

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 01, No. 2, December, 1857 eBook

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 01, No. 2, December, 1857

The following sections of this BookRags Literature Study Guide is offprint from Gale's For Students Series: Presenting Analysis, Context, and Criticism on Commonly Studied Works: Introduction, Author Biography, Plot Summary, Characters, Themes, Style, Historical Context, Critical Overview, Criticism and Critical Essays, Media Adaptations, Topics for Further Study, Compare & Contrast, What Do I Read Next?, For Further Study, and Sources.

(c)1998-2002; (c)2002 by Gale. Gale is an imprint of The Gale Group, Inc., a division of Thomson Learning, Inc. Gale and Design and Thomson Learning are trademarks used herein under license.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Encyclopedia of Popular Fiction: "Social Concerns", "Thematic Overview", "Techniques", "Literary Precedents", "Key Questions", "Related Titles", "Adaptations", "Related Web Sites". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

The following sections, if they exist, are offprint from Beacham's Guide to Literature for Young Adults: "About the Author", "Overview", "Setting", "Literary Qualities", "Social Sensitivity", "Topics for Discussion", "Ideas for Reports and Papers". (c)1994-2005, by Walton Beacham.

All other sections in this Literature Study Guide are owned and copyrighted by BookRags, Inc.

Contents

The Atlantic Monthly, Volume 01, No. 2, December, 1857 eBook.....	1
Contents.....	2
Table of Contents.....	9
Page 1.....	10
Page 2.....	11
Page 3.....	13
Page 4.....	14
Page 5.....	15
Page 6.....	16
Page 7.....	18
Page 8.....	20
Page 9.....	21
Page 10.....	22
Page 11.....	23
Page 12.....	25
Page 13.....	26
Page 14.....	27
Page 15.....	28
Page 16.....	30
Page 17.....	31
Page 18.....	32
Page 19.....	33
Page 20.....	35
Page 21.....	36
Page 22.....	37

Page 23.....	38
Page 24.....	39
Page 25.....	41
Page 26.....	43
Page 27.....	44
Page 28.....	45
Page 29.....	47
Page 30.....	49
Page 31.....	50
Page 32.....	52
Page 33.....	54
Page 34.....	56
Page 35.....	58
Page 36.....	60
Page 37.....	61
Page 38.....	62
Page 39.....	63
Page 40.....	64
Page 41.....	65
Page 42.....	66
Page 43.....	67
Page 44.....	68
Page 45.....	70
Page 46.....	71
Page 47.....	72
Page 48.....	74

Page 49.....	76
Page 50.....	78
Page 51.....	79
Page 52.....	81
Page 53.....	83
Page 54.....	84
Page 55.....	85
Page 56.....	86
Page 57.....	88
Page 58.....	89
Page 59.....	91
Page 60.....	92
Page 61.....	93
Page 62.....	94
Page 63.....	95
Page 64.....	96
Page 65.....	97
Page 66.....	98
Page 67.....	100
Page 68.....	101
Page 69.....	103
Page 70.....	105
Page 71.....	107
Page 72.....	109
Page 73.....	110
Page 74.....	111

Page 75.....	112
Page 76.....	113
Page 77.....	114
Page 78.....	115
Page 79.....	116
Page 80.....	117
Page 81.....	118
Page 82.....	119
Page 83.....	120
Page 84.....	121
Page 85.....	122
Page 86.....	123
Page 87.....	124
Page 88.....	125
Page 89.....	126
Page 90.....	128
Page 91.....	129
Page 92.....	131
Page 93.....	132
Page 94.....	134
Page 95.....	136
Page 96.....	138
Page 97.....	140
Page 98.....	142
Page 99.....	144
Page 100.....	146

Page 101.....	148
Page 102.....	150
Page 103.....	152
Page 104.....	153
Page 105.....	154
Page 106.....	156
Page 107.....	157
Page 108.....	158
Page 109.....	159
Page 110.....	160
Page 111.....	161
Page 112.....	162
Page 113.....	163
Page 114.....	164
Page 115.....	165
Page 116.....	166
Page 117.....	167
Page 118.....	168
Page 119.....	169
Page 120.....	170
Page 121.....	172
Page 122.....	174
Page 123.....	175
Page 124.....	176
Page 125.....	177
Page 126.....	178

Page 127.....	179
Page 128.....	181
Page 129.....	182
Page 130.....	183
Page 131.....	184
Page 132.....	185
Page 133.....	187
Page 134.....	188
Page 135.....	189
Page 136.....	190
Page 137.....	192
Page 138.....	194
Page 139.....	195
Page 140.....	196
Page 141.....	198
Page 142.....	199
Page 143.....	200
Page 144.....	201
Page 145.....	202
Page 146.....	203
Page 147.....	204
Page 148.....	205
Page 149.....	206
Page 150.....	207
Page 151.....	208
Page 152.....	209

Page 153.....	210
Page 154.....	211
Page 155.....	213
Page 156.....	214
Page 157.....	215
Page 158.....	216
Page 159.....	218
Page 160.....	219
Page 161.....	220
Page 162.....	222
Page 163.....	223
Page 164.....	225

Table of Contents

Section	Page
Start of eBook	1
VI.	1
VII.	2
VIII.	2
IX.	3
X.	6
XI.	11
THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO.	12
THE WIND AND STREAM.	24
ROBIN HOOD.	34
THE GHOST REDIVIVUS.	48
THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.	58
THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.	59
THIS IS IT.	68
HERE IT IS,—WITH THE <i>SLIGHT ALTERATIONS!</i>	70
THOMAS CARLYLE.	71
THE BUTTON-ROSE.	86
CHAPTER I.	86
CHAPTER II.	90
CHAPTER III.	97
CHAPTER IV.	100
OUR BIRDS, AND THEIR WAYS.	102
THE INDIAN REVOLT.	112
SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE.	120
AKIN BY MARRIAGE.	127
CHAPTER III	127
WHERE WILL IT END?	140
MY PORTRAIT GALLERY.	153
FOREIGN.	158

Page 1

VI.

The Carmine.

The only part of this ancient church which escaped destruction by fire in 1771 was, most fortunately, the famous Brancacci chapel. Here are the frescos by Masolino da Panicale, who died in the early part of the fifteenth century,—the Preaching of Saint Peter, and the Healing of the Sick. His scholar, Masaccio, (1402-1443,) continued the series, the completion of which was entrusted to Filippino Lippi, son of Fra Filippo.

No one can doubt that the hearty determination evinced by Masolino and Masaccio to deal with actual life, to grapple to their souls the visible forms of humanity, and to reproduce the types afterwards in new, vivid, breathing combinations of dignity and intelligent action, must have had an immense effect upon the course of Art. To judge by the few and somewhat injured specimens of these masters which are accessible, it is obvious that they had much more to do in forming the great schools of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, than a painter of such delicate, but limited genius as that of Fra Angelico could possibly have. Certainly, the courage and accuracy exhibited in the nude forms of Adam and Eve expelled from paradise, and the expressive grace in the group of Saint Paul conversing with Saint Peter in prison, where so much knowledge and power of action are combined with so much beauty, all show an immense advance over the best works of the preceding three quarters of a century.

Besides the great intrinsic merits of these paintings, the Brancacci chapel is especially interesting from the direct and unquestionable effect which it is known to have had upon younger painters. Here Raphael and Michel Angelo, in their youth, and Benvenuto Cellini passed many hours, copying and recopying what were then the first masterpieces of painting, the traces of which study are distinctly visible in their later productions; and here, too, according to Cellini, the famous punch in the nose befell Buonarrotti, by which his well-known physiognomy acquired its marked peculiarity. Torregiani, painter and sculptor of secondary importance, but a bully of the first class,—a man who was in the habit of knocking about the artists whom he could not equal, and of breaking both their models and their heads,—had been accustomed to copy in the Brancacci chapel, among the rest. He had been much annoyed, according to his own account, by Michel Angelo's habit of laughing at the efforts of artists inferior in skill to himself, and had determined to punish him. One day, Buonarrotti came into the chapel as usual, and whistled and sneered at a copy which Torregiani was making. The aggrieved artist, a man of large proportions, very truculent of aspect, with a loud voice and a savage frown, sprang upon his critic, and dealt him such a blow upon the nose, that the bone and cartilage yielded under his hand, according to his own account, as if they had been made of dough,—“come

Page 2

se fosse stato un cialdone." This was when both were very young men; but Torregiani, when relating the story many years afterwards, always congratulated himself that Buonarrotti would bear the mark of the blow all his life. It may be added, that the bully met a hard fate afterwards. Having executed a statue in Spain for a grandee, he was very much outraged by receiving only thirty scudi as his reward, and accordingly smashed the statue to pieces with a sledge-hammer. In revenge, the Spaniard accused him of heresy, so that the unlucky artist was condemned to the flames by the Inquisition, and only escaped that horrible death by starving himself in prison before the execution.

VII.

Santa TRINITA.

In the chapel of the Sassetti, in this church, is a good set of frescos by Dominic Ghirlandaio, representing passages from the life of Saint Francis. They are not so masterly as his compositions in the Santa Maria Novella. Moreover, they are badly placed, badly lighted, and badly injured. They are in a northwestern corner, where light never comes that comes to all. The dramatic power and Flemish skill in portraiture of the man are, however, very visible, even in the darkness. No painter of his century approached him in animated grouping and powerful physiognomizing. Dignified, noble, powerful, and natural, he is the exact counterpart of Fra Angelico, among the *Quattrocentisti*. Two great, distinct systems,—the shallow, shrinking, timid, but rapturously devotional, piously sentimental school, of which Beato Angelico was *facile princeps*, painfully adventuring out of the close atmosphere of the *miniatori* into the broader light and more gairish colors of the actual, and falling back, hesitating and distrustful; and the hardy, healthy, audacious naturalists, wreaking strong and warm human emotions upon vigorous expression and confident attitude;—these two widely separated streams of Art, remote from each other in origin, and fed by various rills, in their course through the century, were to meet in one ocean at its close. This was then the fulness of perfection, the age of Angelo and Raphael, Leonardo and Correggio.

VIII.

San Marco.

Fra Beato Angelico, who was a brother of this Dominican house, has filled nearly the whole monastery with the works of his hand. Considering the date of his birth, 1387, and his conventual life, he was hardly less wonderful than his wonderful epoch. Here is the same convent, the same city; while instead merely of the works of Cimabue, Giotto, and Orgagna, there are masterpieces by all the painters who ever lived to study;—yet imagine the snuffy old monk who will show you about the edifice, or any of his brethren,

coming out with a series of masterpieces! One might as well expect a new Savonarola, who was likewise a friar in this establishment, to preach against Pio Nono, and to get himself burned in the Piazza for his pains.

Page 3

In the old chapter-house is a very large, and for the angelic Frater a very hazardous performance,—a Crucifixion. The heads here are full of feeling and feebleness, except those of Mary Mother and Mary Magdalen, which are both very touching and tender. There is, however, an absolute impotence to reproduce the actual, to deal with groups of humanity upon a liberal scale. There is his usual want of discrimination, too, in physiognomy; for if the seraphic and intellectual head of the penitent thief were transferred to the shoulders of the Saviour in exchange for his own, no one could dispute that it would be an improvement.

Up stairs is a very sweet Annunciation. The subdued, demure, somewhat astonished joy of the Virgin is poetically rendered, both in face and attitude, and the figure of the angel has much grace. A small, but beautiful composition, the Coronation of the Virgin, is perhaps the most impressive of the whole series.

Below is a series of frescos by a very second-rate artist, Poccetti. Among them is a portrait of Savonarola; but as the reformer was burned half a century before Poccetti was born, it has not even the merit of authenticity. It was from this house that Savonarola was taken to be imprisoned and executed in 1498. There seems something unsatisfactory about Savonarola. One naturally sympathizes with the bold denouncer of Alexander vi.; but there was a lack of benevolence in his head and his heart. Without that anterior depression of the sinciput, he could hardly have permitted two friends to walk into the fire in his stead, as they were about to do in the stupendous and horrible farce enacted in the Piazza Gran Duca. There was no lack of self-esteem either in the man or his head. Without it, he would scarcely have thought so highly of his rather washy scheme for reorganizing the democratic government, and so very humbly of the genius of Dante, Petrarch, and others, whose works he condemned to the flames. A fraternal regard, too, for such great artists as Fra Angelico and Fra Bartolommeo,—both members of his own convent, and the latter a personal friend,—might have prevented his organizing that famous holocaust of paintings, that wretched iconoclasm, by which he signalized his brief period of popularity and power. In weighing, gauging, and measuring such a man, one ought to remember, that if he could have had his way and carried out all his schemes, he would have abolished Borgianism certainly, and perhaps the papacy, but that he would have substituted the rhapsodical reign of a single demagogue, perpetually seeing visions and dreaming dreams for the direction of his fellow-citizens, who were all to be governed by the hallucinations of this puritan Mahomet.

IX.

The Medici chapel.

Page 4

The famous cemetery of the Medici, the Sagrestia Nuova, is a ponderous and dismal toy. It is a huge mass of expensive, solemn, and insipid magnificence, erected over the carcasses of as contemptible a family as ever rioted above the earth, or rotted under it. The only man of the race, Cosmo il Vecchio, who deserves any healthy admiration, although he was the real assassin of Florentine and Italian freedom, and has thus earned the nickname of *Pater Patriae*, is not buried here. The series of mighty dead begins with the infamous Cosmo, first grand duke, the contemporary of Philip *ii.* of Spain, and his counterpart in character and crime. Then there is Ferdinando I., whose most signal achievement was not eating the poisoned pie prepared by the fair hands of Bianca Capello. There are other Ferdinandos, and other Cosmos,—all grand-ducal and *pater-patrial*, as Medici should be.

The chapel is a vast lump of Florentine mosaic, octagonal, a hundred feet or so in diameter, and about twice as high. The cupola has some brand-new frescos, by Benvenuto. “Anthropophagi, whose heads do grow beneath their shoulders,” may enjoy these pictures upon domes. For common mortals it is not agreeable to remain very long upside down, even to contemplate masterpieces, which these certainly are not.

The walls of the chapel are all incrustated with gorgeous marbles and precious stones, from malachite, porphyry, lapis-lazuli, chalcedony, agate, to all the finer and more expensive gems which shone in Aaron’s ephod. When one considers that an ear-ring or a brooch, half an inch long, of Florentine mosaic work, costs five or six dollars, and that here is a great church of the same material and workmanship as a breastpin, one may imagine it to have been somewhat expensive.

The Sagrestia Nuova was built by Michel Angelo, to hold his monuments to Lorenzo de’ Medici, duke of Urbino, and grandson of Lorenzo the Magnificent, and to Julian de’ Medici, son of Lorenzo Magnifico.

It is not edifying to think of the creative soul and plastic hands of Buonarotti employed in rendering worship to such creatures. This Lorenzo is chiefly known as having married Madeleine de Boulogne, and as having died, as well as his wife, of a nameless disorder, immediately after they had engendered the renowned Catharine de’ Medici, whose hideous life was worthy of its corrupt and poisoned source.

Did Michel Angelo look upon his subject as a purely imaginary one? Surely he must have had some definite form before his mental vision; for although sculpture cannot, like painting, tell an elaborate story, still each figure must have a moral and a meaning, must show cause for its existence, and indicate a possible function, or the mind of the spectator is left empty and craving.

