet from the world, which none understood altogether but herself. When she came to Castleford ten years ago—in the dreariness of that first waking from her piece of romance, seeing Sir Reginald as he was when the paint with which she had painted him was rubbed off—Lady Arden looked into the future and was terror-stricken, for she knew that she was nothing to her husband.

Margaret Foster was but a child of twelve then, but what could be better than a child's voice for a sorrow which wanted to get away from itself? There must have been another figure in that closet which Lady Arden kept so closely locked—one to set in opposition to the skeleton—a joy as well as a grief, hidden away quietly, and known only to herself.

Martin knew that his was no vulgar curiosity about the Fosters, yet he could not bring himself to question Lady Arden as to the truth of that rumour; and when she brought the book club on the tapis again he suddenly remembered that he was in a hurry, and took his leave of her.

He had to pass the house of mourning, and as he reached it the stout doctor was coming down the door steps.

'How are they?' asked Martin, walking on with him.

'Well, tolerable. My sister, you know, is never anything but an invalid.'

'And—your nieces?'

'Pretty well. That is to say Margaret keeps up. It's a sad thing though,' continued the doctor; 'they have been brought up with such expectations, you see, that it is doubly hard now.'

Martin waited a little in the hope of hearing more, but Dr. Grant was silent, and the curate could not help saying, 'What is hard?'

'Foster must have been wretchedly improvident,' said the doctor, punching his cane into the pavement. 'I always said so, and I knew it would come to this. A medical man with a family has no right to live up to his income.'

'Then they are left——'

'Poor. Yes, absolutely poor. I shall do what I can, of course; there is one thing, Margaret is very attractive, and must marry well. Not that I mean to stand by and see her sold,' added the doctor sharply; 'she is the best of the three: as for the other poor thing——'

Here Martin stopped abruptly.

'I think I had better call, doctor.'

'Do. My sister will like to see you. My time is so occupied, you know, that I cannot be with her much.'

As the curate turned back he thought of the first and only time he had dined with the Fosters; he thought of the wide entrance hall and the footman who had ushered him so grandly into the drawing-

room; of the evidences of luxury and wealth which had been so appalling to some foolish dreams of his. And he wondered if all that was to be changed, or if the doctor's idea of poverty comprehended such an establishment.

He rang, and the footman, more solemn than ever, announced him, and a figure all wrapped in crape rose to meet him. It was only Mrs. Foster. The invalid sister was there also, on a lounge; but though Martin stayed as long as he dared, and said everything he could think of, he extracted nothing but murmurs in return, and he did not see Margaret.

As he rose to take his leave he expressed a hope that she was well, and then Mrs Foster murmured out plaintively that she was gone to see her friend, Lady Arden. Well for her that she *could* exert herself to go out; the two invalids really found it impossible.

Martin wavered for a moment at the door. If there had been anything he had forgotten, or any new and startling suggestion relative to the book club, it is probable he too might have gone to see his friend Lady Arden But when he reflected that it was scarcely an hour since he left her, and that he had been hurried away by some other pressing claims upon his time, the absurdity of the thing struck him, and he went his way, thinking sorrowfully that perhaps it was better he should see Miss Foster no more.

If she had been connected with that bit of romance which he cherished in the hidden corners of his heart before, would she not be doubly dear now in her trouble, because there would be added to the old feeling, that strong, almost painful desire to comfort her, which most of us know so well!

So Martin went about his work more earnestly than ever. The parish was large, and the vicar rheumatic, and he had plenty to do, and little time for dreaming.

And as the months passed on, the change that had come over the life of the Fosters ceased to be the subject of conversation. The large white house had other occupants, and they filled up the gap which the widow and her daughters had left in society. For the position of these last was altered in the social scale; they did not go out, and they did not seem to like seeing any one in the house, nearly as small and unpretending as the lodging in Clarence Terrace, which had received them. The curate called upon them of course, but he seldom saw Margaret. They were visible at church; black, shy figures, which entered without the important rustle attending the movements of the more fashionable churchgoers, and went away amongst the humble first; silent as they had come, speaking to no one, and shrinking from the sort of general assembly at the gate, which had once delighted to receive Mrs. Foster's gentle murmurs and languid assertions of ill-health. Not that their old friends really neglected them, but they had fallen naturally from their former place in society. Those who live and visit in a 'set,' as it is called, must be pretty nearly equal, as far as means go, or it will be but a miserable 'keeping up of appearances.'

Martin Thorpe had suddenly, as it seemed, grown careful and anxious. Wherever he heard of a living vacant, or likely to be vacant, he applied, but then he had no influence, and no influential friend, so his chance was a poor one. He even wrote to the great Thorpe of Waldensterne, but he got no answer. Probably my lord flung the epistle aside amongst the other hundred and fifty begging-letters with which his table bristled, like the barrel of a musical-box; but Martin was not going to trouble his great kinsman a second time. He would wait, as others had to do, patiently.

CHAPTER III.

And the summer came round again; and the carriages of aristocratic suburbans taking their drives ploughed up the dust daily along the roads of the east suburb.

Then Martin Thorpe heard a rumour which had been asserted, and contradicted and asserted again

some dozen times since Mr. Foster's death, namely, that the Fosters were too poor to live, and Margaret was going from home as a governess. Moreover, that she was going to Lady Arden's sister, or brother, or else to Sir Reginald's sister or brother. Anyhow it was Lady Arden's doing. Martin merely smiled at rumour when she asserted that it was not worth a second thought. The sun was very powerful over the rookery, and the red-brick houses seemed to have got redder and more inflamed than ever, crying out to the languid people, 'Why don't you go? Be off to the seaside; what use stopping here to be baked?' At least that was how several of the suburban ladies interpreted the language of the inflammatory houses.

Venetian blinds were down in the drawing-room of Castleford House, and two ladies sat therein, one of them still in deep mourning, which was wretchedly unfashionable of her, for that one was Margaret Foster, and to wear deep mourning longer than a year is quite heathenish in the eyes of society. Perhaps in this case expediency had something to do with it. The other occupant of the drawing-room, Lady Arden, was looking distressed, and she held one of her companion's hands in her own.

'Margaret, if I could but have you with me!'

'But you know that is impossible,' was the reply.

'I feel that it is. I could covet riches for your sake. And you are so young to go amongst strangers.'

'Young!' repeated Margaret; 'I am two-and-twenty.'

'And I thirty. So much older than you; so world-worn and faded, that you cannot care for me as I do for you, Margaret. For long enough —years—you have been my first object—next to Sir Reginald,' said Lady Arden, checking herself quickly: 'and now, when I ask if this step is actually necessary, you say your uncle sanctions it. That is but a half-confidence.'

Margaret did not answer. Hitherto her friendship with Lady Arden had been surrounded, as it were, with an atmosphere of refinement. Little troubles there might have been to tell, but not such as the present ones. With Margaret everything was changed, but she could not bring herself to speak of money troubles to Lady Arden; they seemed so paltry. She even shrank from the thought of her friend seeing more clearly into the daily life at home. Mrs. Foster was querulous and fretful, and her sister exacting. Both leaned upon Margaret, and both dinned into her ear a constant, half-testy reproach, that something was not done to increase their income. Could Margaret tell that to Lady Arden? Not she. To hear her speak of her mother and sister, the listener must have thought them angels of forbearing gentleness and resignation. Perhaps they fancied themselves that it was so, but then they both had, or fancied they had, ill-health, and ill-health, Margaret reflected, was harder to bear than anything.

Looking up when her thoughts had travelled thus far, she saw Lady Arden watching her anxiously.

'Are you quite sure it is necessary, Margaret?'

'Quite sure.'

Lady Arden turned impatiently to a writing-table, and began fidgeting amongst a heap of notes and paper.

'I am writing to Mrs. Beresford; have you any message?'

The tone was cold and displeased, and for the first time a horrible feeling of loneliness crept over Margaret's heart. It seemed as though by her own act she was severing herself from all that had been precious in her life, and this was a foretaste of what lay beyond. Why should she do it?

But the rebellious outcry was soon over. She went up to Lady Arden, who was playing nervously with her gold pen.

'You are angry with me now, when it is hardest to bear,' said Margaret. 'I have no confidence to give, indeed; nothing more to tell than I have told, unless I were to talk of troubles that would seem insignificant and almost contemptible to you, who know nothing of them.'

'Oh, Margaret! as if anything

could be insignificant to me, where you are concerned.'

'I shall be with your sister——'

'In law,' corrected Lady Arden.

'In law, then. It will at least be more satisfactory than if I were going to a perfect stranger. I shall hear of you sometimes.'

'And from me, I hope,' said Lady Arden, turning to her quickly; 'Margaret, you must promise——'

A ring at the door-bell made the speaker start up and push aside the papers with an expression of annoyance.

'Let me go,' said Margaret, kissing her, hurriedly. 'I cannot see any one now.'

Martin Thorpe meeting in the hall a lady in black, with a thick veil over her face, held out his hand, knowing her by instinct, but there was not a word spoken between them.

And then Lady Arden, who was too full of the prospect of parting with Margaret to talk of anything else, told him of it, and how the plan had been pending for some time, but not finally decided upon until that morning.

A whirl of thoughts went rushing one after the other through Martin's brain. It was a turn of the wheel on which he had never calculated. He had treated the report with contempt as mere idle gossip; he could hardly believe it even now. One comfort, Lady Arden was too preoccupied herself to notice her visitor, and she went on talking the affair over till all the details were before him.

'Then it was your suggestion?' said Martin, suddenly breaking his silence.

'Mine! No, indeed. How could you think such a thing possible?'

'It was your sister, you said, who——'

'Margaret found it out by accident. In fact, I had no idea why she was questioning me about it.'

Martin felt that he must change the subject, and he did so abruptly. He had always been disposed to like Lady Arden; she was especially valuable in the parish, and ever ready to support him warmly. Now he was unjust towards her; he accused her mentally of worse than caprice. It was like the rest of the world, he thought. Margaret Foster, the daughter of a wealthy man, as he was esteemed, could be petted and patronized; but Margaret, poor, and with no position, might be easily cast adrift. He was not in a state to reason fairly, or to perceive his injustice.

When he left Castleford he went back to the room in Clarence Terrace, and sat down to think. In another fortnight Margaret would be gone. It was absurd to suppose there could be any hope of an alteration in the arrangement now. It was quite settled; Lady Arden had told him so. Martin had counted the cost of that dream of his too often to begin again now, however much he might feel inclined to do so. There was one plain and incontrovertible position which met him at the outset, and came back at the end always. What was barely sufficient for one could not be common comfort for two; and he was no longer a boy, that he should rush into certain misery for himself and others. Indeed, it was not for himself that he feared. Besides, in other ways, it seemed to him that only trouble could follow the step which, at the same time, he so longed to take. He remembered Dr. Grant's words, 'Margaret is attractive, and must marry well,' and he knew enough of Mrs. Foster to be certain that, even if Margaret cared for him, which he told himself dismally was, to say the least, improbable, there would be enough opposition to make it a miserable affair for her.

All at once Martin's despairing attitude changed, and he began making calculations on the leaf of a sermon. It had occurred to him that he might take pupils. For about five minutes only the idea lasted: it was a sore temptation, but he put it away with a sort of desperate scorn of himself for having given it a thought. Why, had not he, Martin Thorpe, in the full vigour of enthusiasm for his office, raised his voice against the notion of men in his position doing that very thing? He knew that his duty was in his parish, and that, theoretically, he had hardly

a moment to spare from it. What was to become of the practical part, if there were pupils at home?

He dropped his pencil with a heavy sigh. He was tempted to exclaim that it was hard lines. He, who was always expected to appear as a gentleman, whose office required it of him, had no more to live upon than those clay-bespattered navvies who passed his window night and morning to their work on the Wharfencester and Greenbury branch-line. There were many like him—many even in worse circumstances than he was; but he saw in that no consolation, but rather an aggravation of the evil. Had he not seen that there were clergymen's wives in England worn down to a poverty almost ragged, and wholly hungry, clothing their children through charity? If he had not seen, he might have acted differently, hoping for the best; but, having seen, how could he drag one he loved down to that?

Then he knew that it was in his power to apply to the bishop, who would order his stipend to be raised; but he knew also—besides the fact that the living of St. Mark was a poor one—that there were plenty ready and willing to accept what he now received, and he did not wish to lose his curacy. In his weakness he clung to the scene of this, the first gleam of romance his life had known. It was hard enough to feel that he must wait for years, perhaps, indeed, for ever, with the words he longed to speak unspoken; but it would be harder still to go away, and see or hear of Margaret no more Here, at least, the memory of her presence remained; occasionally some one would speak of her, and she would not always be from home; there might be times when it would be possible to see her.

They might meet as friends, at any rate, if there could be nothing else. And then it struck him that he was foolish in giving way to despondency. He had been disappointed as yet in every application for a living; but no one knew how soon he might get one.

When he had reasoned so far, struggling against that dark thread in the tissue which *would* come under his eye, and would not be hidden—do you not know that thread, my friend, and how it persists in crossing you at unsuspected moments, and how ugly it is?—he thought he would call once at Mrs. Foster's before Margaret went; he must see her again, not exactly to say good-bye, though he knew that would have to be said, but to show her—what? Well, he hardly knew; how sincerely he was her friend, perhaps.

After that:—there was his work to do always, and in a great degree there was comfort in doing it.

And to begin at once, instead of dreaming useless dreams, he recollected that there was a poor woman whom he ought to visit at Fernwood Mill, and he set off to do it.

The mill was at the very extent of his parish on one side, and his way lay through the coppice of Fernwood, where the birds sung out a welcome to him, and the air was sweet with the fragrance of wild flowers. But as he entered the coppice Martin stopped and put his hand over his eyes, to be sure that he had not brought his dreams with him

Margaret was there, wandering about amongst the trees, and, looking round, he saw a little nearer to him Mrs. Foster and the invalid daughter, seated on one of the wooden seats with which suburban taste had studded the coppice. Martin spoke to them first, and then went on to Margaret Since he had met her, it was better to say good-bye there, than to wait for the chance of finding her at home when he called. But, instead of speaking in the ordinary sort of way he had meant to do, and then going about his business, he remained beside her, wandering about as she was, apparently without purpose, amongst the trees. Margaret spoke of the beauty of the coppice, of the wild flowers, and the sunlight on the mill-stream; but Martin's thoughts were busy about other things. He had believed himself very brave and strong, master of himself, in no possible danger of breaking his resolve; but the sudden sinking of his heart when he heard Margaret's voice, and felt the uncertainty hanging over the future,

tried him sorely. They might never meet again, and if they did—'It is harder to wait than to work,' muttered Martin. Then he stopped, conscious that he had spoken aloud, answering only his own thoughts. Something either real or fancied in the peculiar paleness of Margaret's face struck him with terror. They had lost sight of Mrs. Foster, and were alone. Alas, for those resolves which Martin was flinging one by one to the wind! Another moment and he would have told all, but yet the moment did not come. There was a heavy step in the coppice, and a lean woman came from between the trees, and stood before them begging.

She was gone again at once, with Martin's coin in her hand, but it was enough. The interruption had brought back his courage and his reason.

Once again he turned to his companion, but his face was as quiet and sad as it had before been full of eagerness and hope.

'I meant to call some day before you left us, Miss Foster, to wish you—everything you could wish for yourself; now it will be needless.'

He seemed to expect an answer, and Margaret said, 'Thank you.'

'I am glad to have seen you here. Better to think of you here in the sunlight than between four walls,' said Martin, his voice sinking. He would say nothing about hoping to meet again; at present there was no hope at all in him—nothing but the actual pain of parting, and the blank future.

'Good-bye,' said Margaret.

But Martin put out both his hands, and held hers in them for a moment, and he said, 'God bless you always!'—and went away, seeing no sunlight anywhere, conscious of nothing except that he was half blind and wholly miserable.

Perhaps we had better not follow him. There are times when a man may surely relax from his strong-mindedness and be glad of a little solitude to put away a hope that is after all only half hope and half despair.

He did not know whether Margaret understood him or not; and he did not care to know. He wanted to leave her unbound by so much as a thought, if it were possible, so that he might be the only sufferer. It was a mistake perhaps, but he fell into it through his unselfishness, and his care for her.

And a month after that, Margaret was busy about her work in the world.

CHAPTER IV.

'Thorpe,' said the doctor; 'you seem to me to get thinner every day. A bachelor life doesn't suit you, why don't you marry?'

Martin laughed.

'Will you give me a recipe for supporting a family on fifty pounds per annum, doctor?'

Dr Grant shuffled a little. 'That isn't enough; the vicar ought to increase it.'

'The vicar is poor himself: but I wrong him a little. I did ask him to make it one pound weekly, so that I might keep level with it, and he does,' said Martin, grimly.

'Why, Thorpe, I know a man who has been curate forty years, and he has a wife and seven or eight children'

'Private property,' said Martin, gnawing his lip.

'Ah! to be sure, that's it. I know there was something wrong. People without property should not take orders, it's a mistake. After all, now I think of it, there are many like you. But at least you might get a better curacy than this, Martin.'

'Perhaps so,' replied Martin, indifferently. He did not care to discuss his reasons or his hopes with the doctor. He had waited seven more years, and he had now been eighteen years a curate.

It was scant consolation to him to hear that there were many like him, or that persons without property ought not to take holy orders; on that last point he had his own opinions. As he looked back, each of the eighteen years seemed to be an additional hope for the future, because a curate who had waited so long must surely have some claims to consideration.

But how those same years seemed to have fled, now that they were gone! He was past forty, past his prime; more than half his natural or probable life was gone; one-tenth of it since he parted with Margaret in Fernwood Coppice. Time begins to wear a different aspect when we have used or abused more than one-half of our probable portion. The years to come are not bugbears then as they were when we were little and wanted to be big; when we began to hate that ugly pinafore and look longingly at the big jacket of George, who had a bat and a fishing-rod instead of our tops and marbles

And when we got the jacket were we satisfied? Not likely. Was not that hero George strapping down his trousers, turning up his collars, and pretending to shave? And had not he a fine dress coat for festive occasions? What a hideous, baby-like affair that coveted round jacket was, after all!

It was a beautiful thing to dream of being one's own master; of doing exactly what we liked, and being answerable to no one, but the most beautiful bit of such a dream as that, would be the strolling carelessly, booted and spurred, towards the stable yard, with a 'John, bring out the chestnut.'

It was a fine climax, but if one was suddenly brought down to reality by a sharp reproof for bestriding a drawing-room chair, or kicking up a pair of dirty heels on a couch, that was harrowing indeed I suppose we are never satisfied, since when the time arrives, and we can look back on youth and youthful things, straightway we want them back again.

Pardon for the digression. It had nothing to do with the youth of Martin Thorpe, or with his years of waiting. It is wonderful to think how we can get accustomed even to waiting, till it ceases to be so terribly irksome as it was at first. The wish is so strong when we conceive it, that no sacrifice would seem too great to make if it could but be attained. Time after time the hope marches off further into the future, till despondency puts a veil over it, and we are almost worn into a dull content that it should be distant. Only it must not be taken away altogether; what could we do without the thing we have leaned upon so long?

Once each year Margaret had come for a few days back to the suburb, and then, at whatever season it might happen, Lady Arden insisted on giving her annual whim, as she called it; at which Mr. Thorpe never failed to be present. The two only met as friends; and though Lady Arden and the curate were great allies, she knew nothing of the hope deferred which Martin had nursed till it had become part of his individuality. He was changed, though he could see no change in himself, except that a few white hairs had begun to glisten amongst the black ones. He was less impatient, and less liable to fits of despondency and weariness. Of all his friends—and he had many in the parish—Lady Arden was the most valued, in a certain careless fashion too he liked Sir Reginald, who was good-natured in spite of his pomposity, and always offered the curate what he liked best himself, which was his way of showing cordiality.

Martin was, therefore, a tolerably frequent visitor at Castleford: in one way or other he generally managed to get some tidings of Margaret, or, at any rate, to hear her spoken of; and he was going there according to custom, when Dr. Grant met him, and told him he had no business in holy orders.

Martin was thinking over the conversation as he walked up the drive to Castleford, and thus he did not see Lady Arden coming to meet him, till she stood still before him in the path, looking unusually excited.

'How beautiful the shrubs are getting,' said Martin.

'Yes. Mr. Thorpe, Margaret—Miss Foster is coming home.'

'To your "whim,"' said Martin, quietly. 'I thought it was about the time.'

'My whim! No. I ought not to be so glad, considering the cause, but I really am, so it is useless to dissemble about it.'

'And the cause is——'

'Her mother and sister are both invalids, as you know, and Mrs. Foster has been worse lately, so Margaret is coming home.'

'To nurse them.'

'She talks of taking pupils,' continued Lady Arden, meditatively. 'I hope they will not let her work too hard. But she will be here, with us, and I shall be able to take care of her.'

'Lady Arden,' said the curate, 'what a pity it is there are not more women like you in the world!'

'Thank you, Mr. Thorpe. You know I never accept compliments, but to-day I would not quarrel with my worst enemy, whoever that may me. Margaret is——'

Lady Arden did not proceed to say what Margaret was. She had been already more unreserved than she would have been with any one but the curate, except, of course, Margaret herself. But her fingers wandered to a locket which she always wore, and which she had a trick of holding in her hand whenever she thought of her friend, whose portrait was shut up within it.

Martin turned away. He had a great mind to tell, but then he thought of his grey hairs, and how his youth was gone long ago. Lady Arden would think him presumptuous, or absurd, and if she were to laugh at him—no, he could not do it.

So he expressed his satisfaction in Lady Arden's pleasure, in a matter-of-fact sort of way, and went home to build big castles in the air, while the old rooks cawed at him, and flapped their wings solemnly, thinking, no doubt, that he had no business to be castle-building at his time of life, with the grey hairs beginning to come.

CHAPTER V.

And now the suburb began to busy itself about Miss Foster, to run about and gossip, and report that she was engaged to be married to a brother of her pupils, or a cousin, or else some relation of Lady Arden's; and that the coming home to take pupils was a mere pretence, she was only come to prepare for the great event. People called upon her, and were inquisitive; and indulged in little witticisms and sly allusions; and when they made her blush, probably with annoyance, they were satisfied. The report, or conjecture, or whatever it was must be correct.

Nevertheless, one by one a few pupils began to be seen every morning wending their way to the unpretending house, and there was no sign of any change in the condition of its inmates.

Martin Thorpe was struggling against a sudden hope. At last some one seemed to be interested about him. He knew that in reality it was but a chance, or the ghost of a chance, which he ought not to count upon at all; but it haunted him for all that, and kept close to him as his shadow.

He had seen Margaret; he had even spent an evening with her at Lady Arden's, and had sat listening to the two singing duets, and when Margaret got tired, as she very soon did, to Lady Arden playing soft pieces from the masses of Mozart and Beethoven, while Sir Reginald snored gently on a distant sofa.

As he parted with Lady Arden at the door, Martin said, 'How thin Miss Foster is;' and she snapped him for it, and told him he was always croaking; which certainly was a false accusation. Margaret had a cold, her ladyship said, and the weather was so horrible. For it was winter then, and frost had bitten the trees, and frozen the noses of the little boys as they ran about and did their best to make slides in the streets, to the discomfiture of foot passengers.

The east winds, too, were harsh and trying, but they passed away, and a warmer breath stole over the suburb. For all that, Margaret Foster had a cold again, and this time it kept her within doors.

Martin had called twice, but Miss Foster was engaged with her pupils, and he did not see her. It was rather hard upon him, but no matter. His ghost-like chance had really deepened into hope. Any day he might re-

ceive a letter which would give him a right to—to set one question at rest for ever. Any day—to-day even, by the late post, he thought as he left his lodging, and debated whether he should or should not call on Miss Foster. He decided that he would call; but as he was going again to Fernwood Mill, he thought it might be as well to leave it, and walk back by the terrace in the evening, when there would be a chance of the pupils having gone home.

And as he entered the coppice on his return, he lingered; it was always a pleasant place to him, but just now his thoughts were pleasant also, and the tints which the setting sun threw about the trees so lovingly had a double beauty for him. For he called up a figure out of the past, and placed it there wandering amongst those trees, and himself beside it. He remembered the exceeding bitterness of the days that followed that parting scene in the coppice—how he had taken refuge in sermon writing, as a man flies to opium, that he might forget for a season; and how, over those very sermons, his head had been wont to sink down suddenly, and his lips to cry out, 'I can write, and write, and preach of comfort and hope, but—God of all pity, make me feel them!'

And now—the bitterness also was far away in the past, and come what might, Martin had one great joy. He knew that Margaret loved him. Her face came before him then, as it was on that day long ago, when the sunbeams put a glory round it; and he wondered how he in his blindness could have doubted then, as he did no longer. His letter might be only another disappointment when it came; but somehow he did not think it would. Hope breathed in the very air of the coppice, and put its shadow on his face as he turned to leave it.

And when he reached the stile leading towards the town, he saw something which filled him with amazement. This was the stout doctor, on foot, and advancing quickly to meet him. Martin sat on the stile lazily, wondering what could have roused Dr. Grant to so extraordinary a proceeding.

'What a strange thing to see you so far from home on foot, doctor!' cried Martin.

Dr. Grant did not answer, but went up to him, panting, and seized his arm.

'Come down, Thorpe, I want you. I don't think poor Margaret can last through the night.'

Martin shook off the doctor's hand as if it had been a snake, and sprang from the stile.

'Good God, doctor! do you know what you are saying?'

At his tone the doctor looked up into the ashy face and trembling lips before him, and his own voice changed a little.

'Martin, Martin Thorpe, forgive me. I never thought of this; how should I? Martin, don't look at me as if I were a murderer.'

'What do you want with me?'

'Be a man, Martin. You must come to her,' said Dr. Grant, passing his arm through the curate's, and dragging him along. 'Lady Arden sent me to look for you.'

Martin asked no more questions; but the doctor went on, puffing for breath, and talking.

'She has been going for weeks, and no one knew. I never saw her,' said the doctor, clenching his fist, 'until it was too late. Not that I could have done much, but——'

'Hush!' said Martin hoarsely. The doctor obeyed, and in silence they reached the house where Margaret's pupils were never to listen to her again; in silence they went through the narrow entrance hall, and up stairs. Then the doctor paused.

'Wait here,' he said.

Martin stood still, leaning one arm on the balustrade, and seeing a thousand suns dance through myriads of trees, bright with unearthly colours, such as never were and never would be seen in Fernwood Coppice.

Then the door by which the doctor had disappeared opened, and Lady Arden stood before him.

Martin looking at her, saw that the tears were running down her cheeks, silently, unfelt, and unnoticed; but he did not move.

Lady Arden went up to him, and

clasped his arm with her two hands, till the pressure hurt him.

'Martin Thorpe, why didn't you tell me about it? Why did I never know?'

He looked at her stupidly, seeing that it was all true, yet unable to wake up, and realize it.

'Speak to me,' cried Lady Arden, still clasping his arm. 'I am so wicked, I cannot give her up.'

Martin might have asked, 'Can I, then?' but he did not.

'There is comfort,' he began; but the words went off into nothing, and his tone was wavering and uncertain. He looked from Lady Arden to the door of the room wherein the great treasure of his life was passing away from him, and he could not at that moment speak of comfort.

The doctor came back and spoke to him in a whisper.

'Martin, you may come in,' he said. 'One moment. No power on earth can save her now, but remember, any excitement will be fatal at once. Come.'

The blinds were down in Mrs Foster's house, and Martin Thorpe sat alone in his lodging.

There was a letter on his table, unopened; the letter he had been so long expecting, which was to bring him his happiness. And now, if he had any feeling respecting it, it was dread least it might contain that which he had so long hoped for.

He looked at it, and at the familiar things in the room of ten feet square; and his heart grew heavy with a weight which he scarcely understood. His thoughts were a strange confusion of that walk in the coppice with its sequel, and he was dizzy, as a man will be whose eyes have not been closed the long night through; but open with a burning, weary stare, at something which has no real existence. He drew the letter to him and opened it. He read that he must be content to wait still longer for his living, and an exclamation of relief and thankfulness passed his lips. If Margaret had lived, how would he have borne the disappointment of that sentence?

And here ended his first and last romance. Yet not so, for the shadow of the golden vision will fall along his way for ever, and tinge his life with a 'sadness that is scarcely akin to pain.' For him, Margaret's voice once heard, shall not cease to speak, and it will give to his own a graver tenderness, and a deeper pity as he looks into the faces of struggling men and weary women, for whom, perhaps, there was once a dream as bright, and a waking as sorrowful as his own: and for whom there remains a battle still harder than his, as he walks the world alone, yet not alone; with the shadow of the past behind him, and beside him, and beyond him, even to the end.

SOCIAL SKETCHES IN A COFFEE-ROOM.

THE coffee-room of a hotel at (let us say) some fashionable watering-place is like that well-known menagerie which whilom was exhibited first I believe at the 'Elephant and Castle,' and afterwards in front of the National Gallery, containing cats, bats, owls, hawks, mice, and monkeys, with many other animals equally opposed in instincts and dispositions; yet one attractive influence kept them in order and amiability—the necessity for eating and a liberal supply of the wherewithal. Such is the cause, too, which accounts for the sociable manner in which the various bipeds, now exhibiting their prowess in the breakfast line, eat, chat, and enjoy themselves, and it may be worth while to anatomize one or two specimens more minutely.

Sitting at the next table to mine is a well-dressed, important-looking individual, evidently well to do in the world; but there is something so hard, and if I may use the term, so shadowless about him, that I would rather not hob-nob with him even over a bottle of Chambertin. At school he sold his cake for marbles, played at knuckle-down and taw with skill, saved up his weekly sixpence instead of spending it in apples and toffy, lent out coppers at interest, and returned home at the holidays richer than when he went to Blenheim House, Brompton. He is now a man of facts and figures, who floors you with Adam Smith, Malthus, and the Scotch economists. The reserve in his manner is part of his stock in trade, and is assumed to impress you with his importance; while the air with which he puts you to rights on all matters statistical and financial makes you quail before his superior knowledge.

If there is anything he abhors it is a bon-mot; and he could no more exist in the ether of imagination and fancy than could an aeronaut in an atmosphere ten miles high. A playfulness of manner he regards as an attempt to draw him out of the dignity of his thoughts wherein he assumes to sit like Zeus amongst the clouds. He is full of some mysterious hints and mucndoes as to some great political secret he bears locked up in the condemned cells of his mind, which would, if divulged, hang the first minister of the crown and revolutionize Europe. If, in the innocence of your heart, you believe in such a secret, and attempt to become the Œdipus in the matter, he increases his air of lofty superiority, and changes the subject in a manner so brusque, that you fancy you have mortally offended him. He darkly hints that there is an article about to appear in the 'Quarterly' from his pen, and that the usual honorarium for such contributions will in his case be trebled. Now, be it known, that he never in his life wrote a leader more ambitious than one or two for the 'Thanet Thunderer,' which the obliging editor of that journal inserted upon the understanding that a hundred copies or so would be taken by the writer. Nevertheless, his habit of reticence, his airs of superiority, his bank-parlour looking head, bald, shining, and sloping, but especially a pamphlet upon the currency, which, by the aid of scissors, paste, and blue books he compiled, procured him a good berth, and he is now a government employé, with a salary of 1,200*l.* per annum. Steady, never-ceasing pretensions, and the development of one faculty of the mind, even though to the detriment of the others, will often be a better introduction in life than far other nobler attributes, if versatile and totally dissimilar.

As an example of this, we have only to glance at that weatherbeaten old man, leaning with his elbow on the back of his chair, watching the spars of a vessel which are just visible in the offing. He is the captain of that ship, and has just returned from taking deep-sea soundings in the South Pacific, charting the coral reefs, and otherwise serving the Government. The Admiralty feeds him with compliments, and

quotes him as an authority upon all those scientific subjects to which he has devoted his life, but at the same time promotes the younger sons of noblemen over his head, although for more than thirty years he has been separated, except at long and uncertain intervals, from kith and kin, gauging the valleys of the deep, and adding largely to the treasury of human knowledge. And wherefore this neglect? Simply because he has the sensibilities of a gentleman, and is not backed by political interest, and is a retiring, high-spirited old man, disdaining to truckle to any one, or to appeal *ad misericordiam* at any human tribunal; for the soul which has so often been face to face with Nature in her most solemn moods, is armed with an honest pride—the strength of which few can guess—which braces it against neglect, and imparts to it an unflinching fortitude to bear, to forbear, and to suffer. 'Any merits I may possess are known and recorded, and if upon these grounds I receive no tangible recognition of my long services, then I will again go to sea, and lock up all complaints in my heart.' Such is the reflection of the veteran commander. But the commissioner—he holds his appointment from the Board of Tape—argues thus: 'I am not a man of learning, but will assume a love of it; and having a good memory, I will assail people's opinion with facts and figures, which at the moment presents some difficulty in answering, for even cleverer people than I seldom have dates at their fingers' ends. This will speedily procure me a reputation amongst a certain set, whose good opinion is of the utmost value. I will fawn, feign, and flatter in the proper quarter, and I will be especially civil to my wife's brother, who possesses some considerable parliamentary influence; I will ask over and over again, undeterred by false delicacy or sentiment, for a particular berth far more lucrative than the one I at present hold, and I shall ultimately succeed in obtaining it.'

The one man will, in all probability, shape his course for some 'ultimate dim Thule,' and will perhaps, ætat. fifty-two, be speared by the Feejee Islanders; while the other will lay down his '42 port, harden his heart towards God and man, drink Vichy water for gout, and die in his comfortable home, with a wife and family around him, ætat. seventy-eight. But of the heaven which during our lives dwells in the souls of all of us, which of those two men had the larger share?

How dissimilar in every respect from the commissioner—differing as much as pinchbeck from gold—is my good friend Damon, who is reading some newspaper at the other end of the room, probably wincing at the literal errors (which the printers' devils *will* make) in one of his own admirable leading articles in, let us say, the 'Morning Budget.' He, too, has a business-like head, with a slight paucity of cuticle-covering on the crown; but, fortunately, *his* baldness is all outside. He is one of the soundest political thinkers of the day, and loves contemporary history and social economy with a devotion worthy of the subjects; but with all his erudition and memory, he cracks a joke as if it were a sweet nut, tells a humorous story better than most men, and enjoys with an immensity of good nature my pertinacity in insisting that he once left Strasbourg in disgust, because he was unable to obtain sound political information out of the chambermaids. Unlike the other pretentious individual, he hates display of all kinds, and rather hides his light than burns it with the bull's-eye of egotism and conceit. He knows full well, the more our intellectual vision is extended by research, study, and thought, the more capable we are of perceiving the vast regions, which as yet we may not hope to penetrate, stretching far away into the illimitable, and holds that the most sublime speech of modern times is that ever to be quoted one of Newton, when he said, in answer to some flattering remark, that he was only picking up pebbles on the shore of the great ocean of truth.

Next to the commissioner, at a table covered with the débris of a

very substantial repast, laughing with a companion, is a young, handsome, dare-devil fellow, radiant with health and insolent with happiness. His friend is a lanky, pale-faced young gentleman, with a small waist, a long, pointed nose, and hands like the paws of a greyhound, the pretty filbert nails of which he is for ever trimming. The contrast which he presents to his robust companion is increased by the fact that he looks as grave and sententious as the celebrated canine Rhadamanthus in Landseer's picture. He eats his ham and eggs as if he were a mourner at their burial in his hypergastric crypt, and perpetrates a pun or tells a funny anecdote in so sad and lugubrious a manner, that those who watch his countenance without hearing his remarks fancy he is describing some awful event. He never by any chance laughs or even smiles, but the quiet, clever manner in which he draws out his more volatile companion, suggests a very large share of mischief and humour. There is a story going the round of the hotel to the effect that all the ladies' boots, which had been placed at their bedroom doors, were found in the morning each containing a bouquet of flowers; and it was observed that the smallest and prettiest boots contained the choicest sprigs. I should make a shrewd guess that the perpetrator thereof was my ruddy young friend, and the joke is about the only practical joke I could forgive, for there was a something not inelegant in the offering, and just a sufficient amount of impudence in the act to give it its salt. The near neighbourhood of two such specimens of the genus homo was certainly most unfortunate for the commissioner; and as there was no table disengaged to which he could adjourn, he was obliged to bear the disagreeable contiguity with what grace he could spare. Already there existed between these three that sort of antagonism which habitués of the same coffee-room often experience, even when entire strangers to each other. At first the young gentleman tried to get a 'rise' out of the man of figures by making execrable puns (such as declaring that the bouquets in the ladies' boots were an offering to their understandings), and letting them off, cracker-like, at his recondite head.

From the respect due to my reader, I should be extremely sorry to give him more than the above specimen of the manner in which the two friends twisted and turned the English language into tropes and figures which might 'rile' their adversary; but it was all of no use, and for this excellent reason, a pun to the commissioner was no pun at all; for only seeing one meaning, and being intensely literal, they were like epigrams with the point omitted, and fell at his feet as harmless as puff-darts on the hide of a rhinoceros. While on this subject, I must say that a pun, unless it falls into its place naturally, or shoots like a bright crystal spontaneously from the subject, ought by all honest men to be regarded as a sort of skeleton key by which the burglar enters the arcanum of intelligence to corrupt, to steal, and to destroy. Johnson's well-known dictum, that a punster would pick a pocket, is perhaps the best alliterative thing ever said upon the subject; but Johnson himself punned, and very badly too. He could always find praise for puns in the dead languages, possibly to show his knowledge of them—such as his allusions to Burke's classical bon-mot upon Wilkes' being carried on the shoulders of the mob:—

'—— numerisque fertur
Lege solutis.'

Athenæus describes a certain Pompeianus as a 'word-catcher,' but word-twister would be more to the purpose, though certainly you must first catch your word. A good or bad pun rising from the sparkle of conversation is one thing, but the attempt to found what I suppose would be by them called a Punic school, whereof punsters are the high-priests and masters, is a peculiar feature in English literature, to say the least of it. In the first place, nothing is so easy as a play upon words, for the English language, owing to its derivatives com-

ing from so many sources, teems with syllables of a similar sound with dissimilar meanings. Besides which, the generality of punning is an impertinence. It is very often an attempt on the part of Ignorance, ill at ease with himself and with others, to change the current of conversation from a subject about which he knows nothing into a channel narrow and shallow, wherein he is at home. I have known the authors of broad, and even coarse, burlesques term themselves littérateurs, and have seen them offended if, at some feast of letters, they have been provided with third-rate places. The truth is, they mistake the light of wordy fireworks for the steady light of constructive ability, and at some modern gathering of Deipnosophists would place a Macaulay or Prescott at the side-table and elect to the chair the author of the last successful extravaganza. Fairy pieces, produced by a union of elegant fancy, wit, music, and something very nearly akin to lyric poetry, are welcome to every one; and even burlesques, founded upon ballets, nursery tales, or melodramas are admissible; but I cannot help believing that turning the higher order of dramas into doggrel and puns is a degrading use of our pens and of our time. I would symbolize the authors of such travesties as half-witted fellows following in the wake of true genius, with a cracked lantern in their hands, making grimaces, imitating any peculiarities in his gait, and throwing stones at him.

'Horrid propensity, making all sense a lie;
Punsters and pickpockets are of a clan
Thus Johnson the burly, called Johnson the surly,
A thief; for he punn'd, did that terrible man'

'Oh, a rascally pun
Is the natural son
Of a bad sort of fun,
Who presumeth to sit
At the table with wit—
A double-edged tool,
Most used by a fool—
A double pretence
To humour and sense;
But sense it divides,
And humour it hides.'

'Send him to Jericho, whether he will or no;
Give him a whipping as rogue or a rake;
Cast round him manacles, and let the man he calls
Bind him with—oh, there's a pun by mistake!'

Certainly the vagaries of fortune are endless. We have just called the reader's attention to a man who considers it *infra dig.* to indulge in anything that approaches a laugh, and sitting in the same room with him is an individual who owes all his success in life to nature having placed a permanent smile upon his face. At school, it is true, he got many a licking from the belief of the masters that he was laughing at them; but by degrees they discovered that the poor fellow was affected by a chronic simper. When thrashed, he smiled; when he was sent to the bottom of the class he smiled; when he had a tooth drawn he smiled so sweetly that the dentist pulled out four; when he was engaged in a pitched battle with some other boy he still smiled, than which nothing could be more provoking, and involved him in an additional drubbing after he had cried 'pax.'

'I'll pax you, you young dog,' cries big bully, and at him again.

When he went home for the holidays, his respected mother died, and he smiled so pleasantly at her funeral that even the undertakers were scandalized. When, at length, he entered the world on his own account, fortune returned his smile. His father made him a grocer, and his simper got him a plum. The maid-servants flocked to his shop, he was 'such a good-tempered young man, always a smile and a kind word for everybody;' and so his first success in life began. After being in the grocery line for some time, he took out a licence, and, by an easy transition of trades, he became a wine merchant; and the smile with which he poured you out a glass of sherry insured his success in this venture also. In due course, he asked a young lady to marry him, and though she refused at first, he smiled so blandly that she afterwards recanted, and became the wife of his bosom, and of his smile. Having made a little money, he purchased houses, and smiled tenants into them, and enlarged his capital, and employed the best chemists, who worked in vineyards in the City, to produce wines with the captivating titles of 'a fine fruity wine,' 'a silky

ditto,' 'an elegant example of the vintage '42,' 'a rough and ready wine,' *et hoc genus omne*, all of which the said chemist or chemists produced.

There sits our friend, smiling at the remains of his breakfast, at the waiter when he passes, at his own boots, and at everybody and at everything. He has retired from business some years, and comes to the sea-side every season to simper with the same identical look with which he was born, and which, like the light of the vestal virgins, is never to be extinguished. I suppose the risible muscles, having become rigid, they would have to be cut, like a horse for string-halt, before that indelible grin could ever be eradicated.

Near this curious individual, his breakfast-table covered with a heterogeneous mélange of edibles, is a wealthy, fashionable, titled roué, who looks as if he had been lately exhumed, owing to his unhealthy and cadaverous appearance. He has so thoroughly exhausted mind and body by dissipation that gluttony is the only vigorous vice he has been able to retain for the solace of his premature old age. Depraved, heartless, and licentious, he is, nevertheless, a man of many accomplishments, and is well versed in the current literature of Europe, which he reads in several of its languages. He is an excellent classic, too; and had he lived in the days of Nero would most likely have been a rival and successor to Petronius Arbiter; only had he written his autobiography in Greek, I do not believe even the 'spirited publisher' of our day (whose idea of 'standard' literature has led to the transfusion of so many peculiar classics into the vernacular) would have found a translator courageous enough to meddle with the offal. He would be witty and amusing if not shamelessly indelicate, and his habit of swearing at the servants, while giving the most ordinary orders, is an outrage upon the whole room. He turns all the i's and e's of his expletives into a's, or double a's, so there is quite a breadth and richness about his absolute style and imperative commands.

Yet this man—certainly the most loathsome specimen of a human wreck I ever knew; and if I dared to hint at the depth of *his* vices and excesses the reader would agree with me—with sufficient luminosity about him to suggest the sparkle that often accompanies rottenness—this man is the centre of a certain clique of well-born gentlemen, and amongst them he is regarded as the leader of *ton*, and an authority upon most matters of taste. Possibly this arises from the fact of his being not only a gourmand, but a consummate gourmet; and if you pride yourself upon the dinner you have ordered, and ask his opinion of the menu, you will soon find how profoundly ignorant you are as a gastronomic purveyor. He is not only thoroughly acquainted with every *récherché* dish that continental artists have produced, but in most cases he can tell you how to make them; though there are some he declares so exceedingly delicate that they are not producible in our smoky climate, and, like carmine, lose a portion of their beauty if not prepared in a rarefied and pure air. He has an intimate knowledge of feasting amongst the ancients, and would learnedly criticise the pure distinctions between the Athenian, Lacedæmonian, Cretan, Persian, Egyptian, and Thracian banquets, and delights in descanting upon the various properties of the Erbulan, the Formian, the Lesbian, the Mamertian, the Sabine, the Marcotic, and a hundred different sorts of drinks amongst the heathens; while especially he would discuss the difference between the Falernian, fit for men, and the 'Opernian Falernian,' fit for gods. If you gave him caviare, he would exclaim, 'This is fine caviare, the nearest approach to the "garum peperatum," which Pliny calls "an exquisite liquor," and Seneca precious "sames."' At the club he would tell you which especial oyster-bed those gentle bivalves came from, and would quote the Roman tyrant, as knowing by his exquisite taste whether the dainties were bred at Circei or in the beds of Rutupiæ. He always travels with his own cook, and his mornings are spent in holding a cabinet council with his cuisinier as

to some plât requiring the genius of invention and the skill of practical art. There is, however, one gold thread running through the dark texture of this man's nature, one bright spot in his shameless life, which, like the vital principle in the grain of Egyptian wheat that has lain buried for a thousand years, may keep, in the dim future, that dark soul from utterly perishing—he has loved fondly, devotedly, and he is faithful to memory. In his chambers in Piccadilly—where many an orgie, rivalling the days of Domitian, had been enacted—is the model of a beautiful hand; but the glass case which covers it is opaque; and there hangs a picture against his wall of a woman lovely as Venus; but a green curtain conceals it, which is never withdrawn.

It is pleasant to turn from this Trimalchio, who is finishing his breakfast off snipes' kidneys and dry curaçoa, to that very strange-looking individual, whom one would pronounce to be a dapper groom in a good place. He is exactly like the pictures of Mr. Punch, and the stoop in his shoulders has been acquired by a peculiar habit of constantly regarding the Roman outline of his nose with a glance at once expressive of tenderness and respect. Every portion of his personal appearance cries 'stables,' and upon making his acquaintance you find he is a sort of peripatetic racing calendar, for he knows the name of every horse that ha been a winner at the principal races for the last twenty years. The buttons of his waistcoat are gold horseshoes. The pin in his cravat is a highly-chased horse's head. The ring on his finger is made from the hair of the tail of a favourite filly. He carries a heavy riding-whip in his hand, and his trousers are strapped tight down, as if he were ready at any minute for a cross-country ride or a brush with the harriers. When he opens his mouth there is no longer any doubt as to the high standing of his profession. 'Bet you six to two he is [illegible] kneed.' 'By Jove! What a finer Bucephalus is, but I have [illegible] doubts about his rider.' 'Bet you even the cob don't fetch thirty pounds at Tattersall's.' 'Done in ponies.' Such were the fragments of conversation going on between him and his friends, while every now and then he would whip out of his breast-pocket a little memorandum-book and inscribe therein certain hieroglyphics, which would most likely be translated into losses or gains of many thousands the next Derby Day. In no country in the world except England could such a character be found.

The same peculiarity of mind which has made that individual a gentleman jockey, but resulting in far different effects, has moulded that fresh-coloured, hale old man, standing with his back to the fire, into a devotee at the shrine of nature, and he is what is termed a naturalist. His life has been spent in watching the habits of animals lowly in the scale of existence, and he has thus acquired, perhaps, the most truly valuable gift to man—the faculty and habit of loving—loving in its extended meaning—the minima and maxima; and his ear, accustomed to the inner whisperings of nature, knows where to find many a magic melody hidden from others. He turns his research and knowledge into serviceable channels, too, for he has established evening classes for the poor at the Institute at B——, and gives them a popular idea of the workings of nature, illustrating his meaning by amusing and curious facts. I remember, at one of his lectures to a very humble auditory, when explaining the uses and ultimate ends of geology, a burly fellow started up and exclaimed:—

'Well, I am darned if I think breaking up stones on the highway a lively sort of fun any how.'

To which the veteran lecturer replied—

'Yes, my friend, you would if you remember that these same stones contain the alphabet of creation.'

Whether the interlocutor understood this I cannot say, but the earnest tone with which it was uttered brought conviction, and there was a hearty burst of 'Hear, hear,' amongst the 'roughs' generally.



THE ARMSTRONG GUN AND SOME OF ITS RIVALS.

ON the 1st of May, eleven years ago, our eyes beheld a vast and novel building, which had been suddenly erected in one of our parks. This magnificent structure was used for the exhibition of works of art from all parts of the world. It was inside that glass house that thousands of English country folks for the first time beheld a real live Chinese, or rubbed shoulders in one day with men from the extreme quarters of the globe.

One of the principal advantages which it was expected would result from this assemblage of nations was, that war, in every sense, would be done away with, and that there would simply be in the future a rivalry in works of art and peace.

So thoroughly were a large majority of even thinking people impressed with this belief, that soldiers were almost looked upon as an unnecessary incumbrance and expense, whom it was scarcely worth while to feed, clothe, and pay, merely for the purpose of showing them to foreign visitors, whose own good sense would teach them the absurdity of ever going to war.

England was not a military nation; she ought not to maintain a large standing army; and hence cultivation of art and maintenance of peace must be her real mission.

Since that period we have passed through a war at the Cape of Good Hope, in Persia, the Crimea, India, China, and lately we were on the verge of a contest with America. For more than forty years we have had no such severe and bloody combats as those which lately occurred in the Crimea and India.

At the present time the greatest attention is being given to military matters. We have a large volunteer force; and hundreds of minds are entirely devoted to improving weapons which are solely intended for the destruction of human life. Even the fair daughters of Eve now look with a smile on the pretty neat-looking cannon used by the artillery, and seem to approve of it, and admire it, as though this same death-dealing instrument were not intended to rend limbs from bodies, and to cause wives to be without husbands, children without fathers, and maidens without lovers.

Men, too, whose appearance is peaceful, are wrangling amongst themselves, and contending jealously as to who is the fortunate man who has invented the instrument which is the most rapidly to destroy life. And these conditions are perfected only eleven years after that Great Exhibition which was to be the inauguration of peace to all nations.

The whole nation is aware that quite lately both honour and wealth have been conferred upon one individual who is supposed to have invented a weapon far more deadly in its effects than any of its predecessors; and so much secrecy was at first maintained in connection with the construction, form, and peculiarities of this weapon, that public curiosity became much excited, and the smallest scrap of information was eagerly grasped at. Now, however, when the gun can be seen wherever there is an artillery-mounted battery; when, also, visitors are admitted to view the various processes of construction; and when, in public meetings and public papers, the merits and demerits of the Armstrong gun are freely discussed, curiosity is in a measure done away with. Yet there still remains considerable interest amongst all classes to know all that can be known about this weapon, which is to gain or lose us our future supremacy in war; for upon the merits or defects of this gun will the success or failure of our future combats most certainly depend.

Before the introduction into the service of the Armstrong guns, the cannon used, both by the artillery and the navy, were 'smooth bore,' and muzzle loading. That is to say, the interior of the gun was circular, and like a common iron tube. The

shot to be fired from this was placed in the muzzle of the gun, and was pushed by a rammer down to the lower part of the bore, the powder, of course, having been rammed down previously. To enable the iron ball to be pressed down the bore of the gun it was necessary that the former should be rather smaller than the latter. This necessity was a great defect in the gun, for two reasons:—First, because some of the gas generated by the explosion of the gunpowder must escape through the space left between the ball and the interior of the bore; and hence a certain amount of impelling force would necessarily be lost: and, secondly, the direction of the ball itself was very uncertain, because its striking either on the upper or lower part of the bore just before leaving the gun would produce a considerable variation in its direction, especially at long distances. Hence, although some of the old smooth-bore guns could drive a shot far beyond a mile, still there was a very remote chance of hitting a small object at such a distance.

In addition to the gun (properly so called) there was another kind of cannon used in the service called a howitzer. The howitzer was a gun with a very large bore, and intended to throw hollow shot, which, when filled with powder, are termed shells. It was discharged by means of a small quantity of powder compared to that constituting a charge for a common gun. One of the great advantages of this weapon was, that it would cause a hollow shot to hop along the ground in a kind of 'duck and drake' style, whilst the shell was made to burst at the right moment by means of a fuse.

Both the gun and howitzer were of various dimensions, the smallest gun being a three-pounder, whilst the largest was a sixty-eight. In the more modern description of smooth-bore guns, the breech or rear of the gun was made considerably thicker and stronger than the muzzle. This alteration enabled the guns to stand a much heavier charge of powder, and hence a longer range was obtained; but with this exception, and a few alterations in the minor details, the gun used by the services in 1851 was essentially the same in principle as that used in 1651.

It had long been known that the accuracy and length of range of small arms could be much increased by adopting the rifling principle. This was to do away, in a great measure, with the difference in size between the bullet and the bore of the gun, and to have grooves twisting in the latter, and a belt on the former, so as to insure the bullets having a twisting motion after they left the barrel. When, however, this principle was endeavoured to be applied to large guns, it was found to fail; for there was the difficulty of forcing the large shot down the bore of the piece. The expense of a large lead projectile was also very great; and the weight of the ball being so much more than that of the iron projectile, the shock to the gun on discharge was also greater; and hence guns, as then constructed, were found to burst. Repeated failures, and the expense attending experiments, at length deterred all but a few individuals from continuing their endeavours to produce an efficient rifled cannon.

Amongst the first which were experimented upon in England were two rifled breech-loading guns, invented by foreigners. So much difficulty having been found in attempting to force a ball down the bore of a rifled cannon, it was suggested to adopt the earliest method of loading the gun, viz., at the rear, and then, by some mechanical arrangement, to render the breech of the gun (in which the powder and ball had been placed) able to withstand the shock of the discharge.

The two rifled guns experimented upon in 1850 at Shoeburyness were —one the invention of Major Cavilli, a Sardinian artillery officer, and the other that of a Swedish nobleman, named Wahrendorff. Both these guns were of iron, breech-loading, and two-grooved. The Cavilli gun burst after a few rounds had been fired; but the other stood repeated discharges. No great advantage, either in range or accuracy, was however obtained, unless the shot

was fired when the gun was considerably elevated.

Mr. Lancaster then proposed an original method of rifling. This was to do away with grooves, and to have the bore of the gun of an elliptical form, and so constructed that the ellipse should turn round in the barrel. The shot for this gun was also elliptical at its base, but in form somewhat like a pear. The rotary motion was then given to the shot by means of its turning round as it passed out of the bore of the gun.

A host of other competitors were now in the field, amongst whom were Messrs. Jeffry, Britten, Whitworth, Haddon, and Armstrong; and later, Commander Scott, R.N., and Mr. Thomas.

Various systems were proposed by each of these gentlemen, and which may be described under the four following heads:—

1st. The concentric.

2nd. The centreing against the bore.

3rd. The expansion.

4th. The compression.

The first system mentioned—viz., the concentric—is that proposed by Commander Scott, and consists of three grooves, which have a peculiar curve on the shoulders, so as to form three rails upon which the shot may glide out without strain. One of the advantages of this system is, that the centre of the shot will always remain in the centre of the bore; and iron shot are fired from iron guns.

The second method—viz., the centreing against the bore—is that proposed by Mr. Lancaster, and which has already been described.

The expansion system is somewhat similar to that which is adopted in the Minie bullet—that is, a ball which, in its ordinary condition, would pass easily up or down the bore of a gun, has at the lower part a sort of cup, which expands when the force of the powder acts upon it, and hence fits tightly into the bore and grooves of the gun. The greatest range that has yet been obtained with any gun was with one which threw a projectile constructed on this principle—Mr. Thomas having with his gun, constructed by the Mersey Company, thrown a shot weighing 175 lbs. a distance of more than twelve hundred yards beyond five miles.

The Whitworth cannon is a breech loader, and rifled, the three-pounder having, when completed, a hexagonal bore. The pitch of the rifling is equal to one turn in five feet. The projectile exactly fits the bore of the piece, and has, on the greater portion of its length, spiral hexagonal faces. It is about three and a half diameters in length—that is, it is three and a half times as long as it is broad. Although loaded at the breech, the Whitworth cannon may also be loaded at the muzzle, because the shot is not larger than the bore of the gun. Some of these cannon have been fired two thousand times, and were afterwards found to be in good order.

The range is quite equal to that of the Armstrong, and the accuracy not less so.

Compression is the system adopted by Sir W. Armstrong—that is, the shot is compressed in its passage through the bore of the gun: hence at first the shot is slighter more in diameter than is the bore. The method of rifling is that termed the fine-grooved, there being a very large number of grooves in the interior of the gun, seventy-six being used in the 100-pounder. The shape of these grooves is as represented in the following diagram:—



The Armstrong gun is a breech-loader, the method adopted being as follows:—The tube can be seen through from end to end until the 'breech' or 'vent-piece' is dropped into its position. This vent-piece contains the vent, and is pressed firmly into its place by means of a powerful hollow screw. This screw, upon being jammed home by the aid of a lever handle, causes the vent-piece to effectually close the bore of the gun. The charge of powder, and the shot or shell, are inserted

through the breech screw, and placed in their proper position; the vent-piece is then inserted, and pressed home.

In consequence of the shot being rather larger than the bore, the gun cannot be loaded at the muzzle.

The Armstrong gun is a 'built-up' gun, as it is termed; that is, it is formed of several pieces which are firmly fastened together. The rear part of the gun, termed the breech-piece, is made of cast steel, whilst the remaining portions are formed by spirals of wrought iron. These various parts are united so as to form a barrel, a steam hammer and a powerful 'press' being the agents employed.

When the various portions of the Armstrong gun are joined together, it is bored, rifled, and browned, there being upwards of twenty-five processes to be gone through before the weapon is completely finished.

One of the most interesting processes connected with the manufacture of the gun, is that termed the 'shrinking;' that is, one of the coils of wrought iron is shrunk over another. To accomplish this, the larger coil is bored to the correct size, and is then heated, either by means of a fire built up inside it, or in a furnace. When sufficiently heated, it is raised until immediately over the coil round which it is to be shrunk, and which is fixed in an upright position for this operation. The large red-hot coil is slowly lowered and dropped over the smaller, which is then played upon by a jet of water to prevent it from expanding.

When the larger coil is heated, it passes over the other very easily, but as it cools it contracts, 'shrinks,' and fits tightly on to the inner coil.

The Armstrong factory at Woolwich is a large, long building, near which are several smaller rooms where the machinery employed is at work. On first entering the establishment, a number of large, long masses of metal may be seen, each of which is slowly rotating on its axis. These are Armstrong guns of various sizes, the exterior of which is being scraped and rounded by means of the hardest steel points and instruments. It appears as though the guns were actually part of the machinery and of no weight, so easily do they turn; yet several of them are many tons in weight. In another part of the establishment men are at work with files and scrapers, finishing off that which the machine has left incomplete.

At the back of this large workshop is an open shed, under which are several furnaces where the shrinking is accomplished. Here an unusual warmth may be felt by the visitor as he passes a mass of bluish-looking iron, which is, in reality, nearly red hot, and in avoiding which he may probably find himself unpleasantly close to a furnace, or to another mass of heated metal; for these are the various coils cooling before proceeding further in their career. In a building beyond that last mentioned, the boring out of the coils and the rifling are performed. During the rifling, which is a very pretty operation, the gun itself remains fixed; whilst the instrument used for boring turns slowly round, a stream of water flows through the gun immediately the rifling instrument comes out. When the gun is having its coils bored, it turns round the same as before mentioned, whilst the boring instrument remains fixed.

When the gun is browned and polished it looks a beautiful piece of workmanship, and seems in its details as far superior to an old gun as a chronometer is to a Sam Slick clock.

The projectile which is fired from this gun is elongated, and composed of several pieces, and is very much in shape like a wine bottle with the neck off. It is covered with a coating of lead, which is hardened by a mixture with another metal. When finished, the shot is slightly larger than the bore of the gun, out of which it has, therefore, to force its way. During its passage along the bore of the gun, the lead coating is therefore forced into the grooves, and the shot takes the rifling.

With the old muzzle-loaders, the powder was first placed in the bore of the gun and rammed down, after which the shot was inserted; but with the breech-loaders the shot is

placed in first, and the powder afterwards.

Sir W. Armstrong proposed his breech-loading gun in the year 1854, and shortly after experiments were tried with it at Shoeburyness, all of which proved the gun to be superior to any that had previously been tried. After a few rounds had been fired, for the purpose of obtaining the range of the gun, nearly a dozen shot were fired, all of which struck a small target at a distance of fifteen hundred yards, and the mean variation from a central line was less than one foot. At the same distance the shot were found either to pass entirely, or nearly, through a block of wood three feet in thickness. The gun was fired more than a thousand times, and yet received no important damage.

To the uninitiated it may appear singular, that although the range of the Armstrong is so very great, still the velocity with which the shot travels is never so great as is that of a round ball when it first leaves the gun. This is in consequence of the weight of the shot and the small charge of powder used. When, however, each shot is about a mile from the muzzle of the gun, then the velocity of the Armstrong would be the greater, because it would scarcely have had its rate at all decreased by the resistance of the air, whereas the round ball would have been retarded considerably.

By the aid of electricity, the velocity of a cannon ball can be now accurately ascertained, and it is found to vary from about 1,000 to about 1,600 feet per second.

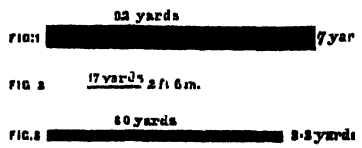
We have now seen of what the Armstrong gun consists, and also its principle, and we will first refer to the advantages of this weapon, and then briefly consider the objections which have been brought against it.

The Armstrong gun is much lighter than the old field pieces; that is, an Armstrong 12-pounder weighs much less than an old 12-pounder field piece, and so on; a rifled cannon on this principle being, therefore, much more easily transported in the field. The quantity of ammunition required is also less, and therefore a larger number of rounds may be carried with the gun, supposing the means of transport to be equal.

There is but one projectile used, and thus confusion is avoided, whilst this one may be converted into a shell, or employed as grape when required.

The accuracy of range is vastly increased as will be seen by the following sketches.

If an old 18-pounder gun were fired at an object which was distant 800 yards, there was just an even chance that the ball fell somewhere within a rectangle which was 92 yards long, by 7 yards wide. (See Fig. 1.) But if an Armstrong 12-pounder were fired at the same range there was just an even chance that it fell within a rectangle only 17 yards long by 2 feet 6 inches wide. (See Fig. 2.) When fired at an object 3,000 yards distant, the shot from the Armstrong would fall within a rectangle similar to that shown by Fig 3, which, it will be seen, is smaller than the rectangle formed by an old 18-pounder at 800 yards.



It is scarcely necessary to point out, even to the most unmilitary reader, the immense advantage derived from this increase in accuracy, more particularly when the object to be attacked is stationary; hence for breaching walls and attacking towns, the Armstrong gun is immeasurably superior to the old weapon.

The length of range is also greater, an object even at 4,000 yards being within striking distance of an Armstrong cannon; whereas an old gun could scarcely range so far under the most favourable circumstances, and the probabilities of hitting an object at that distance would be very remote.

Here, then, we have a gun which seems to possess exactly those qualities which are requisite in a

national weapon. We have lightness, small consumption of ammunition, great destructive power, accuracy, and length of range. Taking all these facts into consideration—and they were most severely tested before the gun was adopted into the service—we may fairly ask what more could be required, and what can there be to find fault with?