Page 5

Here, at the tomb of Lorenzo, are three masterly figures. An heroic, martial, deeply contemplative figure sits in grand repose. A statesman, a sage, a patriot, a warrior, with countenance immersed in solemn thought, and head supported and partly hidden by his hand, is brooding over great recollections and mighty deeds. Was this Lorenzo, the husband of Madeleine, the father of Catharine? Certainly the mind at once dethrones him from his supremacy upon his own tomb, and substitutes an Epaminondas, a Cromwell, a Washington,—what it wills. 'Tis a godlike apparition, and need be called by no mortal name. We feel unwilling to invade the repose of that majestic reverie by vulgar invocation. The hero, nameless as he must ever remain, sits there in no questionable shape, nor can we penetrate the sanctuary of that marble soul. Till we can summon Michel, with his chisel, to add the finishing strokes to the grave, silent face of the naked figure reclining below the tomb, or to supply the lacking left hand to the colossal form of female beauty sitting upon the opposite sepulchre, we must continue to burst in ignorance. Sooner shall the ponderous marble jaws of the tomb open, that Lorenzo may come forth to claim his right to the trophy, than any admirer of human genius will doubt that the shade of some real hero was present to the mind's eye of the sculptor, when he tore these stately forms out of the enclosing rock.

A colossal hero sits, serene and solemn, upon a sepulchre. Beneath him recline two vast mourning figures, one of each sex. One longs to challenge converse with the male figure, with the unfinished Sphinx-like face, who is stretched there at his harmonious length, like an ancient river-god without his urn. There is nothing appalling or chilling in his expression, nor does he seem to mourn without hope. 'Tis a stately recumbent figure, of wonderful anatomy, without any exaggeration of muscle, and, accordingly, his name is——Twilight!

Why Twilight should grieve at the tomb of Lorenzo, grandson of Lorenzo Magnifico, any more than the grandfather would have done, does not seem very clear, even to Twilight himself, who seems, after all, in a very crepuscular state upon the subject. The mistiness is much aided by the glimmering expression of his half-finished features.

But if Twilight should be pensive at the demise of Lorenzo, is there any reason why Aurora should weep outright upon the same occasion? This Aurora, however, weeping and stately, all nobleness and all tears, is a magnificent creation, fashioned with the audacious accuracy which has been granted to few modern sculptors. The figure and face are most beautiful, and rise above all puny criticism; and as one looks upon that sublime and wailing form, that noble and nameless child of a divine genius, the flippant question dies on the lip, and we seek not to disturb that passionate and beautiful image of woman's grief by idle curiosity or useless speculation.

Page 6

The monument, upon the opposite side, to Julian, third son of Lorenzo Magnifico, is of very much the same character. Here are also two mourning figures. One is a sleeping and wonderfully beautiful female shape, colossal, in a position less adapted to repose than to the display of the sculptor's power and her own perfections. This is Night. A stupendously sculptured male figure, in a reclining attitude, and exhibiting, I suppose, as much learning in his *torso* as does the famous figure in the Elgin marbles, strikes one as the most triumphant statue of modern times.

The figure of Julian is not agreeable. The neck, long and twisted, suggests an heroic ostrich in a Roman breastplate. The attitude, too, is ungraceful. The hero sits with his knees projecting beyond the perpendicular, so that his legs seem to be doubling under him, a position deficient in grace and dignity.

It is superfluous to say that the spectator must invent for himself the allegory which he may choose to see embodied in this stony trio. It is not enough to be told the words of the charade,—Julian, Night, Morning. One can never spell out the meaning by putting together the group with the aid of such a key. Night is Night, obviously, because she is asleep. For an equally profound reason, Day is Day, because he is not asleep; and both, looked at in this vulgar light, are creations as imaginative as Simon Snug, with his lantern, representing moonshine. If the figures should arise and walk across the chapel, changing places with the couple opposite them, as if in a sepulchral quadrille, would the allegory become more intelligible? Could not Day or Night move from Julian's monument, and take up the same position at Lorenzo's tomb, or "Ninny's tomb," or any other tomb? Was Lorenzo any more to Aurora than Julian, that she should weep for him only?

Therefore one must invent for one's self the fable of those immortal groups. Each spectator must pluck out, unaided, the heart of their mystery. Those matchless colossal forms, which the foolish chroniclers of the time have baptized Night and Morning, speak an unknown language to the crowd. They are mute as Sphinx to souls which cannot supply the music and the poetry which fell from their marble lips upon the ear of him who created them.

X.

Palazzo Riccardi.

The ancient residence of Cosmo Vecchio and his successors is a magnificent example of that vast and terrible architecture peculiar to Florence. This has always been a city, not of streets, but of fortresses. Each block is one house, but a house of the size of a citadel; while the corridors and apartments are like casemates and bastions, so gloomy and savage is their expression. Ancient Florence, the city of the twelfth and beginning

of the thirteenth centuries, the Florence of the nobles, the Florence of the Ghibellines, the Florence in which nearly every house was a castle,

Page 7

with frowning towers hundreds of feet high, machicolated battlements, donjon keeps, oubliettes, and all other appurtenances of a feudal stronghold, exists no longer. With the expulsion of the imperial faction, and the advent of the municipal Guelphs,—that proudest, boldest, most successful, and most unreasonable *bourgeoisie* which ever assumed organized life,—the nobles were curtailed of all their privileges. Their city castles, too, were shorn of their towers, which were limited to just so many ells, cloth measure, by the haughty shopkeepers who had displaced the grandees. The first third of the thirteenth century—the epoch of the memorable Buondelmonti street fight which lasted thirty years—was the period in which this dreadful architecture was fixed upon Florence. Then was the time in which the chains, fastened in those huge rings which still dangle from the grim house-fronts, were stretched across the street; thus enclosing and fettering a compact mass of combatants in an iron embrace, while from the rare and narrow murder-windows in the walls, and from the beetling roofs, descended the hail of iron and stone and scalding pitch and red-hot coals to refresh the struggling throng below.

After this epoch, and with the expiration of the imperial house of the Hohenstaufen, the nobles here, as in Switzerland, sought to popularize themselves, to become municipal.

Der Adel steigt von seinen alten Burgen,
Und schwört den Staedten seinen Buerger-Eid,

said the prophetic old Attinghausen, in his dying moments. The change was even more extraordinary in Florence. The expulsion of some of the patrician families was absolute. Others were allowed to participate with the plebeians in the struggle for civic honors, and for the wealth earned in commerce, manufactures, and handicraft. It became a severe and not uncommon punishment to degrade offending individuals or families into the ranks of nobility, and thus deprive them of their civil rights. Hundreds of low-born persons have, in a single day, been declared noble, and thus disfranchised. And the example of Florence was often followed by other cities.

The result was twofold upon the aristocracy. Those who municipalized themselves became more enlightened, more lettered, more refined, and, at the same time, less chivalrous and less martial than their ancestors. The characters of buccaneer, land-pirate, knight-errant could not be conveniently united with those of banker, exchange broker, dealer in dry goods, and general commission agents.

The consequence was that the fighting business became a specialty, and fell into the hands of private companies. Florence, like Venice, and other Italian republics, jobbed her wars. The work was done by the Hawkwoods, the Sforzas, the Bracciones, and other chiefs of the celebrated free companies, black bands, lance societies, who understood no other profession, but who were as accomplished in the arts of their own

guild as were any of the five major and seven minor crafts into which the Florentine burgesses were divided.

Page 8

This proved a bad thing for the liberties of Florence in the end. The chieftains of these military clubs, usually from the lowest ranks, with no capacity but for bloodshed, and no revenue but rapine, often ended their career by obtaining the seigniorship of some petty republic, a small town, or a handful of hamlets, whose liberty they crushed with their own iron, and with the gold obtained, in exchange for their blood, from the city bankers. In the course of time such seigniorships often rolled together, and assumed a menacing shape to all who valued municipal liberty. Sforza—whose peasant father threw his axe into a tree, resolving, if it fell, to join, as a common soldier, the roving band which had just invited him; if it adhered to the wood, to remain at home a laboring hind—becomes Duke of Milan, and is encouraged in his usurpation by Cosmo Vecchio, who still gives himself the airs of first-citizen of Florence.

The serpent, the well-known cognizance of the Visconti, had already coiled itself around all those fair and clustering cities which were once the Lombard republics, and had poisoned their vigorous life. The Ezzelinos, Carraras, Gonzagas, Scalas, had crushed the spirit of liberty in the neighborhood of Venice. All this had been accomplished by means of mercenary adventurers, guided only by the love of plunder; while those two luxurious and stately republics—the one an oligarchy, the other a democracy—looked on from their marble palaces, enjoying the refreshing bloodshowers in which their own golden harvests were so rapidly ripening.

Meanwhile a gigantic despotism was maturing, which was eventually to crush the power, glory, wealth, and freedom of Italy.

This *palazzo* of Cosmo the Elder is a good type of Florentine architecture at its ultimate epoch, just as Cosmo himself was the largest expression of the Florentine citizen in the last and over-ripe stage.

The Medici family, unheard of in the thirteenth century, obscure and plebeian in the middle of the fourteenth, and wealthy bankers and leaders of the democratic party at its close, culminated in the early part of the fifteenth in the person of Cosmo. The *Pater Patriae*,—so called, because, having at last absorbed all the authority, he could afford to affect some of the benignity of a parent, and to treat his fellow-citizens, not as men, but as little children,—the Father of his Country had acquired, by means of his great fortune and large financial connections, an immense control over the destinies of Florence and Italy. But he was still a private citizen in externals. There was, at least, elevation of taste, refinement of sentiment in Cosmo's conception of a great citizen. His habits of life were elegant, but frugal. He built churches, palaces, villas. He employed all the great architects of the age. He adorned these edifices with masterpieces from the pencils and chisels of the wonderful *Quattrocentisti*, whose

Page 9

productions alone would have given Florence an immortal name in Art history. Yet he preserved a perfect simplicity of equipage and apparel. In this regard, faithful to the traditions of the republic, which his family had really changed from a democracy to a ploutarchy, he had the good taste to scorn the vulgar pomp of kings,—“the horses led, and grooms besmeared with gold,”—all the theatrical paraphernalia and plebeian tinsel “which dazzle the crowd and set them all agape”; but his expenditures were those of an intellectual and accomplished oligarch. He was worthy, in many respects, to be the chief of those haughty merchants and manufacturers, who wielded more power, through the length of their purses and the cultivation of their brains, than did all the contemporaneous and illiterate barons of the rest of Christendom, by dint of castle-storming and cattle-stealing.

In an age when other nobles were proud of being unable to write their own names, or to read them when others wrote them, the great princes and citizens of Florence protected and cultivated art, science, and letters. Every citizen received a liberal education. Poets and philosophers sat in the councils of the republic. Philosophy, metaphysics, and the restoration of ancient learning occupied the minds and diminished the revenues of its greater and inferior burghers. In this respect, the Medici, and their abettors of the fifteenth century, discharged a portion of the debt which they had incurred to humanity. They robbed Italy of her freedom, but they gave her back the philosophy of Plato. They reduced the generality of Florentine citizens, who were once omnipotent, to a nullity; but they had at least, the sense to cherish Donatello and Ghiberti, Brunelleschi and Gozzoli, Ficino and Politian.

It is singular, too, with what comparatively small means the Medici were enabled to do such great things. Cosmo, unquestionably the greatest and most successful citizen that ever lived,—for he almost rivalled Pericles in position, if not in talent, while he surpassed him in good fortune,—was, during his lifetime, the virtual sovereign of the most enlightened and wealthy and powerful republic that had existed in modern times. He built the church of San Marco, the church of San Lorenzo, the cloister of San Verdiano. On the hill of Fiesole he erected a church and a convent. At Jerusalem he built a church and a hospital for pilgrims. All this was for religion, the republic, and the world. For himself he constructed four splendid villas, at Careggi, Fiesole, Caffaggiolo, and Trebbio, and in the city the magnificent palace in the Via Larga, now called the Riccardi.

Page 10

In thirty-seven years, from 1434 to 1471, he and his successors expended eight millions of francs (663,755 gold florins) in buildings and charities,—a sum which may be represented by as many, or, as some would reckon, twice as many, dollars at the present day. Nevertheless, the income of Cosmo was never more than 600,000 francs, (50,000 gold florins,) while his fortune was never thought to exceed three millions of francs, or six hundred thousand dollars. Being invested in commerce, his property yielded, and ought to have yielded, an income of twenty *per cent*. Nevertheless, an inventory made in 1469 showed, that, after twenty-nine years, he left to his son Pietro a fortune but just about equal in amount to that which he had himself received from his father.

With six hundred thousand dollars for his whole capital, then, Cosmo was able to play his magnificent part in the world's history; while the Duke of Milan, son of the peasant Sforza, sometimes expended more than that sum in a single year. So much difference was there between the position and requirements of an educated and opulent first-citizen, and a low-born military *parvenu*, whom, however, Cosmo was most earnest to encourage and to strengthen in his designs against the liberties of Lombardy.

This Riccardi palace, as Cosmo observed after his poor son Peter had become bed-ridden with the gout, was a marvellously large mansion for so small a family as one old man and one cripple. It is chiefly interesting, now, for the frescos with which Benozzo Gozzoli has adorned the chapel. The same cause which has preserved these beautiful paintings so fresh, four centuries long, has unfortunately always prevented their being seen to any advantage. The absence of light, which has kept the colors from fading, is most provoking, when one wishes to admire the works of a great master, whose productions are so rare.

Gozzoli, who lived and worked through the middle of the fifteenth century, is chiefly known by his large and graceful compositions in the Pisan Campo Santo. These masterpieces are fast crumbling into mildewed rubbish. He had as much vigor and audacity as Ghirlandaio, with more grace and freshness of invention. He has, however, nothing of his dramatic power. His genius is rather idyllic and romantic. Although some of the figures in these Medici palace frescos are thought to be family portraits, still they hardly seem very lifelike. The subjects selected are a Nativity, and an Adoration of the Magi. In the neighborhood of the window is a choir of angels singing Hosanna, full of freshness and vernal grace. The long procession of kings riding to pay their homage, "with tedious pomp and rich retinue long," has given the artist an opportunity of exhibiting more power in perspective and fore-shortening than one could expect at that epoch. There are mules and horses, caparisoned and bedizened; some led by grinning blackamoors, others ridden by showy kings,

Page 11

effulgent in brocade, glittering spurs, and gleaming cuirasses. Here are horsemen travelling straight towards the spectator,—there, a group, in an exactly opposite direction, is forcing its way into the picture,—while hunters with hound and horn are pursuing the stag on the neighboring hills, and idle spectators stand around, gaping and dazzled; all drawn with a free and accurate pencil, and colored with much brilliancy;—a triumphant and masterly composition, hidden in a dark corner of what has now become a great dusty building, filled with public offices.

XI.

FIESOLE.

Here sits on her hill the weird old Etrurian nurse of Florence, withered, superannuated, feeble, warming her palsied limbs in the sun, and looking vacantly down upon the beautiful child whose cradle she rocked. Fiesole is perhaps the oldest Italian city. The inhabitants of middle and lower Italy were Pelasgians by origin, like the earlier races of Greece. The Etrurians were an aboriginal stock,—that is to say, as far as anything can be definitely stated regarding their original establishment in the peninsula; for they, too, doubtless came, at some remote epoch, from beyond the Altai mountains.

In their arts they seem to have been original,—at least, until at a later period they began to imitate the culture of Greece. They were the only ancient Italian people who had the art-capacity; and they supplied the wants of royal Rome, just as Greece afterwards supplied the republic and the empire with the far more elevated creations of her plastic genius.