We will now examine the objections which have been brought against the gun, and we shall then perceive that some people at least seem to think that the Armstrong gun is not all that is to be desired.

In the first place, no objections are brought against the lightness of these guns, or against the small quantity of ammunition required for them. The fact of only one projectile being requisite is a well-known advantage; and no attempt is made to deny both the length and accuracy of the range. But (these little buts!) it is urged that on real service no great advantage is derived from this minute accuracy, because to obtain it the actual distance of your target must be known, and this can only be guessed. In the heat of action, also, it would be almost impossible to get men to pay minute attention to the adjustment of vernicrs. To obtain such results as those mentioned above, it is necessary that the gun should stand on a firm and level platform, and then one or two shots would have to be fired, under exactly similar conditions, before the range could be accurately known; and in the field this similarity of condition would be impossible owing to the irregularities of the ground.

Thus one of the undeniable advantages of the Armstrong gun is in a measure depreciated, for it could only show these fully when everything was favourable—a condition not likely to happen on actual service.

Another, and a much more serious objection is, that it appears that the vent-pieces have been known to be blown away during practice. Such a disaster of course renders the gun for the time being, unserviceable; but as a remedy for this, two vent-pieces are supplied to each gun, so that if one be blown away the other may be at once used. If, however, *both* should be blown away, then the gun is useless until a third is procured.

Another objection seems to be that in consequence of the shot having to be forced out through a bore which is of a less diameter than the shot, there is a tremendous strain upon the gun, and that a separation of the coils, therefore, occasionally happens during proof, and that the gun must any way be a short-lived one owing to its fearful wear and tear.

Again, it is said that the shot being covered with a lead coating, this latter is likely to strip off, and thus the range of the shot is at once checked, its direction altered, and the lead fragments of the shell or shot would fall upon friends instead of enemies. Shells too, in spite of all precautions, will now and then burst inside the gun; and should one do so in an Armstrong gun, the grooves would be so much damaged that the piece would be for a time unserviceable.

There also seems to be a suspicion that when the Armstrong gun is fired with great rapidity there will be an expansion of the various parts in consequence of the gun becoming heated, and hence the whole of it will not remain in gear.

One or two minor faults are also found with this weapon.

It could not be used for firing molten iron in shells, as the heat of the iron would cause the shell to expand. It could not be employed for ricochet fire, as the rebound of the shot would not be true. The great object too, especially in naval warfare, is to knock a large hole in a ship, and the Armstrong projectiles are not capable of doing this, as they are of far less diameter than the common round shot, the 100-pounder being only 7 inches in diameter, and the 40-pounder about 4·7 inches, or a little more than the old 12-pounder smooth bore. For comparatively short ranges the trajectory of the Armstrong is not so flat as that of a smooth bore; that is, the shot travels in a more curved

manner. This arises from the fact that the shot of the Armstrong being heavier, and the charge of powder much less, its velocity at short ranges is less, and hence a greater elevation must be given to the gun. Thus the shot of the Armstrong might pass over the heads of a body of men, if their distance had been badly estimated, whereas, under a similar error, a shot from an old 32-pounder would strike them.

Here is a goodly list of accusations to bring against this widely-known gun. At a first glance it seems to possess all those qualities which are requisite in a national weapon; but when we hear all these charges brought against it, it appears really to be a most dangerous, useless, and inefficient gun. These two conclusions are very much those to which various individuals have been led, some announcing the gun as 'perfect,' others declaring it to be a mere 'Brummagem.' Each person appears to have been capable of perceiving but one side of the question, and unwilling to acknowledge that any truth rested on the side of his opponent. An impartial inquirer, however, may examine the matter from both sides, and may probably arrive at as truthful a conclusion as would one more deeply or personally interested.

The advantages of the Armstrong gun as regards accuracy and length of range are undeniable. Its lightness, and the comparatively small amount of ammunition expended by it, are also qualities which must give this weapon the preference over the old cannon, and so far there is no room for cavil or doubt. But now let us test the real value of the objections.

First, it is urged that the great accuracy of the gun is of no use in service, because it could not always stand on a platform. But this argument fails to be of any weight when the gun does stand on a platform, as would be the case in the attack and defence of a fortress, and also for coast defence; besides which, in the old guns there was also this source of error in addition to that of irregularity in the flight of the projectile. It might with equal justice be urged that the Enfield or Whitworth rifle was little better than old Brown Bess, because owing to the rifleman being excited and, therefore, somewhat unsteady in action, and also in consequence of the wind causing his projectile to diverge, an accurate weapon was no better than one that was untrue. The skill of the gunner would in a measure be called into play to so place his gun, that it should stand as firm, and as level in the field, as though on a platform. The distance of the mark aimed at would also be very correctly known in a siege, and also were the object fired at a ship. To judge distance accurately is one of the subjects in which an artillery officer should be a proficient, and thus the objection is not a serious one.

That some vent-pieces have been blown away is a fact. But whether these accidents were entirely due to the defect of the gun is a very doubtful question. If the breech screw is not tightly screwed up an accident will happen; but even granting that sometimes such a case may occur, another breech-piece can be substituted. In the old field-pieces the spunge and rammer, as well as a gunner's arms, were sometimes blown away; and this is a result which may happen with all muzzle-loaders, so that the defect in the Armstrong breech-piece is not fatal to the gun, even if there really be a serious defect, which is not a certainty. Still it must be admitted that this is a question which demands the most searching investigation; for if it be shown that even with every precaution a breech-piece is still liable to be blown away, no time should be lost in supplying a remedy for this defect in the weapon.

That the gun from the principle of its construction, must be short-lived, is scarcely borne out by the fact, that at Shoeburyness an Armstrong gun was fired over 1,000 times, and was then as serviceable as on the first discharge.

The statement that some of the lead-covered shot sometimes 'strip' appears also to have a foundation in

fact; but because one or two have done so, the whole gun and projectile ought not, therefore, to be widely condemned.

The remaining objections are comparatively trifling, and merely serve to show that although we may have a very wonderful weapon, the lightness, range, and accuracy of which is almost unrivalled, still we have not as yet an entirely perfect gun, and it is more than probable that we never shall have one without some defects. We may, however, congratulate ourselves on possessing an arm which is undoubtedly superior to those which have hitherto gained us our battles, and we may fairly conclude is also better than any possessed by other nations. Yet, whilst we are thus satisfied, it is painful to reflect that even amongst the most civilized nations there appears but one method by which disputes must be finally disposed of, and this is by slaughter and the exertion of brute force. Individuals have now advanced beyond this state of affairs, and two men who, having a difference of opinion, proceed to settle it by means of an appeal to fists, or, what is far worse, by the aid of the knife or revolver, are regarded by society as ruffians and law breakers. Yet when the rulers of nations dispute and fail to arrange their quarrels, then men fight by thousands, and slay by hundreds. Surely a singular anomaly is this trial by battle.

Whilst, however, these conditions exist, it becomes us to be ready to fight and to be so armed that we need fear no assailant. As long, however, as Englishmen remain true to themselves and to their country, and with the Enfield rifle for our regulars and volunteers, and the Armstrong gun for the artillery, we may be perfectly satisfied that no foe will be able to molest us with impunity, and those opposed to us will soon discover the merits of that new arm of which we have endeavoured to give a sketch.

Since the adoption into the service of the Armstrong gun, almost an entire revolution has taken place in the conditions affecting naval combats, or those between forts and ships. This has been caused by the introduction of ships in armour.

The experiments carried on during the last few years have proved that a ship can be so protected by iron plates as to render her invulnerable to shells, and only to be penetrated by the heaviest shot, which must be fired with the highest velocities. To endeavour to destroy an iron-plated vessel by means of an average Armstrong gun, would be as futile as to assail a rhinoceros with a pea-shooter.

The only means by which these iron plates can be penetrated is by giving to a shot an enormous velocity, a quality which cannot easily be imparted to an Armstrong or to any other elongated shot. Hence it appears that some other arm is now requisite to prevent an iron-plated vessel from defying all projectiles.

The question resolves itself into a relative one between guns and plates, viz.:—Can guns be constructed of such a size and strength as to throw a shot heavy enough to break a plate, or with velocity enough to penetrate it? or can we go on increasing the thickness of the plates, and yet retain floating power for the ship, until we get beyond the limit in size to which guns can attain, and yet be handled by ordinary means?

The late practical experiments between the 'Merrimac' and 'Monitor' have drawn considerable attention to this subject, although nothing new has been brought to light thereby, or any question solved which had not already been so at Shoeburyness. Yet the facts are brought forward more prominently than hitherto, and another problem, therefore, remains to be solved, and another prize to be gained by that individual who shall construct a gun able to penetrate any iron plates with which a ship can be coated.

ANOTHER PEEP AT ANGLO-ROMAN LIFE.

AMONG other advantages which attend a residence in the 'Eternal City,' may be reckoned the rapidity with which an agreeable acquaintance among our brother aliens is cultivated. Whether it is that the 'genial current' of the English soul, too often frozen in more northern latitudes, thaws under the influence of an Italian sky, or whether a sort of æsthetical 'fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind' there, I cannot say, but this I know, that with a few introductions, a proper respect for the letter H, and a decent studio to receive his patrons in, no artist need lack friends in Rome.

Not that Mæcenas stalks about now as in the Augustan—ay, and in the Georgian age, warping this and that young judgment in the sunshine of his lordly patronage. In these days our young Constables can paint by the light of Nature, and without the fear of Sir George Beaumont before their eyes.

As I left young Stippler's rooms the other day in a cloud of fragrant Latakia, I could not help contrasting the youth's position with that which his father might have held if he had taken to canvas instead of the more profitable tape and bobbin line. There was an art of the last generation with its hacknied themes—its gods and graces—its servile dedications—its toadyisms—its conventionalities, and now we have the art of Young England, whose real patron is the public, and whose only key to fame is individual merit. I say, I thought of this honest student, rising from his pipe and beer, to work with unaffected, simple pleasure, and then remembered poor Haydon puzzling over Homer with a lexicon, in order to paint a Greek head, while the duns were knocking at his door—and felt glad that the grand school, with all its pedantry and absurdities, had passed away, and that a genius need no longer starve in a garret because his verses are not decasyllabic, or his picture less than twelve feet square.

Yes, your modern connoisseurs look kindly on their artistic brethren in Rome, and are glad to base their opinions of form and colour on the latest oracle from the Café Hellenico. Thus a deal of pleasant intercourse takes place between the tourists and *nous autres*; and such of us who are inclined to accept it, need never wait long for an invitation to picnics, balls, and concerts. Much precious time may be wasted (or shall I say employed?) very pleasantly in these amusements. An excursion to Tivoli or Ostia, an afternoon's walk with Her in the Pamfili Doria Gardens, or an evening hop in the Via Babuino, are all so many digressions from the path of duty which my fellow-workers will do well generally to avoid, but perhaps better occasionally to follow. We know the old proverb about the stultifying effects which all work and no play will have in time on our young friend Jack, and I think an art-student's life in Rome may be very pleasantly divided between the two occupations. When a man takes Time by the forelock, he need not lose his breath in running to keep up with that allegorical personage. By six o'clock on a summer's morning breakfast is over at the 'Hellenico,' and half the studios in Rome are occupied. Our friends have got four hours' start of London gentlemen, and, in consequence, are entitled to lay aside their mahlsticks earlier in the afternoon. Ah, those beautiful April mornings in Rome, when a perfume of rosemary hangs on the air in the gardens—when the anemones are in full bloom, and the orchid buds beginning to peep! There is snow still lingering on the distant hills, but the sun is bright and cheerful, and as you walk on the Pincian, what a noble view of the city beneath, with its domes and palaces, its tortuous streets and purple shadows! Here you may see St. Peter's at its full height, and to the right the overgrown palace which shoulders it. The Castle of St.

Angelo, with its great winged statue, lies on the road, and from its base, where the Tiber rolls lazily along, you may trace the old river's valley below the wooded heights of Monte Mario, far away to Soracte and the Apennines.

Such is the lovely prospect which Messieurs Jules and Henri, students of the French Academy, have before them, when they choose to stroll in the gardens of the Villa Medici—their own residence—secured to them by the good offices of 'The Little Corporal.' No wonder Vandyke Brown grumbles as he looks at the grand old palace with its ample accommodation, and hears with something like envy of the liberal allowance to its pensionnaires. When has England done the like of this in the cause of art? When our Royal Academy sends *one*, the French Government commissions *twenty* young aspirants to work in Rome, and while they are living like princes on Monte Pincio, we meet for our studies in a garret.*

I say garret, for it is on a terzo piano in a little back lane where the younger representatives of British art in Rome are wont to assemble, after discussing their café news and 'Scelti' cigars at the Hellenico.

Here may be seen Mr. Chalker, whose studies from the 'antique' gained him much credit in Trafalgar Square. By his side sit Cloudesley Stumper, renowned for his atmospheric effects, and Flaker White, who lays on his 'high lights' so carefully. Here, too, is Scampring, who dashes off his sketch in a single evening with such rapidity, that it becomes unnecessary for him to attend the Academy on the other five nights of the week; and Glumford, the great amateur, who covers up his work when professional gentlemen approach, for fear of inspiring them with envy. Daubney Glaze, too, saunters in and makes critical remarks, thrusting his hands in his pockets with the air of a man who has finished his 'curriculum,' and can afford to patronize his younger brethren.

The choice of attitude for the model, or, as it is technically called, the 'pose,' is left by the rules of the Academy to the taste of the students, who claim in rotation the privilege of setting the figure, and one evening a difficulty arose in consequence of the absence of an artist.

'I say, whose turn is it to-night?' asks Chalker.

'Why Tontingham's, but he isn't here,' cries some one.

'Well, never mind, let somebody take his place,' says Mr. C., good-humouredly. 'Perhaps Mr. Stumper will oblige.'

'Really,' answered that gentleman, 'I don't exactly know what to suggest. Let me see—we had the Assassin last week; suppose we try Adam before the Fall. The character is simple, and shows the extremities.'

'Well, if you *air* going to 'ave a bibbical subjick,' interposes Mr. Cadmyon Linseed, 'I vote for Cain in the hact of slaying Abel. It's grand in houtline, and develops the biceps.'

'No, that won't do,' retorts Mr. Chalker. 'Look at the fellow's arm. After all, there's nothing like the quiet dignity of the antique. I'll tell you what, he wouldn't make a bad Antinous. Pst! Giuseppe! Abbassa la testa! so—what do you think of that, gentlemen?'

There was a murmur of dissent. 'Don't see the "Iliacus internus,"' said one.

'There's an awkward high light in the clavicular fossæ,' cried another.

'Won't do, hay? Want more action?' asks the persevering Cadmyon. 'Then what d'ye say to the *Layokune*, and roll up some towels for the serpents?'

* Let me not, however, allude disrespectfully to that humble atelier, where I have spent so many happy evenings, or forget to acknowledge, with hearty thanks, the private generosity which established it. Many years ago some English residents, ashamed, I suppose, that no opportunity should be offered to their young compatriots of studying from 'the figure' in Rome, raised by subscription a fund, the interest of which is just sufficient to cover the rent of the studio in question, and to pay for the hire of models during the season. A small library forms part of the little establishment, and is accessible to all English visitors.

A roar of laughter greeted this suggestion. Poor Cadmyon looked crestfallen.

'Come, come now; business is business,' remarked Mr. Chalker, 'hang it, you know, we *must* have something.'

'Try Ajax defying the lightning,' said Scampring. And thereupon the honest model, who is in the pork and sausage line of business during eight hours of the day, and accommodates himself to any position or character, from a Pifferaro up to Agamemnon, king of men, on receiving his instructions, immediately bent back his body, expanded his chest, threw down his arms, and stared horribly at the ceiling, with the expression of a maniac whose lucid intervals are very rare. In about five minutes, however, he discovered that the gaslight made his head ache (and no wonder, under the circumstances). So 'Ajax' was given up, and the poor man sat down again.

'What is to be done?' asked Chalker, in despair. 'Will you give the pose, Mr. Linseed?'

'Oh, blow the pose!' at length rejoined that gentleman. 'Why not draw him as he sits now?'

And as Giuseppe had thrown himself carelessly on his mattress, of course the attitude was better than any he had yet assumed. So it was agreed that he should remain where he was, and to work we all went. I recognized the pork butcher next year in various pictures on the Academy walls, as 'Prometheus Bound,' with the ingenious addition of a chain; as 'Narcissus,' with the appropriate brook, and as 'Evening Repose,' in which our friend appeared as a shepherd, with a crook, and in goatskin breeches.

'After all, there's nothing like Nature,' remarked Mr. Stumper, as he prepared some paper for his drawing. 'What a torso the fellow has! I've a great mind to make a separate study of the back. Hallo! are you going to do him in oil, Mr. Linseed?'

'No study of the yewman form,' replied that gentleman, 'is perfect without colour—reck'lect that, Mr. Stumper. How can you expect to give all the delixies, the subbtelties (as Mr. Ruskin calls 'em) of flesh tones without colour? When I look at that bew'ful form—what do I see? Ay, you may stare, gentlemen, but I repeat, *what* do I see?'

'Why, a sausage-maker to be sure,' said Wagsby (the wit of the café), who had just come in.

'Never mind what he is, Mr. W.,' retorted our lecturer, contemptuously. 'I say, when I look at that there bow'ful form, *I* don't see a hard chalk outline with a lot of black lines crossed all over it for shadow. No; *I* see colour—colour,' repeated Mr. Linseed, growing warm with eloquence. 'Colour, ennobling and vivifying the nat'ral elements of yewman life, tinging and shaping them into one grand, mysteeryus, subbtel 'armony. 'Ead a little more to the right, if you please—tell him, somebody! that's it.' And here Mr. Linseed, turning up his coat-sleeves, and displaying a pair of once white wristbands, decorated with elaborate links, commenced his work.

'Couldn't the model be told not to wash his hands?' asks Perugin Smith, the pre-Raphaelite. 'For my part I don't see the least use in painting from a figure so terribly clean. Dirt is natural to the Italian nation, and you'll never paint a Contadino properly unless you paint him dirty.'

'You can always have him as dirty as you like in your own studio,' answered the satirical Wagsby. 'You had better tell him not to use soap and water the next time he comes to you. I dare say he wouldn't mind foregoing the luxury for a paul or so extra. Hillo! what's the row?'

Just at that instant we heard a smart pop and whizz. Up jumped the model from his seat with a sudden yell and an 'accidente!' Some one had been 'fixing' his drawing with steam, and had left the boiling kettle with a lump of clay stuck over the spout. This frail plug had been blown off, and had hit poor Giuseppe somewhere in the dorsal region. He execrated at first the kettle and the steam and the unlucky wight's carelessness,

but finding himself after all not hurt, *his* anger abated, and at last he joined heartily in the laugh, which, by this time, was universal. To say the truth, the incident interfered sadly with our work that evening, for the Anglo-Roman artists are of a jovial turn, and can be moved to mirth at the shortest notice. It is we workers in sober England who sigh over our gesso in gloomy Soho, but in Italy, with a bright blue sky overhead, and all nature smiling around, *risum teneatis amici?*

Our little colony on the banks of the Tiber enjoys, I think, an easy lot, an easy life. There are, of course, exceptions, like old Scumbleton, who has been in his studio every morning for the last twenty years, and Grinder, who has copied every picture of note in Rome at least a dozen times; but the majority of our friends take their pleasure, chat over their modest dinner at the Grubbioni Restaurant, and smoke their pipes afterwards in perfect ease and contentment. When one of them gets a commission, he executes it, and exchanges the price thereof for food and raiment. Then he lives on the fat of the land; on wild boar and *porcupino*, *triglie* and beccafici, ponzin and babba, ervioto, which gladdeneth the heart of man, and Florence oil to make him of a cheerful countenance. And when the money is spent, and his coat is getting seedy, he returns to his work, sits down again to his maccaroni and homely wine, eats and drinks, and is thankful. Happy, happy fellows!

Among other national predilections to which as an Englishman I plead guilty, is a weakness for souchong, which, to my mind, is a great luxury in a land where soda water is almost unknown and Bass's pale ale is five and sixpence the quart. Perhaps the best brew in Rome of that domestic beverage was to be found at Lady Prism's rooms in the Piazza di Spagna, and as she is a very amusing person, and a thorough-paced gossip, I frequently found myself nibbling her ladyship's toast and enjoying her amiable society. It was here that I often had the pleasure of meeting Mrs. Widgeon, the celebrated sculptor (or rather *sculptress*, as I believe Mr. Lindley Murray hath it). She used to give lessons in wax-modelling to young ladies residing in Rome, and very clever her works are considered, I believe.

Doubts have been entertained as to the profession and calling of Mr. Widgeon, now deceased. Some people suppose him to have been professor of the caligraphic art, and, as such, to have embellished the copybooks of some of the most aristocratic youth in England. Others incline to the belief that he was a pastrycook and confectioner, with an exclusively genteel connection in our metropolis, and that it was in superintending the designs of pie-crust that Mrs. Widgeon's genius first developed itself, and thus induced her to follow up the study of that art in which she has since become so justly celebrated. Be that as it may, it is very well known that she first embraced her present calling in direct opposition to the wishes of her friends, who now move, as she herself explains, in the very first circles of society, and though family circumstances have rendered it necessary to work for her living, she never, to quote her own words, forgets the Lady in the Artist.

'My first essays, Mr. Easel,' she would say, 'were those of an amateur. My late beloved parent was very intimate at Flammington Park, the seat of the lamented Viscount Fudgemore, where there is, as you doubtless know, a magnificent collection of works of art. Whenever I accompanied my father there I used to copy the Rembrandts in the gallery with Galpin's patent broad pencils on glazed Bath post letter paper, and got great solidity of effect in that way, I assure you. I have some of those early works of mine still, and though perhaps I ought not to say so, have been offered really *immense* sums for them. But *no*, I say—I am a sculptress, *not* a painter; and besides, you know, Mr. Easel, though they *were* done so long ago, and the lead, I am sorry to say, has got rubbed a good deal, which gives them rather a cloudy

appearance, still, as reminiscences, they are to me *invaluable* (—a little more sugar, if you please, Lady Prism—). An accident, however—and it only shows, Mr. Easel, on what slight threads may hang the issue of one's fate—an accident led me to turn my attention to another branch of art. We always had hot rolls for breakfast at Flammington, and after the conclusion of that meal I was in the habit, as children often are (I have observed, and endeavoured to check it in my pupils)—I was in the habit of working up the dumps of new bread into seals and various other forms, under cover of the table-cloth. One morning Lord Fudgemore observed it, and though he was justly displeased at the mess I had made (I think there must have been at least a quarter of a pound of bread-crumbs under the table), still his lordship—and I am always proud to own it—commended my ingenuity, and gave me great encouragement—(may I trouble you for the muffins, Mr Easel?) "Why don't you try to model in wax, my dear?" said he, and soon after he was good enough to send up to town for a box of modelling tools and a hogshead of the best spermaceti. It was not quite the right sort, to be sure, but it did very well to begin upon; and in less than twelve months I had made immense progress.

'But I was only an amateur then,' continued Mrs. Widgeon, 'though I trust I may say without vanity, a very talented one. In later years I have had almost unprecedented success, and my *chefs-d'œuvre* have been greatly in request among the nobility and higher class of gentry in England. Not that *I* put myself in their way. No: there are artists here, Mr. Easel, I regret to say, who court patronage. *I never* do. On the contrary, the universal complaint is, that it is most difficult to get me to part with my works.'

The honest lady used generally to prolong her chat till past eleven, and when she *does* begin I defy mortal man to stop her; but on the evening in question Lady Prism had promised to take me to the Walsinghams' hop, by way of introduction to that delightful family, and so before 10 P.M. Mrs. Widgeon was deposited, I am thankful to say, at the door of her casetta, and we were trundling on to the Via Britannica.

A private ball in Rome is much like a private ball anywhere else, except that there is perhaps more of what Mrs. Widgeon was in the habit of calling *lazy-alley* about the entertainment there than in Mayfair. A good sprinkling of the Italian nobility is another distinctive feature, and lends, in some eyes, additional grace to the festive scene. But perhaps the chief advantage which it offers is the opportunity of dancing given to unfortunate gentlemen who, like myself, are usually obliged to look on at the pastime after investing half a sovereign per night in cabs and gloves on such occasions during a London season.

You see, dancing men are at a premium in the Eternal City. By far the greater proportion of male visitors are fogies, and as for the young artists, with a few honourable exceptions, such as J. Easel, Esq., your humble servant and myself, they have no more idea of Terpsichorean enjoyment than his Holiness at the Vatican. As for that young muff, Paynes Grey, who floundered through a *polker*, as he calls it, with little Miss Petworth (she dances *à merveille* herself), I declare I could have throttled him in his white choker, which nearly did so without further assistance, for his awkwardness.

For my part, I have not danced much since I left school; but, upon my word, though I enter into the sport with the greatest zest and enthusiasm at the time, and do *not* expect, like Mrs. Tillotson Shyo, the curate's wife, that the floor will give way and precipitate me down to the basement for my wickedness, still I must say that I generally wake the next morning with a sort of dismal conviction that I have been making an ass of myself the night before. What pleasure can there be, I ask, in temporarily becoming a kind of human teetotum, and spinning over deal boards or glazed calico until one is ready to drop with fatigue and giddiness? And yet there is Joe

Pufferall—whose wind I *know* is not particularly good, having raced with him scores of times round the Green at Eastminster—there is Joe Pufferall, I say, gasping for breath, with a red face, a reeling head, a limp shirtcollar, and draggled tie, vowing that it is a 'delaightful gollope,' and imploring his partner (the hypocrite)—who also looks rather damp and exhausted—just to have *one* turn more.

I suppose it is all right. It *is* fun to cut in and bump up against the conceited rascal who took away your partner for the last valse. The mistakes which you make in the Lancers *are* amusing, at least to bystanders, and besides it is fine exercise for the dear girls after sitting in their carriages all day; for though the gentle creatures are afraid to walk a couple of miles before breakfast, they don't object to slide over that distance after supper; and for health, exercise is everything, as Dr. Glibb has often assured us.

There is old M'Tinsel, indefatigable in the pursuit of pleasure, making his way up to Mrs. Somerset Ajax through the little crowd of Italian noblesse by which that excellent lady is usually surrounded. 'Chi è—quel' vecchio?' whispers Count Pannolino to one of his friends as M'T. leads her off to the quadrille.

'Il Marchese Tinsilli—Milor di Londra,' answers Sig. Antonio, who is studying the English language, and who firmly believes Mac to be an abbreviation for marquis. 'Da vero!' says the count. 'E la signora——' and then they begin to whisper. 'Ma che! che! che!' cries the other in reply, and they both fall a laughing at the notion.

Mrs. M'T. has not yet arrived, having engaged herself previously to go to a public concert near the Piazza Navona, and a conversazione in the Via Babuino. I think, if there were twenty parties the same night in Rome, this indefatigable woman would contrive to attend them all. She goes home between each entertainment—they *do* say to resuscitate the bloom on her cheeks, but that I really believe to be a base calumny; otherwise, what on earth would be the advantage in using the 'Patent-permanent-roscate-vademecum,' or 'Circassian toilette elixir,' sold, as we all know, at the moderate price of four and ninepence the bottle, or in larger flasks, containing half a pint, seven and six? Poor thing! What a life she must lead with that witless old Cockney dandy her husband, who, by all accounts, must be a sadly disposed person, even *now*, though women laugh at him and he gets his hair from the Burlington Arcade. It does one good, after all, to look at a venerable padded worldling like this figuring away in a quadrille, and skipping from side to side, as fast as his corns will permit. You may laugh if you will, but it is a good moral lesson to look at him, and think what a life he has led. Sent to Eton at fourteen, where he showed much proficiency in cricket, and displayed an early taste for waistcoats—to Oxford, where he cultivated that excellent judgment of port for which he has since become so celebrated—into the militia, in which service he rose to the rank of captain, and distinguished himself brilliantly on several review days—can we wonder that when at length he succeeded to the family estate he became *ennuyé* of a country life, and that Skiphunt Hall is let for ten months in the year?

M'T. rises at the convenient hour of 11 A.M., takes his chocolate, and toddles down to the banker's to look at the 'Times,' which, I will do him the justice to say, he usually reads right through, advertisements and all, every morning. Then he repairs to Guttler's for lunch. That repast concluded, he looks in at Pellegrini's to examine the list of arrivals, or adjourns to the club for a cigar, which carries him on till four in the afternoon, when the carriage is ordered, and he joins madame to make calls or for a drive on the Pincian until dinner time. The rest of the evening is generally devoted to relaxation after the fatigues of the day, and if there is an accessible ball, concert, conversazione, or tea fight within two miles of the Piazza d'Inghilterra, ten to one you will meet there Morgan M'Tinsel, Esq., in excellent spirits, and his accustomed stays.

Next to M'Tinsel, I think the Count von Schlüpfenschleiden attracts the most attention of bystanders by his extraordinary capers in the 'Lancers.' I wonder by what stern law of fashion, and how long ago, the 'steps' which are still, I believe, taught in dancing-schools—let us say the 'pas seul,' the double shuffle, or whatever their names may be—I say, I wonder when all that wonderful and elaborate pirouetting was first reduced to the very solemn 'walk over' which now obtains in our English quadrilles. The best excuse that can be made for it is, perhaps, that it is characteristic of the undertaker's costume which is now a man's full dress. It is at the 'Maison Deuil' we rig out on those occasions, and I think our steps are equally funereal. When in my younger days I went through a course of instruction at M. Valentin's academy (Maison Terpsichore), in the Acacia Road, I could execute the 'glissade' and 'jeter' as well as most of the pupils, and passed a brilliant examination in the Minuet de la Cour in company with the sweetest of little partners—Miss Letitia Fidkins, of Notting Hill (now, alas! espoused to an appraiser and auctioneer, a mercenary wretch by the name of Jones). But what has the use of all this been to me? The first ball at which I assumed the toga virilis showed me how fruitless had been my labours. It was in vain that I tried to balançoir in the legitimate manner—viz., with two slides and a jerk. Every one stared so rudely that I was at last obliged to give it up; and now, in after years, as I look at this distinguished foreigner, I marvel how I could ever have been guilty of such impropriety.

Meantime Lady Prism has been entertaining me with various comments on the assembled company. I think nothing escaped her vigilant eye. Mrs. Somerset Ajax and her suite—M'Tinsel and his wig (her ladyship's own peruque is from the hands of a more skilful artist, and deceives the most searching glance)—then Mrs. Major Spicer and her daughter ('And how shameful it is you know, Mr. Easel, for a parent to encourage such extravagance—I hear on the *best* authority that their income does not exceed,' &c.) By-and-by it was Mrs. Seymour George's shoulders (to say the truth that lady is somewhat *décolletée*) which underwent the lash of this old gossip's criticism; and, in short, I could not help thinking, as we went into supper, that if ever a College of Propriety should be established, Lady Prism would make an admirable professor.

When we returned to the ball-room we found the musicians striking up a familiar air, which that dear charming little Miss Walsingham had made them rehearse the previous day, and presently to the familiar bars of Sir Roger de Coverley all the guests step forward. Count Pannolino leads out Mrs. M'Tinsel, her 'worser' half has secured Mrs. Ajax; Squeemysh condescends to stand up with a Roman belle, and Trotman is made happy by the hand of Miss Emily Spiller.

'Come, Mr. Easel, no desertion from the ranks,' cries Miss Walsingham; and we all take up our positions *vis à vis*:—

1st Round.

Top and bottom couples cross, change sides, bow and turn, first with one, then with both hands; balançoir, set and turn again. Amidst these manœuvres, Master Ned Spiller (*æt.* 9½), partaking in the general excitement, and under the influence of eleven glasses of negus, gets between everybody's legs, and nearly upsets a gentleman from Cambridge.

2nd Round.

Dance continued with increased spirit—heavy men growing livelier—ladies indefatigable. Trotman very jolly—looks knowingly at the mistletoe bough, which, though long past Christmas, still hangs in the middle of the room. N.B. The improper custom of romping underneath this vegetable, as Lady P. says, has been wisely discontinued in polite circles.

3rd Round.

Unflagging enthusiasm. The native domestics take courage, and gape with a mingled expression of surprise and delight at the doors. M'Tinsel particularly active. He is performing cavalier seul on his own

account, and looking unutterable things at Mrs. Somerset Ajax. His hair is somewhat disordered, and as he skips about a few locks get entangled in the bough above. In his efforts to disengage them he drags down a candle from the chandelier, and—ah, that unfortunate macassar oil!—in an instant his hair is in a blaze!

There is one short moment of horror and suspense. Every one seems paralyzed with fear. Mrs. M'Tinsel falls screaming into the arms of Count Pannolino; her husband stares wildly round, then forms a desperate resolution. There is no time to consider—yes, a sacrifice must be made to the 'devouring element'—one! two! and he stands unscathed before us. Something falls frizzling to the ground. Goodness gracious—it was HIS WIG!

* * * *

The next morning a carriage was seen rolling rapidly on the road to Tivoli. It contained M'T., his wife, and his confidential valet. They passed a fortnight in complete retirement in that charming retreat, and Mrs. M'T. made an admirable sketch from Adrian's Villa, which I afterwards saw in her album.

Wagsby said they went down there for change of *hair*, and expected me to laugh at the unfeeling joke. All I know about the matter is, that going into Frizzilini's shop to be cropped a few days afterwards, I saw old F. very busily engaged in fabricating something which appeared to me very like a p-ruke.

But, after all, what business is it of mine?

The commencement of Lent is a signal for the cessation among our Anglo-Roman friends of such frivolities as those which have been just described. That season is, indeed, devoted to the more earnest occupation of a tourist's time, and the picture galleries, churches, and museums are crowded daily. Artists' studios are also thrown open to the public during certain hours of the day; and Chromer Green, the well-known landscape painter, dons a formal dress-coat (instead of his usual shabby old dressing-gown) in honour of morning visitors.

Mr. Flamborough Toutingham also distributes his cards with the following sentence inscribed thereon:—

ADMIT THE BEARER TO MY ATELIER. F. T.

What that gentleman's precise object may be in adopting this form it is difficult to conceive, seeing that he opens the door of his 'terzo-piano' himself, and the right of entry to his rooms is not in the least affected by the ticket in question. Be that as it may, the apartments are tastefully arranged, and fitted up with judicious bits of old drapery, fragments of mediæval armour (neatly executed in papier mâché), and gutta percha furniture in the cinquecento taste. F. T. himself is picturesquely attired in velvet knickerbockers, mauve-coloured stockings, green morocco slippers with red heels, and a black velvet tunic. A very 'imposing' costume it is, as the ladies all declare, and I can only regret the ill-natured remarks which his brother limners (prompted, no doubt, by envy) are in the habit of making about his 'costoom.' The works of Dante and Tasso lie carelessly open on his table, scored over with commentaries in pencil by F. T., and near them may be noticed an envelope directed to 'Her Grace, the Dowager Duchess of Tewkesbury,' which has been in that very place all through the season.

Toutingham's theories of art are sublime. 'Draw!—paint!' says he. 'Pshaw! any fool can do that. The true mission of the Poet-artist is to Think. The grandest element of all noble art lies in the Imagination. Your canvas is only a vulgar medium—a mere material suggestion of the Ideal.' His studio is accordingly hung with grand ideas—that is to say, with yards of gesso, covered with 'indications' of landscape, 'motives' for composition, 'chords,' 'harmonies of colour,' 'conceptions' of form, 'accidents of drapery,' 'lines of beauty, 'sympathies' of nature, 'artists' dreams,' &c. &c., but—as Wagsby tersely puts it—the deuce a bit of a picture.

'Here is a glorious subject at Naples,' cries Toutingham. 'This dark part here is the land' (pointing

at a maze of pencil lines with a little wand which he keeps for this purpose); 'yes, this is the land. The sea comes up to this line, softly rippling and gleaming in the evening light. That spot is—ahem!—a sort of gond—in short a boat; white sail to throw up sky, you know—cloud hovering in the horizon. Here will come the—the pier—dank seaweed and barnacles clinging to the piles. These splashes down here are some figures—say relations of the boatmen—looking out on shore. Pretty motive that—isn't it? You see the line of the boat finds an "accidental repeat" in the curve of the dockleaf. Then again—Vesuvius smoking in the background—Fisherman smoking in the foreground. Nice bit of colour, eh?'

'Aw—a yes—vewy,' says Sympring (who can see nothing but some black scrawls on the paper); 'vewy nice. By the way—excuse my asking, you know—but what's that spidery-looking thing in the middle?'

'That!' cries Mr. Toutingham aghast, 'why, my dear sir, *that's the sun!*'

Some of the company were looking at a sloppy sketch of a house and grounds, about ten inches square, mounted on at least a yard and a half of cardboard.

'Oh! that,' remarks Mr. T., 'is only a little memorandum of a picture which I painted for the Earl of Toughborough. *I don't know how it came to be here, I'm sure.* I was staying down at Heavitale Hall when I did it—his lordship's shooting-box—capital sport, I can tell you—figure in foreground, Viscount Heavitale—lordship's eldest son; considered to be rather like him. The party in a riding habit holding back the dogs is the Lady Harriet Hark-away—always accompanies her brother in field sports. Keeper in the middle distance. Lord Toughborough was so pleased with the picture that he had it engraved and distributed among his tenantry,' &c. &c.

Vandyke Brown, Esq., R.A., R.B., R.C., &c. &c., is a painter of a very different stamp from the gentleman whom I have just been describing. The elements of *his* school of art are essentially classical, and the subjects of his pictures chiefly derived from the study of Dr. Lemprière's dictionary. The labours of Hercules, the jealousy of Juno, the various romantic adventures of her erring spouse, and the interesting metamorphoses so faithfully chronicled by the late Ovidius Naso, are subjects on which he has bestowed the keenest attention.

V. B. is also a wit—of the old school, it is true—but, as he often says himself, not a *whit* the worse for that. He has a little collection of curious puns, remarkable for their antiquity, to which he makes a solemn addition once a year, and judiciously introduces them in conversation as he is exhibiting his works. That familiar one about the 'lively spark' in Vulcan's forge was invented in the year '37. He has another fine old crusted joke about Diana and the 'stag,' which had its origin in the days of railway mania, and is pretty well circulated now; but Brown evidently thinks it is too good to be given up, and down to this time, if he can introduce it in talking of the lately opened Frascati line, he will do so. The time-honoured Horatian pun on the peaches, viz.

'*Pernoce*, odi, puer, apparatus,'

is regularly fired off once a fortnight during the summer, when dessert appears after dinner at the Grubbioni. The good-natured artists respect the witticism, and Toutingham generally goes off into a roar of laughter, which is all the more creditable to both because neither of these gentlemen ever read a page of Horace in their lives.

Poor old V. B.! I like to look at him smoking his pipe at the Hellenico, where the waiters all know him, and respect his grey beard, and his bad Italian, and his thirty thousand pounds. He always gets the first look at 'Galignani' and the fullest measure of café nero—and, in short, is the patriarch of the place.

To get Vandyke Brown to come to dinner or an evening party is considered a triumph by Anglo-Roman hosts, and the young bucks open

their mouths and listen to his jokes and his aphorisms with wonder. But, in truth, the old fellow does not care for their society so much as he once did, and prefers to live in a little world of his own—in Olympus, with Zeus the Thunderer, and Dr. Lemprière, and his beloved mythology, like a quiet, respectable, honest old heathen, as he is.

What a pity that we cannot *all* make this sphere exactly what we wish it! I know some people who would have been glad to spend their lives in Rome, and I am not surprised at the choice. To have the fairest works of art and nature always before one's eyes; to exchange our wretched and expensive clime for the cheap and sunny south, and work just hard enough to satisfy one's conscience without fatigue; to enjoy pleasant company—see pretty faces—do, dress, and dine, what, how, and when we like—are not these temptations to keep us lingering on the other side of the Alps?

As the time drew near for our departure, Mr. Trotman waxed exceedingly slow, and it was, I think, only the final excitement of the Easter festivities which revived his drooping spirits.

If I do not describe at length the ceremonies of the Holy Week, it is because they may be found detailed in numerous handbooks, together with mention of the days and hours when they occur, and a variety of other information which I do not profess to afford. Seven days' hard work is the 'semaine sainte,' and I wish my fellow-tourists well over it. We went to St. Peter's on Palm Sunday, where, in the splendid uniform of the 33rd Royal Roysterers (green), Morgan M'Tinsel, Esq., went through the ceremony with the greatest decorum. Afterwards, to the Lavanda, on which occasion I had the pleasure of seeing at a great distance, and over the heads of about ten thousand other spectators, a row of white caps, conical in shape, and such as I remember wearing at school many years ago, in consequence of having declined to repeat certain verses from that well-known poem, the 'Propria quæ maribus.' These caps were ranged close to each other, and, from the point where I was standing, diminished in rapid perspective. I was told that there was feet-washing going on below the caps, and so there may have been for aught I can tell. I only know I did not see it.

Thence to the celebrated 'Cena' in the Vatican, where, after having been twice driven back by those gigantic wasps, the Swiss Guard, for daring to appear in a frock coat, instead of the orthodox 'swallow-tail,' I at last succeeded in charging in behind a long Englishman, and was rewarded for my energy by being very nearly crushed to death. I remember a strong smell of dead boxleaves, and that when I arrived at the Tavola, like an ill-conditioned mummy, the whole ceremony had concluded.

I should have been content with sight-seeing after this, had not Trotman (the instigator of all these absurd undertakings) determined that we should see the 'washing of the pilgrims' feet,' which takes place at the 'Pellegrini' on Good Friday, and at which ceremony many members of the noblest families in Rome assist, to show their sincere humility and appreciation of yellow soap. Towards eight o'clock, then, on the evening of that day, we found ourselves at the door of the celebrated hospital in the midst of a crowd of people—chiefly English, of course. Papas, husbands, and brothers were conducted to one portion of the building, to see the men pilgrims washed; while ladies—much to Mr. Trotman's disappointment—were led away to the female foot tubs, in accordance with the strictest propriety. Round our room were seated some twenty or thirty men of all nations, and of every variety of ugliness. As we look at them, and remember our youthful and poetical ideas of a pilgrim—that interesting person with the cowl and cockleshell, staff and rosary, who usually, in romance, turns out to be the jilted lover in disguise—can we recognize those scowling, beetle-browed, savage, or half-witted ruffians as belonging to the same community? Some I saw with their heads and arms bandaged; one had lost an eye in a recent scuffle,

and left the sightless socket still exposed; all dirtier than any English scavenger, and not half so respectable. Is Christian humility still to be tested by overt acts of self-abasement? Kneel down, then, gentle pilgrims, and wash your brothers' feet. I wonder how long they have been in the hospital—I wonder whether the fraternity of Pellegrini prohibit the use of soap and water for their guests until this evening, that they may appear in the plenitude of filth before an admiring public. I wonder if, with the excellent objects of charity and humility in view, each honest ministering brother took a pilgrim into his own cell, or dormitory, and *there* quietly performed the kindly office, whether the same good end might be unostentatiously attained. I wonder whether the majority of strangers who come to see the spectacle go away much edified thereby, or only sneer and hold their noses. These are doubts, brother pilgrims—foolish scruples, I dare say—which arise in my mind as I look on at the Lavanda.

But see, the fraternity are kneeling before their brothers: the tubs are filled with hot water, into which the *real* Pellegrini presently pop their black and weary feet. The steam rises, and with it a sickening odour fills the room, from which, perhaps, we had better now retire.

There was a frugal supper laid out in the hall above, and I must say it was a more pleasant sight to see these poor fellows plying their knives and forks upstairs than undergoing their ablutions below. A wooden railing runs down on either side of the room; between this and the wall the tables are set out, and on the other side of the rails assemble the visitors to look on, just as we do at the Zoological Gardens at home when the wild beasts are fed. Each pilgrim had a basin of soup, two little fish, a lettuce, and some fruit, which they ate much more quietly and decently than might have been expected, and then emptied a little mug of wine by way of accompaniment. Good night, brother pilgrims! buon' viaggio! Our pilgrimage begins where yours ends, and we must soon look our last upon St. Peter's. On Easter Sunday we all turned into the Piazza, to receive the Pope's blessing, in return for which I present my humble respects, and beg parenthetically to express my belief that Pio Nono is an honest, kind-hearted gentleman, who is not answerable for all the evil that Antonelli has wrought in Rome.

On Easter Monday we witnessed the great Girandola, confessedly the most extensive, expensive, and comprehensive affair in the way of fireworks which it is possible to imagine, and which occurs, be it observed, just where it should, like blue fire at the end of the play, when comedy and melodrama, masquerading and spectacle are at an end, and we are all thinking of going home

Trotman and I set off the next morning; and it was with doleful faces, certes, that we drove away under the old Porta del Popolo. There is something in Rome, apart from all its art, and grandeur, and classical associations—independent of picture galleries and palaces, and temples—something which makes us love it for its own sake, and drink in good earnest at the Fountain of Trevi, in the hope that we may one day see it again. And while I am thus thinking I fall back into the cushions of the old diligence, and am presently asleep.

A week afterwards I am awakened by the sharp double rap of a metropolitan postman at the door of my chambers. I jump out of bed and look from my window upon an ugly black roof, and a black, murky sky. A little black sparrow is chirping upon a black chimney pot.

Yes. There is no mistake. I am in London. JACK EASEL.

SANS COEUR.

A DOVE sat shining on a tree,
Above the nest which was her home,
Cooing her one note, while the sun
Went down in heaven's dome.

A wild cat sat in the grass below,
In the air a merlin rose:
But the dove was too high for the cat to climb,
And the hawk was too weak, I suppose.

A viper looked up with diamond eyes,
And longed to be round her throat.
She could not abide such airs, she said,
As always singing one note.

The hawk screamed, 'She's too big for me;'
The cat said, 'She's too high for cats;
So I, to fill my vulgar maw,
Must munch the mice, and crunch the rats.'

There came a man across the wood—
Oh, as bonnie as bonnie could be!
And he shot the wild dove over the nest.
'She was very good sport,' said he.

A girl stood in the Hall that night,
Shining over the ball-room floor;
And the rest were nearly dying with spite,
For the men stood gazing by wall and door.

The wild cat stood and twirled his moustache,
The hawk left the card-room table,
And both were longing to carry her off,
And only wished they were able.

And the viper came up, so smooth and lithe,
Hanging on her partner's arm—
Came to call her, 'My dove, my dear!'
And to sneer at each girlish charm.

There came a man across the floor—
Oh, as bonnie as bonnie could be!
And over and over again they danced,
While the music lilted merrily.

The hawk and the wild-cat sneered and sighed,
But the viper's remark came true,
'He never means to care for her,
And she ought to have known it too.'

The girl lies in the churchyard, dead;
The dove hangs dead in the tree;
And he thought of both on his dying bed—
'Alas! that seemed good sport,' said he.

C. I. E.



Drawn by John Gascoine. p 434

ON THE GROTESQUE IN THINGS SORROWFUL.

THERE are men upon whom the mantle of 'sweet bully Bottom' has fallen; who are ready to offer themselves indifferently as models for an Apollo or a lion rampant; who think they can play the organ or turn a double summersault *because* they have never tried. When such persons become dabblers in philosophy they presently succeed in probing all things existent and non-existent, and whatever oscillates between; they undermine, by a few fathoms, the deepest abysses of all mysteries; they calculate all possible permutations of mental and moral phenomena; they exhaustively ticket off affinities and antipathies, attractions and repulsions, likes and contraries; beyond their ken will has no motive, and conscience has no freak. Give them favourable conditions and they will deny the power of solidity to water; or swear in the teeth of science that from it no inflammable gas can be extracted. Other persons there are, of less arrogance, whose vision is affected by a monstrous determination to synthesis; who, in their ideal emblem, can, with Heraclitus, see only a doleful figure striding the orb of the world, and weeping tears as big as soap-bubbles; or with Democritus and Dr. Jeddler, discern nothing but a jester in cap and bells. To such men, with their systems definitively made up, we very much fear that nature is the one great unnatural fact in the universe; and have only the faintest of hopes that they will allow themselves to perceive how the grotesque and the sorrowful can dovetail into each other. It is likely that they will regard the attempt to illustrate their contiguity as an effort to demonstrate the affirmative of an 'everlasting no.' We can afford to let such incorrigibles in complacency and priggishness pass by on the other side, whilst candour sees with us that we only reduce to form a conviction that has been pressing on the mind of man since the first date of men, and minds, and convictions.

That we may not, however, imprudently, or—what is of more consequence—untruly overstate our case, let us at once concede that, whilst the sorrowful is the real and the essential, the grotesque is almost exclusively in the accidents and circumstances. Although, on this account, the grotesque is variable, it will be found that, in some form or other, in a greater or less degree, it is exhibited whenever sorrow reduces itself from the abstract to instance and example. Is it, because of this, to be inferred that sorrow is the less, or the less real? Not at all; liability to ridicule proves nothing in the world. We know that a tinsel formula obtained for a time to the effect that 'Ridicule is the test of truth.' Connect this formula with a proverb which is at once more homely and more respectable. Truth holds her court at the bottom of a well, a position which is *primâ facie* ridiculous enough. Truth, therefore, is not true. The syllogism is as valid and as serious as the authors of its major premiss deserve. The forced recognition of the grotesque as an *umbra* and parasite of sorrow is, indeed, one of the aggravations of the latter; for it is the acknowledgment that our nature, even in its saddest and most sober gait, cannot move without offering a point of contact to the ridiculous.

Sorrow has had its confessors in all ages, from Adam to Aristotle, from Solomon to Farquhar Tupper, from Boethius to Tennyson, from the melancholy Jaques to Carlyle, who—the one from Arden, and the other from Chelsea—would

> 'through and through
> Cleanse the foul body of the infected world
> If it would patiently receive their medicines.'

And, in a world like this, it is perhaps the *first*, not the grandest, of all worthy passions; the noble parent of a nobler offspring; mother and

nurse of human greatness. In certain conditions it may even be said that a man's capacity for sorrow is the measure of his intellect. To its modes of utterance, however, to its forms of endurance, and to its circumstances generally, the fatal or fated incongruity of human nature has penetrated. Not all in mockery or in wrath. The very incongruities in the exposition of grief, from which the grotesque arises, take shape and stand often as pages to point out the panel which, behind the sable hangings of the hall of sorrow, yields to slightest pressure; or to show a quaintly decked side-door of exit from her too overwhelming presence. But before we become irrevocably committed to the starch of a treatise, or to an analysis of abstractions, let us decisively break away into the regions of instance and example. We may here say a word or two as effectively and as wisely as if we were professors of the dismal, and as pleasantly as if motley formed our only wear.

Suppose we glance for a moment at the sorrows of a defunct Olympian community. The poets, we have been told, first gave gods to mankind; and, concerning the divine personages of all polytheisms, this is near enough the truth to be allowed to pass. Let us see if the divine offspring—creations half ether and half slime, whose blood was half ichor and half a puddle—had any reason to be entirely thankful to the *makers*, their progenitors. The gods of the Greeks were nature-gods, not lords of nature, but dancing an ignoble attendance upon her processes. They were obnoxious to the conditions of Time and Space; their thrones tottered to the whims of Fate; and themselves were huge marionettes, dangled on gilded wires by the Destinies. They were of necessity mortal—any verbal ascription of eternity, notwithstanding—subject to death with the nature or the elements from which they derived, rather than over which they exercised, sovereignty. Zeus, best and greatest, thunderer and cloud-compeller, chief of the latest dynasty of Heaven, could only dismember his father Chronos or Time, not gain by his destruction a broad emancipation; Hamadryads died with their trees; and Naiads languished with the desiccation of their water-courses, or shed their last tears with the bubbling death-pangs of their fountains. Now, any disability in a divine personage is grotesque enough; but we shall, of course, confine our attention to an instance or two in which their general disability took the specific form of sorrow.

Jove—oh, immortal and perennial sorrow!—was henpecked by his sister spouse, who was a shrew. The father of gods and men had to submit to the grotesque humiliation of setting his words in sparring attitude, and of swaggering forth a challenge to all Olympus to try their strength in a game, a variety of which is known to modern boys under the name of 'French and English.' There is a delicious *soupçon* of the ridiculous in such grief as seized the Thunderer, engaged by an oath into which he had been trapped by his wife, when 'stung to the soul, he sorrowed and he raged,' or when he fumed under a curtain lecture the punishment of gallant peccadilloes. But the ox-eyed amiable Juno had her griefs. Too often unappreciated, she knew the pangs of jealousy; she knew the gnawing of the serpent envy, and the tumult of wrath invading her celestial breast, because she could not swamp the hateful Trojans. She knew what it was to tremble lest her shrine—the shrine of her who moved majestic, Queen of Heaven—should be left in scorn without the offering of a votary, or the prayer of a suppliant. It wrings one's heart, and strains one's sides to think of Vulcan falling headlong through the air for a long summer's day with hideous ruin and compound fracture and dislocation; and to picture him, having lost his lusty symmetry for ever, restored to a vigour which allowed him to hobble between fire and forge. The fun of these instances, and of a hundred others, which everybody may call to mind, arises, of course, from the miserable falling-off of reality from pretence; from the utter incon-

gruity of the ideas which are forced into juxtaposition, of divinity, pain, and disability. Verily, such divinity seems not a little out at elbows!

We have said that the grotesque is found almost exclusively in circumstances and surroundings. There seems something, however, radically and throughout grotesque in the case of grief for unworthy objects. A glutton who mourns that the capacity of his most interesting compartment is limited; a burglar who weeps at the disappointment of an interrupted spoliation; a heart-broken bandit who, after having crossed himself and invoked the blessing of his patron saint, is prevented from severing the throbbing jugular of some traveller who has fallen into his hands as prize of war — these are examples of grief which, after the one tear has been shed which *all* suffering demands, may be treated with disrespect and contumely as essentially grotesque. From this category the high motive comes in to redeem the conscientious devotee—the ascetic who would win heaven by allowing his arm to wither, by causing his back to bleed in reeking furrows, or by standing for half a life-time fifty feet nearer the sky than his neighbours of more comfortable and easy-going sanctity. Yet here the accidents, the attending circumstances, deformity and absurd discomforts, are certainly ridiculous enough.

All voluntary, motiveless suffering is grotesque. The man who, having the toothache, or any other distressing but seldom fatal affliction, and being out of hearing, so that no one else may be annoyed, refuses the alleviation that an occasional groan would accord him, is more of a fool than a hero, and suffers grotesquely by just so much as he suffers over and above what is necessary. He is a martyr to a phantom which has juggled him into the conviction that it is manly to stave off relief. Not so Achilles, and other heroes of old, of whom no one doubts the bravery, bore pain. Common sense incites to relief of feeling by shouts or motion, by laughter, sighs, or tears, so long as no one else is forced thereby into involuntary penance, or into awkward, petulant expressions of condolence. To be consistent, such amateur sufferers should, when they enjoy the blessed privilege of a curable disease, which, left to itself, is death, throw physic to the dogs; should tear the bandage from a lacerated limb, and grandly perish from the effect of a preventible hæmorrhage. Throw open for them the back-gates of a fools' paradise.

A plague in a crowded city is perhaps the climax of powerless misery and despair. It is precisely at the time of such an infliction that men give to their colossal grief an unparalleled grotesquerie. Thucydides, Boccaccio, and De Foe severally bear witness to the fact that large communities are apt to bound at once from the extremity of entreaty and humiliation to a hardened, haggard, prayerless defiance. Such incongruous apostacy and wilful putting away of the last hope seem in large populations to have outgrown the dimensions of the grotesque; but in kind they are radically so, and seem other only because the sorrow of which they are the monstrous products is itself almost beyond the measure of human conception. The emblem of the Decameron might fitly be a flower-wreathed skull turned into a wine cup. Its idea and basis and working out offer signal instances of the sorrowful in combination with the grotesque.

Who is not moved with an April kind of pity for the illustrious governor of Barataria, sitting down to dinner and to disappointment after the fatigues of justice distributed indifferently, and with a skill in casuistry verging on inspiration? What! shall his benevolent excellency, Sancho Panza, the protector of farmers and handicraftsmen, the maintainer of the prerogative of gentlemen, the rewarder of virtue, the respecter of religion, and champion of the clergy—shall he be tortured by a cruel kindness that condemns him to a community of suffering with the wretched and impious Tantalus? So far indignation is unmingled with any other feeling.

The grotesque comes to us, when we think of Sancho as a man, the burden of whose state and its responsibilities would have been airily supported by a satisfied appetite. The cares of office would have been tolerable with a contented stomach, which, to Sancho, was the only continual feast. *Duelos con pan son menos*; but the troubles, without the bread, were intolerable. The sorrows of the beautiful shrew, Katherine, are substantially the same, and their grotesqueness nearly identical with those of the lusty squire of Don Quixote.

The grotesque is honoured when much discomfort and mishap, although not gravely perilous to life or limb, is brought about by absurd or absurdly minute agencies. Last year you were sojourning at Smyrna or Jerusalem, and morning by morning wrote down in your journal that your last night's rest was broken by bands of entomological marauders—freebooters whom an enlightened genius in your own happy land has before now succeeded in breaking in, through all the stages of diminishing restiveness, to habits of peaceful, steady-going industry. Has any tear, even one from the wife of your bosom, blistered those entries? Assuredly not. Yet your annoyance represented the loss of nightly repose, of daily vigour and amiability; and the gain of a truculent desire to exterminate a class of fellow-creatures whose habits of liveliness and application have entitled them to divide with the ant the honours of proverb and apophthegm. The minute, although it may have grave issues, will, just because it is minute, be obnoxious to the grotesque, so long as people fail to assimilate the gaily profound observation of Mercutio, that a scratch 'not so deep as a well, nor so wide as a church door' will serve to convert a gallant and a wit into a grave man. Crises in their own garb and magnitude occur only at long intervals; in dwarfish masquerade they are moment by moment of our fellowship. 'Trifles make the sum of human things' is simply the cunning, glittering legend of the reverse of a medal, whose obverse bears, that, relatively to man, there are no such things as trifles.

Here is an incident where the grotesque fairly laughs down the grave, although there are no fewer than three most melancholy circumstances connected with it. It is clearly melancholy that a recorder should lose his watch; it is sorrowful that a man should be found audacious and abandoned enough to possess himself of the same by theft and falsehood; it is heartrending that the best affections of a lady, the slightest expression of whose husband's will was evidently law, should be outraged by a mock message of tenderness, the cruelty of which would be enhanced beyond the hope of words if it were lawful to conceive of her as a kind of buxom Mariana at the moated grange. Yet, withal, Momus does not so much carry the day, as fly off with it. 'Sir John Sylvester, Recorder of London, was in my time,' says the late Lord Campbell in his 'Lives of the Chancellors,' 'robbed of his watch by a thief whom he tried at the Old Bailey. During the trial, he happened to say aloud that he had forgotten to bring his watch with him. The thief, being acquitted for want of evidence, went with the Recorder's love to Lady Sylvester, and requested that she would send him his watch by a constable he had ordered to fetch it.' The sorrowful aspects of this affair, which the thief negotiated successfully, we have indicated: the man who does not see the fun of it may lay the unflattering unction to his soul that he was out of the way when humour was distributed to his kind.

It is a tearful fact that the course of true love never did run smooth. Yet its channel has, ere now, been dammed up by obstacles the most ridiculous. Rejection, we humbly venture to suppose, is an unpleasant kind of difficulty to be met with by the full outpouring of an ardent affection. There is an incident, which—although by some caprice of modesty or reticence he does not mention it in his autobiography—gives a second immortality to the author of the 'Decline and Fall.' Gibbon, ab-

dominous and love-consumed, fell on his knees before the idol of his affection, was rejected hopelessly and insultingly, and yet remained worshipping. *Facilis descensus amoris!* Conceive his rage and dismay when he found he could not recover the perpendicular! Then did his round features squeeze themselves into excruciatingly sharp angles; then did he screw up his button mouth in vain; then, pending the arrival of the leisurely summoned Mercury, did he console himself bitterly with hysteric rapping of his snuff-box, which alas! at such a pinch was of no service. Have we not here the *reductio ad absurdum* of the great, unspeakable sorrow of being crossed in love!

'For twenty years successively, upon the death of a childless rich man, Will Honeycomb immediately drew on his boots, called for his horse, and made up to the widow;' but always to find her pre-engaged! Cottalus, again—'The Spectator' is our unimpeachable authority for these rare instances of the sorrowful grotesque—after having 'made his applications to more than you meet with in Mr. Cowley's ballad of mistresses, was at last smitten with a city lady of 20,000*l.* sterling; but died of old age before he could bring matters to bear!' Dare we break through the reserve that should surround the lovely and the sacred with a quasi-mystery, sufficiently to whisper of a Hottentot Venus, with acres of clouded coral for her lips, and a cavernous retreat of impish graces for a nose, bewailing the defection of her Mars, the cattle-lifter?

There is a grotesque in sorrow that is evident to the subject of it, and even enjoyable by him. A man of ripe judgment and presence of mind has been known to avoid or shift the grotesque of lending his hat to the playful breezes. There is also a grotesque so recondite as to tax the observation of dear friends to discover. When, for instance, you enacted the part of Menelaus—happily unwed—with quite an infinitesimal amount of satisfaction to yourself, what was there so irresistibly absurd that your intimate, Ulysses, who only heard the report, and did not by any means see the ridiculous despair of your gestures, or the spasmodic writhing of your features, sympathized only with the comical part of your forlornness? To you, not appreciating the absurdities of your condition, it was the riving of your heart; the knowledge that your Helen was a bloodless lie; a temporary negation of all things, during which you reached out your hand, and grappled only with the reeling night; an open bivouac with feeless, shivering ghosts on the hither bank of the Styx. To him it was simply a jocular aid to digestion. To this day it is a problem and a puzzle. Something grotesque there must have been, or so faithful and tried a friend would not have enjoyed or even discovered it. The gravity of his character adds to the difficulty of comprehending his conduct; for he has assumed to hold up the pointer of the third guide-post on this side of the Delectable Mountains, which latterly hung a little, having been damaged by the controversies of travellers. *Solvitur ridendo;* it is your turn now, in recovered sunshine, at an awful distance to pick out the grotesque from his sorrowful squabbles with his 'people's churchwarden,' and to smile benevolently at the picturesque miseries of Ulysses paterfamilias, who renews, in the person of the infant Telemachus, the periods of vaccination, teething, and hooping-cough. Perhaps, also, it is his turn to wonder, what is there ridiculous in human sorrow? Is it not the most sacred prerogative of friendship to chuckle at the despair of *amicissimi?* Puck was with him, suggesting with shrill voice and attenuated laughter, 'What a fool this mortal is!' Robin Goodfellow, in his 'hairy strength,' is with you, and shouts in your ear the same refrain with a great guffaw.