The great works undertaken by the Tarquins, if there ever were Tarquins, were in the hands of Etrurian architects and sculptors. The admirable system of subterranean drainage in Rome, by which the swampy hollows among the seven hills were converted into stately streets, and the stupendous *cloaca maxima*, the buried arches of which have sustained for more than two thousand years, without flinching, the weight of superincumbent Rome, were Etrurian performances, commenced six centuries before Christ.

It would appear that this people had rather a tendency to the useful, than to the beautiful. Unable to assimilate the elements of beauty and grace furnished by more genial races, this mystic and vanished nation was rather prone to the stupendously and minutely practical, than devoted to the beautiful for its own sake.

At Fiesole, the vast Cyclopean walls, still fixed and firm as the everlasting hills, in their parallelipedal layers, attest the grandeur of the ancient city. Here are walls built,

probably, before the foundation of Rome, and yet steadfast as the Apennines. There are also a broken ring or two of an amphitheatre; for the Etrurians preceded and instructed the Romans in gladiatorial shows. It is suggestive to seat one's self upon these solid granite seats, where twenty-five hundred years ago some grave Etrurian citizen, wrapped in his mantle of Tyrrhenian purple, his straight-nosed wife at his side, with serpent bracelet and enamelled brooch, and a hopeful family clustering playfully at their knees, looked placidly on, while slaves were baiting and butchering each other in the arena below.

Page 12

The Duomo is an edifice of the Romanesque period, and contains some masterpieces by Mino da Fiesole. On a fine day, however, the church is too dismal, and the scene outside too glowing and golden, to permit any compromise between nature and Mino. The view from the Franciscan convent upon the brow of the hill, site of the ancient acropolis, is on the whole the very best which can be obtained of Florence and the Val d'Arno. All the verdurous, gently rolling hills which are heaped about Firenze la bella are visible at once. There, stretched languidly upon those piles of velvet cushions, reposes the luxurious, jewelled, tiara-crowned city, like Cleopatra on her couch. Nothing, save an Oriental or Italian city on the sea-coast, can present a more beautiful picture. The hills are tossed about so softly, the sunshine comes down in its golden shower so voluptuously, the yellow Arno moves along its channel so noiselessly, the chains of villages, villas, convents, and palaces are strung together with such a profuse and careless grace, wreathing themselves from hill to hill, and around every coigne of vantage, the forests of olive and the festoons of vine are so poetical and suggestive, that we wonder not that civilized man has found this an attractive abode for twenty-five centuries.

Florence is stone dead. 'Tis but a polished tortoise-shell, of which the living inhabitant has long since crumbled to dust; but it still gleams in the sun with wondrous radiance.

Just at your feet, as you stand on the convent terrace, is the Villa Mozzi, where, not long ago, were found buried jars of Roman coins of the republican era, hidden there by Catiline, at the epoch of his memorable conspiracy. Upon the same spot was the favorite residence of Lorenzo Magnifico; concerning whose probable ponderings, as he sat upon his terrace, with his legs dangling over Florence, much may be learned from the guide-book of the immortal Murray, so that he who runs may read and philosophize.

Looking at Florence from the hill-top, one is more impressed than ever with the appropriateness of its name. *The City of Flowers* is itself a flower, and, as you gaze upon it from a height, you see how it opens from its calyx. The many bright villages, gay gardens, palaces, and convents which encircle the city, are not to be regarded separately, but as one whole. The germ and heart of Florence, the compressed and half hidden Piazza, with its dome, campanile, and long, slender towers, shooting forth like the stamens and pistils, is closely folded and sombre, while the vast and beautiful corolla spreads its brilliant and fragrant circumference, petal upon petal, for miles and miles around.

THE BATTLE OF LEPANTO.

Page 13

It was two hours before dawn on Sunday, the memorable seventh of October, 1571, when the fleet weighed anchor. The wind had become lighter, but it was still contrary, and the galleys were indebted for their progress much more to their oars than to their sails. By sunrise they were abreast of the Curzolaes, a cluster of huge rocks, or rocky islets, which, on the north, defends the entrance of the Gulf of Lepanto. The fleet moved laboriously along, while every eye was strained to catch the first glimpse of the hostile navy. At length the watch from the foretop of the *Real* called out, "A sail!" and soon after announced that the whole Ottoman fleet was in sight. Several others, climbing up the rigging, confirmed his report; and in a few moments more word was sent to the same effect by Andrew Doria, who commanded on the right. There was no longer any doubt; and Don John, ordering his pendant to be displayed at the mizzen-peak, unfurled the great standard of the League, given by the pope, and directed a gun to be fired, the signal for battle. The report, as it ran along the rocky shores, fell cheerily on the ears of the confederates, who, raising their eyes towards the consecrated banner, filled the air with their shouts.

The principal captains now came on board the *Real* to receive the last orders of the commander-in-chief. Even at this late hour there were some who ventured to intimate their doubts of the expediency of engaging the enemy in a position where he had a decided advantage. But Don John cut short the discussion. "Gentlemen," he said, "this is the time for combat, not for counsel." He then continued the dispositions he was making for the assault.

He had already given to each commander of a galley written instructions as to the manner in which the line of battle was to be formed, in case of meeting the enemy. The armada was now formed in that order. It extended on a front of three miles. Far on the right a squadron of sixty-four galleys was commanded by the Genoese, Andrew Doria, a name of terror to the Moslems. The centre, or *battle*, as it was called, consisting of sixty-three galleys, was led by John of Austria, who was supported on the one side by Colonna, the captain-general of the pope, and on the other by the Venetian captain-general, Veniero. Immediately in the rear was the galley of the *Comendador* Requesens, who still remained near the person of his former pupil; though a difference which arose between them on the voyage, fortunately now healed, showed that the young commander-in-chief was wholly independent of his teacher in the art of war. The left wing was commanded by the noble Venetian, Barberigo, whose vessels stretched along the Aetolian shore, which, to prevent his being turned by the enemy, he approached as near as, in his ignorance of the coast, he dared to venture. Finally, the reserve, consisting of thirty-five galleys, was given to the brave Marquis of Santa Cruz, with directions to act on any part where he thought his presence most needed. The smaller craft, some of which had now arrived, seem to have taken little part in the action, which was thus left to the galleys.

Page 14

Each commander was to occupy so much space with his galley as to allow room for manoeuvring it to advantage, and yet not enough to enable the enemy to break the line. He was directed to single out his adversary, to close at once with him, and board as soon as possible. The beaks of the galleys were pronounced to be a hindrance rather than a help in action. They were rarely strong enough to resist a shock from the enemy; and they much interfered with the working and firing of the guns. Don John had the beak of his vessel cut away; and the example was speedily followed throughout the fleet, and, as it is said, with eminently good effect. It may seem strange that this discovery should have been reserved for the crisis of a battle.

When the officers had received their last instructions, they returned to their respective vessels; and Don John, going on board of a light frigate, passed rapidly through that part of the armada lying on his right, while he commanded Requesens to do the same with the vessels on his left. His object was to feel the temper of his men, and rouse their mettle by a few words of encouragement. The Venetians he reminded of their recent injuries. The hour for vengeance, he told them, had arrived. To the Spaniards, and other confederates, he said, "You have come to fight the battle of the Cross,—to conquer or die. But whether you die or conquer, do your duty this day, and you will secure a glorious immortality." His words were received with a burst of enthusiasm which went to the heart of the commander, and assured him that he could rely on his men in the hour of trial. On his return to his vessel, he saw Veniero on his quarter-deck, and they exchanged salutations in as friendly a manner as if no difference had existed between them. At a time like this, both these brave men were willing to forget all personal animosity, in a common feeling of devotion to the great cause in which they were engaged.

The Ottoman fleet came on slowly and with difficulty. For, strange to say, the wind, which had hitherto been adverse to the Christians, after lulling for a time, suddenly shifted to the opposite quarter, and blew in the face of the enemy. As the day advanced, moreover, the sun, which had shone in the eyes of the confederates, gradually shot its rays into those of the Moslems. Both circumstances were of good omen to the Christians, and the first was regarded as nothing short of a direct interposition of Heaven. Thus ploughing its way along, the Turkish armament, as it came nearer into view, showed itself in greater strength than had been anticipated by the allies. It consisted of nearly two hundred and fifty royal galleys, most of them of the largest class, besides a number of smaller vessels in the rear, which, like those of the allies, appear scarcely to have come into action. The men on board, including those of every description, were computed at not less than a hundred and twenty thousand. The galleys

Page 15

spread out, as usual with the Turks, in the form of a regular half-moon, covering a wider extent of surface than the combined fleets, which they somewhat exceeded in numbers. They presented, indeed, as they drew nearer, a magnificent array, with their gilded and gaudily painted prows, and their myriads of pennons and streamers fluttering gayly in the breeze, while the rays of the morning sun glanced on the polished scymitars of Damascus, and on the superb aigrettes of jewels which sparkled in the turbans of the Ottoman chiefs.

In the centre of the extended line, and directly opposite to the station occupied by the captain-general of the League, was the huge galley of Ali Pasha. The right of the armada was commanded by Mehemet Siroco, viceroy of Egypt, a circumspect as well as courageous leader; the left by Uluch Ali, dey of Algiers, the redoubtable corsair of the Mediterranean. Ali Pasha had experienced a similar difficulty with Don John, as several of his officers had strongly urged the inexpediency of engaging so formidable an armament as that of the allies. But Ali, like his rival, was young and ambitious. He had been sent by his master to fight the enemy; and no remonstrances, not even those of Mehemet Siroco, for whom he had great respect, could turn him from his purpose.

He had, moreover, received intelligence that the allied fleet was much inferior in strength to what it proved. In this error he was fortified by the first appearance of the Christians; for the extremity of their left wing, commanded by Barberigo, stretching behind the Aetolian shore, was hidden from his view. As he drew nearer, and saw the whole extent of the Christian lines, it is said his countenance fell. If so, he still did not abate one jot of his resolution. He spoke to those around him with the same confidence as before of the result of the battle. He urged his rowers to strain every effort. Ali was a man of more humanity than often belonged to his nation. His galley-slaves were all, or nearly all, Christian captives; and he addressed them in this neat and pithy manner: "If your countrymen win this day, Allah give you the benefit of it! Yet if I win it, you shall have your freedom. If you feel that I do well by you, do then the like by me."

As the Turkish admiral drew nearer, he made a change in his order of battle by separating his wings farther from his centre, thus conforming to the dispositions of the allies. Before he had come within cannon-shot, he fired a gun by way of challenge to his enemy. It was answered by another from the galley of John of Austria. A second gun discharged by Ali was as promptly replied to by the Christian commander. The distance between the two fleets was now rapidly diminishing. At this solemn hour a death-like silence reigned throughout the armament of the confederates. Men seemed to hold their breath, as if absorbed in the expectation of some great catastrophe. The day was magnificent. A light breeze, still adverse to the Turks, played on the waters, somewhat fretted by contrary winds. It was nearly noon; and as the sun, mounting through a cloudless sky, rose to the zenith, he seemed to pause, as if to look down on

the beautiful scene, where the multitude of galleys, moving over the water, showed like a holiday spectacle rather than a preparation for mortal combat.

Page 16

The illusion was soon dispelled by the fierce yells which rose on the air from the Turkish armada. It was the customary war-cry with which the Moslems entered into battle. Very different was the scene on board of the Christian galleys. Don John might be there seen, armed cap-a-pie, standing on the prow of the *Real*, anxiously awaiting the coming conflict. In this conspicuous position, kneeling down, he raised his eyes to heaven, and humbly prayed that the Almighty would be with his people on that day. His example was speedily followed by the whole fleet. Officers and men, all falling on their knees, and turning their eyes to the consecrated banner which floated from the *Real*, put up a petition like that of their commander. They then received absolution from the priests, of whom there were some in each vessel; and each man, as he rose to his feet, gathered new strength from the assurance that the Lord of Hosts would fight on his side.

When the foremost vessels of the Turks had come within cannon-shot, they opened a fire on the Christians. The firing soon ran along the whole of the Turkish line, and was kept up without interruption as it advanced. Don John gave orders for trumpet and atabal to sound the signal for action; and a simultaneous discharge followed from such of the guns in the combined fleet as could bear on the enemy. Don John had caused the *galeazzas* to be towed some half a mile ahead of the fleet, where they might intercept the advance of the Turks. As the latter came abreast of them, the huge galleys delivered their broadsides right and left, and their heavy ordnance produced a startling effect. Ali Pasha gave orders for his galleys to open on either side, and pass without engaging these monsters of the deep, of which he had had no experience. Even so their heavy guns did considerable damage to the nearest vessels, and created some confusion in the pasha's line of battle. They were, however, but unwieldy craft, and, having accomplished their object, seem to have taken no further part in the combat. The action began on the left wing of the allies, which Mehemet Siroco was desirous of turning. This had been anticipated by Barberigo, the Venetian admiral, who commanded in that quarter. To prevent it, as we have seen, he lay with his vessels as near the coast as he dared. Siroco, better acquainted with the soundings, saw there was space enough for him to pass, and darting by with all the speed that oars and wind could give him, he succeeded in doubling on his enemy. Thus placed between two fires, the extreme of the Christian left fought at terrible disadvantage. No less than eight galleys went to the bottom. Several more were captured. The brave Barberigo, throwing himself into the heat of the fight, without availing himself of his defensive armor, was pierced in the eye by an arrow, and though reluctant to leave the glory of the field to another, was borne to his cabin. The combat still continued with unabated fury on the part of the Venetians. They fought like men who felt that the war was theirs, and who were animated not only by the thirst for glory, but for revenge.

Page 17

Far on the Christian right, a manoeuvre similar to that so successfully executed by Siroco was attempted by Uluch Ali, the viceroy of Algiers. Profiting by his superiority of numbers, he endeavored to turn the right wing of the confederates. It was in this quarter that Andrew Doria commanded. He also had foreseen this movement of his enemy, and he succeeded in foiling it. It was a trial of skill between the two most accomplished seamen in the Mediterranean. Doria extended his line so far to the right, indeed, to prevent being surrounded, that Don John was obliged to remind him that he left the centre much too exposed. His dispositions were so far unfortunate for himself that his own line was thus weakened and afforded some vulnerable points to his assailant. These were soon detected by the eagle eye of Uluch Ali; and like the king of birds swooping on his prey, he fell on some galleys separated by a considerable interval from their companions, and, sinking more than one, carried off the great *Capitana* of Malta in triumph as his prize.

While the combat thus opened disastrously to the allies both on the right and on the left, in the centre they may be said to have fought with doubtful fortune. Don John had led his division gallantly forward. But the object on which he was intent was an encounter with Ali Pasha, the foe most worthy of his sword. The Turkish commander had the same combat no less at heart. The galleys of both were easily recognized, not only from their position, but from their superior size and richer decoration. The one, moreover, displayed the holy banner of the League; the other, the great Ottoman standard. This, like the ancient standard of the caliphs, was held sacred in its character. It was covered with texts from the Koran, emblazoned in letters of gold, with the name of Allah inscribed upon it no less than twenty-eight thousand nine hundred times. It was the banner of the Sultan, having passed from father to son since the foundation of the imperial dynasty, and was never seen in the field unless the Grand-Seignior or his lieutenant was there in person.

Both the Christian and the Moslem chief urged on their rowers to the top of their speed. Their galleys soon shot ahead of the rest of the line, driven through the boiling surges as by the force of a tornado, and closing with a shock that made every timber crack, and the two vessels quiver to their very keels. So powerful, indeed, was the impetus they received, that the pasha's galley, which was considerably the larger and loftier of the two, was thrown so far upon its opponent that the prow reached the fourth bench of rowers. As soon as the vessels were disengaged from each other, and those on board had recovered from the shock, the work of death began. Don John's chief strength consisted in some three hundred Spanish arquebusiers, culled from the flower of his infantry. Ali, on the other hand, was provided with the like number of janissaries. He was also followed by a smaller vessel, in which two hundred more were stationed as a *corps de reserve*. He had, moreover, a hundred archers on board. The bow was still much in use with the Turks, as with the other Moslems.