We would yield to none in our appreciation of the infinite seriousness and significance of death. We would hold by these as firmly as if they were preached to us with the splendid fervour of Sherlock, and enforced by the muffled thunder and ruin of an avalanche. It is not we

who first associate the notion of the grotesque with the person and the office of that pale terror. Such association has been open through all ages to the common perception of mankind. 'The favourite and principal emblem of mortality among our ancestors appears to have been the moral and allegorical pageant familiarly known by the appellation of the Dance of Death, which it has in part derived from the grotesque and often ludicrous attitudes of the figures that composed it, and especially from the active and sarcastical mockery of the ruthless tyrant upon his victims, which may be, in a great measure, attributed to the whims and notions of the artists who were employed to represent the subject.' The figures of this Dance of Death, with which the name of Hans Holbein has been, of late centuries, principally associated, studiously endeavour to convey the impression that Death is a jaunty fellow; smart; a little self-conscious and conceited, and fully able, for his part, to *give* a joke. The community of death, its uncertainty and inevitability, but chiefly its incongruity with all past functions and experience, are apt to tip the mortal dart with the juices of the herb that raises sardonic laughter. All obey the summons of this last master of the ceremonies: the pontiff in triple crown, and the beggar whose coronation, in spite of three slouched hats, is incomplete; the cardinal, who is one of the hinges of the gate of heaven, and the human turnspit in his kitchen; the queen who takes her daily bath of milk, and the poor who stand waiting for the precious gift of her generosity for the use of their families; the Quaker succinctly clothed, and the dancing dervish of full, gyrating drapery.

The essentially serious side of the question is, of course, not to seek:—

> 'Great God! on what a slender thread
> Hang everlasting things;
> The eternal state of all the dead
> Upon life's feeble strings!'

Mementoes of death have obtained in divers forms, and suggesting divers lessons. 'Remember that thou art mortal' fell sepulchrally on the ears of the feasting Philip of Macedon. The ancient Egyptians, at their banquets, sent round an attendant with a coffin in which was the image of a dead body carved in wood, made as like as possible in colour and workmanship, and generally about one or two cubits in length. 'Look upon this,' would the attendant say to the guest, 'then drink and enjoy yourself; for when dead you will be like this.' So Cyrenaic a version of the *dum vivimus vivamus* is, perhaps, not the truest homily to put into the mouth of such an effigy. A better though unuttered sermon is preached by the skull in Zurbaran's picture of the Franciscan, where, invested with a mystic profundity beyond the domain of mere colour, a monk in cowl and garment of sackcloth and ropen girdle, deprecates the future woe. No words of lighter import can be issuing from those divinely-weighted lips than

> 'Dies iræ, dies illa,
> Solvet sæclum in favilla.'

The transition, or rather the progress, is neither abrupt nor violent to the grotesqueness of the soul-forsaken body—

> 'Ah! lovely appearance of death!
> What sight upon earth is so fair?
> Not all the gay pageants that breathe
> Can with a dead body compare.
> With solemn delight I survey
> The corpse, when the spirit is fled,
> In love with the beautiful clay,
> And longing to lie in its stead.'

The idea of these verses by Charles Wesley had—except that of the last line—been substantially uttered, hundreds of years before, by that whimpering sentimentalist, Nero, as he contemplated the remains of Agrippina, his mother. And such admiration, so long as it confines itself to the statuesque effect of form and unpretentious repose, may pass without serious cavil. But no one may suppose that the grotesque is therefore excluded from the unshrined temple. 'The prominent characteristic of nature,' says Frederick von Schlegel, 'is an overflowing and exhaustless vital energy.' To be within the realm and category of nature, and not to share in this energy, seems abnormal and mon-

strous. Not only, however, is a dead body in this position, it is even placed under another disadvantage. The body is to us the exponent of beauty, genius, will, strength, emotion. It is the very vehicle of life; through whose glances, words, and gestures alone we get any knowledge of the person inhabiting it. We easily, therefore, transfer the idea of vitality to the body itself. Because it is a necessary accident, we forget that it is an accident at all. We identify all its modifications only with itself, as if it were self-invigorating and self-determining. We invest it with faculties which do not belong to it; and in the first moments of its strange loneliness and divorce from the soul, we are apt to demand something which it was never its function to supply. It occupies the very same space as heretofore; it is in the very attitude, it may be, of vigour and energy, or in the very pose of a boundless latent force; and we go to it for strength, for volition, for recognition. We find it irresponsive and powerless, and it thus appears ridiculous as a pretender and impostor.

The human body does not even put off the grotesque as it puts on corruption. The contrast between its former life and its present dissolved organisms is still apparent. And indeed, because it is a deeper shade to the stronger light than the one we have just mentioned, it has been more often indicated. We may be sure that the tongue of the great Roman satirist saluted his cheek quite as often as his tears blotted his verses, when he celebrated the few ounces of dust* which, for aught he knew, were then blowing about the world or giving ophthalmia to a Bithynian beggar; but which formerly, adhering with moisture and informed with soul, had been named Hannibal, blaster and scaler of the Alps, victor of Cannæ, fear of Rome. There is a sub-presentation of the grotesque in the kindred reflections which the world's dramatist has put into the mouth of Hamlet. And none better than Shakspeare knew of this lurking of the grotesque in the very penetralia and intensities of grief; or better understood that this liability to exhibit the grotesque was one of 'sorrow's crowns of sorrow.' That he has, through scenes so perilous, preserved to Ophelia the angelic beauty of her life, the integrity of her filial piety—which, as a clue of light and love, infallibly threaded the devious mazes of her tangled intellect—and, above all, the perfect pathos of her death, without obtruding the grotesque, is one of the scarcely minor marvels of his genius. He was, we are bound to acknowledge, materially assisted by Ophelia's madness, the exceptional laws of which, tolerating and demanding the grotesque, held in abeyance the law of congruity. We believe that there is a grotesque, even here: but we, for our part, shall defer seeking it out until after we have incurred the malison that threatens the disturber of Shakspeare's bones. If the reader wishes to investigate this grotesque, we advise him as a preliminary, to cool his veins with an iceberg; and we warn him that he will pay a life-long penalty for the analysis.

It was in the spirit of Juvenal and of Hamlet that Francis Beaumont wrote his Rembrandtesque poem 'On the Tombs in Westminster;' and that Landor apostrophized a lock of the 'calm hair, meandering in pellucid gold,' of the long forceless Medusa, Lucrezia Borgia.* It was partly in this spirit, and fearing lest sorrow should o'er-

* Strictly an ounce and a half. His *quot libras* is an overstatement.

* On the Tombs in Westminster.

Francis Beaumont.

'Mortality, behold and fear,
What a change of flesh is here!
Think how many royal bones
Sleep within these heaps of stones;
Here they lie, had realms and lands,
Who now want strength to stir their hands;
Where from their pulpits sealed with dust,
They preach "In greatness is no trust."
Here's an acre sown, indeed,
With the richest, royallest seed
That the earth did e'er suck in,
Since the first man died for sin:
Here the bones of birth have cried,
"Though gods they were, as men they died:'
Here are sands, ignoble things,
Dropped from the ruined sides of kings,
Here's a world of pomp and state,
Buried in dust, once dead by fate.'

leap itself, that Timanthes veiled with his robe the face of Agamemnon, at the sacrifice of the fair and innocent Iphianassa. And a candid reading of the whole passage very much favours the notion that Horace thought of the step which separates the pathetic, the specifically sublime, from the grotesque, the specifically ridiculous, when he recommended the enacting of murders behind the curtain. Niobe wept herself to an absurdity.

Instances abound of the grotesque in the manner of death. The exit of Empedocles from the world is not the worst example. He doomed himself to a sultry suicide down the inner steeps of Ætna, in order that he might be accounted a god; but his slipper, vomited from the uneasy volcano, revealed at once the manner of his decease and the blasphemous conceit of his aspirations. A disappointment of the same nature, it has been surmised by the gentle Elia, the unfortunate Clarence may have experienced, who was possibly drowned in a liquor that was *not* malmsey! Absalom, and his Drydenic antitype, Monmouth, might meet here also on common ground.

'I owe much, I leave nothing, I give the rest to the poor;' so ran the last will and testament of Rabelais. In one sense, the most sublime and self-denying of bequests. For all students of humanity know that, since every man has very little in comparison with the boundless stores of what he has not, and since the treasures of an empire are easily packed in a corner of the great hopes of indigence, to give away these is immeasurably greater than to bequeath a paltry legacy restricted to the narrow limits of one's own proprietary. Again, every man, by possessing, proves the little worth of the object of his grasp; and is, therefore, little to be praised for freely dispensing what he knows to be essentially valueless. But to give away what has never been tarnished in your eyes by ownership—eminences, and gilded pinnacles, and purpled cloud-palaces of gods, from which proximity has not dispelled the enchantment—this is to alienate your truest sources of wealth and satisfaction; this is to exhibit magnanimity of the most imperial order. Such reasoning is, of course, unassailable; and if it were our business to strew the flowers of sanctity over the memory of Rabelais, we might enforce it. At present, we leave his unique legacy to stand upon its own grotesque merits.

We conceive the jocular accessory of the execution of Sir Thomas More to be no true grotesque. Considering his character, there was nothing strained, nothing shockingly incongruous in his farewell to earth. He was an amiable, Christian philosopher, 'whose humility neither power nor piety could elate, and whose mirth even martyrdom could not spoil.' Christian people die daily: where a blameless life and a good conscience deprive the one inevitable event of its terror, there is perhaps no sufficient reason for a good man to vary the accustomed and calculated rotation of his moods. Every hour is a last hour, in so far as it might be so; and life is a doled-out succession of moments that are due to death. If More be unexcused, it is mere sophistry to palliate any merriment in the world.

To reduce theory to practice is oftentimes to risk the grotesque. Eminently this is the case in the department of feeling. Within the memory of the youngest of grey-headed men an illustrious personage died, and was universally lamented. As a sentiment, it would have been passably expressive to embody the whole people in one of the national emblems, and to say, 'The British lion mourns.' At that time a certain monumental lion disfigured a London thoroughfare. This animal took the opportunity of appearing indued with a pall hired by the day from some neighbouring undertaker. The pall, of course, fell flapping in the wind over the stark sides of the lion, now ruffling itself on the *os coccygis*, and anon dangling its white border over the countenance, as the cap frill of an ancient dame might fall about the face of her favourite cat. The passer-by, who took in all the circumstances much too faithfully for amusement, was astonished and horrified. His sorrow was too



Drawn by Adelaide Claxton

knightly and loyal to be diverted into anything more cheerful than the momentary energy of rage and reprobation of the unconscious caricature of grief. But how grotesque would such an exhibition have been if an indifferent person, vainly sought in Europe—say a Chinaman, or a native British Columbian from the banks of the golden Sus-ka-chewan—could have been brought to witness it!

Perhaps our French neighbours are entitled to claim the most fearful examples of the grotesque in the mode of death. The martyrs of the first Revolution, recumbent on the framework of the guillotine, with neck bared for the knife, foamed against Heaven. But Rousseau, a man of the same language and race, has bespoken a grander arena on which to act his part in grotesqueness. He has engaged, when the shivering universe shall stand before its Judge, to challenge the Supreme Being to an inspection of his 'Confessions' in octavo! The force of the madly sorrowful and ridiculous can no further go. Here the grotesque of sadness reaches at once climax and anti-climax; and here, within one word, our paper reaches its end.

Ernst ist das Leben—'Life is a very serious thing, as the German poet sings; and plainly, so far as we can see, even because it is so serious, hath God given us the pleasant faculty of smiling and laughing, to accompany us in our hard adventures as some impish dwarf did the knights of mediæval romance, that we may not be oppressed in spirit by excessive solitary brooding over the weighty duties of which we are the champions.' May our dwarf, whose nourishment is chiefly the grotesque, be without malice, and our chivalrous representative be named Christopher, knight and saint!

THE DAILY GOVERNESS.

'There are thousands of women in the world nobly fulfilling duties the most painful, with a firmness of resolution that would deserve so many statues to be erected in their honour, if heroism were not estimated rather by the splendour than the merit of the achievement.'

MILLMOTH'S FITZOSBORNE'S LETTERS.

PELTED by the unpitying sky;
Hail and sleet, and rain and snow,
Seem with keenest blasts to vie
Which shall prove her bitterest foe!
Drenched and weary, faint, forlorn,
'Mid that elemental whirl,
(To what kindlier fortunes born!)
Stands yon fair but fragile girl.

Once, Heaven's breath was scarcely let
On her blooming cheek to blow;
And if e'er her eye were wet
'Twas but for another's woe!
For her infant years had grown
Where no sordid cares could come;
And her mind had caught the tone
Breathed throughout that cherished home!

Graceful objects round her shone
In that home so calm and bright;
And whate'er she looked upon
Seemed to wear intenser light.
On her cradle visions rare
Beamed of Painting's golden prime;
And the strains that lulled her there
Were the songs of elder time.

From her earliest years she moved
In an orbit, fancy-fraught;
Circled but by friends she loved,
And by master-spirits taught.
Books her playmates were, and she
Found in them companions meet;
And, excursive as the bee,
Culled from all things something sweet.

Nature, best instructress, spread
Richest lore before her sight,
And her ample page she read
Day by day with new delight:
She could scan Creation's face
In its simplest, homeliest guise;
And perceive some inner grace
Strange, or dim to other eyes!

Ancestry, might that avail,
She could boast of great and good;
Ay, than rank a loftier tale,
Hearts with Honour's soul imbued.
Troops of friends, if friends they are
Who but wear the swallow's wing,
And from Fortune's frowns afar
Seek and find another spring!

Fair nursling of a hero's love
Cut off amid the blaze of fame,
Upon the red Redan, who strove
To win himself a deathless name;
Stay of a widowed mother's life,
To help her Fortune's ills sustain,
What recks that elemental strife,
That blinding sleet or driving rain!

The contumelies of prosperous pride,
Though ne'er so keenly felt before,
That track her footsteps as they glide
Through yon inhospitable door,
Are light to the o'erwhelming blow,—
That Aaron's rod of cureless grief,—
That has no tears for selfish woe,
So finds in minor ills relief.

And as the mourned and cherished past
Now flits before her mental eye,
She half believes her lot o'ercast
By some life-long fatality:
Until a joyous infant band
Greets her approach with genial smile,
And clasping close each loving hand
She can lay down her Cross a while!

THE HOUSE IN PICCADILLY.

A TALE FOR MAIDENS, WIVES, AND WIDOWS; AND, INCIDENTALLY, FOR ELDERLY GENTLEMEN.

CHAPTER IX.

MRS. KNIGHTLY RECEIVES HER FRIENDS.

THEY were at home at last, after having had the pleasantest tour in the world, home, at the house in Kensington Gore, which old Lord Clifford had vacated for a smaller one on the Bayswater side of the gardens. Georgie and her husband had both begged the kind old man to remain in his own house, to live with them still; but he had firmly refused to do so, though he was touched by their so evidently and heartily wishing it. They were better alone, he said, in the house which was theirs now, and his no longer. He would still be near them; still be enabled to come daily and see his darling Georgie. He had wished to refurnish the house, that his daughter might find it all bright, and fresh, and new when she came back there as a bride; but they had both pleaded that he should not do this; the old belongings would be dearer to them both, they said. But when they came home, Lord Clifford was there to meet them, and after dinner was over he led them into what had been his study; but in place of the old veneered book-cases, and shaky writing-tables, and hard horsehair chairs, he had compromised with his feelings, when he had been requested not to refurnish the whole of the house, by collecting a quantity of splendidly carved oak library furniture, and beautiful bronzes, for this room, which would be Rupert's now. And the tears of the daughter, as she hung on his arm thanking him for this special mark of attention to her husband, were pleasanter to him than anything had ever been before; ay, pleasanter even than had been the first sight of those orders and rewards of gallantry which were hung on his uniform coats over his brave old breast.

Soon, though, there was a sorrow in their midst, Mrs. Knightly, Mrs. Knightly, junior — 'received her friends.'

She met Rupert's sisters at the door of her drawing-room (she had decided to receive her friends in the evening), regardless of propriety, looking prettier than ever, they both thought, in this first flush of her happiness, and in her magnificent wedding dress of white satin and Honiton lace. And her bright eyes had never been brighter, nor her lovely little face more glowing than when she whispered, 'Don't be surprised, Gussie, whomsoever you may see' The whisper and fond, loving, sisterly, sympathetic clasp of the hand fortunately prepared Gussie; for almost the first person she saw was Frank Tollemache. The first sight of him told Gussie that if he was prepared to throw prudence to the winds and ask her to marry him, she could be no longer strong. And in spite of that cloud which Colonel Crofton was hanging over them, Mrs. Knightly could not have found a happier pair than Augusta and Frank Tollemache amongst the two hundred and odd who thronged her saloons on this her first reception of her friends as Rupert Knightly's wife.

The Dowager Mrs Knightly had not chosen to be present, though Georgie and Rupert, who had sedulously refrained from touching upon unpleasant topics, had both implored her to join them. But Colonel Crofton was there, and by his presence severely tested poor Florence's self-control. Gerald was there too; but a cloud seemed to have come over the gay young soldier; and not even his favourite sister Georgie could win him to be other than moody and gloomy. He had some private grief, evidently; and when Georgie pressed him on

the point, he admitted that he had, and promised he would come up and talk to her about it.

Young Mrs. Knightly was a star, a gem, an—anything that is bright, flashing, brilliant, and lovely—in her bridal robes and wreath, and with her dark perfumed hair turned loosely up from her pretty white brow. And Augusta might have sat for a portrait of the Serpent of old Nile, so superb was she in her dark, proud, southern beauty, set off and adorned as it was by jewels and rich raiment. And still even Colonel Crofton was fain to confess that, lovely as both these were, lovely as many other women who were present that night were, Florence eclipsed them all. She had wailed and wept so for the last three weeks that any other woman's good looks would have been utterly washed out and destroyed. But she had only brought herself to the perfect purity and whiteness of a marble statue—a marble statue with great brown eyes full of life, too full almost, and golden rippling hair. Always beautiful she was; now startlingly lovely,—far lovelier than when the rose of happiness and health had reigned above the lily in her cheek. Indifferent to every one else, scarcely heeding what others said to her, she was keenly alive, every nerve was strained to catch the lightest sound that fell from the lips, the lightest look that came from the eyes of this man who had so won every atom of her heart, that she could not take it from him, though cruel fate had ordained that he should marry her mother. And seeing this, Mrs. Knightly — Rupert's wife — determined to throw herself into the breach before a chasm yawned for ever between happiness and Floy.

'My plan is, Gussie,' said Frank Tollemache, 'to shut up the Hall for a few years, pay off all the servants, with the exception of one old gardener and his wife, who'll live in the Hall to keep it from going to pieces through the damp, and go abroad. I shall be—we shall be able to come back in a few years, you see, and everything will be as right as possible.'

Augusta's answer was, 'Well, Frank, we'll talk about it to-morrow; it's very hard though that I can't have what I ought to have; if I had, there need be no shutting up of the Hall and going abroad.'

'That's right of you both,' said Georgie, encouragingly, who had heard these two speeches; 'take the leap bravely, and you'll light all right on the other side of the hedge, I dare say.'

The next morning, at about one o'clock, Gerald Knightly was sitting, gravely conversing with his brother and sister-in-law.

'And who is Tiny Braybrooke?' asked the lady.

'The sweetest little thing in the world.'

'That's no answer, my dear Gerald; who is she? What is she? and where does she live?'

'She's an orphan and an heiress; she's the sweetest and the prettiest little thing in the world; (no offence, Georgie, I don't mean that she's prettier than you, but she's so different,) and she lives at an old place called the Woodlands, between Bromley and Beckenham.'

'And why won't she marry you, Gerald? the sweetest and prettiest might consider herself next, to me, also the most fortunate woman in the world to gain you. Why won't this Miss Braybrooke think so? Only think, Rupert, Gerald unsuccessful in a love affair!'

'It isn't exactly that, you see,' replied Gerald, rather touchingly; 'but two years ago—more than that—when I asked her, she said, "No! she'd only marry a guardsman." I haven't asked her since, but I know she likes me.'

'So that was the reason you wanted to change, was it, Gerald?' asked Rupert, laughing; 'and how old may the young lady be now?'

'About eighteen.'

'Well, I'd try again if I were in your place, Gerald, and trust to our mother coming round entirely. Georgie's going over to speak to her to-day; but I understand now, old fellow, the full extent of that generosity towards me which has induced you to refuse all my mother's offers of serving you. Georgie shall

go and call on this Miss Braybrooke in a day or two. You take my advice; sixteen never knows its own mind, and try again.'

'I shall wait now,' replied Gerald, 'until this affair with Crofton has blown over, as it will surely, if Georgie takes it in hand.'

But when Mrs. Rupert Knightly entered the drawing-room of the Piccadilly mansion that day, she saw that something unusual had occurred; and on being put in possession of the facts, she determined on not creating extra confusion in the house by speaking just then to her mother-in-law about Colonel Crofton.

Augusta had told her mother that she was going to marry Frank Tollemache in a fortnight. And Mrs. Knightly had refused the one request Frank and Gussie had made to her—that her daughter might be married from *her* house. Augusta would not permit Georgie or any one else to try their eloquence where she had failed, so it came to pass, at the end of a stormy fortnight, that it was from her brother Rupert's house that she went forth as Lady Tollemache.

The wedding was a very quiet one, for they had all felt that in the absence of their mother it could not be otherwise. It was quiet, too, for another reason. They did not like to put any public slight upon Colonel Crofton (for they all felt that some way or other he would soon be related to them), by excluding him from a ceremony at which many of their mutual friends, who would soon know all about the state of affairs, should be present. So they got out of their difficulties by not asking any of their mutual friends.

Miss Braybrooke, otherwise Tiny, was there, in the character of a future sister-in-law, for Gerald had taken Rupert's and Georgie's advice, which was wonderful considering he had asked them to give it, and Tiny had shown herself wiser at eighteen than she had been two years before. It had all been rapidly arranged, for she had only one relative—an uncle—to consult. He was one of Gerald's brother officers, and had always intended that such should be the end. She was a 'tiny,' indeed; a blue-eyed mite; small, and fair, and delicate. She looked as if a rough wind would blow her away altogether, or a rough word break her in two. In her double character of beauty and heiress, Tiny had been very much spoilt; and a less thoroughly generous-tempered man than Gerald might have doubted the wisdom of intrusting his happiness to such a stormy little creature's keeping. For she was one of those fairy-like beings with large flashing turquoise-coloured eyes and fragile forms, who can on occasions behave like hurricanes. However, Gerald was troubled with no such doubts, as he looked down into the sweet, childishly-lovely face that was lifted to meet his gaze with such ingenuous fondness; and after a day or two's communion with that pure, unsullied, warm, truthful nature, Gerald's sisters were not troubled by such doubts either.

Florence and Celestine Braybrooke were Augusta's bridesmaids, and with the Rupert Knightlys and Gerald, were the only persons present at that quiet wedding which, after all the hindrances that had been thrown in its way, came off early in September. So when most of their friends were down at their places in the country, enjoying themselves, Sir Francis Tollemache had just concluded arrangements for shutting up his old house, and letting his shooting for a few years, till such time as he could come back and take his place in the county again—an unencumbered man.

CHAPTER X.

GEORGIE 'THROWS HERSELF INTO THE BREACH.'

Mrs. Rupert Knightly kept Floy with her for some days after Gussie had become Lady Tollemache. She judged it best to do so for several reasons. One was, that in the companionship of herself and Tiny Braybrooke—who had also remained on a visit—Floy would not have so much time for cultivating grief. Another was, that until she herself

had found an opportunity of talking privately to Mrs. Knightly, and trying to make matters more harmonious in the Piccadilly household, Floy was best away from her mother.

So one morning, after seeing them quietly settled, Tiny at something that she called work, and Floy in an easy chair, with a book that she could not read, Mrs. Rupert Knightly got into her little pony phaeton, and drove herself over to see Rupert's mother.

Before starting, she made this resolution—and she kept it too—that let Mrs. Knightly, senior, say what she would, she would not lose her temper; and that nothing should tempt her to say anything that might cause Mrs. Knightly, senior, to lose her temper.

Mrs. Knightly was suffering from a soft and gentle attack of low spirits and sulks, when Georgie, with a fearless step, and a bright, cordial greeting, entered the pretty pale-green octagon room, which had witnessed the disclosure of those plans which had spread dismay through the Knightly family. So when Georgie bent over and kissed her, she was only allowed to touch a very small and cold portion of her cheek. She looked upon Georgie as a rebel, and wished to punish her; only she didn't know how it could be done.

Now positive incivility would not have checked Mrs. Rupert Knightly in the good work she had felt it to be her mission to undertake; therefore coolness had just no effect whatever upon her. Mrs. Knightly would have been a stony-hearted woman, which she was not, if she had been capable of resisting the geniality and affection of Georgie's manner, as the latter took off her bonnet and mantle, and seated herself on a low chair, by the side of the little couch on which Mrs. Knightly reclined.

'I have come over to talk to you about a great many things,' she began, frankly; 'but, first of all, dear Mrs. Knightly, I must tell you that Gussie went away very sad indeed in consequence of your refusal. No, no, not because you wouldn't give her the money, but because you refused to see and be friendly with, Frank, with whom you've been friendly so long, you know, and because you wouldn't be at her wedding. I cheered her up as well as I could, by telling her you'd soon write, as I'm sure you will, and make good my words.'

Mrs. Knightly would have answered angrily here, but she could not, for her hand was taken and kissed. Before she could frame another sort of answer, her daughter-in-law went on:

'And I can't have you staying away from us—from our house—in this way. It can't be, you know;' my own dear Rupert's mother not friendly with me! That must not be. Say you will come, and soon.'

Mrs. Knightly murmured a faint assent.

'Now I'm coming to the point,' Georgie continued, waxing hot in spite of herself, and feeling a fine well-grown bullet rolling about in her throat as she spoke; 'the point which has in a measure created this unhappy estrangement between you and your children. No, dear, dearest Mrs. Knightly—don't speak yet, please; but let me go on, while I can. Rupert—all of them, in fact—are too proud to speak and plead as I am going to. I think them wrong in that respect. But first, before I go any further, you must give me a forgiveness beforehand, because I'm going to speak of a subject you may not like to have spoken about—the marriage with Colonel Crofton you have contemplated.'

Mrs. Knightly stooped and kissed Georgie's forehead; and, happy omen, there were tears, not of anger, in her eyes.

'It is you, not the property, they all care for so much,' Georgie continued, speaking spasmodically, in spite of herself, 'you believe that, don't you? They can none of them endure that their mother should bear another name. Still comparatively young as you are—and pretty as you are—it is only natural that your hand and heart should be sought by many. I dare say,' she continued, smiling, 'Colonel Crofton is not singular in his desire to possess himself of both.'

Georgie was using the right wea-

pons; Mrs. Knightly was giving way fast. Georgie read that she was, in the deepening expression of gravity on her face, in the drying up of her tears; and, more than all, in the firmer grasp impressed upon her own hand.

'It was only natural, too, that you at first should be undecided as to whether you should pledge him your hand. As to giving him your heart, I am sure—we are all sure—you have not done, and you will never do it.'

'You are quite, quite right, my dear,' sobbed the completely routed lady. 'Oh! if you had only said this to me before.'

'But it is not too late now, dear mother,' interposed Georgie, fondly; 'there is no feeling in favour of Colonel Crofton to combat, is there?'

'None whatever, my dear,' simply replied Mrs. Knightly.

'Then now I may tell you something else,' said Georgie; 'and that is, that Florence has lost her heart to Colonel Crofton; and though we none of us like him very well, yet—and I know so well how desirous you are of doing everything to make your children happy, if they'll only let you know how it's to be done—you had better for her sake give her a fortune large enough to induce him to propose to her. What do you think?'

And then, for upwards of an hour, Mrs. Knightly and her daughter-in-law amicably discussed various plans for bringing about such a desirable consummation as Floy's being united to Colonel Crofton.

It was finally decided—subject to Rupert's approval—that Mrs. Knightly should inform Colonel Crofton, by word of mouth, of her change of sentiment—that she should at the same time tell him the amount of money she intended at once settling upon her daughters, both of them; for one or two of Georgie's disclosures had sent Frank Tollemache—disinterested, unselfish Frank—up in her estimation again. They must trust, then, to his feeling of honour for everything to come right, as he could not but be aware of the havoc he had made in poor Floy's heart.

'And now,' said Georgie, springing to her feet when these important arrangements had been made, 'do let me take you for a drive in my new pony-carriage; you haven't seen it yet. Rupert gave it to me only yesterday; and I think you'll say it's far prettier than Mrs. Vining's, that we've all thought perfection till now.'

Mrs. Knightly had never bestowed a single thought upon Mrs. Vining's pony-phaeton; but she did not say so. She contented herself with rapturously praising everything—Georgie's driving, the carriage, the ponies, the harness, everything about it, when she was at last comfortably seated in it, in a more than usually becoming bonnet, and with one of the handsomest Cashmeres over her shoulders that had ever caused the eyes of a Frenchwoman to glisten, and her heart to ache, for the possession of just such another.

So they rolled comfortably through Regent Street, and Georgie was patience itself as regards shopping. Mrs. Knightly made a colossal selection of flowers at Eagle's, and of dresses at Swan and Edgar's, and directed them to be packed there and sent to her daughter, Lady Tollemache. And she purchased expensive gifts for the daughter-in-law who was by her side, as well as for the one Gerald was going to give her, and whom she had only seen in the course of one stiff morning call. But it was upon Floy especially—upon poor Floy, whom she blushed hotly to think of as having suffered through her in any way, that she lavished the largest amount of presents. Nothing was too rich, beautiful, and costly for the mother's heart to offer to Floy.

CHAPTER XI.

SETTLING DOWN.

A few months have passed over their heads since that drive behind the new ponies, when I bring the Knightly family before the reader for the last time. It is the close of an early spring evening, and there is that air of lassitude over the three

ladies who are sitting in the little green room, which shows that one great excitement is over and another is yet to come on. Mrs. Knightly, Lady Tollemache, and Mrs. Rupert Knightly were resting a while after the fatigues of the wedding-breakfast, before they dressed for the grand ball Mrs. Rupert gave on the occasion of the marriage of her sister and brother-in-law, in her new house. Yes; hers it was now. Mrs. Knightly, senior, had delighted in sacrifices and peace-offerings from the time Georgie had risked angering her by telling her what she ought to do.

She had lost no time in making over to all her children that which should have been theirs before. She had prayed Rupert and Georgie to live when in town at the old family mansion in Piccadilly, though when it came to the point they would both rather have stayed in the house where they had made their first start in married life. And now she was going to divide her time equally between her three children who were married and settled in England.

It had all come round as Georgie had said it would. Possibly she might have given Colonel Crofton a hint as to the course it would best become him to pursue. At any rate, as soon as he was given to understand that Mrs. Knightly had definitely altered her mind, he recommenced shining on Florence's horizon again. And Floy, who had faded and withered when he had withdrawn what was more than the sun to her, bloomed freshly as of yore ere very long. She was solemnly betrothed to him soon—as soon as he was quite clear what she was to have; and then her worshipping love for him was such, that though they all marvelled at it, they had none of them the heart to tell her how really cold and calculating was this man whom she adored.

Gerald and Florence were married on the same day from the house in Piccadilly; for Tiny had no mother and no female relative; and Gerald, who was deserving of ten times as much love and devotion as Colonel Crofton, had not such a wealth of it lavished upon him by his young bride as had that gallant officer.