Page 18

The pasha opened at once on his enemy a terrible fire of cannon and musketry. It was returned with equal spirit, and much more effect; for the Turkish marksmen were observed to shoot over the heads of their adversaries. Their galley was unprovided with the defences which protected the sides of the Spanish vessels; and the troops, huddled together on their lofty prow, presented an easy mark to their enemies' balls. But though numbers of them fell at every discharge, their places were soon supplied by those in reserve. Their incessant fire, moreover, wasted the strength of the Spaniards; and as both Christian and Mussulman fought with indomitable spirit, it seemed doubtful to which side the victory would incline.

The affair was made more complicated by the entrance of other parties into the conflict. Both Ali and Don John were supported by some of the most valiant captains in their fleets. Next to the Spanish commander, as we have seen, were Colonna and the veteran Veniero, who, at the age of seventy-six, performed feats of arms worthy of a paladin of romance. Thus a little squadron of combatants gathered around the principal leaders, who sometimes found themselves assailed by several enemies at the same time. Still the chiefs did not lose sight of one another, but beating off their inferior foes as well as they could, each refusing to loosen his hold, clung with mortal grasp to his antagonist.

Thus the fight raged along the whole extent of the entrance of the Gulf of Lepanto. If the eye of the spectator could have penetrated the cloud of smoke that enveloped the combatants, and have embraced the whole scene at a glance, he would have beheld them broken up into small detachments, engaged in conflict with one another, wholly independently of the rest, and indeed ignorant of all that was doing in other quarters. The volumes of vapor, rolling heavily over the waters, effectually shut out from sight whatever was passing at any considerable distance, unless when a fresher breeze dispelled the smoke for a moment, or the flashes of the heavy guns threw a transient gleam over the dark canopy of battle. The contest exhibited few of those enlarged combinations and skilful manoeuvres to be expected in a great naval encounter. It was rather an assemblage of petty actions, resembling those on land. The galleys, grappling together, presented a level arena, on which soldier and galley-slave fought hand to hand, and the fate of the engagement was generally decided by boarding. As in most hand-to-hand contests, there was an enormous waste of life. The decks were loaded with corpses, Christian and Moslem lying promiscuously together in the embrace of death. Instances are given where every man on board was slain or wounded. It was a ghastly spectacle, where blood flowed in rivulets down the sides of the vessels, staining the waters of the Gulf for miles around.

Page 19

It seemed as if some hurricane had swept over the sea, and covered it with the wreck of the noble armaments which a moment before were so proudly riding on its bosom. Little had they now to remind one of their late magnificent array, with their hulls battered and defaced, their masts and spars gone or fearfully splintered by the shot, their canvas cut into shreds and floating wildly on the breeze, while thousands of wounded and drowning men were clinging to the floating fragments, and calling piteously for help. Such was the wild uproar which had succeeded to the Sabbath-like stillness that two hours before had reigned over these beautiful solitudes!

The left wing of the confederates, commanded by Barberigo, had been sorely pressed by the Turks, as we have seen, at the beginning of the fight. Barberigo himself had been mortally wounded. His line had been turned. Several of his galleys had been sunk. But the Venetians gathered courage from despair. By incredible efforts they succeeded in beating off their enemies. They became the assailants in their turn. Sword in hand, they carried one vessel after another. The Capuchin, with uplifted crucifix, was seen to head the attack, and to lead the boarders to the assault. The Christian galley-slaves, in some instances, broke their fetters and joined their countrymen against their masters. Fortunately, the vessel of Mehemet Siroco, the Moslem admiral, was sunk; and though extricated from the water himself, it was only to perish by the sword of his conqueror, Juan Contarini. The Venetian could find no mercy for the Turk.

The fall of their commander gave the final blow to his followers. Without further attempt to prolong the fight, they fled before the avenging swords of the Venetians. Those nearest the land endeavored to escape by running their vessels ashore, where they abandoned them as prizes to the Christians. Yet many of the fugitives, before gaining the shore, perished miserably in the waves. Barberigo, the Venetian admiral, who was still lingering in agony, heard the tidings of the enemy's defeat, and exclaiming, "I die contented," he breathed his last.

Meanwhile the combat had been going forward in the centre between the two commanders-in-chief, Don John and Ali Pasha, whose galleys blazed with an incessant fire of artillery and musketry that enveloped them like "a martyr's robe of flames." Both parties fought with equal spirit, though not with equal fortune. Twice the Spaniards had boarded their enemy, and both times they had been repulsed with loss. Still their superiority in the use of their fire-arms would have given them a decided advantage over their opponents, if the loss thus inflicted had not been speedily repaired by fresh reinforcements. More than once the contest between the two chieftains was interrupted by the arrival of others to take part in the fray. They soon, however, returned to one another, as if unwilling to waste their strength on a meaner enemy. Through the whole engagement both commanders exposed themselves to danger as freely as any common soldier. Even Philip must have admitted that in such a contest it would have been difficult for his brother to find with honor a place of safety. Don John received a

wound in the foot. It was a slight one, however, and he would not allow it to be attended to till the action was over.

Page 20

At length the men were mustered, and a third time the trumpets sounded to the assault. It was more successful than those preceding. The Spaniards threw themselves boldly into the Turkish galley. They were met by the janissaries with the same spirit as before. Ali Pasha led them on. Unfortunately, at this moment he was struck by a musket-ball in the head, and stretched senseless on the gangway. His men fought worthily of their ancient renown. But they missed the accustomed voice of their commander. After a short, but ineffectual struggle against the fiery impetuosity of the Spaniards, they were overpowered and threw down their arms. The decks were loaded with the bodies of the dead and the dying. Beneath these was discovered the Turkish commander-in-chief, sorely wounded, but perhaps not mortally. He was drawn forth by some Castilian soldiers, who, recognizing his person, would at once have despatched him. But the wounded chief, having rallied from the first effects of his blow, had presence of mind enough to divert them from their purpose by pointing out the place below where he had deposited his money and jewels, and they hastened to profit by the disclosure before the treasure should fall into the hands of their comrades.

Ali was not so successful with another soldier, who came up soon after, brandishing his sword, and preparing to plunge it into the body of the prostrate commander. It was in vain that the latter endeavored to turn the ruffian from his purpose. He was a convict, —one of those galley-slaves whom Don John had caused to be unchained from the oar, and furnished with arms. He could not believe that any treasure would be worth so much to him as the head of the pasha. Without further hesitation he dealt him a blow which severed it from his shoulders. Then returning to his galley, he laid the bloody trophy before Don John. But he had miscalculated on his recompense. His commander gazed on it with a look of pity mingled with horror. He may have thought of the generous conduct of Ali to his Christian captives, and have felt that he deserved a better fate. He coldly inquired “of what use such a present could be to him,” and then ordered it to be thrown into the sea. Far from being obeyed, it is said the head was stuck on a pike and raised aloft on board the captive galley. At the same time the banner of the Crescent was pulled down, while that of the Cross run up in its place proclaimed the downfall of the pasha.

The sight of the sacred ensign was welcomed by the Christians with a shout of “Victory!” which rose high above the din of battle. The tidings of the death of Ali soon passed from mouth to mouth, giving fresh heart to the confederates, but falling like a knell on the ears of the Moslems. Their confidence was gone. Their fire slackened. Their efforts grew weaker and weaker. They were too far from shore to seek an asylum there, like their comrades on the right. They had no resource but to prolong the combat or to surrender. Most preferred the latter. Many vessels were carried by boarding, others sunk by the victorious Christians. Before four hours had elapsed, the centre, like the right wing of the Moslems, might be said to be annihilated.

Page 21

Still the fight was lingering on the right of the confederates, where, it will be remembered, Uluch Ali, the Algerine chief, had profited by Doria's error in extending his line so far as greatly to weaken it. His adversary, attacking it on its most vulnerable quarter, had succeeded, as we have seen, in capturing and destroying several vessels, and would have inflicted still heavier losses on his enemy, had it not been for the seasonable succor received from the Marquis of Santa Cruz. This brave officer, who commanded the reserve, had already been of much service to Don John, when the *Real* was assailed by several Turkish galleys at once, during his combat with Ali Pasha; the Marquis having arrived at this juncture, and beating off the assailants, one of whom he afterwards captured, the commander-in-chief was enabled to resume his engagement with the pasha.

No sooner did Santa Cruz learn the critical situation of Doria, than, supported by Cardona, general of the Sicilian squadron, he pushed forward to his relief. Dashing into the midst of the *melee*, they fell like a thunderbolt on the Algerine galleys. Few attempted to withstand the shock. But in their haste to avoid it, they were encountered by Doria and his Genoese. Thus beset on all sides, Uluch Ali was compelled to abandon his prizes and provide for his own safety by flight. He cut adrift the Maltese *Capitana*, which he had lashed to his stern, and on which three hundred corpses attested the desperate character of her defence. As tidings reached him of the discomfiture of the centre and the death of his commander, he felt that nothing remained but to make the best of his way from the fatal scene of action, and save as many of his own ships as he could. And there were no ships in the Turkish fleet superior to his, or manned by men under more perfect discipline; for they were the famous corsairs of the Mediterranean, who had been rocked from infancy on its waters.

Throwing out his signals for retreat, the Algerine was soon to be seen, at the head of his squadron, standing towards the north, under as much canvas as remained to him after the battle, and urged forward through the deep by the whole strength of his oarsmen. Doria and Santa Cruz followed quickly in his wake. But he was borne on the wings of the wind, and soon distanced his pursuers. Don John, having disposed of his own assailants, was coming to the support of Doria, and now joined in the pursuit of the viceroy. A rocky headland, stretching far into the sea, lay in the path of the fugitive, and his enemies hoped to intercept him there. Some few of his vessels stranded on the rocks. But the rest, near forty in number, standing more boldly out to sea, safely doubled the promontory. Then quickening their flight, they gradually faded from the horizon, their white sails, the last thing visible, showing in the distance like a flock of Arctic sea-fowl on their way to their native homes. The confederates explained the inferior sailing of their own galleys by the circumstance of their rowers, who had been allowed to bear arms in the fight, being crippled by their wounds.

Page 22

The battle had lasted more than four hours. The sky, which had been almost without a cloud through the day, began now to be overcast, and showed signs of a coming storm. Before seeking a place of shelter for himself and his prizes, Don John reconnoitred the scene of action. He met with several vessels in too damaged a state for further service. These mostly belonging to the enemy, after saving what was of any value on board, he ordered to be burnt. He selected the neighboring port of Petala, as affording the most secure and accessible harbor for the night. Before he had arrived there, the tempest began to mutter and darkness was on the water. Yet the darkness rendered the more visible the blazing wrecks, which, sending up streams of fire mingled with showers of sparks, looked like volcanoes on the deep.

Long and loud were the congratulations now paid to the young commander-in-chief by his brave companions in arms, on the success of the day. The hours passed blithely with officers and men, while they recounted one to another their manifold achievements. But feelings of gloom mingled with their gayety, as they gathered tidings of the loss of friends who had bought this victory with their blood.

It was, indeed, a sanguinary battle, surpassing in this particular any sea-fight of modern times. The loss fell much the most heavily on the enemy. There is the usual discrepancy about numbers; but it may be safe to estimate the Turkish loss at about twenty-four thousand slain, and five thousand prisoners. But what gave most joy to the hearts of the conquerors was the liberation of twelve thousand Christian captives, who had been chained to the oar on board the Moslem galleys, and who now came forth with tears streaming down their haggard cheeks, to bless their deliverers.

The loss of the allies was comparatively small,—less than eight thousand. That it was so much less than that of their enemies may be referred in part to their superiority in the use of firearms; in part, also, to their exclusive use of these, instead of employing bows and arrows, weapons much less effective, but on which the Turks, like the other Moslem nations, seem to have greatly relied. Lastly, the Turks were the vanquished party, and in their heavier loss suffered the almost invariable lot of the vanquished.

As to their armada, it may almost be said to have been annihilated. Not more than forty galleys escaped, out of near two hundred and fifty which had entered into the action. One hundred and thirty were taken and divided among the conquerors. The remainder, sunk or burned, were swallowed up by the waves. To counterbalance all this, the confederates are said to have lost not more than fifteen galleys, though a much larger number doubtless were rendered unfit for service. This disparity affords good evidence of the inferiority of the Turks in the construction of their vessels, as well as in the nautical skill required to manage them. A large amount of booty, in the form of gold, jewels, and brocade, was found on board several of the prizes. The galley of the commander-in-chief alone is stated to have contained one hundred and seventy thousand gold sequins,—a large sum, but not large enough, it seems, to buy off his life.

Page 23

The losses of the combatants cannot be fairly presented without taking into the account the quality as well as the number of the slain. The number of persons of consideration, both Christians and Moslems, who embarked in the expedition, was very great. The roll of slaughter showed that in the race of glory they gave little heed to their personal safety. The officer second in command among the Venetians, the commander-in-chief of the Turkish armament, and the commander of its right wing, all fell in the battle. Many a high-born cavalier closed at Lepanto a long career of honorable service. More than one, on the other hand, dated the commencement of their career from this day. Such was the case with Alexander Farnese, the young prince of Parma. Though somewhat older than his uncle, John of Austria, difference of birth had placed a wide distance in their conditions; the one filling the post of commander-in-chief, the other only that of a private adventurer. Yet even so he succeeded in winning great renown by his achievements. The galley in which he sailed was lying, yard-arm to yard-arm, alongside of a Turkish galley, with which it was hotly engaged. In the midst of the action, the young Farnese sprang on board of the enemy, and with his stout broadsword hewed down all who opposed him, opening a path into which his comrades poured one after another; and after a short, but murderous contest, he succeeded in carrying the vessel. As Farnese's galley lay just astern of Don John's, the latter could witness the achievement of his nephew, which filled him with an admiration he did not affect to conceal. The intrepidity he displayed on this occasion gave augury of his character in later life, when he succeeded his uncle in command, and surpassed him in military renown.

Another youth was in that sea-fight, who, then humble and unknown, was destined one day to win laurels of a purer and more enviable kind than those which grow on the battle-field. This was Cervantes, who, at the age of twenty-four, was serving on board the fleet as a common soldier. He was confined to his bed by a fever; but, notwithstanding the remonstrances of his captain, insisted, on the morning of the action, not only on bearing arms, but on being stationed at the post of danger. And well did he perform his duty there, as was shown by two wounds on the breast, and another in the hand, by which he lost the use of it. Fortunately, it was the left hand. The right yet remained, to record those immortal productions which were to be familiar as household words, not only in his own land, but in every quarter of the civilized world.

A fierce storm of thunder and lightning raged for four-and-twenty hours after the battle, during which the fleet rode safely at anchor in the harbor of Petala. It remained there three days longer. Don John profited by the time to visit the different galleys and ascertain their condition. He informed himself of the conduct of the troops, and was liberal of his praises to those who deserved them. With the sick and the wounded he showed the greatest sympathy, endeavoring to alleviate their sufferings, and furnishing them with whatever his galley contained that could minister to their comfort. With so generous and sympathetic a nature, it is not wonderful that he should have established himself in the hearts of his soldiers.