The Croftons were to reside abroad; and though he had given some sort of promise to her mother not to play, it was to the orange-groves of Baden-Baden that he took his wife; and there they remain, in spite of the frequent invitations they receive from mother, brothers, and sister in England. Once, on the occasion of the christening of the little heir of the Tollemaches, Florence expressed a wish to see them all, but on her husband's replying, 'Well, my dear, and as I don't care about it, you can go and have that pleasure, and stay as long as you like, and I'll remain here;' on his replying in this way she crushed the wish out of her heart; for rather than leave him for one day she would submit to never seeing any of those well-loved ones at home again.

It is her vocation to adore her husband, and nobly she fulfils it. Her idol has never been shaken on its podestal yet, and never will be shaken; though no idol of clay or gold could receive such loving worship more coolly than he does. He is an indifferent, not a negligent or unkind husband. He is always polite, and calmly affectionate to her; and though her warm heart yearns 'for more' in her deep love and reverence for him, she is humbly grateful and thankful for so much.

He likes his golden-haired, dark-eyed wife to be courted and admired—within bounds; and he makes her dress richly, to set off her beauty; and he takes care that she shall have plenty of amusement—and that her amusements do not interfere with his. And here his interest in her ceases.

And she—well, her one prayer is that she may not for one hour survive this man. Florence Crofton was a woman to be one of two things—there could be no medium—a tyrant or a slave. She is far happier as she is, than if fate had made her the former.

Lady Tollemache and Georgie, both happy wives, with loving husbands ever anxious to please and



Drawn by Lucien A. Wiles p. 41

THE DRAWING-ROOM FALLS

make them happy, sigh and shake their heads as they think of the state of bondage poor Floy must be in, when she can't even come to see them; and Tiny, who rules Gerald absolutely, but so gracefully that he doesn't know it, looks upon her as little better than an idiot for ever caring about that horrid man; for Colonel Crofton was the one member of the family into which she had entered whom Tiny could not take into her large, warm heart. Indeed, she had honoured Colonel Crofton with her profound, unconcealed, and hearty dislike; and he had been rather favourably disposed towards her for it than otherwise. He surely had something of the spaniel and the walnut-tree in his nature.

Rupert Knightly is entitled to write M.P. after his name now; and he is the master of Warmingston Hall, and of the Warmingston fox-hounds. He distinguishes himself rather more in the latter capacity than he does in the house; for up to the present time he has shown that he considers silence to be the better part.

Gerald is in the Guards, though Tiny gave up the point so magnanimously.

Mrs Knightly — rather prettier and more blooming in her grand maternal character than she was before — is far happier than when she had too much power in her hands. They would perhaps be the happiest family in the world, were it not for their occasional sad thoughts of Floy, who considers herself the favoured by fate of the Knightly race.

A. H. T.

THE DRAWING-ROOM 'PARIS.'

'If he will not when he may,
When he will he shall have nay.'
WITHER.

THREE Sisters fair, of charms so rare,
As Paris might himself perplex—
Whose form and face his choice shall grace
The paragon of all her sex?

And while they seem, to Fancy's dream,
Three goddesses like those of yore;
He deems himself, conceited elf!
The 'Paris' of that festive floor.

Which shall the golden apple win,
Where charms so nearly balanced are?
He hesitates; a lord steps in,
And claims the fairest of the fair!

In vain, in vain, the Sisters twain
Are by the would-be Paris sought;
Both say him nay, he turns away,
A sad but useful lesson taught.

THE BLOODLESS BATTLE OF BRIGHTON.

BY the special wish of the Lord Lieutenant of the county, the Marquis of Flintshire, the Downshire Volunteers were present at the great bloodless battle at White Hawk Down on Easter Monday. And I need scarcely say that Captain St. Ives and his gallant Chicklebury Company (including myself) were there in the vanguard.

I am happy also to mention that the hideous rhubarb lace, originating, it is said, in the predilection of a quondam apothecary captain for that medicinal colour, had been a week only before discarded, and black and silver substituted on our cuffs and shakos—a grave, hearse-like ornament, suitable for men who are ready to be the slayers and buriers of any of England's enemies who shall be madmen enough at any time to risk inevitable sea-sickness of the most frightful description, in order to try and scale our invulnerable chalk cliffs.

We all came up from Downshire, 400 strong (our Chicklebury Company musters 50 men), on the Saturday night, a voluntary subscription covering our expenses, and we met on parade opposite St. Barabbas's Church, Pimlico, at the painfully early hour of six.

There had been a slight and foolish disagreement between our corps and the 99th Tidewaiters,' who complained that we were all farmers, and commanded by a horse-jobber—referring to our colonel, the celebrated Colonel Hanger, so well known on the turf, and whose father was a friend of one of our excellent and famous kings during his glorious regency. But a few judicious words from the Marquis of Flintshire settled the difference; and the adjutant of the gallant Tidewaiters was reprimanded for his irritating language. It was finally arranged that we were to march to glory between the Tidewaiters and the Government Office Door Openers' and Lyon's Inn corps, which we did with no ill effects.

When I went to the night porter of Old Inn (for I slept on Sunday at a London friend's chambers), and told him to put me down to be called at 4½ A.M., he did not express the slightest surprise, but calmly going to a black board that hung inside the gateway, he marked me down as

No. 5 at 4½,

and pointing out, at the same time, the humiliating fact that

No. 2 was down for 4;

and No. 1 for 3½;

and No. 9, already in bed, for 2!

So that instead of being the alertest of Volunteers, as I had vain-gloriously imagined myself, I actually discovered myself to be only a slothful laggard in the rear of Honour.

I took great precautions that night. I furbished up my rifle; I brushed my uniform; I cleaned my bayonet; I loaded my wicker travelling flask with old port, and my havresac (as large as a medium carpet bag) with cold meat and bread; I laid my breakfast ready to hand, and placed a candle and matches close to my bedside.

Suffice it to say my precautions were crowned with success. I awoke in the dreary gray, and was at the rendezvous half an hour too soon. Already the streets were dotted with gray uniforms. There were Volunteers who lived in Chelsea running to the Tower Hamlets for lost knickerbockers, and men of the Minories speeding in flying cabs to Bedford Square for mislaid ramrods. Indeed, so great was the general zeal, that I saw a Queen's Westminster Volunteer at 8 P.M. on Sunday night sitting in mournful grandeur under a tree in Hyde Park, intending to sleep there, in order to be in time at the Victoria Station in the morning. The day promised well—the sky

> 'Brightened to blue from a silvery grey.'
> BROWNING.

The gilt figures on the western clock-faces were glistening in the morning sun: the Whitechapel sun beautiful, though it did shine from

father a low neighbourhood. The clocks all struck six with pleasant and harmonious disagreement. The scarlet band of the Door Openers come in by ones and twos, staggering under drums, or encircled by Laocoon wreaths of wide-mouthed brass instruments. Natty, bright-eyed little fifers come strutting, drum-majors carrying gilt kitchen pokers ornamented with the balls of pump-handles, and lastly our six electro-plated bugles, hung by crimson bell-pulls. Up come our men with quick, smart step, and cheerful, good-natured greetings. Up come our officers—St. Ives, Foresight, Linton, Barberini, Hawker, Natkin, Marsh, Douglas, &c.; and there is much exchange of fun and prophecies about the weather. Lastly, to crown all, up comes Captain Maximilian Bagshaw, who is on the staff, a very Agamemnon, stupendous in a large cocked hat fluttering with scarlet and white feathers plucked from the tail of the domestic fowl—the innocent cock of the walk. In his belt is tucked several sheets of writing-paper; and, taken as a whole, he is, I think I am justified in saying, the sublimest and most unparalleled sight that my eyes beheld on the glorious day of our bloodless victory. On horseback the hat would have been striking, on foot it was gorgeous and superb. Under such a willing, good-natured man, in such a hat, the Downshire were certain of new laurels.

We were proved, the band clanged and pounded, and through an enthusiastic crowd of early milkmen we proceeded to the station to take the train. Four hundred of us tumbled in—a snorting shriek, and we were off. There were twenty-two carriages, and we were in the second of eight trains that took down the 20,000 men, the conquerors in the bloodless battle of Brighton.

The air thinned and brightened, a few wet wafers of rain fell on our faces, then a rainbow threw itself over the sky and joined the dark clouds to the bright. The wind rose, and the blue widened out to windward. And now blackbirds began to dot the green fields; the young corn showed its sharp points; and primroses appeared, pale and innocent, nestling under the hedges; then rustic roofs and woods; and lastly the Downs, rolling away, gray or sunny, to seaward; a little chat, a little fabrication of hoods and capes out of penny papers to keep out the wind, and we were at Brighton.

We marched at once for the Level, where our section of the Volunteer army was to pile arms and rest till the gun fires: for we are in the first division, and Lord Umbra was to lead us to the inoffensive battle.

'We came, we saw, and we conquered.' Our march to the Level was like a Roman triumph. The Brighton maidens could not have looked more smiling and pleased if we had come to deliver them from actual French bondage. Magenta scarfs waved in the wind; the balconies were turned into bower-pots of pretty faces; little arch bonnets crowded every doorway. In the streets the country people—rather amphibious at Brighton—grinned and cheered. Flags blew crimson from roof and tower. The bands alternately played 'Poor Uncle Sam,' and wished they were in Dixey's Land, so that the air rang with the clash and ring of the brazen discord. Music, Babylonian in noise, was pounded into our ears as the scarlet and the gray marched onwards till they found their Level.

The rifles are piled in stacks; then the havresacs are pillaged, and the men collect round the bivouac fires and the great frothing, seething caldrons of hot coffee; the great green enclosure brims with soldiers; and my front-rank man—a musical soul—compares the scene to the opening of the 'Etoile du Nord.' The military bands file in and debouch towards the foot-lights, opening out like so many great scarlet flowers expanding at day-break in one of the virgin forests in South America.

'And here comes the tenor,' said my metaphorical friend, who, by-the-by, is in the law, as a dark man in a cloak advanced at the head of the 27th Shoreditch Sappers. 'Clamp! boong!' in come the Queen's West-

minster, the 39th Finsbury, and that splendid corps from Mile End, with heads erect and martial bearing, each corps to its respective ground, marked out by large white placards. Every cross-belt was in place, every cartouche-box held its due number of rounds of blank cartridge, every bayonet was sharp and bright, every badge and scarlet *pompon* in proper and soldierly trim.

Now, the rifles once wigwammed, the men break off into chatty clumps till the gun fires. There is the long refreshment tent to visit, or the coffee caldrons to dip into. There is the shadowy windmill on the distant slope of the gray Downs to observe with delight. There is the position of the sea to speculate over, and the clear atmosphere that makes the outlines of the houses so sharp to rhapsodize upon. In the mean time fresh regiments arrive on the ground, or defile past us on either road. The men's step—the hoarse words of command—the cantering up of confused adjutants, all serve to amuse people determined to be pleased.

The weather 'takes up'—the sunshine is lovely in its very coquettishness. Now we 'fall in,' and are proved; numbered; changed from twos into fours, and from fours into twos; our ammunition counted; our rifles examined; our bulky haversacs hung correctly; and our 'wheels' and changes of face tested. We are graver and less idle than usual, because we are all in earnest, being ingredients in a great national and historical experiment, while officers are still 'nagging,' fuming, fretting, swearing, and blaming us for executing their own jumbled orders.

'Boom! boom!' the signal guns fire (no man knows where) on the Stoyne, far away on the Downs, in the Pavilion Gardens, or somewhere on the sea-shore, and we prepare to march on to the Race-course Hill. Long ago the last train slid up the misty valley, and brought the last batch of the 20,000 Volunteers. It is about half-past eleven o'clock—we left London at seven—and now 20,000 English Volunteers are ready to fight any enemy of Old England.

Slowly in companies we march up towards the Race-course. Half of us go by the sea-shore. But I am part of first division and two brigades of the second—about 1,200 men—whom the Duke of some place or other is leading.

We march with triumphant war music, with the bright sea and the sky smiling on us, between walls of bright eyes, happy, rosy, country faces and omnipresent girlhood. We pass drags, gigs, traps, carts, and trucks with a smart, swinging pace, already pretty well sure of a day's pleasure not easily to be forgotten. The mob are delighted with everything—with the leather aprons and spades and pickaxes of the pioneers—with the gilt sceptres of the drum-majors—with the little brass-bound drums of the band-boys. Bagshaw's tremendous hat and feathers is loudly cheered. If the mob ever betrays any want of judgment, it is in constantly mistaking our smart doctor for a general and the drum-major of the Door Openers for the commander-in-chief.

Now we leave the trim avenues and paved streets, and get on the turf—the green springy turf, dark-veined with ruts, and here and there rank with the grassy growth of a wet spring. Our lungs inhale greedily the fresh, pure air, and we are ready for any work. We pass at the back of the Grand Stand, and three-quarters of a mile further, on the sloping Northern Downs on the centre of the Horse-shoe ridge, we brigade; and soon after the second division, arriving by way of the Marine Parade, brigades also on White Hawk Down in nine solid black squares striped and banded with flushing scarlet. The London Scottish, the St. George's, the Middlesex, &c., are all there massed in solid phalanxes.

The resemblance to a Derby Day increases. The trampled turf, variegated with orange-peel and flying sandwich papers, looks as it does in May at Epsom. After a like manner the little black people sprinkle over the grass, looking in the distance like wavering trains of spilt gunpowder.

Mobs seethe up from Kemp Town on our right, and emerge from all parts of Brighton like ants from a disturbed anthill. Behind the brigade are two lines of the 18th Hussars, all blue and gold, and behind them the Hampshire Guerilla Horse, the riders conspicuous in plumed wideawakes. It is supposed that the sprinkled gunpowder represents nearly half a million of people. The Stand brims with black dots. The valley between the Race Hill and Red Hill, two miles to the east, alone is empty. The artillery are on the brow of a hill, and there are guns for the supposititious enemy's use above the Rifle Butt Valley on the southern extremity of Red Hill, near the Ovingdean Road, about two miles from the Grand Stand. The Race Hill and Red Hill, in fact, form a basin with steep sides, bisected by White Hawk Down. Now as the guns pass us on their way to their stations, jolting and jolting, with their powder-chests, levers and linstocks, and muff-capped guardians, the horses driven by men in smock-frocks, wearing orange labels in their hats, like newly-pressed conscripts, we are allowed to fall out, and unsling our havresacs, uncork our flasks, and lay down our ponderous rifles; and as the twin sandwiches are unfolded and a general gurgle is heard along our ranks, there is time to look round on the brave and free shoreland we are resting near.

See how the fleet cloud-shadows are manœuvring over the sloping corn and fallow fields and along the grassy shoulders of the chalky hills! What a lovely, fitful, and variable light glances over the thousands of happy faces, and over the squares of gray, black, and scarlet! What is that semi-luminous wall of mist away there to the southern horizon? Why, Englishmen, that is the great sea, that Shakespeare says 'serves us in the office of a wall:' and is our best rampart. How glassy gray it is, with that quiet, subdued, lustrous splendour upon it, just where the white specks of sails, small as a gull's wing, dot its surface. The sea is looking at us with the tranquil, hoar majesty of an aged deity.

A running, clicking sound, then a prickly glitter of steel points, as we fix bayonets and form close columns to be inspected. It is past one when Lord Clyde, chased by a cluster of officers, plumed and laced, dashes past our ranks, and we present arms with that regulated triple movement so difficult to do with complete and steady exactitude.

Lord Clyde goes again—hunted back to the Grand Stand, and as he does so our brigades form into open column and 'march past.' We take an hour and twenty minutes to do it, and then the bands begin again to thump, and pound, and chime.

We get rather nervous as our handful approaches the crisis. Our officers get more and more alert. They get quite pathetic in their appeals, or they wrangle among themselves. The brigades wind on towards the Stand like huge wriggling black snakes spotted with scarlet.

Hawker, that smart and indefatigable sergeant, becomes rather 'naggug' and tormenting. He says, 'For Heaven's sake, gentlemen, keep still.' You would really think from Hawker's manner that a second Waterloo was about to commence. He is rather fretful at the laxity of private Clinton. He dreadfully harasses that unfortunate youth. It is every moment, 'Now do keep quiet, Mr. Clinton;' 'Now keep your rifle steady, Mr. Clinton;' 'Now do look to the right and mind the wheel, Mr. Clinton;' 'Mind your fours, Mr. Clinton.' Under this course of treatment, Clinton at an early hour becomes pale and jaded. Officers should never 'nag,' for it worries men without improving them.

No sound now but 'Steady with that double,' 'Pray look to your centre,' 'Mind the wheel,' 'Forward,' and so on. Every man stiffens himself into a hero. Every man squares his chest and keeps his eyes staring forward, for we are just now marching past Lord Clyde.

We are like a wall—yes, straight and even as a fortress wall. 'Bravo!' the people applaud. 'Best we've seen yet!' is the cry as we double. There are absurd rumours that Lord Clyde is seen to applaud us, and M'Murdo to point us specially out.

But every regiment has fortunately this happy hallucination.

As we halt for a moment between the railed-off country people—between the ale-barrels, the oranges, the lollypops, the pale hams, the ginger beer, and the crowd of Mr. Wardles in barouches taking and recommending pale sherry — the Cinque Ports Volunteers pass in man-of-war dress, with cutlasses; the Irish, gay with their bright-green bands and stripes; the Scottish, with their ptarmigan plumes; and the Devil's Own, smart with scarlet.

The sham fight is now to commence. As the head of the long column clears the Grand Stand, the Inns of Court, alert and soldier-like, trot off at the double to the Red Hill ridge in the Ovingdean direction. They are to stand as the enemy, who, having landed from the sea and taken up a strong position, are about to force their way up the White Hawk Valley.

The enemy must be turned. The first division moves down into the valley, massy and threatening. Three battalions of the first brigade are thrown out for a reserve, under cover of the guns of the main battery, while the remainder deploys into line to oppose the enemy's advance. We stand and load near the guns, which are ready for the linstock.

The first battalion of the City of London Brigade stole forward in twos as skirmishers. The puffs of white smoke and the running fire creep slowly up the hill to where the Inns of Court stand dark and thick as a plantation. The enemy's skirmishers retire to the main body, and as the head of their column appears, our guns open on it with a deafening roar, that surges back in echoes from the hills.

The little army then retreated and formed bristling squares, that as from living pyramids vomited fire.

Down in the fields, in the valley, six black squares moved towards the sea-shore to support the line.

The enemy, dislodged from his first position and his flank turned by our seaward lines, brings up a park of artillery to the brow of a hill to command the second valley, in order to enable his troops to descend from another point to seize the Race-course Hill. Now began the tug of war and the supposed crisis, that Napoleon knew, and well too; swarming behind their guns the Inns of Court, swift as in Chancery suits, fierce as in the Old Bailey, terrible as at assizes, prepared to sweep down on us, but were repulsed by our tremendous sham fire. Artillery plied on artillery, and rifle on rifle, still, pertinacious as in law-suits, these 'fearful and wondrous men' formed again and advanced a second time to the attack. Again the gray lines were formed on the side of the hill, and the squares, breaking into echellon, advanced eagerly to support them, throwing out skirmishers towards the sea ridge.

Gradually we descended into the valley and entered into the thick of the work—seeing no comrade's head, however, jump off, and catching no bleeding front-rank man in our pitying arms. But still we had our troubles (particularly the stout men with tight boots). The soft, padded turf left us, and we came to fallow, heavy, and dusty, encumbered with gray clinkers that hurt your ankles. Then we waded through green fields, where the yellow turnip blossoms reached to the noses of the shorter men. Last of all, and worst of all, came a hill of arable ground to go up at the double. The fat men fell behind as if they were shot. The line became a very 'rabbly' one for a few moments, till we got again on the level and commenced firing hot and fast, by twos from the right, blazing away at our quiet, inoffensive old friend the sea, who yet has played us many a scurvy turn, too, so after all we do not much pity him. Away there to the left the Hampshire Light Horse are scattered skirmishing, some of the men dismounting and firing while their comrades hold their horses, as the Charles the First Dragoons used to do.

There is all this time a hot fight going on at the other position. There have been cartridges enough fired (some forty a man) to have slain 12,000 Frenchmen. The Inns of Court, on their hill, change front constantly to save their guns and meet the enemy. The fire is rolling, billowing, and

tremendous. The lawyers, fond of an 'action,' take a good deal to kill them. They won't surrender, but appeal to the 'ultima ratio' and a higher court.

Now at the warning cry of 'Prepare to receive cavalry,' shouted by a hoarsely fierce colonel, we tumble on one knee and throw out our porcupine spikes. Yonder on the down side, in the sunshine, the Hussars, in blue, clump in a threatening squadron. Their pace quickens, they bear down on us across the turf, the black skirmishers dash in and throw themselves under our wings of bayonet steel, and our square opens a crackling fire.

Before the prickly hedges that spit fire the assailing horsemen, in their turn, wheel and flee. Then we spring up again, and block into column, that wedge that Napoleon knew so well how to drive into the heart of an enemy.

The enemy are losing heart as they see the shadows lengthen, and begin to think of their boats. Forced from their position, they now craftily try to steal round the ridge and debouch on the hill behind our artillery. Their guns are moved to a new position, opposite the Grand Stand, and open a fire, replied to by our cannon, that are wheeled round to face them.

Now to finally crush them our reserve is ordered up It is fresh and vigorous: it was with his reserve that, as with a fresh and unblunted sword, Napoleon so often defeated the Austrians. We march with the reserve rapidly down the Hawk Down Hill into the second valley, as the first division retreats up the other one. We form squares; we form supporting lines in echellon (in shelving rows like oysters in a dish); finally we form in line along the whole extent of the valley, and, after sending skirmishers aloft, dashing up to the very top of the hill, sweeping away into the sea the supposititious enemy.

Now peace being proclaimed between ourselves and the pertinacious, untiring Inns of Court, we prepare to march back to the town by the Marine Parade. But first we have to fire a volley to discharge our guns.

The firing is in the air — a tremendous crackling outburst of volcanic fire, accompanied by sulphurous clouds of reddish smoke and bursts of black wafery waddings. The hill-echoes surge back with sweeping burst the terrific roar, so fitful and so fierce.

Then we ground arms and put the ramrods in our rifle barrels till our officers can come round to each one to see that his piece is discharged.

Slowly at last we march off through contented crowds on to the Marine Parade. The airy sea-side palaces are running over with people, the balconies, the very doorways are crowded. Handkerchiefs wave, kind, bright eyes greet us and thank us with eloquent silence.

We pass the Regent's hideous Pavilion just as the stars make springtime in the sky, and in the Level we once more disband to eat and drink.

The twilight march to the station was again a triumph but of a laxer kind than that of the morning—the band leave Poor Uncle Sam to lament with the inconsolable Susannah. Whole regiments burst out into song under the dark Titanic viaduct arches, and every one, from captain to drummer, feels that it has indeed been a day to mark in one's diary with white sea-coast chalk. We have proved to England that 20,000 men can start from London at seven in the morning, drive an army of Frenchmen into the sea by sunset, and be back by midnight to a late supper.

A gallant Belgian officer, conspicuous on the field by his huge white feather, expressed his delight and surprise at such a volunteer army. The veteran M'Murdo said such a day's march was unprecedented in history. Not a single serious accident happened during the day, and the universal impression was that, with 150,000 such men (a force increasable in times of danger to 300,000 men, and with blouse regiments and government help to even 500,000) men we scarcely, except for conquest, needed so expensive and numerous a regular army to taint garrison towns, to increase idle men, and to ultimately burden our pension list. W. T.

WHITSUNTIDE.

Dear Mr. Editor,

RUMMAGING in an old trunk of mine the other day, I came upon a well-worn Latin grammar, out of which fell a mysterious cardboard tablet, which upon examination proved to be a manuscript almanack neatly embellished with flourishes and annotations in a round schoolboy's hand, such as:

'1 June. Played the Stumpington C. Club; stunning match. Licked them easy, with three wickets to go down. Mem. Jones ma: scored twenty-three runs.

'3rd. Got my remove into the "upper fourth." Old B. came down and tipped me a sov.

'5th. Pulled up to Battersea in a light "funny." N.B. Dreadful row about smoking on the river, &c. &c.'

I had some difficulty in deciphering the above dates, as they had been struck out with heavy ink lines for some days previous to the 8th, which was marked emphatically as 'Whit Sunday—hurray!'

The little document set me thinking of old days at Eastminster School, and the delight with which we looked forward to the early summer holidays. I suppose as long as I live Whitsuntide will always be associated in my mind with 'old B.,' his generous 'tips,' and the good nature which induced him to go the round of all possible metropolitan amusements with me on Whit Monday before I went back to the country.

Old B. had chambers in the Temple; but on these festive occasions we met for breakfast, by appointment, at the 'Tavistock' Hotel in Covent Garden, where to this day the sight of fruit and vegetable carts unlading amid the alternate odours of fresh flowers and hesternal tobacco—the general 'rus in urbe' rakishness and jollity of the market have a charm for me from old associations, which can never be effaced. The breakfast was a little feast in itself. The famous broiled ham, the devilled kidneys, the hot rolls which one ate fearlessly without a thought of dyspepsia—the delicious, fresh-gathered water-cresses; the coffee—was there ever such coffee? No, not in the salons of Tortoni himself have I recognized the fragrant aroma which belonged to those generous cups.

The banquet concluded, we sallied forth, knowing by previous references to 'The Times,' the precise hour at which each entertainment opened. I think I began with the 'Industrious Fleas,' then inspected Miss Linsey Woolsey's Exhibition of Needlework (which I confess I always did find rather slow); walked round Mr. Burford's Panorama; looked in at the India Museum; descended into the Thames Tunnel (taking the Monument *en route*); then proceeded by omnibus to the Colosseum, where, in my day, there were no end of attractions, viz.: a glyptothek full of the most beautiful plaster casts; a Swiss cottage, with real cascades; a live eagle chained to papier mâché rocks which defied detection, and a lovely Swiss maiden, who sold cakes which I am convinced were brought from Switzerland—they were so very stale; an aviary; a stalactite cavern (6*d.* extra), and an Elizabethan ascending room (the guide called it Elizabethian, but I forgave him), in which we were wound up-stairs nearly as quickly as we could have walked; a diorama; a panorama; a cyclorama—Ah! 'circumspice' indeed! I think we were never tired of looking round in that elysium.

Then there was the Polytechnic with its countless wonders, its treasures of art and science, its philosophical experiments, its talented lecturers—the serious gentleman with the orrery, and the funny demonstrator of the dissolving views (we only heard his voice in the dark, as, for instance, while the Mosque of Omar was changing into the Jardin Mabille, or the Great Pyramid melted into the Niagara Falls, and were surprised to find him rather a sinister-looking person, in a black satin waistcoat, when the lights were turned on). A bell used to summon us when the diving-bell was lowered. I wonder if intrepid young gentlemen still venture their lives, and

stuff their ears with cotton, in that well-regulated machine? I declare I envied Mr. Diver in his subaqueous dress, picking up the sixpences of an admiring crowd. I say I coveted his waterproof helmet, and his air-pump, and his cheap glory, and hoped that I too might one day become a distinguished character.

As for 'Madame Tussaud's,' if I were to mention the cerate celebrities of *my* day, it would be tantamount to disclosing my age, which I decline to do. Some effigies I *know* I have not seen. There is Cavour, for instance, and Mr. Spurgeon; Lola Montez; Lord Shaftesbury; dozens of additions have been made, perhaps, without my hearing of them. 'Sed fugit interea,' &c. As years roll on, one's pursuits are changing. I don't think I should enjoy the Polytechnic now; my steps no longer haunt the Baker Street Bazaar, but there is one holiday resort that I always visit with renewed pleasure —I mean the British Museum.

Some country cousins of a not altogether unprepossessing appearance, carried me off there the other day, and I was delighted to renew my acquaintance with the great overgrown establishment. How can I attempt to describe all we saw there? My fair relations made copious notes about the zoological collection; and I have no doubt are well up in the characteristics of radiated, molluscous, and annulose animals; know the difference between plantigrades and digitigrades much better than your humble servant. Of course we saw M. Du Chaillu's gorillas, and the mastodon, and the bird-catching spider, and the chlamydosaurus, or frilled lizard of North Australia, with a large folded ruff round the neck, like Queen Elizabeth; the nutmeg pigeons which feed on aromatic fruits, and so want no stuffing when brought to table, and the pigeon which has a red spot on its breast, as if it had been shot with an arrow, and recovered from the accident; the tropical baits, with very short fur and very long tongues, and the dainty American racoon, which washes his food before eating it; the long-nosed elephant-shrews of Africa (I know some ditto ditto in England); and the flying lemur, which outdoes Leotard himself in the trapeze.

As we approached the Lophophorus impeyanus, or Indian pheasant, and noticed the gorgeous plumage of the male bird, contrasted with the humbler feathers of his partner, I could not help feeling that civilized humanity reverses at least one principle of nature in lower creation. It is our mates who are arrayed in purple and valenciennes, in cashmores and 'moire antique,' while we walk humbly in British broadcloth; and, if we may believe some transatlantic ladies, are really the inferior animals of the twain.

* * * *

If I had been an alderman, I might have lingered long and fondly over the model of the gigantic fossil tortoise. How many quarts of turtle soup might the animal have afforded? How many cubic feet of verdant obesity? A duplicate of this cast ought really to be sent to the Mansion House.

Then there are the right and left legs of the Dinornis giganteus, a slice from whose drumstick alone would dine any reasonable family in Mayfair; and the wondrous Megatherium Americanum, at the tip of whose colossal vertebræ depended an official ticket, with

> 'PLEASE NOT TO TOUCH THIS SPECIMEN'

inscribed thereon.

When the brute lived and stalked in Buenos Ayres, I think the caution would have been unnecessary.

We pass on through fossil, mineral, and botanical collections, to the Egyptian Room, and find ourselves in the midst of mummies, scarabæi, cynocephali, sarcophagi, papyri—what not? Great interest is manifested by the ladies in the articles of dress, and various appliances for the toilet, with which the walls are crowded. Here are vases of alabaster and serpentine, combs, hair-pins, and bronze mirrors. Heavens! what is that enormous mass of thick brown hair bristling on the shelf? The wig of an Egyptian lady of rank—so says our Catalogue. *Rank* indeed—the pomatum on it alone would have

justified the appellation. This box held the kohl with which they painted their eyes; those tweezers were wielded with a depilatory object. Is female vanity, then, of this age alone, or of the last century? Is it three hundred or three thousand years old? It was *stibium* then—it is crinoline now; and to the end of time they will go on touching up their faces, wearing horsehair on their heads, or in their petticoats, while we stand by, and, as becomes our gallant nature, wonder and admire.

The Prince of Denmark began to moralize over a single skull, and if I had been of a sentimental nature, there is no knowing what rhapsodies I might have uttered over the tightly-swathed mummies which abound in this department; but, in truth, the dart of Mors æva Mors seems somewhat blunted in the British Museum; and I saw English damsels laughing over the remains of Harsontiorf and Har-em-bhai, as though those gentlemen had never existed except in their present condition.

There are mummies of cats placed on their beam-ends, without legs or tails; mummies of bulls, jackals, snakes, crocodiles, rams, and fish; linen marked in the corner for the benefit of some laundress of the period; children's toys; musical instruments; weapons of war; authors' inkpots and artists' palettes; tools; baskets; dice; chairs; a table; fruit and grain; and (O mirabile dictû!) *two ducks* trussed for cooking, and some bread.

After this, what can one not imagine? When Lord Macaulay's famous New Zealander (at present, perhaps, held in some vegetable form) alights in a balloon on Primrose Hill, who can say what that enterprising and antipodal tourist may carry home with him? The pen with which I am writing these lines; the pint pot from which I imbibe Mr. Bass's bitter ale; nay, your correspondent himself, may rest his bones one day in a museum-case at Auckland.

In the Northern Gallery are a series of paintings descriptive of Egyptian life and manners, which interests us all. For the ladies there is a conversazione with the fashions prevalent at Thebes a few thousand years ago. The guests bear a remarkable resemblance to each other, and but for the great number assembled, one might suppose it to be a family party. Slave girls in a light summer costume, consisting, as far as I recollect, of a bracelet and collar, enter with refreshments, which they hand round almost as solemnly as our modern flunkeys. That distinguished-looking person must be the lady of the house, who no doubt is making herself agreeable. 'Ah! Mrs. Amenoph—glad to see you; charming quartett this, is it not?'—'Cleopatra, my dear, do take another glass of negus.' Negus indeed—I wonder what those wondrous cups contained; I wonder if that complex apparatus of lamps and garlands in the corner was the last patent stove of the time; I wonder if that hecatomb of game on the sideboard—those piles of fruit, were really consumed by the company, or only brought in for show, as they say pineapples used to appear at London dinners in the early part of the nineteenth century, and were privately removed afterwards. Some of the young ladies carry bouquets, and others baskets of fruit. There are musicians playing on one side (I think they must be professional—they look so hot and tired), and the rout-seats are packed as close as in a Mayfair drawing-room.

Other pictures represent sporting and country scenes, and animals are painted in a manner most creditable to the Landseer of the period. I could have stood before these works of art for hours, had not my rural relations pulled me off to look at some other novelty; and what with the Nineveh bulls, majolica ware, the gorillas, the panathenaic frieze, the Mastodon ohioticus, Venetian glass, and heterobranchous gasteropods, I really have rather a confused idea of what I saw afterwards.

One thing I remember distinctly, and that is, that I was very glad to get back to my chambers, where, under the influence of a fragrant weed, I indited this letter. In witness whereof I affix my hand,

And remain,

Yours very drowsily,

DICK DEWBERRY.

MEDIUMS.

I HAVE read somewhere that the belief that disembodied spirits may be permitted to revisit this world has its foundation upon that sublime hope of immortality which is at once the chief solace and greatest triumph of our reason. This may apply very well to those purely poetical spiritualists who believe in the awful and solemn visitations of departed spirits on an office of rebuke or warning; but the sublime hope of immortality can have small presence in the breasts of those who can sit at a table and summon the spirits of their dearest relatives while they coolly smoke a cigar and indulge in flippant talk with the gaping company around them. Herein, however, lies the only distinguishing peculiarity of the magic of the present day. The alchemysts of old wore black velvet gowns covered with cabalistic signs, and surrounded all their operations with an atmosphere of solemnity and mystery. Paracelsus, Father Hell, Flamel, Agrippa, Borris, Cagliostro, and all the magicians of the middle age still preserved the state and circumstance becoming their assumed supernatural powers; and even Mesmer, in modern days, thought it necessary to appear among his patients arrayed in the habiliments of Prospero. The novelty in magic in those times consisted simply in successive modifications of the old idea. When alchemy was exploded the enthusiasts and the quacks invented new delusions based upon the powers of imagination; and this medium of operation, being subject to no laws, and capable of every kind of deceptive influence, has enabled the magicmongers to play an infinite variety of entertaining tunes upon the same facile string. Thus we have had in succession, Magnetism, Animal Magnetism, Mesmerism, Electro-biology, and Spirit Rapping. Except the last mentioned, all these black arts could lay claim to some little respectability and dignity. Magnetism and mesmerism were at least founded upon a scientific idea, which was to some extent capable of demonstration; and it cannot be denied that their apostles were men of learning and capacity. It seems a strange characteristic of this advanced and enlightened age that the only magic which the public will accept should be one of the grossest kind, utterly revolting to reason and religion, and practised chiefly by vulgar and uneducated persons of no character. But there is evidently much shrewdness in these modern wizards, vulgar and ignorant as they are. They read the bent of the popular folly as a sharper takes stock of the victim whom he intends to delude and cheat. They have discerned one thing,—that the age wanted a novelty in its magic, and that it wanted it served up in a way that would accord with the habits of the time and strip the marvellous of all those pretentious mysteries and hocus-pocus ceremonies at which the age has learned to laugh. So the modern practitioner casts aside the wand, the cabalistic gown, and shadowy laboratory, and performs his magic arrayed in the habiliments of every day life, in a modern drawing-room. Here is a new sensation—a magician in peg-tops, working his conjurations with a cigar in his mouth in the first floor of a fashionable lodging-house, in the light of day, and within sight and hearing of the broad awake traffic of the London streets. In this fashion does Mr. F—— perform his conjurations and put you in direct communication with the other world at his residence in the centre of modern civilization.

But really, after all, the peg-tops and the cigar constitute the only novelty of this performance. Mesmer did very much the same thing. He hired a sumptuous apartment, which he opened to all comers who chose to make trial of the new power of nature. The women were all enthusiastic about him, and spread his fame far and wide. Mes-

mer was the rage; and high and low, rich and poor, credulous and unbelieving, all hastened to convince themselves of the power of this mighty magician who made such magnificent promises. Mesmer took care that nothing should be wanting to heighten the effect of the magnetic charm. In all Paris there was not a house so charmingly furnished as M. Mesmer's. Richly stained glass threw a dim, religious light on his spacious saloons, which were almost covered with mirrors. Orange blossoms scented the air of his corridors; incense of the most expensive kinds burned in antique vases on the chimney-piece; æolian harps sighed melodious music from distant chambers; while sometimes a sweet female voice from above, or below, stole softly upon the mysterious silence that was insisted upon from all visitors. The affair was variously pronounced 'delightful,' 'wonderful,' 'amusing.' And this was how M. Mesmer operated. 'In the centre of the room was placed an oval vessel, about four feet in diameter, in which was placed a number of wine-bottles filled with magnetized water, and disposed in radii, with their necks outwards. Water was then poured in so as to cover the bottles, and afterwards filings of iron to increase the magnetic effect. The vessel was then covered with an iron lid pierced with holes, through which iron rods were inserted. Around this the patients sat, holding each other by the hand, and applying the ends of the rods to such parts of their bodies as were afflicted. Then came in assistant magnetizers, strong, lusty young men, who rubbed the patients down the spine, using gentle pressure upon the breasts of the ladies, and staring them out of countenance, to magnetize them by the eye! Gradually the cheeks of the ladies began to glow' (no wonder), 'then the imagination to become inflamed, and off they went, one after another, in convulsive fits, laughing, crying, shrieking, and screaming until they all became insensible together. In the midst of this Mesmer made his appearance dressed' in a long robe of lilac-coloured silk, and waving his wand like Prospero. He awed the still sensible by his eye, and the violence of their symptoms diminished. He stroked the insensible with his hands upon the eyebrows and down the spine, traced figures upon their breast and abdomen with his long white wand.' 'It is impossible,' says M. Dupôtet, 'to conceive the sensation which Mesmer's experiments created in Paris. No theological controversy in the early ages of the Catholic Church was conducted with greater bitterness.' The report of the most eminent medical men of the day upon these strange manifestations was to this effect:—'That the only proofs advanced in support of animal magnetism were the effects it produced on the human body; that those effects could be produced without passes or other magnetic manipulations; that all these manipulations and passes never produce any effect at all if employed without the patients' knowledge; and that therefore imagination did, and animal magnetism did not, account for the phenomena.'

So one after the other these delusions of a past day were exposed under the light of scientific knowledge, and their apostles were fain to retire into seclusion to escape the ridicule of their learned opponents and the resentment of their mortified dupes. Who could continue to believe in the alchemyst when he had no gold to show as the result of all his crucible work in that mysterious laboratory? The lapse of two or three generations was sufficient to prove that the elixir of life which they pretended to have discovered was impotent to prolong the lives of those who boasted that they held the secret in their hands. But such is the credulity of mankind, such the popular appetite for supernatural wonders, that no sooner is one delusion exposed than another succeeds it and takes its place. It is remarkable, too, that while the originators of systems of magic have been mostly cheats and impostors, their disciples have in many instances followed out their practices in sincerity and good faith. M. de Puysegar, the disciple of Mesmer,

was a firm believer in the art which he practised. He magnetized a tree, and believed that its trunk and branches gave forth the magnetic influence to all who touched them. Dr. Marmaduc was also a believer at the outset, but afterwards became a dexterous trickster, and gulled the good people of Bristol to some tune. He had a host of followers in London—Holloway, who charged five guineas for admission to his séances; Loutherbourg, the artist, and his wife, whose house at Hammersmith was sometimes surrounded by as many as three thousand persons waiting for the privilege of admission at three guineas a head; and the crazy old woman near by, who called herself a 'Lover of the Lamb of God.'

The present spirit-rapping mania, though it flourishes in a time of general enlightenment, exhibits greater tenacity of life than any of its predecessors. It is long since Mr Parsons stood in the pillory for his share in the Cock Lane deception, and it is fully ten years since his American disciple, Mr. Stone, was exposed as a clumsy impostor. That showman's pet medium, Mrs. Hayden, was the first to discover that rapping on a table was the language of departed spirits. Mrs. Hayden contrived to deceive a few credulous and unobservant people, but the moment two acute and watchful gentlemen visited her, to put her powers to the test, she failed to accomplish any part of her programme. Her spirits could rap, but they could not tell their own names; and sometimes they affected to be disembodied when they were in the flesh walking the earth. It was proclaimed to all the world that Mrs. Hayden was a contemptible impostor, and for the moment spirit-rapping was laughed out of fashion. But after an interval of a few years we have another American importation in the person of Mr. H——, who tickles the fancy of our idle and ennuied population with floating bodies, self-playing accordions, and a luminous hand. Mr. H—— comes to us with the fame of having performed before the Emperor of the French and made a convert of the Empress Eugénie. He is at once admitted into the fashionable drawing-rooms of the West end, and a writer, distinguished for learning and intelligence, puffs his supernatural powers in one of the leading periodicals of the day. Mr. F—— follows immediately to introduce the pleasing variety of reading inscriptions enclosed in opaque envelopes, and bringing out blood-red inscriptions on the skin of his arm. And so half the town runs mad about spirit-rapping. Here is the great evil. The masters are artful quacks, as every observant person who has tested their powers can testify; but their disciples are deluded believers. It is a melancholy fact that spirit-rapping, in all its assumed seriousness, has become one of the most fashionable amusements of the day. In West end drawing-rooms, in family parlours, and in club smoking-sanctums persons of intelligence and education sit down to spirit-rapping as they sit down to a game of cards. These persons are, for the most part, believers, and yet they go about their conjurations without the slightest show of reverence. They sit at the table with pipes in their mouths, and drink grog while they question the spirits of their departed friends. I cannot imagine more revolting impiety than this. The solemnity of the grave and the great mystery of death are treated as mere playthings, and the spirits of the dead, which religion teaches us to believe return to the Almighty Creator who gave them, are summoned to revisit earth with as little ceremony as is used to ring up the servant from the kitchen. It would be bad enough to make a joke of a matter so serious; but I am confident I shall be borne out by many who are cognizant of the facts to which I allude, when I say that these spiritualist practices are very commonly pursued in the full belief that the spirits of the dead do respond when called upon, and that the whole affair is not a farce, but a real manifestation from the other world. I have no doubt whatever that in every private circle where spiritualism is practised there is

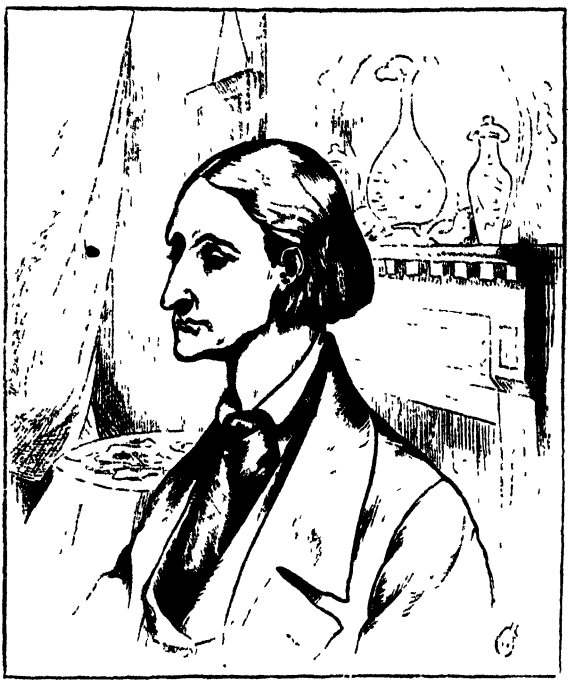
always at least one person who deliberately aids the deception by trickery. These are mostly persons who have, in the first instance, been deceived themselves, and who subsequently take a delight in deceiving others. There is a fascination about mysterious influences which weak and impressionable natures cannot resist; and I feel assured that rank imposture is often to be found among the members of a



family who, truthful in everything else, are yet cheats and tricksters when they sit down to a round table to astonish their friends with the manifestations of spirits. Others are the victims of a delusion to which their nervous and impressionable temperaments incline them, and which their perceptive powers are not strong enough to detect.

In these days statesmen, authors, journalists—men who claim to be the chief instructors of the people—and even clergymen, are among the disciples of the leading mediums. Do they ever reflect upon the character of the founders of their new faith? Look at Mr. Bennett's characteristic portraits of the Medium. These be your prophets. That man in the built-up stock is in reality a solemn idiot, coarse, uneducated, vulgar, but with all the conceit, assurance, and low shrewdness of an overpowering humbug. The very heaviness of his impudence is deceiving. His trickery is concealed under a cloak of passiveness. His face betrays nothing. His hypocrisy is a dull, stagnant pool which detection cannot stir. You feel at once that this is no conjuror; and when he does anything wonderful, the credulous say, 'This is a lump to be acted upon by extraneous influences—an unconscious

agent—in fact, a medium.' So the credulous, hunting after a new sensation, are gulled by a solemn humbug. The younger one is of another type. The nature of the fox is partially hidden by a veil of moroseness. This is a sullen fellow, who would revel in deception, who would deceive others until he deceived himself. He looks gloomy enthusiast enough to lose what little brains he possesses and cut his throat some day.



Here we have the medium of the private circle, the medium who raps out messages from his mother, who was buried only yesterday; the medium who is so impressed by the sentences he bungles out on the paper that he comes to believe himself capable of doing what he pretends to do. He is the type of the disciple that the impostor and the quack send forth into society to give an air of truthfulness and innocence to the grossest and most blasphemous delusion that ever turned the heads of mankind in any age or time.

ARTISTS' NOTES FROM CHOICE PICTURES.

La Crème de la Crème.

THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE—No; in the brief page or two allotted to these Notes, we will not attempt to tell over again the old tale of 1720. We all know everything about that absurd affair: how our great-great-grandfathers and grandmothers, and all degrees of cousinhood, went crazy together over a ridiculous notion that a certain set of directors in a back street in the City had hit upon an ingenious contrivance by which they could not only pay off the National Debt (it wasn't so large then as now, remember), but also make every one who would venture a few odd hundreds in the undertaking, 'rich beyond the dreams of avarice,' as Johnson, with more prescience, promised should befal the adventurers in Thrale's brewhouse.

Very strange, certainly, it was that such visions should have been deemed realities—so strange that we might almost have persuaded ourselves that it was because the thing happened in those far-off dark ages, when steam was only employed for cooking potatoes—was it so employed then?—and electric telegraphs were unknown; were it not that we ourselves have expected almost as great results to flow from dabbling in railway shares as ever our ancestors anticipated from the purchase of South Sea stock. Had we not, too, our Railway King, at whose frown mortals grew pale; before whose throne sinner and saint, lawn sleeves and coat of serge, beauty and bravery, learning and wit, all did homage as willing and lowly as ever did prince and peer, and duchess and dairymaid, before the chairs of the haughty 'South Sea Kings' of whom that simple-hearted senator complained in the House of Commons—'We have made these men monarchs, and lo! they turn their backs on their benefactors'? Perhaps, even now, if one were to arise with the genius of a Law or a Blunt—it may be with even the lesser genius of a Hudson—some new Mississippi scheme or South Sea Bubble might find its adherents and its victims; for, as Sir Isaac Newton very philosophically said, when asked, in the midst of the turmoil, how high he thought the South Sea fever-heat would mount? 'Madam, there is no calculating the madness of people.' To calculate the motions and determine the levity of the moon would to the author of the 'Theory of Gravitation' have been an easy operation, but who could undertake to calculate the phases or settle the limits of terrestrial lunacy?

In truth, it was a mad time that of the summer of 1720; and Ward has taken the mania at its highest. You recollect, no doubt, how that 'Merry South Sea ballad,' as it calls itself, of 'the Grand Elixir, or the Philosopher's Stone Discovered,' describes the scene:—

> 'In London stands a famous pile,
> And near that pile an Alley,
> Where merry crowds for riches toil,
> And Wisdom stoops to folly.
> * * * *
> Here stars and garters do appear,
> Among our lords the rabble,
> To buy and sell, to see and hear,
> The Jews and Gentiles squabble.
> Our greatest ladies hither come
> And ply in chariots daily;
> Oft pawn their jewels for a sum
> To venture in the Alley.'

And you recollect how, again, Dean Swift, writing of all these 'bold adventurers' who in thousands came to that 'narrow sound, but deep as hell, Change Alley, dreadful name!' relates that—

> 'Meantime secure on Garr'way Cliffs,
> A savage race by shipwrecks fed,
> Lie waiting for the foundered skiffs,
> And strip the bodies of the dead.'

Well, we have here the scene of the picture from which our Note is this month taken. The South Sea Bubble stimulated alike the pencil and the pen of the satirist. Caricaturists as well as poets and poetasters, and preachers and politicians, found in it abundant materials for profitable occupation. It was upon the South Sea Bubble that Hogarth





THE SOUTH SEA BUBBLE

fleshed his maiden graver. He had, it is true, burlesqued the countenances of his neighbours and acquaintances, but his first public venture as a satirist was a rude engraving which was sold for a shilling—it would sell for something more now—of 'The South Sea Bubble, an Allegory; W. Hogarth, inv. et sculp., 1721.' Hogarth was just three-and-twenty then: perchance he had made an unlucky venture in the stock, and in this way took his revenge. There is nothing much in the engraving, save—and the exception is a considerable one—the evidence of a keen eye for the salient points of a popular or fashionable folly. At any rate there is a wide distance between it and the 'South Sea Bubble' before us.

Mr. Ward, when he sent this picture to the Royal Academy, quoted the last four lines printed above from the 'Grand Elixir,' and no doubt looked farther into the literature of the period. But he drew his inspiration primarily from a passage in Lord Mahon's history, where, describing the scene in Change Alley, he says (vol. ii. p. 11):—

'The crowds were so great within doors that tables with clerks were set in the streets. In this motley throng were blended all ranks, all professions, and all parties—Churchmen and Dissenters, Whigs and Tories, country gentlemen and brokers. An eager strife of tongues prevailed in this second Babel; new reports, new subscriptions, new transfers, flew from mouth to mouth; and the voice of ladies (for even many ladies had turned gamblers) rose loud and incessant, above the general din.'

The scene thus spiritedly described, Mr. Ward faithfully embodied. To all the characters mentioned by the historian, the painter has given a visible existence. And it is pleasant to note that the historian was fully sensible of the compliment paid to him by the painter. The picture was exhibited in 1847. In a volume of the history published subsequently, Lord Mahon has a passage in which, speaking of the exhibitions of the Royal Academy, he says, with evident reference to this picture: 'There the historian may acknowledge his own descriptions far exceeded;' and he adds to it a note expressive of his 'warm appreciation of the genius and success with which one passage of this history ("A Scene in Change Alley in 1720") has been illustrated by Mr. E. M. Ward.' (Vol. vi. p. 327.) More graceful testimony to the fidelity of his realization of a remarkable scene, historical painter could not desire. It would be idle to weaken its effect by corroborative remarks, and for criticism this is neither the place nor the season.

From this picture our artist has taken as his central figure the lady who occupies the most conspicuous position in the original. She is hardly one we can sympathize with, as we do with the Duchess of Leslie's picture. She is of high rank, we see that, by her superb air, by the chariot she has just quitted, by the tall footman who, with his gold-headed stick, struts at her heels. She is handsome, perfectly well-bred, has a delicate hand, a placid countenance. But there is something on that smooth face which tells that her past is not altogether a pleasant page to dwell on; that her future is not likely to be. Has she gambled at basset before she came here to gamble in stock? She is a young widow, you see; her stately footman is in full mourning; she has not put off her 'weeds,' and the likeness of her husband hangs conspicuously on her breast. Before long, it may be—has not the painter suggested as much?—it will share the fate of the diamond-set miniature which another fair lady is pledging to the cunning Jew broker in his pawnshop, improvised there on the left for the benefit of unsuccessful speculators. But just now madam has her eyes directed furtively towards that gaudy fop in the laced coat beside her, not attracted assuredly by his person so much as by the news he is reading aloud from the prospectus in his hand, and expatiating upon with superabundant gesticulation, of 'A New Company, Capital One Million, for a Perpetual Motion.' She ponders the chances of the scheme, and

hesitates whether to risk a little on it, or all on the giant stock, which the placard just posted outside Garraway's tells has risen to a thousand premium. Between the two, she has neither eye nor ear for the miserable urchin who is begging importunately for a crumb from her store.

The fop with his scheme has, however, a more absorbed auditor in the country squire, who has at this dangerous juncture brought his daughter to see London society, and has been drawn into the vortex. He is a certain victim. The daughter—a frank, unsuspecting rustic beauty—forms, with her wondering, innocent face, a charming contrast to the shrewder, worldly, and somewhat blasé London dame; and the contrast is the more marked as our artist has here brought them into immediate contact.

The sweet sad face on the left of the town lady is, in the original, the companion of the care-stricken warrior who is descending the steps on the right of the picture. In an evil hour he has been tempted to embark his all—probably to risk something more—in one of the many flimsy schemes lately set afloat—was it that promising one for 'Making Deal boards out of Sawdust'?—and, as the bill on the door indicates, already the wreck is total. He turns away overwhelmed with despair and remorse. His plans and prospects are all shattered; but he has an angel at his side to whisper words of courage and comfort in this his deepest gloom, and we may surely trust that her honest, hopeful affection will ere long find a way to his heart, and bring peace to his conscience.

Look on that firm yet tender countenance and judge if it be not so.

MAKE HAY WHILST THE SUN SHINES.

A Proverb Paraphrased.

MAKE hay whilst the sun shines, whate'er be your lot;
Enjoy life, whilst enjoy it you may.
Oh, ne'er be this time-honoured maxim forgot:
Make hay, whilst the sun shines, make hay!

In the season of youth, when the heart's in its spring,
Ere a hope has had time to decay,
Ere your vigour of arm, or of spirit, take wing,
Make hay, whilst the sun shines, make hay!

Be Fame, Rank, Ambition, or fortune your mark,
Or those treasures that pass not away,
If you wait till to-morrow, your sky may be dark;
Make hay, whilst the sun shines, make hay!

Would you chain the wild wing of the runagate Love,
Don't forget that his season is May;
And since Winter vouchsafes us few rays from above,
Make hay, whilst the sun shines, make hay!

'Mid the chances of life, when a prize may be won,
Shun the danger that waits on delay:
Ere the day be far spent and the night cometh on,
Make hay, whilst the sun shines, make hay!

ALARIC A. WATTS.

THE UNIVERSITY BOAT RACE.

IT is the morning so long wished for by boating men—the morning of Saturday the 12th of April. It is the day of the University boat race, 'the Great Event' of the boating year.

The sky is bright, and blue as steel over the Thames, but keenly cold, for the acid 'north north-east' is blowing, to the horror of rheumatic old admirals at Chelsea and invalids in general, especially of those living near the river, where the water seems always to serve as a sort of hone on which to sharpen the edge of the wind.

Hundreds of old University men have risen this very daybreak and looked anxiously with half-shaved faces at the gilt arrow vanes on the stable roof, or crept down stairs in dressing-gowns to peer at the barometer in the hall or the billiard-room, and from that chilly but favourable augury have taken comfort. In many a stable court, too, the grooms and coachmen have been long since out with their heads in the air sniffing the wind and predicting a fine but cold day for 'master and the young ladies.'

The Oxford and Cambridge men who will pull to-day for 'the blue riband' of the Thames have been long in training, living the life of gladiators, with a regimen and hours rigorously enforced by stern taskmasters. They have long shunned delight, and 'lived laborious days,' and all for the prize that is to be won this very afternoon. They have been rising daily at seven, running two miles before breakfast, avoiding smoking, feeding on simple fare, taking gruel for supper, and going to bed nightly for weeks soon after ten. They have borne like heroes the palling monotony of food and the customary mental depression; but they are now at last changed to India-rubber men, untiring, unwindable, stanch as bulldogs, hopeful, elastic, vigorous. From their adolescence strong men, they are now become duodecimo Samsons.

They have learnt to work together; to become, as it were, a small phalanx or nation; to allow for each other's faults; and to good-humouredly club together each other's excellencies in rowing without envy, brag, or over-confidence. They are at this moment prepared to bear either victory or defeat without presumption and without despondency. In fact, they are brave young Englishmen, carrying healthy minds in healthy bodies.

To-day is to prove all that these sixteen English athletes have learned in the long pull from Oxford to Nuneham, and the hard pull from Cambridge to Bottisham. The experiences gained on the Isis and the Cam must now or never bear fruit. Those clear, marked, quiet thirty strokes a minute must to-day be quickened to thirty-nine or forty. 'The grip of the water,' 'the fall of the backs,' and 'the finish of the strokes' must be simultaneous, Oxford! There must be tiger dash and race-horse speed, I tell you, but no careless haste, Cambridge, or all will be lost by such want of harmony, by such carelessness.

They tell me that a murderer who has been in an agony of feverish suspense during his trial grows calm and often sleeps well when he knows that he is irrevocably to be hung, so terrible to the human mind is suspense. And hence it is, perhaps, that though every day's practice on the new water has shown an increase of speed, our University boating men are glad that the day has at last come for the final contest. They have grown tired of being photographed, of betting, and of the isolated 'loafing' river-side public-house life in general. They are weary of looking generally in a blind, speculative way into the future, and, like soldiers under fire, long for the hand-to-hand battle.

* * * * *

The old town of Putney begins to fill. There is talking from door to door. The chief saddler at his castle gate chats with the chief

butcher at *his*, and both portly, well-to-do respectable tradesmen have strong opinions about the race, the weather, the American war, and the state of the universe generally. Smart traps roll into inn yards; hot and cold liquids are dashingly frothed out or dribbled out to prematurely thirsty travellers from London. Some public-houses have broken out with Union jacks and faded banners new many a race day past. Foot-passengers arrive like a fugitive army, and along the Hammersmith and Barnes roads the cabs and broughams move in jostling procession. Swells and bargemen, schoolboys and old watermen, crowd the roads in one vast republican rabble; as for the river banks they grew black with our sombre-garbed nation hours since, and at Putney the scene is like a fair.

'Half-past eleven!' by the clock; and now the steamers begin to arrive at Putney one by one. I count fourteen—not including a private paddle, a screw, and a tug-boat. There they are: 'The Victoria,' 'Flora,' 'Starlight,' 'Waverley,' 'Citizen,' and the rest, brimmed up with black pyramidical multitudes that culminate on the very paddle-boxes. They cheer. Then every one cheers, just to give vent to his feelings, and the costermongers shout their battle cries.

The Oxford and Cambridge two eight-oared cutters touch the water almost at the same moment—a few minutes before twelve by Putney clock—and the two eights take their places. The Oxford men are the most powerful men both in weight and strength and length; the Cambridge men are lighter, and have not the same stalwart, Life-Guard appearance.

'I don't like the look of things,' says a Cambridge man, who had betted largely, to me; 'it's very "fishy." The Oxford eight have got seven stone more rowing weight in their boat—a great advantage in rough water. Give me good big men, and you may take the good little men. I fear it's all up with Cambridge.'

But opinions differ even with men of science. 'If I had any money to invest, gents, I'd lay it on Cambridge,' said a waterman at my elbow. Who can decide when doctors disagree?

'Six to four on the Oxford,' resolutely shouted an Ethiopian serenader, excited by the sight of the bigger crew.

'Five to four on the Cambridge,' replied an antagonistic crossing-sweeper. N.B. At races it is always the men without money who are most violent in their offers to bet, just as the man without any vote at all is always the noisiest shouter at an election. I refused both bets.

All eyes (and some *such* bright ones) are fixed upon the boats and the crews. The air is filled with jangling opinions like a jar one on the other like bells out of tune. Some said the Cambridge men are not strong and heavy enough. Others swear violently that, as for the Oxford men, there 'was too much of them.' One knowing man with a straw hat and blue riband assured me plaintively that 'Nos. 6 and 7 of the Oxford boat were not old and steady enough;' that as for the bow, he was a stone too heavy; while Nos. 4 and 5, who ought to have been the biggest men in the boat, were positively the smallest.' Upon hearing which, I was instantly told by the speculative waterman before mentioned, that though the Cambridge coxswain was light enough, he had been told by a third cousin of his that he (the coxswain) hadn't a clear head; and as for their stroke side balancing their bow side, it didn't do it a bit. Some one behind me upon this expresses audibly his fears that the Oxford stroke isn't cool enough. Who am I to believe?

But now let us look for a moment at the boats themselves—those strange wooden floats, so slim, so sharp, so fragile. They are in length, a boating man tells me, about fifty-seven feet, and in width rather more than two feet. Two vast continents have contributed to their fabrication, for they are formed of Cuban cedar veneers, moulded over English oak ribs, and strengthened by light iron tie-rods; they have no keels,



and therefore very easily upset; the rowlocks are extended on stilt-like iron outriggers, so that the narrowness of the boats does not take away their leverage. The outside planks are French polished, and shine like the skins of thorough-bred racers.

The Indian's bark canoe, through which you feel the water ripple, is not more dangerous a craft; but the skill and prowess of English youth render those slim boats as safe as a man-of-war with all its walls of oak and iron.

Now the umpire is ready, the starter is prepared, the word will soon be given, and Oxford and Cambridge will spring from Putney Aqueduct like rival arrows from two Tartar bows;—nay, rather like two rival conical bullets fired the same moment from competing rifle barrels.

Now I feel, in the enthusiasm of the moment, like a herald at a tournament, and long to cry out, 'Forward, forward, gallant knights! Brasen-nose, do your duty! Now then, Trinity Hall, to your arms! Christ Church and Corpus, to your posts!' and so on, till I got bonnetted as a general nuisance, or an irritated costermonger in the crowd should violently bid me 'Stash it,' or 'Dry up.'

Ha! unlucky Cambridge—fortunate in being first at the post—has lost the choice of station. The great Life-Guard Oxford men, upon whom already a lucky sun seems to shine, pull proudly to the Middlesex side, 'an advantage as the wind is,' says the reporter of a sporting paper, a dreadfully knowing man with tight, cabby legs, a white hat worn a little on one side, and a breast-pin formed of a dog's tooth.

Now the eight oars of Oxford and the eight oars of Cambridge begin to move, as eagles about to swoop, and before flying, pulse their great dark wings, as if to try their strength, expanse, and elasticity.