Page 24

But the proofs of this kindly temper were not confined to his own followers. Among the prisoners were two sons of Ali, the Turkish commander-in-chief. One was seventeen, the other only thirteen years of age. Thus early had their father desired to initiate them in a profession which, beyond all others, opened the way to eminence in Turkey. They were not on board of his galley, and when they were informed of his death, they were inconsolable. To this sorrow was now to be added the doom of slavery.

As they were led into the presence of Don John, the youths prostrated themselves on the deck of his vessel. But raising them up, he affectionately embraced them. He said all he could to console them under their troubles. He caused them to be treated with the consideration due to their rank. His secretary, Juan de Soto, surrendered his quarters to them. They were provided with the richest apparel that could be found among the spoil. Their table was served with the same delicacies as that of the commander-in-chief; and his gentlemen of the chamber showed the same deference to them as to himself. His kindness did not stop with these acts of chivalrous courtesy. He received a letter from their sister Fatima, containing a touching appeal to Don John's humanity, and soliciting the release of her orphan brothers. He had sent a courier to give their friends in Constantinople the assurance of their personal safety; "which," adds the lady, "is held by all this court as an act of great courtesy,—*gran gentilezza*; and there is no one here who does not admire the goodness and magnanimity of your Highness." She enforced her petition with a rich present, for which she gracefully apologized, as intended to express her own feelings, though far below his deserts.

The young princes, in the division of the spoil, were assigned to the pope. But Don John succeeded in obtaining their liberation. Unfortunately, the elder died—of a broken heart, it is said—at Naples. The younger was sent home, with three of his attendants, for whom he had an especial regard. Don John declined the present, which he gave to Fatima's brother. In a letter to the Turkish princess, he remarked, that "he had done this, not because he undervalued her beautiful gift, but because it had ever been the habit of his royal ancestors freely to grant favors to those who stood in need of their protection, but not to receive aught by way of recompense."

THE WIND AND STREAM.

A brook came stealing from the ground;
You scarcely saw its silvery gleam
Among the herbs that hung around
The borders of that winding stream,—
A pretty stream, a placid stream,
A softly gliding, bashful stream.

A breeze came wandering from the sky,
Light as the whispers of a dream;

He put the o'erhanging grasses by,
And gayly stooped to kiss the stream,—
The pretty stream, the flattered stream,
The shy, yet unreluctant stream.

Page 25

The water, as the wind passed o'er,
Shot upward many a glancing beam,
Dimpled and quivered more and more,
And tripped along a livelier stream,—
The flattered stream, the simpering stream,
The fond, delighted, silly stream.

Away the airy wanderer flew
To where the fields with blossoms teem,
To sparkling springs and rivers blue,
And left alone that little stream,—
The flattered stream, the cheated stream,
The sad, forsaken, lonely stream.

That careless wind no more came back;
He wanders yet the fields, I deem;
But on its melancholy track
Complaining went that little stream,—
The cheated stream, the hopeless stream,
The ever murmuring, moaning stream.

TURKEY TRACKS.

Don't open your eyes, Polder! You think I am going to tell you about some of my Minnesota experiences; how I used to scamper over the prairies on my Indian pony, and lie in wait for wild turkeys on the edge of an oak opening. That is pretty sport, too, to creep under an oak with low-hanging boughs, and in the silence of a glowing autumn-day linger by the hour together in a trance of warm stillness, watching the light tracery of shadow and sun on that smooth sward, only now and then roused by the fleet rush of a deer through the wood, or the brisk chatter of a plume-tailed squirrel, till one hears a distant, sharp, clucking chuckle, and in an instant more pulls the trigger, and upsets a grand old cock, every bronzed feather glittering in the sunshine, and now splashed with scarlet blood, the delicate underwing ground into down as he rolls and flutters; for the first shot rarely kills at once with an amateur; there's too much excitement. Splendid sport, that! but I'm not going into it second-hand. I promised to tell you a story, now the skipper's fast, and the night is too warm to think of sleep down in that wretched bunk;—what another torture Dante might have lavished on his Inferno, if he'd ever slept in a fishing-smack! No. The moonlight makes me sentimental! Did I ever tell you about a month I spent up in Centreville, the year I came home from Germany? That was turkey-hunting with a vengeance!

You see, my pretty cousin Peggy married Peter Smith, who owns paper-mills in Centreville, and has exiled herself into deep country for life; a circumstance I disapprove, because I like Peggy, and manufacturers always bore me, though Peter is a



clever fellow enough; but madam was an old flame of mine, and I have a lingering tenderness for her yet. I wish she was nearer town. Just that year Peggy had been very ill indeed, and Kate, her sister, had gone up to nurse her. When I came home Peggy was getting better, and sent for me to come up and make a visitation there in June. I hadn't seen Kate for seven years,—not since she was thirteen; our education intervened.

Page 26

She had gone through that grading process and come out. By Jupiter! when she met me at the door of Smith's pretty, English-looking cottage, I took my hat off, she was so like that little Brazilian princess we used to see in the *cortege* of the court at Paris. What was her name? Never mind that! Kate had just such large, expressive eyes, just such masses of shiny black hair, just such a little nose,—turned up undeniably, but all the more piquant. And her teeth! good gracious! she smiled like a flash of lightning,—dark and sallow as she was. But she was cross, or stiff, or something, to me for a long time. Peggy only appeared after dinner, looking pale and lovely enough in her loose wrapper to make Peter act excessively like—a young married man, and to make me wish myself at an invisible distance, doing something beside picking up Kate's things, that she always dropped on the floor whenever she sewed. Peggy saw I was bored, so she requested me one day to walk down to the poultry-yard and ask about her chickens; she pretended a great deal of anxiety, and Peter had sprained his ankle.

"Kate will go with you," said she.

"No, she won't!" ejaculated that young woman.

"Thank you," said I, making a minuet bow, and off I went to the farm-house. Such a pretty walk it was, too! through a thicket of birches, down a little hill-side into a hollow full of hoary chestnut-trees, across a bubbling, dancing brook, and you came out upon the tiniest orchard in the world, a one-storied house with a red porch, and a great sweet-brier bush thereby; while up the hill-side behind stretched a high picket fence, enclosing huge trees, part of the same brook I had crossed here dammed into a pond, and a chicken-house of pretentious height and aspect,—one of those model institutions that are the ruin of gentlemen-farmers and the delight of women. I had to go into the farm-kitchen for the poultry-yard key. The door stood open, and I stepped in cautiously, lest I should come unaware upon some domestic scene not intended to be visible to the naked eye. And a scene I did come upon, fit for Retzsch to outline;—the cleanest kitchen, a dresser of white wood under one window, and the farmer's daughter, Melinda Tucker, moulding bread thereat in a ponderous tray; her deep red hair,—yes, it was red and comely! of the deepest bay, full of gilded reflections, and accompanied by the fair, rose-flushed skin, blue eyes, and scarlet lips that belong to such hair,—which, as I began to say, was puckered into a thousand curves trying to curl, and knotted strictly against a pretty head, while her calico frock-sleeves were pinned-back to the shoulders, baring such a dimpled pair of arms,—how they did fly up and down in the tray! I stood still contemplating the picture, and presently seeing her begin to strip the dough from her pink fingers and mould it into a mass, I ventured to knock. If you had seen her start and blush, Polder! But when she saw me, she grew as cool as you please, and called her mother. Down came Mrs. Tucker, a talking Yankee. You don't know what that is. Listen, then.

Page 27

“Well, good day, sir! I’xpect it’s Mister Greene, Miss Smith’s cousin. Well, you be! Don’t favor her much though; she’s kinder dark complected. She ha’n’t got round yet, hes she? Dew tell! She’s dre’ful delicate. I do’no’ as ever I see a woman so sickly’s she looks ter be sence that ’ere fever. She’s real spry when she’s so’s to be crawlin’,—I’xpect too spry to be ’hulsome. Well, he tells me you’ve ben ’crost the water. ’Ta’n’t jest like this over there, I guess. Pretty sightly places they be though, a’n’t they? I’ve seen picturs in Melindy’s jography, looks as ef ’twa’n’t so woodsy over there as ’tis in these parts, ’specially out West. He’s got folks out to Indianny, an’ we sot out fur to go a-cousinin’, five year back, an’ we got out there inter the dre’fullest woodsy region ever ye see, where ’twa’n’t trees, it was ’sketers; husband he couldn’t see none out of his eyes for a hull day, and I thought I should caterpillar every time I heerd one of ’em toot; they sartainly was the beater-ee!”

“The key, if you please!” I meekly interposed. Mrs. Tucker was fast stunning me!

“Law yis! Melindy, you go git that ’ere key; it’s a-hangin’ up’side o’ the lookin’glass in the back shed, under that bunch o’ onions father strung up yisterday. Got the bread sot to rise, hev ye? well, git yer bunnet an’ go out to the coop with Mr. Greene, ‘n’ show him the turkeys an’ the chickens, ‘n’ tell what dre’ful luck we hev hed. I never did see sech luck! the crows they keep a-comin’ an’ snippin’ up the little creturs jest as soon’s they’re hatched; an’ the old turkey hen’t sot under the grapevine she got two hen’s eggs under her, ‘n’ they come out fust, so she quit—”

Here I bolted out of the door, (a storm at sea did not deafen one like that!) Melindy following, in silence such as our blessed New England poet has immortalized,—silence that

“—Like a poultice comes,
To heal the blows of sound.”

Indeed, I did not discover that Melindy could talk that day; she was very silent, very incommunicative. I inspected the fowls, and tried to look wise, but I perceived a strangled laugh twisting Melindy’s face when I innocently inquired if she found catnip of much benefit to the little chickens; a natural question enough, for the yard was full of it, and I had seen Hannah give it to the baby. (Hannah is my sister.) I could only see two little turkeys,—both on the floor of the second-story parlor in the chicken-house, both flat on their backs and gasping. Melindy did not know what ailed them; so I picked them up, slung them in my pocket-handkerchief, and took them home for Peggy to manipulate. I heard Melindy chuckle as I walked off, swinging them; and to be sure, when I brought the creatures in to Peggy, one of them kicked and lay still, and the other gasped worse than ever.

“What can we do?” asked Peggy, in the most plaintive voice, as the feeble “week! week!” of the little turkey was gasped out, more feebly every time.

Page 28

"Give it some whiskey-punch!" growled Peter, whose strict temperance principles were shocked by the remedies prescribed for Peggy's *ague*.

"So I would," said Kate, demurely.

Now if Peggy had one trait more striking than another, it was her perfect, simple faith in what people said; irony was a mystery to her; lying, a myth,—something on a par with murder. She thought Kate meant so; and reaching out for the pretty wicker-flask that contained her daily ration of old Scotch whiskey, she dropped a little drop into a spoon, diluted it with water, and was going to give it to the turkey in all seriousness, when Kate exclaimed,—

"Peggy! when will you learn common sense? Who ever heard of giving whiskey to a turkey?"

"Why, you told me to, Kate!"

"Oh, give it to the thing!" growled Peter; "it will die, of course."

"I shall give it!" said Peggy, resolutely; "it does *me* good, and I will try."

So I held the little creature up, while Peggy carefully tipped the dose down its throat. How it choked, kicked, and began again with "week! week!" when it meant "strong!" but it revived. Peggy held it in the sun till it grew warm, gave it a drop more, fed it with bread-crumbs from her own plate, and laid it on the south window-sill. There it lay when we went to tea; when we came back, it lay on the floor, dead; either it was tipsy, or it had tried its new strength too soon, and, rolling off, had broken its neck! Poor Peggy!

There were six more hatched the next day, though, and I held many consultations with Melindy about their welfare. Truth to tell, Kate continued so cool to me, Peter's sprained ankle lasted so long, and Peggy could so well spare me from the little matrimonial *tete-a-tetes* that I interrupted, (I believe they didn't mind Kate!) that I took wonderfully to the chickens. Mrs. Tucker gave me rye-bread and milk of the best; "father" instructed me in the mysteries of cattle-driving; and Melindy, and Joe, and I, used to go strawberrying, or after "posies," almost every day. Melindy was a very pretty girl, and it was very good fun to see her blue eyes open and her red lips laugh over my European experiences. Really, I began to be of some importance at the farm-house, and to take airs upon myself, I suppose; but I was not conscious of the fact at the time.

After a week or two, Melindy and I began to have bad luck with the turkeys. I found two drenched and shivering, after a hail-and-thunder storm, and setting them in a basket on the cooking-stove hearth, went to help Melindy "dress her bow-pot," as she called arranging a vase of flowers, and when I came back the little turkeys were singed; they died a few hours after. Two more were trodden on by a great Shanghai rooster, who

was so tall he could not see where he set his feet down; and of the remaining pair, one disappeared mysteriously,—supposed to be rats; and one falling into the duck-pond, Melindy

Page 29

began to dry it in her apron, and I went to help her; I thought, as I was rubbing the thing down with the apron, while she held it, that I had found one of her soft dimpled hands, and I gave the luckless turkey such a tender pressure that it uttered a miserable squeak and departed this life. Melindy all but cried. I laughed irresistibly. So there were no more turkeys. Peggy began to wonder what they should do for the proper Thanksgiving dinner, and Peter turned restlessly on his sofa, quite convinced that everything was going to rack and ruin because he had a sprained ankle.

“Can’t we buy some young turkeys?” timidly suggested Peggy.

“Of course, if one knew who had them to sell,” retorted Peter.

“I know,” said I; “Mrs. Amzi Peters, up on the hill over Taunton, has got some.”

“Who told you about Mrs. Peters’s turkeys, Cousin Sam?” said Peggy, wondering.

“Melindy,” said I, quite innocently.

Peter whistled, Peggy laughed, Kate darted a keen glance at me under her long lashes.

“I know the way there,” said mademoiselle, in a suspiciously bland tone. “Can’t you drive there with me, Cousin Sam, and get some more?”

“I shall be charmed,” said I.

Peter rang the bell and ordered the horse to be ready in the single-seated wagon, after dinner. I was going right down to the farm-house to console Melindy, and take her a book she wanted to read, for no fine lady of all my New York acquaintance enjoyed a good book more than she did; but Cousin Kate asked me to wind some yarn for her, and was so brilliant, so amiable, so altogether charming, I quite forgot Melindy till dinner-time, and then, when that was over, there was a basket to be found, and we were off,—turkey-hunting! Down hill-sides overhung with tasselled chestnut-boughs; through pine-woods where neither horse nor wagon intruded any noise of hoof or wheel upon the odorous silence, as we rolled over the sand, past green meadows, and sloping orchards; over little bright brooks that chattered musically to the bobolinks on the fence-posts, and were echoed by those sacerdotal gentlemen in such liquid, bubbling, rollicking, uproarious bursts of singing as made one think of Anacreon’s grasshopper

“Drunk with morning’s dewy wine.”

All these we passed, and at length drew up before Mrs. Peters’s house. I had been here before, on a strawberrying stroll with Melindy,—(across lots it was not far,)—and having been asked in then, and entertained the lady with a recital of some foreign

exploit, garnished for the occasion, of course she recognized me with clamorous hospitality.

“Why how do yew do, Mister Greene? I declare I ha’n’t done a-thinkin’ of that ’ere story you told us the day you was here, ‘long o’ Melindy.” (Kate gave an ominous little cough.) “I was a-tellin’ husband yesterday ’t I never see sech a master hand for stories as you be. Well, yis, we hev *got* turkeys, young ’uns; but my stars! I don’t know no more where they be than nothin’; they’ve strayed away into the woods, I guess, and I do’no’ as the boys can skeer ’em up; besides, the boys is to school; h’m—yis! Where did you and Melindy go that day arter berries?”

Page 30

"Up in the pine-lot, ma'am. You think you can't let us have the turkeys?"