'Now;' 'no.' 'Now;' 'no.' 'Now;' 'yes.' Now they're away, pretty even—the oars all dipping trueeven, and almost at the same moment. But Cambridge is again unlucky: one of her after oars nervously misses a stroke, and the Oxford eight instantly shows her bows slightly in front. at this misfortune you can at a glance pick out the Oxford men from the Cambridge men in the crowd, if you turn your back from the boats and look carefully at them, for there is a slight cloud over the Cam men's eyes, while those of the Oxonians glisten, positively glisten, with a sort of inner fire, such as you see in an opal.

It is beautiful now to watch the Oxford men leading, already at the 'Star and Garter,' a third of a length ahead. What long, powerful strokes they pull—forty a minute I'm sure, though I don't know much about it. Some one says that one or two of the forward men are a trifle shorter in the stroke than the rest, but I don't see it, for they pull their oars well through the water. The 'catch hold' of the water, the fall of the backs, and the careful, trim, swift finish of the oars is in exact harmony—perfect metrical accord and sympathy. The boat darts along like a brown water-snake with antennæ—through which it moves and breathes—yet but with one heart—and a strong, bold heart too.

How quick and smooth both boats go through the water, never a careless or hurried stroke, yet all so swift and impetuously vigorous.

Opposite the 'Star and Garter,' Oxford is a third of a length ahead; and now, off the London Rowing Club boathouse, they gain another third; Cambridge, again unlucky, steers outside a vile craft that blunders in the way. But 'it's no matter,' grumblingly sighs a sporting man in a green cutaway, 'for Oxford must win if their boat does not come to grief before Craven Cottage.'

What beautiful skill — strength forced to the utmost, yet no apparent effort. How straight and stiff are those arms banded with muscle and bound as if with tendons of steel. A rowing man near me, catching hold, in his enthusiasm, of any listener, begs me earnestly to 'observe how the bodies all swing forward at the same moment, the pull of the arms and the pressure of the legs being exactly simultaneous.



What strength and science united; the strength in the first part of the stroke, the science in the last. 'Pray observe, too,' he says, 'how the shoulders duck down and press forward for the fresh stroke.' The steering is perfect; Oxford goes, in fact, with a keen, knife-edge precision to its goal.

Alas, for Cambridge! it is quite otherwise with them. At Craven Cottage the Oxford boat is all but



clear of them; it has shaken them off, and left them behind as underlings to follow in their train, and take the troubled water they leave them. And now, too, when lungs should beat firmer and quicker, and ears and eyes should be clearer, and brain more steady, Cambridge shows signs of alarm, of nervous impatience, of haste and unsteadiness. They pull with short and jerky strokes through the lumpy water, rendered worse by those bullying and unbearable elephantine steamers, that keep puffing all the time as if they were 'blown' by an exertion they did not share in.

The Oxford crew make a long and daring shoot just above Craven Cottage, and, nobly steered, sweep through the Surrey arch of Hammersmith Bridge four lengths ahead. The unlucky Cambridge men take the centre arch, quite out of the true course, and where there is no improvement in the eddy. From this fatal point, the Oxford keeps the lead, till off Chiswick, when their stroke oar's wrist (already sprained) gives way, and he has to bravely do all the rest of his work with only one hand. Now Cambridge gains a trifle, but after passing through Barnes Bridge the Oxford boat again leaps forward, and with straining eyes and flushed faces the Oxford champions tear in in spite of bad tide, foul wind, and a disabled man, winners by forty-five seconds, or twenty-five strokes.



That great reach of water has been run over in the frightfully short space of time of twenty-four minutes and forty-five seconds.

Now the cheers shake the clouds, as Oxford relapses into the calmness of victory, and the men, in their light rowing dress, are helped out

tenderly as children. The handsome young coxswain, with the fine chiselled face, relinquishes the hot cords, the stroke is lifted out like a wounded warrior as he is, the others tilt out their oars and leap on shore. All hats are waving; pretty girls in carriages shake the victorious colours, that flutter also from Hansom cab whips, and from the tops of omnibi. The air is blooming with them, and the Cambridge ribbons fade away into surreptitious pockets. The conquerors are crowned with praises.

That carriage with the two officers in it, I met this morning, just opposite the 'White Hart' at Mortlake. I am sure I did, and the two dogs, now barking their applause, were running before it, trying their best to get run over; and near them now, too, is the Ethiopian with the long-tailed coat and the tinkling banjo, who took off his hat to the carriage full of ladies.

But the race is not the only thing worth seeing. The road has been full of sweet sounds and pleasant sights, such as bring back to me the memory of other boating days. I know the very spot on Barnes Terrace where Colonel Rushton's pretty wife and daughters might have been seen in their barouche. I would have almost missed the race just to have had one glimpse of their happy faces, for Young Rushton is one of the Oxford eight. I



can imagine the little Skye terrier, melancholy and sly, leaning over the carriage door. I can imagine the glossy greys, the neat-dressed servant with the cockade in his hat, the smart turn-out, and the little gloved hands holding the opera-glass with such graceful anxiety. What a perfect type of the English lady is Mrs. Colonel Rushton.

And, indeed, had I been ubiquitous, like the Irish baronet's celebrated bird, I should like to have been also on my bay mare, cantering alongside the boats at Barnes, heading the squadron of Amazons and old University men, looking at the cutters, that seem from here like mere black centipedes striding over the water.

But one place more I should like now to be at, though the race is over, and that is the dinner to-night of the Thames Subscription Club at Willis's Rooms, King Street, St. James's. There I should see the sturdy champions, generously deprecating their own victory, and acknowledging the prowess of their defeated antagonists, like brave, honest gentlemen, as they are.

Then I should hear, over my wine, of how this annual race originated in 1829, by a challenge from Cambridge to Oxford; how, since that, the Cantabs have won ten times out of the nineteen matches; and how that the Oxonians have always won easily, while the closest and most exciting matches have ever resulted in favour of Cambridge.

The 'Derby' is by sporting men, with almost affecting earnestness, called emphatically, all through the year, 'The *Great Event*,' but to boating men the University Boat Race is a much greater event, for the flower of England are the competitors, and no unnaturally dwarfed stable boys; and the beauty of England, in both cases, spectators, in the former are only lookers-on, but in the latter are watching with straining eyes and panting hearts at a struggle wherein brothers, cousins, and lovers are the heroes who are striving for the laurels.

MY ADVENTURE WITH BOODLE'S DOG.

WHEN I set out in life with virtuous resolutions, and a mind well fortified by the precepts and example of my pastors and masters, I little dreamt that I should ever be concerned in a deliberate act of dog-stealing. Well knowing the innate wickedness of the human heart, and being fully sensible of the overwhelming power of temptation in desperate circumstances, I might have conceived it possible that I should one day be driven to take undue advantage of my neighbour by selling him razors which were not made to shave; by borrowing his deposit in a savings bank, of which I might be manager; by forging his signature to a bill which I meant to take up when due; or by some other of the many comparatively innocent methods which many distinguished personages have been known to adopt under the pressure of adverse fortune; but that I should ever fall so low as to league myself with vulgar ruffians to steal an honest man's dog never entered even my most fevered and delirious dreams. Yet I am guilty of this crime. I avow it, and with this confession I give myself up to justice. The reader may suppose that previously to committing this act, I had fallen into evil ways; that Fortune had cast me off; that sharp misery had worn me to the bone; or that I had become an associate of dog-fanciers and low sporting characters. No such thing. When I deliberately stole that dog, I was a householder and a ratepayer; butchers and bakers were besieging me for the honour and profit of my patronage; I was getting stout and required an extra quarter of a yard of broad cloth for my surtouts; I was newly elected a member of the Athanasian Club, and was beginning to be noticed by Bishops and Fellows of the Royal Society. As for sporting literature, I declare upon my honour that 'Bell's Life,' is Greek to me. Nay, worse than Greek; for, reversing the preference of Mr. Cobden, I can truly say that I can find more intelligible and agreeable reading in the pages of 'Thucydides' than in the columns of 'Bell's Life.' Nor had I a fancy for dogs. I never owned a dog in my life; had no desire to possess a dog; and scarcely knew the difference

between a mastiff and a Skye terrier. And yet I conspired to steal a dog, and stole it—and that stolen dog is now lying on the hearth-rug at my feet while I write this account of how I stole him.

It was in this wise. I have been in the habit for some years, on my occasional holidays, of going out to a quiet suburban tavern to play quoits. One day, some months ago, as I was leaving the ground, and passing through the bar, the landlord said to me—

'Look here a minute, sir; I'll tell you a good story. You know little Jones that plays quoits here sometimes?'

'Always has two or three dogs with him?'

'Yes.'

'And wears a very high shirt collar?'

'Yes, that's him. We call him "Collars."'

'Well, what of him?'

'Such a lark, sir. You've seen that white Maltese dog of his, with the white wool, like, all over his eyes.'

'Yes; but I was not aware that it was a Maltese dog. What then?'

'Jones, sir, bought that dog of one of them downy cards in Regent Street. You've seen the chap down here; wears a velvet coat, with pockets, and generally has a little dog peeping out of each on 'em. Give him three sovereigns for the dog. Well, what do you think? About a fortnight afterwards, as Jones was walking down Oxford Street with his dog, as proud as Punch, carrying him, you know, in his arms—up comes a man—name of Boodle—a cowkeeper; and says he to Jones—"That's my dog!" "No, it ain't," says Jones; "it's mine; I've bought and paid for him." "I don't care for that," says Boodle; "it's my dog, and I'll have him." "You won't," says Jones. "Won't I?" says Boodle, and then he hollo as out to a policeman who was passing, and if he didn't give Jones into custody then and there. Jones swore he was a gentleman—as he is, you know, and lots of tin, too—but they wouldn't believe him, and as he wouldn't part with the dog, they locked him up. Well, old Boodle proved that it was his dog, and Jones was obliged to come away without the animal, after having been locked up all night in the station. Jones was awful wild, and commenced an action against the cowkeeper for false imprisonment; but when the day of hearing came, Jones was unwell, and the case went against him by default of his appearance. Jones had to pay all the costs, and was wilder still. And what do you think he done, sir, to spite the cowkeeper? Why he employs the "card" he originally bought the dog of, and another chap, a pal of his, to steal the dog back again; and they done it, sir—and Jones has got the dog now over in Paris, or somewheres, to be out of the way.' Here the landlord of the 'Cock and Bottle' went into an ecstatic fit of laughter at the idea of Jones's cleverness. I was amused myself, and went away much more impressed with Jones's talents than I had ever been before. I was still chuckling over the exploit of Jones, when I met my friend Walker, who was going into the City. Walker is a man who always begins the conversation when he meets you, by saying, 'Well, what's the news?'

My latest information being this dog story, I told it him just as I got it from Mr. Harris, of the 'Cock and Bottle.' Walker was amused, and laughed heartily, as Mr. Harris had done, and as I had done, indeed, never thinking of the criminal nature of the proceeding on Jones's part, nor of the injury to the worthy keeper of cows. You see it was one of those rogueries which are always redeemed by the comically adroit way in which they are committed. It reminded Walker of our mutual friend Hopkins, who swindles his creditors in such a jocular way, that they are rather pleased than otherwise, and are willing to be swindled again by the same pleasant process.

'Very good indeed,' said Walker, as we were shaking hands to part. 'By the way, what sort of dog was it?'

'Woolly, white dog; Maltese, I believe.'

Walker chuckled again, and we parted.

I dismissed that dog affair from

my mind forthwith, and probably should never have had occasion to recal it, had I not mentioned the subject to Walker. But that very evening, when I was settling myself in my easy chair for a quiet, after-dinner snooze, an impatient double knock came to the door, and in walked friend Walker

'Here's a lark!' said Walker, almost the moment he had entered the room. As Walker was in the habit of calling everything, comic and serious indifferently, a lark, I expressed some anxiety: for I know that he would say 'Here's a lark!' if he had just received intelligence that my bank had broke, or that my house had caught fire.

'Well, what is it?'

'That dog—such a lark!'

'Well.'

'Well, you remember telling me the story about what's-his-name employing the fellows to steal him back from the cowkeeper.'

'Yes, of course I do.'

Here Walker was so tickled with his 'lark,' whatever it was, that he could not continue for laughing. At length, when he had indulged his fancy, he went on—

'I was thinking of that story all the way into town; and going into Hornsey's print-shop, still grinning over it, Hornsey said, "What's amusing you, sir?"'

'Such a lark, Hornsey!' I said, and then I told him the story. But I had scarcely got to the end of it, when Hornsey started as if he had been shot, and crying out to his lad, "Mind the shop, John," bolted out into the street without his hat. Well, I thought, Hornsey's gone mad. But he came back presently. And what do you think made him bolt that way?'

'Don't know, I'm sure!'

'Why he knows the cowkeeper that owns the dog, and he ran round to tell him how his dog had been stolen from him.'

'You surely didn't mention my name in the matter?' I asked, rather anxiously.

'Well, 'pon my word, I did,' said Walker. 'Thinking it was only a lark, I mentioned your name at the beginning—said I heard the story from you, and that you heard it from what's-his-name, of the "Cock and Bottle."'

'I'm afraid that may be awkward.'

'Oh, nonsense,' said Walker; 'you didn't steal the dog.'

'But——' I was about to say that my name might be mixed up in unpleasant proceedings, when my speech was checked by a thundering single rap at the outer door. Almost immediately I heard loud, angry, and unfamiliar accents in the passage.

'Please, sir,' said the servant, 'a man wants to see you.'

'What sort of person is he?'

'Well, he is rather an odd-looking man, sir; and I think he said his name was Boodle.'

'The cowkeeper, by Jove!' cried Walker; 'here's a lark!'

'Well, it may be a lark for you, Walker, but——'

'Why, I shall be on it as well as you, you know,' said Walker.

'On what?' I said.

'On the trial, as witness; case of dog-stealing.'

'I shan't see this man, tell him so.' But Boodle had stolen a march on me. He was on the door-mat outside, and heard my words, and the next instant he entered, and said—

'Ye maun; ye maun see me. I'm here, and my name's John Boodle, cowkeeper, of Drury Lane; and I understand as how you know all about the stealing of my dog; and I'll have you oop as a witness.'

John Boodle was a terrible-looking personage in my dainty little snuggery. I dare say he would have looked very picturesque, and all that sort of thing, out in a field, or in a cow-shed, but John Boodle with a huge, glazed hat on his head, his high-lowed feet emulating the proportions of an elephant's, and arrayed as to his middle man in a green smock-frock which emitted an atmosphere of cows in a sort of vaccine sirocco, which pervaded the whole room in a moment, was an object of unpleasant portent. And his terrible aspect was further aggravated by his hands, which were so large and red and plump, that you might have imagined them to be boxing-gloves of flesh and blood;

and by his eyes, which were not on a line, and were disproportionate as to the amount of white they exhibited. I saw all this in a moment, and was rather glad that Walker was with me.

'I'll have you oop as a witness,' repeated John Boodle.

'But, my good man, how do you know that——'

'I know it, becos o' that ere paper. There's your name—"Parker." Hornsey wrote it down. And he told me as you told a gen'leman, a friend of his——'

'Name of Walker,' I suggested.

'No; Brown,' said Walker, who thought he was going to escape.

'No; it wasn't Brown,' said Boodle. 'Walker's the name. I've got that down too.' Walker winced.

And Boodle went on again. 'And Hornsey told me as how a gen'leman, a friend of his—name of Walker—told him as another gen'leman, Mr. Parker—that's you, sir—was told by Mr. 'Arris, of The Cock and Bottle, that that ere Jones—I know him—give two fellows three sovereigns to steal my dog, and that they stole him accordin'. Is that right, sir, or is it not?'

'Well! really Mr. Boodle, I cannot mix myself up with these matters. *I* didn't steal your dog, you know. You had better go to Jones: he seems to be the party.'

'Very well, sir; as you'll not give a 'onest man no satisfaction, I'll go to Jones. I'll *have* Jones took oop, sir, for dog-stealing, on your information; and I'll have you oop, sir, as a witness agen him.'

I could hear Walker muttering, 'What a lark!' to himself, as the cowkeeper abruptly left the room, taking the great source of the sirocco with him; and I called out—

'Mr. Boodle, there is that other party——'

'Yes; I know—Walker,' Mr. Boodle growled from the passage. 'I'll have him oop too. I'll have all on ye oop.' And with that Mr. Boodle went down the stairs like ill-regulated thunder, and banged the door after him by way of a grand concluding crash.

'Well!' I said to Walker, 'what do you think of it now?' He would insist that it was only a lark.

'Yes,' I said, 'it is all very well for you; you don't care. But I decidedly object to have my name appearing in the papers in connection with a dog-stealing case. I have something to study as a professional man. And then, what will the people say at the Athanasian Club?'

'Oh! bother the Athanasian Club—set of prigs.'

'Prigs! Let me tell you that——'

'Oh! nonsense; they are prigs. Didn't you tell me yourself that the very waiters are so solemn that you are afraid of offending them by asking them to bring you a chop?'

'Walker, this is adding insult to injury.'

'What do you mean by injury, sir?'

'Injury! Didn't you tell Hornsey about that confounded dog, and get me into this scrape?'

'Well! come, I like that. Didn't you tell me about it?'

Walker and I came to high words; but in the end we smoked the pipe of peace, and dispelled at once the memory and the effluvium of Boodle. But when Walker went away the memory of Boodle came back and troubled me in my dreams, wherein I saw Boodle in his elephantine highlows, with his milk-pails swinging at his side, stalking through the affrighted Bishops and Fellows of the Royal Society in the library of the Athanasian Club to lay his great hand upon my shoulder and say, 'I'll have you oop as a witness against Jones as stole my dog.'

Boodle's natural boxing glove is still upon my uneasy shoulder, when I am awakened by loud and urgent knocking at the outer door.

'Please, sir, a gentleman wants to see you.'

'Tell him I'm not up. Who is he? He's not the man that was here last night?'

'No, sir; not that man.'

'Oh! a *man*, eh? Just ask him his name.'

'Please, sir, he says his name is Harris.'

'Harris—Harris. I don't know anybody of the name of Harris. Let me see, though. Harris of The Cock and Bottle! Can it be he?'

I dressed, and went down stairs. Harris of 'The Cock and Bottle' it was! 'That dog business again—I groaned in spirit. I was right. Boodle had gone to Harris after he had left me the night before, and Harris had denied everything; and now Mr. Harris had come to me to make the modest request that, being upon my oath at the trial, I should deny everything too.

'I told him,' said Mr. Harris, 'that I knew nothing about it; and I mean to stick to that. Don't you know nothing about it neither, sir?'

'Well,' I said, 'I *don't* know anything about it, except what you told me. And I wish you hadn't told me.'

'And so do I, sir,' said Mr. Harris. 'I don't want to get into trouble, and I don't want to offend Jones, who is a good customer. I shall stick to it that I know nothing about it.'

'That is all very well, Mr. Harris,' I said. 'I don't want to get into trouble over the affair any more than you; but if I should be summoned, I must state the truth. I must repeat what you told me. And, let me tell you, it will be an awkward affair for Jones. It will be nothing short of House of Correction.'

'You don't mean that, sir?'

'I do, though: it's theft and conspiracy into the bargain. The best thing you can do is to advise Jones to give the dog back before he gets himself and you too into trouble.'

'He won't do it, sir. He's sent him down into the country—to Brighton, or Cheltenham, or somewhere, to be out of the way. And he says that if it costs him a hundred pounds Boodle shan't have that dog again.'

'Well, he'll only have himself to blame if he is sent to prison as a felon.'

'I shouldn't like to have any hand in that, sir; and I hope you won't mention me in the matter.'

'But I must, Mr. Harris, if I am called upon.'

'Oh! don't, sir,' said Mr. Harris. 'I beg you won't. You'll get me into trouble.'

'You don't consider that I shall get into trouble too, Mr. Harris.'

'Then you shouldn't have repeated what I told you, sir.'

'Then why did you tell me? I did not want to hear your confounded story, and I am not going to be bullied in my own house about a wretched dog. And I wish you a good day, Mr. Harris; and I trust you will not trouble me about this matter again.' And with that I showed Mr. Harris the way out, and banged the door against him in wrath.

'A very pretty affair indeed,' I thought to myself at breakfast, 'that a respectable professional man, and a member of the Athanasian Club, should be mixed up in a low transaction of this kind. This comes of frequenting a tavern and playing quoits, and listening to the talk of the persons that one meets there. Confound Jones and his dog.'

The words were scarcely out of my mouth when a knock came to the door, and the servant entered to announce Mr. Hornsey.

'Hornsey—Hornsey! who is he? What sort of man is he?'

'Man with hook nose, sir, and black eyes. Looks like——'

'Like what?'

'Like Punch, sir.'

'Like Punch! I know a man that looks like Punch. Everybody says he looks like Punch. The boys call him Punch. Why! it's Hornsey, the print-seller. That dog again. Say I'm not at home: say I'm gone abroad. Stop: say I'm dead at once. That's the best way to settle it.'

'But please, sir, he said he knew you were at home, because your hat and gloves were on the hall table.'

'Trust Hornsey with those eyes and that nose of his for spying out a thing like that. Well, show him up.' And immediately Hornsey entered my room, his eyes walking before him in a procession of two, with his nose, like a drum-major in full uniform, in the middle. Of course it was the dog business. Hornsey had come to say that Boodle was mad about the dog.

'He don't care so much about the animal itself, sir,' said Hornsey; 'but Boodle don't like to be bested. He said to me only this morning, "Hornsey, if you can get that dog back you may keep him; but have

him I will, if it costs me a hundred pounds."'

'Well, Mr. Hornsey, how can I——'

'Just what I was coming to, sir. You know where the dog is?'

'Indeed I don't, Mr. Hornsey.'

'But didn't you tell Mr. Walker that that party—Jones, I think his name is—had sent him somewhere to be out of the way; didn't you say to Cheltenham or Brighton? Now, which was it, sir?'

Here a grand idea suddenly occurred to me, and I said—

'Neither, Mr. Hornsey. The dog, I believe, is—indeed I may say I know—is in Paris.'

'Paris!' said Hornsey. 'Boodle will send after him. He don't mind the distance; he don't mind the money. Paris! Boodle will have him. Thank you, sir. Good day. Sorry to have troubled you.'

'Stop, Mr. Hornsey,' I said, beginning to repent of sending Boodle on a wild-goose chase, and being struck with another grand idea. 'Boodle does not want to be vindictive against Jones; he only wants his dog.'

'That's it, sir: only wants the dog'

'Then take my advice; employ the same fellows to steal the dog back again. They'll soon find him out if you'll pay them well.'

Hornsey was in ecstasies with the idea, and slapped his thigh with so much enthusiastic admiration that he evidently hurt himself. 'Capital, sir, capital! Boodle will do it. It will be cheapest, after all, and save trouble. Good day, sir.'

I was relieved for the moment. If Boodle succeeded in stealing the dog back there would be an end of the matter. There would be no criminal proceedings against Jones, and no necessity for summoning me as a witness. This was all I cared about. The Bishops and the Fellows of the Royal Society at the Athanasian Club would never know that I played quoits at 'The Cock and Bottle,' and had been mixed up in a case of dog-stealing. I snapped my fingers in triumph. But, stay—Was it the effort of snapping my fingers that brought on this reflection? Supposing Jones should dispute the matter. There might be a trial after all; I should be summoned as a witness, and, in addition to having to confess that I was mixed up in a case of dog-stealing, it might be elicited from me in cross-examination that I had actually advised Hornsey to steal the dog from Jones. Oh! this was infinitely worse. I had got myself into a pretty scrape now.

I was in a most unhappy frame of mind until I had seen Walker; and when I had seen Walker, my frame of mind was more unhappy still. Walker dissipated all my hopes in an instant. Boodle, he said, had sought high and low for the dog—had sent to Cheltenham, to Brighton, and even to Paris; and not being able to find him had resolved to summon Jones for illegal possession, and me and others to give evidence against him. Learning from Walker that the step was to be taken at once, I thought it would be prudent to go out of town for a few days, and I went to Brighton.

It was pleasant to walk on the Marine Parade, with the fresh wind blowing upon me from the sea, and think that I was out of reach of Boodle. I could snap my fingers now at Boodle and all his myrmidons. Is there anything unlucky, anything provocative of fate, anything calculated to tempt retribution in that act of snapping the finger and thumb? I ask because I had scarcely indulged in the act when I saw coming towards me a little man with a very high shirt collar. It was Jones—Jones, who had procured the ruffians to steal Boodle's dog. And what was the object that Jones carried in his arms? Was it a lady's white boa hanging out of his breast pocket? Was it—— By Jove it was the dog—Boodle's dog—the dog that Jones had stolen—the dog of all my trouble and anxiety!

People who only nod to each other in London, shake hands and become friendly in strange and distant places. Jones and I had a long talk together. I told him how I had been bothered out of my life about his, or rather Boodle's, dog. He had heard all about it, and was

delighted. He was like Walker, and regarded the whole affair as a good lark. I represented to him the danger that he ran of being convicted of dog stealing. He only went into a fit of laughter. I advised him to restore the dog at once to Boodle. He said he would see Boodle hanged first, and laughed again.

'Nonsense,' said Jones. 'Look at him; isn't he a paragon?'

'Well, he looks to me like a ball of wool, and nothing else. I can't tell which is his head and which is his tail.'

'That's the beauty of the beast,' said Jones. 'Come up to the "York" in the evening and take coffee, and I'll make him go through his tricks. He's a clever one I can tell you.'

I promised to do so, and we parted. Perhaps, thought I, if I have a quieter opportunity, I may be able to persuade Jones to do what's right and restore the dog to Boodle—Boodle! can I believe my eyes? Am I enchanted, haunted, a victim to second sight, or what? I had scarcely mentioned the man's name to myself when he stood before me. There he was in his best Sunday clothes gazing at the Pavilion. He had come down by the excursion train for a holiday, or, more likely, to search for his dog. The situation was now getting critical. We were coming to close quarters indeed. The case was desperate. I addressed Boodle; but I had scarcely said 'Mr. Boodle,' before he began upon me.

'Won't you give a 'onest man no satisfaction?'

'One moment, Mr. Boodle.'

'I tell you I'll have you cop as a witness.'

'Listen to one word, Mr. Boodle. When do you return to town?'

'By the eight o'clock train.'

'And where do you put up?'

'At the Greyhound in East Street.'

'Mr. Boodle, before you return to town I may be able to give you the satisfaction you require.'

I was off at once to Jones's, though it was some time before the appointed hour. Now, I thought, if I can only bring about a meeting between Jones and Boodle all may be satisfactorily arranged. I was turning over in my mind how I should accomplish this when I arrived at the 'York.' What do I see frisking about on the pavement before the door? Jones's dog—Boodle's dog—the dog that encompassed me with trouble and threatened all my prospects. There was no one within sight—no one but an old lady, and she was not looking. A grand thought! I picked up the dog, tucked him under my coat, and ran away. I reached my lodgings, and locked myself in with the dog until half-past seven, when I again tucked him under my coat and made for the Greyhound in East Street. As luck would have it I arrived just as Boodle was getting into a fly to drive to the station.

'Here you are, Boodle,' I said; 'here's the dog.'

'What; you don't mean——'

'There, there,' I said; 'put him into that basket and be off with him as soon as you can.'

'Thank you, sir, thank you,' said Boodle, whipping the dog into the basket in which he had brought down his day's provender.

'And promise me one thing, Mr. Boodle—that you will not tell any one who got him for you.'

'Never, sir, never; you may depend upon that.' And Mr. Boodle drove off with his dog in triumph.

Now, thought I, that business is settled and my mind's at rest. I shall return to town. I returned to town accordingly and dined—for the first time since I became mixed up in this dog business—at the Athanasian Club. Bishops were benignant, Fellows of the Royal Society greeted me with friendly nods. It was all right; they hadn't heard of Boodle and his dog.

It was highly gratifying, two days after this, to receive a visit from Mr. Boodle, with a request that I would be good enough to accept the dog as a present. 'You see, sir,' said Mr. Boodle, 'I didn't care so much about the dog himself, but I was not going to be bested, you know. You've got him back for me, and you can have him. I wouldn't part with him, but I know he'll have a good home here.'

'Well, thank you, Mr. Boodle, he's

a very pretty little dog, and I'm very much obliged indeed.'

'Oh! don't mention it, sir; you're welcome, I'm sure.' And Boodle's face beamed all over with a benevolent smile, and his eye twinkled with satisfaction, as he parted with his dog and bade me adieu.

My happiness was now complete. I had adroitly avoided an exposure and learnt a new pleasure in the faithful attachment of a dumb animal. But judge of my bewilderment when, after about a fortnight, I received the following letter from Jones:—

'DEAR SIR, *'Brighton.*

'Why did you not come and see my dog as you promised? I shall be in town to-morrow, and will call upon you and bring him with me. How about the cowkeeper? Is he still scouring the country in search of him? He needn't trouble himself; he shall never have him.

'Yours,

'J. JONES.'

What does this mean? Is not the dog lying here at my feet? Yes; of course he is. 'Ponto!' He rises and wags his tail. Jones is joking; or it is some deeply-laid scheme to steal him again—to steal him from *me!* Ay! Master Jones, I shall beware of you. In the words of the popular song, Master Jones, 'You don't get over me.' Next day, in the expectation of a call from Jones, I carefully locked Ponto up in my study. Jones came, and in his arms he carried a white dog—a very twin of Ponto. Or was it Ponto himself? Had he escaped from my study? Had Jones——

'You see,' said Jones, 'I have brought the dog.'

'Nonsense,' I said, 'that is not the dog; you—you don't mean to say that that is Boodle's dog?'

'No,' said Jones, 'it's not Boodle's dog now, it's mine; but this is the dog that Boodle had—the one you saw in my arms at Brighton.'

'Oh! you're joking. Look here—here is Boodle's dog;' and I opened the study door and called Ponto. The dog immediately ran into the room.

'Why, what on earth does this mean?' said Jones; and I saw that he was seriously puzzled. I told him the whole story, how I had whipped up the dog at the door of the 'York,' how I had restored it to Boodle, and how Boodle, in gratitude, had made me a present of the animal. Jones stared for a moment in amazement, and then went into a fit of laughter, from which I thought he would never recover. At length he said—

'Do you know what you have done?'

'What do you mean?' I asked.

'Why you have stolen the wrong dog. This is Ponto that I have in my arms now, and that animal of yours—why, it's the dog that the old lady lost.'

'Old lady?'

'Yes; an old lady who was stopping at the "York." She was in an awful state about it and offered ten pounds reward for it.' And Jones went into another uncontrollable fit of laughter.

I could now interpret the twinkle of satisfaction that lurked in Boodle's eye when he presented me with that dog. Artful cowkeeper! *He* was not going to be had oop in a case of dog stealing.

Am I? I ask the old lady at the 'York.' I am sure if she reads this confession she will be convinced that I carried out my felonious design with the very best intentions; and I hope she will think of my position as a professional man and a member of the Athanasian Club. Ponto is here, in good health, waiting to be claimed. 'Why don't you take means at once to restore him to the rightful owner?' says the energetic reader. 'Insert an advertisement in "The Times,"' &c. That is all very well, but I do not intend to have my peace for ever destroyed by the animal. I know a most respectable member of society who brought half the London canine 'fancy' hovering round his doors, waylaying him for weeks and months. The unfortunate man, in the height of his humanity and honesty, had advertised for the owner of a dog he had picked up, or rather, of a dog who picked up him. Now, Nature never intended me for a martyr, so Ponto must wait to be claimed.

LONDON: PRINTED BY WILLIAM CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.