"Dew tell ef you went up there! It's near about the sightliest place I ever see. Well, no, —I don't see how's to ketch them turkeys. Miss Bemont, she't lives over on Woodchuck Hill, she's got a lot o' little turkeys in a coop; I guess you'd better go 'long over there, an' ef you can't get none o' her'n, by that time our boys'll be to hum, an' I'll set 'em arter our'n; they'll buckle right to; it's good sport huntin' little turkeys; an' I guess you'll hev to stop, comin' home, so's to let me know ef you'll hev 'em."

Off we drove. I stood in mortal fear of Mrs. Peters's tongue,—and Kate's comments; but she did not make any; she was even more charming than before. Presently we came to the pine-lot, where Melindy and I had been, and I drew the reins. I wanted to see Kate's enjoyment of a scene that Kensett or Church should have made immortal long ago:—a wide stretch of hill and valley, quivering with cornfields, rolled away in pasture lands, thick with sturdy woods, or dotted over with old apple-trees, whose dense leaves caught the slant sunshine, glowing on their tops, and deepening to a dark, velvety green below, and far, far away, on the broad blue sky, the lurid splendors of a thunder-cloud, capped with pearly summits, tower upon tower, sharply defined against the pure ether, while in its purple base forked lightnings sped to and fro, and revealed depths of waiting tempest that could not yet descend. Kate looked on, and over the superb picture.

"How magnificent!" was all she said, in a deep, low tone, her dark cheek flushing with the words. Melindy and I had looked off there together. "It's real good land to farm," had been the sweet little rustic's comment. How charming are nature and simplicity!

Presently we came to Mrs. Bemont's, a brown house in a cluster of maples; the doorway full of chickens, turkeys, ducks, and geese. Kate took the reins, and I knocked. Mrs. Bemont herself appeared, wiping her red, puckered hands on a long brown towel.

"Can you let me have some of your young turkeys, ma'am?" said I, insinuatingly.

"Well, I do'no';—want to eat 'em or raise 'em?"

"Both, I believe," was my meek answer.

"I do'no' 'bout lettin' on 'em go; 'ta'n't no gret good to sell 'em after all the risks is over; they git their own livin' pretty much now, an' they'll be wuth twice as much by'm'by."

"I suppose so; but Mrs. Smith's turkeys have all died, and she likes to raise them."

"Dew tell, ef you han't come from Miss Peter Smith's! Well, she'd oughter do gret things with that 'ere meetin'-'us o' her'n for the chickens; it's kinder genteel-lookin', and I spose they've got means; they've got ability. Gentility without ability I do despise; but where 't'a'n't so, 't'a'n't no matter; but I'xpect it don't ensure the faowls none, doos it?"

Page 31

"I rather think not," said I, laughing; "that is the reason we want some of yours."

"Well, I should think you could hev some on 'em. What be you calc'latin' to give?"

"Whatever you say. I do not know at all the market price."

"Good land! 't'a'n't never no use to try to dicker with city folks; they a'n't use to't. I'xpect you can hev 'em for two York shillin' apiece."

"But how will you catch them?"

"Oh, I'll ketch 'em, easy!"

She went into the house and reappeared presently with a pan of Indian meal and water, called the chickens, and in a moment they were all crowding in and over the unexpected supper.

"Now you jes' take a bit o' string an' tie that 'ere turkey's legs together; 'twon't stir, I'll ensure it!"

Strange to say, the innocent creature stood still and eat, while I tied it up; all unconscious till it tumbled neck and heels into the pan, producing a start and scatter of brief duration. Kate had left the wagon, and was shaking with laughter over this extraordinary goodness on the turkeys' part, and before long our basket was full of struggling, kicking, squeaking things, "werry promiscuous," in Mr. Weller's phrase. Mrs. Bemont was paid, and while she was giving me the change,—

"Oh!" said she, "you're goin' right to Miss Tucker's, a'n't ye?—got to drop the turkeys;—won't you tell Miss Tucker 't George is comin' home tomorrer, an' he's ben to Californy. She know'd us allers, and Melindy 'n' George used ter be dre'ful thick 'fore he went off, a good spell back, when they was nigh about childern; so I guess you'd better tell 'em."

"Confound these turkeys!" muttered I, as I jumped over the basket.

"Why?" said Kate, "I suspect they are confounded enough already!"

"They make such a noise, Kate!"

So they did; "week! week! week!" all the way, like a colony from some spring-waked pool.

"Their song might be compared
To the croaking of frogs in a pond!"

The drive was lovelier than before. The road crept and curled down the hill, now covered from side to side with the interlacing boughs of grand old chestnuts; now barriered on the edge of a ravine with broken fragments and boulders of granite, garlanded by heavy vines; now skirting orchards full of promise; and all the way accompanied by a tiny brook, veiled deeply in alder and hazel thickets, and making in its shadowy channel perpetual muffled music, like a child singing in the twilight to reassure its half-fearful heart. Kate's face was softened and full of rich expression; her pink ribbons threw a delicate tinge of bloom upon the rounded cheek and pensive eyelid; the air was pure balm, and a cool breath from the receding showers of the distant thunderstorm just freshened the odors of wood and field. I began to feel suspiciously that sentimental, but through it all came persevering "week! week! week!" from the basket at

Page 32

my feet. Did I make a fine remark on the beauties of nature, “Week!” echoed the turkeys. Did Kate praise some tint or shape by the way, “Week! week!” was the feeble response. Did we get deep in poetry, romance, or metaphysics, through the most brilliant quotation, the sublimest climax, the most acute distinction, came in “Week! week! week!” I began to feel as if the old story of transmigration were true, and the souls of half a dozen quaint and ancient satirists had got into the turkeys. I could not endure it! Was I to be squeaked out of all my wisdom, and knowledge, and device, after this fashion? Never! I began, too, to discover a dawning smile upon Kate’s face; she turned her head away, and I placed the turkey-basket on my knees, hoping a change of position might quiet its contents. Never was man more at fault! they were no way stilled by my magnetism; on the contrary, they threw their sarcastic utterances into my teeth, as it were, and shamed me to my very face. I forgot entirely to go round by Mrs. Peters’s. I took a cross-road directly homeward; a pause—a lull—took place among the turkeys.

“How sweet and mystical this hour is!” said I to Kate, in a high-flown manner; “it is indeed

“An hour when lips delay to speak,
Oppressed with silence deep and pure;
When passion pauses—”

“Week! week! week!” chimed in those confounded turkeys. Kate burst into a helpless fit of laughter. What could I do? I had to laugh myself, since I must not choke the turkeys.

“Excuse me, Cousin Sam,” said Kate, in a laughter-wearied tone, “I could not help it; turkeys and sentimentality do not agree—always!” adding the last word maliciously, as I sprang out to open the farm-house gate, and disclosed Melindy, framed in the buttery window, skimming milk; a picture worthy of Wilkie. I delivered over my captives to Joe, and stalked into the kitchen to give Mrs. Bemont’s message. Melindy came out; but as soon as I began to tell her mother where I got that message, Miss Melindy, with the *sang froid* of a duchess, turned back to her skimming,—or appeared to. I gained nothing by that move.

Peggy and Peter received us benignly; so universal a solvent is success, even in turkey-hunting! I meant to have gone down to the farm-house after tea, and inquired about the safety of my prizes, but Kate wanted to play chess. Peter couldn’t, and Peggy wouldn’t; I had to, of course, and we played late. Kate had such pretty hands; long taper fingers, rounded to the tiniest rosy points; no dimples, but full muscles, firm and exquisitely moulded; and the dainty way in which she handled her men was half the game to me;—I lost it; I played wretchedly. The next day Kate went with me to see the turkeys; so she did the day after. We were forgetting Melindy, I am afraid, for it was a



week before I remembered I had promised her a new magazine. I recollected myself; then, with a sort of shame, rolled up the number, and went off to the farm-house. It seems Kate was there, busy in the garret, unpacking a bureau that had been stored there, with some of Peggy's foreign purchases, for summer wear, in the drawers. I did not know that. I found Melindy spreading yeast-cakes to dry on a table, just by the north end of the house; a hop-vine in full blossom made a sort of porch-roof over the window by which she stood.

Page 33

"I've brought your book, Melindy," said I.

"Thank you, sir," returned she, crisply.

"How pretty you look to-day," condescendingly remarked I.

"I don't thank you for that, sir;—

"Praise to the face
Is open disgrace!"

was all the response.

"Why, Melindy! what makes you so cross?" inquired I, in a tone meant to be tenderly reproachful,—in the mean time attempting to possess myself of her hand; for, to be honest, Polder, I had been a little sweet to the girl before Kate drove her out of my head. The hand was snatched away. I tried indifference.

"How are the turkeys to-day. Melindy?"

Here Joe, an *enfant terrible*, came upon the scene suddenly.

"Them turkeys eats a lot, Mister Greene. Melindy says there's one on 'em struts jes' like you, 'n' makes as much gabble."

"Gobble! gobble! gobble!" echoed an old turkey from somewhere; I thought it was overhead, but I saw nothing. Melindy threw her apron over her face and laughed till her arms grew red. I picked up my hat and walked off. For three days I kept out of that part of the Smith demesne, I assure you! Kate began to grow mocking and derisive; she teased me from morning till night, and the more she teased me, the more I adored her. I was getting desperate, when one Sunday night Kate asked me to walk down to the farm-house with her after tea, as Mrs. Tucker was sick, and she had something to take to her. We found the old woman sitting up in the kitchen, and as full of talk as ever, though an unlucky rheumatism kept her otherwise quiet.

"How do the turkeys come on, Mrs. Tucker?" said I, by way of conversation.

"Well, I declare, you han't heerd about them turkeys, hev ye? You see they was doin' fine, and father he went off to salt for a spell, so's to see'f 'twouldn't stop a complaint he's got,—I do'no' but it's a spine in the back,—makes him kinder' faint by spells, so's he loses his conscientiousness all to once; so he left the chickens 'n' things for Melindy to boss, 'n' she got somethin' else into her head, 'n' she left the door open one night, and them ten turkeys they up and run away, I'xpect they took to the woods, 'fore Melindy brought to mind how't she hadn't shut the door. She's set out fur to hunt 'em. I shouldn't wonder'f she was out now, seein' it's arter sundown."

“She a’n’t nuther!” roared the terrible Joe, from behind the door, where he had retreated at my coming. “She’s settin’ on a flour-barrel down by the well, an’ George Bemont’s a-huggin’ on her”

Good gracious! what a slap Mrs. Tucker fetched that unlucky child, with a long brown towel that hung at hand! and how he howled! while Kate exploded with laughter, in spite of her struggles to keep quiet.

“He *is* the dre’fullest boy!” whined Mrs. Tucker. “Melindy tells how he sassed you ’tother day, Mr. Greene. I shall hev to tewtor that boy; he’s got to hev the rod, I guess!”

Page 34

I bade Mrs. Tucker good night, for Kate was already out of the door, and, before I knew what she was about, had taken a by-path in sight of the well; and there, to be sure, sat Melindy, on a prostrate flour-barrel that was rolled to the foot of the big apple-tree, twirling her fingers in pretty embarrassment, and held on her insecure perch by the stout arm of George Bemont, a handsome brown fellow, evidently very well content just now.

"Pretty,—isn't it?" said Kate.

"Very,—quite pastoral," sniffed I.

We were sitting round the open door an hour after, listening to a whippoorwill, and watching the slow moon rise over a hilly range just east of Centreville, when that elvish little "week! week!" piped out of the wood that lay behind the house.

"That is hopeful," said Kate; "I think Melindy and George must have tracked the turkeys to their haunt, and scared them homeward."

"George—who?" said Peggy.

"George Bemont; it seems he is—what is your Connecticut phrase?—sparkin' Melindy."

"I'm very glad; he is a clever fellow," said Peter.

"And she is such a very pretty girl," continued Peggy,— "so intelligent and graceful; don't you think so, Sam?"

"Aw, yes, well enough for a rustic," said I, languidly. "I never could endure red hair, though!"

Kate stopped on the door-sill; she had risen to go up stairs.

"Gobble! gobble! gobble!" mocked she. I had heard that once before! Peter and Peggy roared;—they knew it all;—I was sold!

"Cure me of Kate Stevens?" Of course it did. I never saw her again without wanting to fight shy, I was so sure of an allusion to turkeys. No, I took the first down train. There are more pretty girls in New York, twice over, than there are in Centreville, I console myself; but, by George! Polder, Kate Stevens was charming!—Look out there! don't meddle with the skipper's coils of rope! can't you sleep on deck without a pillow?

ROBIN HOOD.

There is no one of the royal heroes of England that enjoys a more enviable reputation than the bold outlaw of Barnsdale and Sherwood. His chance for a substantial



immortality is at least as good as that of stout Lion-Heart, wild Prince Hal, or merry Charles. His fame began with the yeomanry full five hundred years ago, was constantly increasing for two or three centuries, has extended to all classes of society, and, with some changes of aspect, is as great as ever. Bishops, sheriffs, and game-keepers, the only enemies he ever had, have relinquished their ancient grudges, and Englishmen would be almost as loath to surrender his exploits as any part of the national glory. His free life in the woods, his unerring eye and strong arm, his open hand and love of fair play, his never forgotten courtesy, his respect for women and devotion to Mary, form a picture eminently healthful and agreeable to the imagination, and commend him to the hearty favor of all genial minds.

Page 35

But securely established as Robin Hood is in popular esteem, his historical position is by no means well ascertained, and his actual existence has been a subject of shrewd doubt and discussion. "A tale of Robin Hood" is an old proverb for the idlest of stories; yet all the materials at our command for making up an opinion on these questions are precisely of this description. They consist, that is to say, of a few ballads of unknown antiquity. These ballads, or others like them, are clearly the authority upon which the statements of the earlier chroniclers who take notice of Robin Hood are founded. They are also, to all appearance, the original source of the numerous and wide-spread traditions concerning him; which, unless the contrary can be shown, must be regarded, according to the almost universal rule in such cases, as having been suggested by the very legends to which, in the vulgar belief, they afford an irresistible confirmation.

Various periods, ranging from the time of Richard the First to near the end of the reign of Edward the Second, have been selected by different writers as the age of Robin Hood; but (excepting always the most ancient ballads, which may possibly be placed within these limits) no mention whatever is made of him in literature before the latter half of the reign of Edward the Third. "Rhymes of Robin Hood" are then spoken of by the author of "Piers Ploughman" (assigned to about 1362) as better known to idle fellows than pious songs, and from the manner of the allusion it is a just inference that such rhymes were at that time no novelties. The next notice is in Wyntown's Scottish Chronicle, written about 1420, where the following lines occur—without any connection, and in the form of an entry—under the year 1283:—

"Lytil Jhon and Robyne Hude
Wayth-men ware commendyd gude:
In Yngil-wode and Barnysdale
Thai oysyd all this tyme thare trawale."[1]

At last we encounter Robin Hood in what may be called history; first of all in a passage of the "Scotichronicon," often quoted, and highly curious as containing the earliest theory upon this subject. The "Scotichronicon" was written partly by Fordun, canon of Aberdeen, between 1377 and 1384, and partly by his pupil Bower, abbot of St. Columba, about 1450. Fordun has the character of a man of judgment and research, and any statement or opinion delivered by him would be entitled to respect. Of Bower not so much can be said. He largely interpolated the work of his master, and sometimes with the absurdest fictions.[2] *Among his interpolations*, and forming, it is important to observe, *no part of the original text*, is a passage translated as follows. It is inserted immediately after Fordun's account of the defeat of Simon de Montfort, and the punishments inflicted on his adherents.

"At this time, [sc. 1266,] from the number of those who had been deprived of their estates arose the celebrated bandit Robert Hood, (with Little John and their accomplices,) whose achievements the foolish vulgar delight to celebrate in comedies

and tragedies, while the ballads upon his adventures sung by the jesters and minstrels are preferred to all others.

Page 36

“Some things to his honor are also related, as appears from this. Once on a time, when, having incurred the anger of the king and the prince, he could hear mass nowhere but in Barnsdale, while he was devoutly occupied with the service, (for this was his wont, nor would he ever suffer it to be interrupted for the most pressing occasion,) he was surprised by a certain sheriff and officers of the king, who had often troubled him before, in the secret place in the woods where he was engaged in worship as aforesaid. Some of his men, who had taken the alarm, came to him and begged him to fly with all speed. This, out of reverence for the host, which he was then most devoutly adoring, he positively refused to do. But while the rest of his followers were trembling for their lives, Robert, confiding in Him whom he worshipped, fell on his enemies with a few who chanced to be with him, and easily got the better of them; and having enriched himself with their plunder and ransom, he was led from that time forth to hold ministers of the church and masses in greater veneration than ever, mindful of the common saying, that

““God hears the man who often hears the mass.””

In another place Bower writes to the same effect: “In this year [1266] the dispossessed barons of England and the royalists were engaged in fierce hostilities. Among the former, Roger Mortimer occupied the Welsh marches, and John Daynill the Isle of Ely. Robert Hood was now living in outlawry among the woodland copses and thickets.”

Mair, a Scottish writer of the first quarter of the sixteenth century, the next historian who takes cognizance of our hero, and the only other that requires any attention, has a passage which may be considered in connection with the foregoing. In his “*Historia Majoris Britanniae*” he remarks, under the reign of Richard the First: “About this time [1189-99], as I conjecture, the notorious robbers, Robert Hood of England and Little John, lurked in the woods, spoiling the goods only of rich men. They slew nobody but those who attacked them, or offered resistance in defence of their property. Robert maintained by his plunder a hundred archers, so skilful in fight that four hundred brave men feared to attack them. He suffered no woman to be maltreated, and never robbed the poor, but assisted them abundantly with the wealth which he took from abbots.”

It appears, then, that contemporaneous history is absolutely silent concerning Robin Hood; that, excepting the casual allusion in “*Piers Ploughman*,” he is first mentioned by a rhyming chronicler who wrote one hundred years after the latest date at which he can possibly be supposed to have lived, and then by two prose chroniclers who wrote about one hundred and twenty-five years and two hundred years respectively after that date; and it is further manifest that all three of these chroniclers had no other authority for their statements than traditional tales similar to

Page 37

those which have come down to our day. When, therefore, Thierry, relying upon these chronicles and kindred popular legends, unhesitatingly adopts the conjecture of Mair, and describes Robin Hood as the hero of the Saxon serfs, the chief of a troop of Saxon banditti, that continued, even to the reign of Coeur de Lion, a determined resistance against the Norman invaders,[3]—and when another able and plausible writer accepts and maintains, with equal confidence, the hypothesis of Bower, and exhibits the renowned outlaw as an adherent of Simon de Montfort, who, after the fatal battle of Evesham, kept up a vigorous guerilla warfare against the officers of the tyrant Henry the Third, and of his successor,[4] we must regard these representations, which were conjectural three or four centuries ago, as conjectures still, and even as arbitrary conjectures, unless one or the other can be proved from the only *authorities* we have, the ballads, to have a peculiar intrinsic probability. That neither of them possesses this intrinsic probability may easily be shown; but first it will be advisable to notice another theory, which is more plausibly founded on internal evidence, and claims to be confirmed by documents of unimpeachable validity.

This theory has been propounded by the Rev. John Hunter, in one of his “Critical and Historical Tracts.”[5] Mr. Hunter admits that Robin Hood “lives only as a hero of song”; that he is not found in authentic contemporary chronicles; and that, when we find him mentioned in history, “the information was derived from the ballads, and is not independent of them or correlative with them.” While making these admissions, he accords a considerable degree of credibility to the ballads, and particularly to the “Lytell Geste,” the last two *fits* of which he regards as giving a tolerably accurate account of real occurrences.

In this part of the story King Edward is represented as coming to Nottingham to take Robin Hood. He traverses Lancashire and a part of Yorkshire, and finds his forests nearly stripped of their deer, but can get no trace of the author of these extensive depredations. At last, by the advice of one of his foresters, assuming with several of his knights the dress of a monk, he proceeds from Nottingham to Sherwood, and there soon encounters the object of his search. He submits to plunder as a matter of course, and then announces himself as a messenger sent to invite Robin Hood to the royal presence. The outlaw receives this message with great respect. There is no man in the world, he says, whom he loves so much as his king. The monk is invited to remain and dine; and after the repast an exhibition of archery is ordered, in which a bad shot is to be punished by a buffet from the hand of the chieftain. Robin, having himself once failed of the mark, requests the monk to administer the penalty. He receives a staggering blow, which rouses his suspicions, recognizes the king on an attentive

Page 38

consideration of his countenance, entreats grace for himself and his followers, and is freely pardoned on condition that he and they shall enter into the king's service. To this he agrees, and for fifteen months resides at court. At the end of this time he has lost all his followers but two, and spent all his money, and feels that he shall pine to death with sorrow in such a life. He returns accordingly to the greenwood, collects his old followers around him, and for twenty-two years maintains his independence in defiance of the power of Edward.

Without asserting the literal verity of all the particulars of this narrative, Mr. Hunter attempts to show that it contains a substratum of fact. Edward the First, he informs us, was never in Lancashire after he became king; and if Edward the Third was ever there at all, it was not in the early years of his reign. But Edward the Second did make one single progress in Lancashire, and this in the year 1323. During this progress the king spent some time at Nottingham, and took particular note of the condition of his forests, and among these of the forest of Sherwood. Supposing now that the incidents detailed in the "Lytell Geste" really took place at this time, Robin Hood must have entered into the royal service before the end of the year 1353. It is a singular, and in the opinion of Mr. Hunter a very pregnant coincidence, that in certain Exchequer documents, containing accounts of expenses in the king's household, the name of Robyn Hode (or Robert Hood) is found several times, beginning with the 24th of March, 1324, among the "porters of the chamber" of the king. He received, with Simon Hood and others, the wages of three pence a day. In August of the following year Robin Hood suffers deduction from his pay for non-attendance, his absences grow frequent, and on the 22d of November he is discharged with a present of five shillings, "*poar cas qil ne poait plus travailler*." [6]

It remains still for Mr. Hunter to account for the existence of a band of seven score of outlaws in the reign of Edward the Second, in or about Yorkshire. The stormy and troublous reigns of the Plantagenets make this a matter of no difficulty. Running his finger down the long list of rebellions and commotions, he finds that early in 1322 England was convulsed by the insurrection of Thomas, Earl of Lancaster, the king's near relation, supported by many powerful noblemen. The Earl's chief seat was the castle of Pontefract, in the West Riding of Yorkshire. He is said to have been popular, and it would be a fair inference that many of his troops were raised in this part of England. King Edward easily got the better of the rebels, and took exemplary vengeance upon them. Many of the leaders were at once put to death, and the lives of all their partisans were in danger. Is it impossible, then, asks Mr. Hunter, that some who had been in the army of the Earl secreted themselves in the woods, and turned their skill in archery against the king's subjects or the king's deer? "that these were the men who for so long a time haunted Barnsdale and Sherwood, and that Robin Hood was one of them, a chief amongst them, being really of a rank originally somewhat superior to the rest?"

Page 39

We have, then, three different hypotheses concerning Robin Hood: one placing him in the reign of Richard the First, another in that of Henry the Third, and the last under Edward the Second, and all describing him as a political foe to the established government. To all of these hypotheses there are two very obvious and decisive objections. The first is, that Robin Hood, as already remarked, is not so much as named in contemporary history. Whether as the unsubdued leader of the Saxon peasantry, or insurgent against the tyranny of Henry or Edward, it is inconceivable that we should not hear something of him from the chroniclers. If, as Thierry says, "he had chosen Hereward for his model," it is unexplained and inexplicable why his historical fate has been so different from that of Hereward. The hero of the Camp of Refuge fills an ample place in the annals of his day; his achievements are also handed down in a prose romance, which presents many points of resemblance to the ballads of Robin Hood. It would have been no wonder, if the vulgar legends about Hereward had utterly perished; but it is altogether anomalous that a popular champion^[7] who attained so extraordinary a notoriety in song, a man living from one hundred to two hundred and fifty years later than Hereward, should be passed over without one word of notice from any authoritative historian.^[8] That this would not be so we are most fortunately able to demonstrate by reference to a real case which furnishes a singularly exact parallel to the present,—that of the famous outlaw, Adam Gordon. In the year 1267, says the continuator of Matthew Paris, a soldier by the name of Adam Gordon, who had lost his estates with other adherents of Simon de Montfort, and refused to seek the mercy of the king, established himself with others in like circumstances near a woody and tortuous road between the village of Wilton and the castle of Farnham, from which position he made forays into the country round about, directing his attacks especially against those who were of the king's party. Prince Edward had heard much of the prowess and honorable character of this man, and desired to have some personal knowledge of him. He succeeded in surprising Gordon with a superior force, and engaged him in single combat, forbidding any of his own followers to interfere. They fought a long time, and the prince was so filled with admiration of the courage and spirit of his antagonist, that he promised him life and fortune on condition of his surrendering. To these terms Gordon acceded, his estates were restored, and Edward found him ever after an attached and faithful servant.^[9] The story is romantic, and yet Adam Gordon was not made the subject of ballads. *Caruit vate sacro*. The contemporary historians, however, all have a paragraph for him. He is celebrated by Wikes, the Chronicle of Dunstaple, the Waverley Annals, and we know not where else besides.

Page 40

But these theories are open to an objection stronger even than the silence of history. They are contradicted by the spirit of the ballads. No line of these songs breathes political animosity. There is no suggestion or reminiscence of wrong, from invading Norman, or from the established sovereign. On the contrary, Robin loved no man in the world so well as his king. What the tone of these ballads would have been, had Robin Hood been any sort of partisan, we may judge from the mournful and indignant strains which were poured out on the fall of De Montfort. We should have heard of the fatal field of Hastings, of the perfidy of Henry, of the sanguinary revenge of Edward,—and not of matches at archery and encounters at quarter-staff, the plundering of rich abbots and squabbles with the sheriff. The Robin Hood of our ballads is neither patriot under ban, nor proscribed rebel. An outlaw indeed he is, but an “outlaw for venyson,” like Adam Bell, and one who superadds to deer-stealing the irregularity of a genteel highway-robbery.

Thus much of these conjectures in general. To recur to the particular evidence by which Mr. Hunter’s theory is supported, this consists principally in the name of Robin Hood being found among the king’s servants shortly after Edward the Second returned from his visit to the north of his dominions. But the value of this coincidence depends entirely upon the rarity of the name.[10] Now Hood, as Mr. Hunter himself remarks, is a well-established hereditary name in the reigns of the Edwards. We find it very frequently in the indexes to the Record Publications, and this although it does not belong to the higher class of people. That Robert was an ordinary Christian name requires no proof; and if it was, the combination of Robert Hood must have been frequent also. We have taken no extraordinary pains to hunt up this combination, for really the matter is altogether too trivial to justify the expense of time; but since to some minds much may depend on the coincidence in question, we will cite several Robin Hoods in the reigns of the Edwards.

28th Ed. I. Robert Hood, a citizen of London, says Mr. Hunter, supplied the king’s household with beer.

30th Ed. I. Robert Hood is sued for three acres of pasture land in Throckley, Northumberland. (*Rot. Orig. Abbrev.*)

7th Ed. II. Robert Hood is surety for a burgess returned for Lostwithiel, Cornwall. (*Parliamentary Writs.*)

9th Ed. II. Robert Hood is a citizen of Wakefield, Yorkshire, whom Mr. Hunter (p. 47) “may be justly charged with carrying supposition too far” in striving to identify with Robin the porter.

10th Ed. III. A Robert Hood, of Howden, York, is mentioned in the *Calendarium Rot. Patent.*

Page 41

Adding the Robin Hood of the 17th Ed. II. we have six persons of that name mentioned within a period of less than forty years, and this circumstance does not dispose us to receive with great favor any argument that may be founded upon one individual case of its occurrence. But there is no end to the absurdities which flow from this supposition. We are to believe that the weak and timid prince, that had severely punished his kinsman and his nobles, freely pardoned a yeoman, who, after serving with the rebels, had for twenty months made free with the king's deer and robbed on the highway,—and not only pardoned him, but received him into service *near his person*. We are further to believe that the man who had led so daring and jovial a life, and had so generously dispensed the pillage of opulent monks, willingly entered into this service, doffed his Lincoln green for the Plantagenet plush, and *consented* to be enrolled among royal flunkies for three pence a day. And again, admitting all this, we are finally obliged by Mr. Hunter's document to concede that the stalworth archer (who, according to the ballad, maintained himself two-and-twenty years in the wood) was worn out by his duties as "proud porter" in less than two years, and was discharged a superannuated lackey, with five shillings in his pocket, "*poar cas qil ne poait plu is travailler*"!

To those who are well acquainted with ancient popular poetry the adventure of King Edward and Robin Hood will seem the least eligible portion of this circle of story for the foundation of an historical theory. The ballad of King Edward and Robin Hood is but one version of an extremely multiform legend, of which the tales of "King Edward and the Shepherd" and "King Edward and the Hermit" are other specimens; and any one who will take the trouble to examine will be convinced that all these stories are one and the same thing, the personages being varied for the sake of novelty, and the name of a recent or of the reigning monarch substituted in successive ages for that of a predecessor.

Rejecting, then, as nugatory, every attempt to assign Robin Hood a definite position in history, what view shall we adopt? Are all these traditions absolute fictions, and is he himself a pure creation of the imagination? Might not the ballads under consideration have a basis in the exploits of a real person, living in the forests, *somewhere* and *at some time*? Or, denying individual existence to Robin Hood, and particular truth to the adventures ascribed to him, may we not regard him as the ideal of the outlaw class, a class so numerous in all the countries of Europe in the Middle Ages? We are perfectly contented to form no opinion upon the subject; but if compelled to express one, we should say that this last supposition (which is no novelty) possessed decidedly more likelihood than any other. Its plausibility will be confirmed by attending to the apparent signification of the name

Page 42

Robin Hood. The natural refuge and stronghold of the outlaw was the woods. Hence he is termed by Latin writers *silvaticus*, by the Normans *forestier*. The Anglo-Saxon robber or highwayman is called a woodrover *wealddenga*, and the Norse word for outlaw is exactly equivalent.[11] It has often been suggested that Robin Hood is a corruption, or dialectic form, of Robin of the Wood; and when we remember that *wood* is pronounced *hood* in some parts of England,[12] (as *whoop* is pronounced *hoop* everywhere,) and that the outlaw bears in so many languages a name descriptive of his habitation, this notion will not seem an idle fancy.

Various circumstances, however, have disposed writers of learning to look farther for a solution of the question before us. Mr. Wright propounds an hypothesis that Robin Hood "one among the personages of the early mythology of the Teutonic peoples"; and a German scholar,[13] in an exceedingly interesting article which throws much light on the history of English sports, has endeavored to show specifically that he is in name and substance one with the god Woden. The arguments by which these views are supported, though in their present shape very far from convincing, are entitled to a respectful consideration.

The most important of these arguments are those which are based on the peculiar connection between Robin Hood and the month of May. Mr. Wright has justly remarked, that either an express mention of this month, or a vivid description of the season, in the older ballads, shows that the feats of the hero were generally performed during this part of the year. Thus, the adventure of "Robin Hood and the Monk" befell on "a morning of May." "Robin Hood and the Potter" and "Robin Hood and Guy of Gisborne" begin, like "Robin Hood and the Monk," with a description of the season when leaves are long, blossoms are shooting, and the small birds are singing; and this season, though called summer, is at the same time spoken of as May in "Robin Hood and the Monk," which, from the description there given, it needs must be. The liberation of Cloudesly by Adam Bel and Clym of the Clough is also achieved "on a merry morning of May."

Robin Hood is, moreover, intimately associated with the month of May through the games which were celebrated at that time of the year. The history of these games is unfortunately very defective, and hardly extends farther back than the beginning of the sixteenth century. By that time their primitive character seems to have been corrupted, or at least their significance was so far forgotten, that distinct pastimes and ceremonials were capriciously intermixed. At the beginning of the sixteenth century the May sports in vogue were, besides a contest of archery, four *pageants*,—the Kingham, or election of a Lord and Lady of the May, otherwise called Summer King and Queen, the Morris-Dance, the Hobby-Horse, and the "Robin Hood."

Page 43

Though these pageants were diverse in their origin, they had, at the epoch of which we write, begun to be confounded; and the Morris exhibited a tendency to absorb and blend them all, as, from its character, being a procession interspersed with dancing, it easily might do. We shall hardly find the Morris pure and simple in the English May-game; but from a comparison of the two earliest representations which we have of this sport, the Flemish print given by Douce in his "Illustrations of Shakspeare," and Tollett's celebrated painted window, (described in Johnson and Steevens's Shakspeare,) we may form an idea of what was essential and what adventitious in the English spectacle. The Lady is evidently the central personage in both. She is, we presume, the same as the Queen of May, who is the oldest of all the characters in the May games, and the apparent successor to the Goddess of Spring in the Roman Floralia. In the English Morris she is called simply The Lady, or more frequently Maid Marian, a name which, to our apprehension, means Lady of the May, and nothing more.[14] A fool and a taborer seem also to have been indispensable; but the other dancers had neither names nor peculiar offices, and were unlimited in number. The Morris, then, though it lost in allegorical significance, would gain considerably in spirit and variety by combining with the other shows. Was it not natural, therefore, and in fact inevitable, that the old favorites of the populace, Robin Hood, Friar Tuck, and Little John, should in the course of time displace three of the anonymous performers in the show? This they had pretty effectually done at the beginning of the sixteenth century; and the Lady, who had accepted the more precise designation of Maid Marian, was after that generally regarded as the consort of Robin Hood, though she sometimes appeared in the Morris without him. In like manner, the Hobby-Horse was quite early adopted into the Morris, of which it formed no original part, and at last even a Dragon was annexed to the company. Under these circumstances we cannot be surprised to find the principal performers in the May pageants passing the one into the other,—to find the May King, whose occupation was gone when the gallant outlaw had supplanted him in the favor of the Lady, assuming the part of the Hobby-Horse,[15] Robin Hood usurping the title of King of the May,[16] and the Hobby-Horse entering into a contest with the Dragon, as St. George.

We feel obliged to regard this interchange of functions among the characters in the English May-pageants as fortuitous, notwithstanding the coincidence of the May King sometimes appearing on horseback in Germany, and notwithstanding our conviction that Kuhn is right in maintaining that the May King, the Hobby-Horse, and the Dragon-Slayer are symbols of one mythical idea. This idea we are compelled by want of space barely to state, with the certainty of doing injustice to the learning and ingenuity with which the author

Page 44

has supported his views. Kuhn has shown it to be extremely probable, first, that the Christmas games, which both in Germany and England have a close resemblance to those of Spring, are to be considered as a prelude to the May sports, and that they both originally symbolized the victory of Summer over Winter,[17] which, beginning at the winter solstice, is completed in the second month of spring; secondly, that the conquering Summer is represented by the May King, or by the Hobby-Horse (as also by the Dragon-Slayer, whether St. George, Siegfried, Apollo, or the Sanskrit Indras); and thirdly, that the Hobby-Horse in particular represents the god Woden, who, as well as Mars [18] among the Romans, is the god at once of Spring and of Victory.

The essential point, all this being admitted, is now to establish the identity of Robin Hood and the Hobby-Horse. This we think we have shown cannot be done by reasoning founded on the early history of the games under consideration. Kuhn relies principally upon two modern accounts of Christmas pageants. In one of these pageants there is introduced a man on horseback, who carries in his hands a bow and arrows. The other furnishes nothing peculiar except a name: the ceremony is called a *hoodening*, and the hobby-horse a *hooden*. In the rider with bow and arrows Kuhn sees Robin Hood and the Hobby-Horse, and in the name *hooden* (which is explained by the authority he quotes to mean wooden) he discovers a provincial form of wooden, which connects the outlaw and the divinity.[19] It will be generally agreed that these slender premises are totally inadequate to support the weighty conclusion that is rested upon them.

Why the adventures of Robin Hood should be specially assigned, as they are in the old ballads, to the month of May, remains unexplained. We have no exquisite reason to offer, but we may perhaps find reason good enough in the delicious stanzas with which some of these ballads begin.

“In summer when the shawes be sheen,
And leaves be large and long,
It is full merry in fair forest
To hear the fowles song;
To see the deer draw to the dale,
And leave the hilles hee,
And shadow them in the leaves green
Under the green-wood tree.”

The poetical character of the season affords all the explanation that is required.

Nor need the occurrence of exhibitions of archery and of the Robin Hood plays and pageants, at this time of the year, occasion any difficulty. Repeated statutes, from the thirteenth to the sixteenth century, enjoined practice with the bow, and ordered that the

leisure time of holidays should be employed for this purpose. Under Henry the Eighth the custom was still kept up, and those who partook in this exercise often gave it a spirit by assuming the style and character of Robin Hood and his associates. In like manner the society of archers in Elizabeth's time took

Page 45

the name of Arthur and his Knights; all which was very natural then, and would be now. None of all the merrymakings in merry England surpassed the May festival. The return of the sun stimulated the populace to the accumulation of all sorts of amusements. In addition to the traditional and appropriate sports of the season, there were, as Stowe tells us, divers warlike shows, with good archers, morris-dancers, and other devices for pastime all day long, and towards evening stage-plays and bonfires in the streets. A Play of Robin Hood was considered "very proper for a May-game"; but if Robin Hood was peculiarly prominent in these entertainments, the obvious reason would appear to be that he was the hero of that loved green-wood to which all the world resorted, when the cold obstruction of winter was broken up, "to do observance for a morn of May."

We do not, therefore, attribute much value to the theory of Mr. Wright, that the May festival was, in its earliest form, "a religious celebration, though, like such festivals in general, it possessed a double character, that of a religious ceremony, and of an opportunity for the performance of warlike games; that, at such festivals, the songs would take the character of the amusements on the occasion, and would most likely celebrate warlike deeds,—perhaps the myths of the patron whom superstition supposed to preside over them; that, as the character of the exercises changed, the attributes of the patron would change also, and he who was once celebrated as working wonders with his good axe or his elf-made sword might afterwards assume the character of a skilful bowman; that the scene of his actions would likewise change, and the person whose weapons were the bane of dragons and giants, who sought them in the wildernesses they infested, might become the enemy only of the sheriff and his officers, under the 'grene-wode lefe.'" It is unnecessary to point out that the language we have quoted contains, beyond the statement that warlike exercises were anciently combined with religious rites, a very slightly founded surmise, and nothing more.

Another circumstance, which weighs much with Mr. Wright, goes but a very little way with us in demonstrating the mythological character of Robin Hood. This is the frequency with which his name is attached to mounds, wells, and stones, such as in the popular creed are connected with fairies, dwarfs, or giants. There is scarcely a county in England which does not possess some monument of this description. "Cairns on Blackdown in Somersetshire, and barrows near to Whitby in Yorkshire and Ludlow in Shropshire, are termed Robin Hood's pricks or butts; lofty natural eminences in Gloucestershire and Derbyshire are Robin Hood's hills; a huge rock near Matlock is Robin Hood's Tor; ancient boundary-stones, as in Lincolnshire, are Robin Hood's crosses; a presumed loggan, or rocking-stone, in Yorkshire, is Robin Hood's penny-stone; a fountain near Nottingham, another between

Page 46

Doncaster and Wakefield, and one in Lancashire, are Robin Hood's wells; a cave in Nottinghamshire is his stable; a rude natural rock in Hope Dale is his chair; a chasm at Chatsworth is his leap; Blackstone Edge, in Lancashire, is his bed." [20] In fact, his name bids fair to overrun every remarkable object of the sort which has not been already appropriated to King Arthur or the Devil; with the latter of whom, at least, it is presumed, that, however ancient, he will not dispute precedence.

"The legends of the peasantry," quoth Mr. Wright, "are the shadows of a very remote antiquity." This proposition, thus broadly stated, we deny. Nothing is more deceptive than popular legends; and the "legends" we speak of, if they are to bear that name, have no claim to antiquity at all. They do not go beyond the ballads. They are palpably of subsequent and comparatively recent origin. It was absolutely impossible that they should arise while Robin Hood was a living reality to the people. The archer of Sherwood who could barely stand King Edward's buffet, and was felled by the Potter, was no man to be playing with rocking-stones. This trick of naming must have begun in the decline of his fame; for there was a time when his popularity drooped, and his existence was just not doubted,—not elaborately maintained by learned historians, and antiquarians deeply read in the Public Records. And what do these names prove? The vulgar passion for bestowing them is notorious and universal. We Americans are too young to be well provided with heroes that might serve this purpose. We have no imaginative peasantry to invent legends, no ignorant peasantry to believe them. But we have the good fortune to possess the Devil in common with the rest of the world; and we take it upon us to say, that there is not a mountain district in the land, which has been opened to summer travellers, where a "Devil's Bridge," a "Devil's Punch-bowl," or some object with the like designation, will not be pointed out. [21]

We have taken no notice of the later fortunes of Robin Hood in his true and original character of a hero of romance. Towards the end of the sixteenth century Anthony Munday attempted to revive the decaying popularity of this king of good fellows, who had won all his honors as a simple yeoman, by representing him in the play of "The Downfall of Robert, Earl of Huntington" as a nobleman in disguise, outlawed by the machinations of his steward. This pleasing and successful drama is Robin's sole patent to that title of Earl of Huntington, in confirmation of which Dr. Stukeley fabricated a pedigree that transcends even the absurdities of heraldry, and some unknown forger an epitaph beneath the skill of a Chatterton. Those who desire a full acquaintance with the fabulous history of Robin Hood will seek it in the well-known volumes of Ritson, or in those of his recent editor, Gutch, who does not make up by superior discrimination for his inferiority in other respects to that industrious antiquary.

Page 47

[Footnote 1: A writer in the *Edinburgh Review* (July, 1847, p. 134) has cited an allusion to Robin Hood, of a date intermediate between the passages from Wyntown and the one about to be cited from Bower. In the year 1439, a petition was presented to Parliament against one Piers Venables of Aston, in Derbyshire, “who having no liflode, ne sufficeante of goodes, gadered and assembled unto him many misdoers, beyng of his clothyng, and, in manere of insurrection, wente into the wodes in that countrie, like as it hadde be *Robyn Hude and his meyne*.”—*Rot. Parl.* v. 16.]

[Footnote 2: “Legendis non raro incredilibus aliisque plusquam anilibus neniis.”—Hearne, *Scotichronicon*, p. xxix.]

[Footnote 3: In his *Histoire de la Conquete de l'Angleterre par les Normands*, livr. xi. Thierry was anticipated in his theory by Barry, in a dissertation cited by Mr. Wright in his *Essays: These de Litterature sur les Vicissitudes et les Transformations du Cycle populaire de Robin Hood*. Paris, 1832.]

[Footnote 4: *London, and Westminster Review*, vol. xxxiii. p. 424.]

[Footnote 5: No 4. *The Ballad Hero, Robin Hood*. June, 1852.]

[Footnote 6: Hunter, pp. 28, 35-38]

[Footnote 7: Mr. Hunter thinks it necessary to prove that it was formerly a usage in England to celebrate real events in popular song. We submit that it has been still more customary to celebrate them in history, when they were of public importance. The case of private and domestic stories is different.]

[Footnote 8: Most remarkable of all would this be, should we adopt the views of Mr. Hunter, because we know, from the incidental testimony of *Piers Ploughman*, that only forty years after the date fixed upon for the outlaw's submission “rhymes of Robin Hood” were in the mouth of every tavern lounge; and yet no chronicler can spare him a word.]

[Footnote 9: Matthew Paris, London, 1640, p. 1002]

[Footnote 10: Mr. Hunter had previously instituted a similar argument in the case of Adam Bell, and doubtless the reasoning might be extended to Will Scathlock and Little John. With a little more rummaging of old account-books we shall be enabled to “comprehend all vagrom men.” It is a pity that the Sheriff of Nottingham could not have availed himself of the services of our “detective.”]

[Footnote 11: See Wright's *Essays*, ii. 207. “The name of Witikind, the famous opponent of Charlemagne, who always fled before his sight, concealed himself in the forests, and returned again in his absence, is no more than *uitu chint*, in Old High Dutch, and signifies the *son of the wood*, an appellation which he could never have received at his birth, since it denotes an exile or outlaw. Indeed, the name Witikind,

though such a person seems to have existed, appears to be the representative of all the defenders of his country against the invaders.”]

Page 48

[Footnote 12: Thus, in Kent, the Hobby-Horse is called *hooden*, i.e. wooden. It is curious that Orlando, in *As You Like It*, (who represents the outlaw Gamelyn in the *Tale of Gamelyn*, a tale which clearly belongs to the cycle of Robin Hood,) should be the son of Sir Rowland de Bois. Robin de Bois (says a writer in *Notes and Queries*, vi. 597) occurs in one of Sue's novels "as a well-known mythical character, whose name is employed by French mothers to frighten their children."]

[Footnote 13: Kuhn, in Haupt's *Zeitschrift fuer deutsches Alterthum*, v. 472. The idea of a northern myth will of course excite the alarm of all sensible, patriotic Englishmen, (e.g. Mr. Hunter, at page 3 of his tract,) and the bare suggestion of Woden will be received, in the same quarters, with an explosion of scorn. And yet we find the famous shot of Elgill, one of the mythical personages of the Scandinavians, (and perhaps to be regarded as one of the forms of Woden,) attributed in the ballad of *Adam Bel* to William of Clouesly, who may be considered as Robin Hood under another name.]

[Footnote: 14. Unless importance is to be attached to the consideration that May is the Virgin's month.]

[Footnote 15: As in Tollett's window.]

[Footnote 16: In Lord Hailes's *Extracts from the Book of the Universal Kirk*.]

[Footnote 17: More openly exhibited in the mock battle between Summer and Winter celebrated by the Scandinavians in honor of May, a custom still retained in the Isle of Man, where the month is every year ushered in with a contest between the Queen of Summer and the Queen of Winter. (Brand's *Antiquities*, by Ellis, i. 222, 257.) A similar ceremony in Germany, occurring at Christmas, is noticed by Kuhn, p. 478.]

[Footnote 18: Hence the spring begins with March. The connection with Mars suggests a possible etymology for the Morris,—which is usually explained, for want of something better, as a Morisco or Moorish dance. There is some resemblance between the Morris and the Salic dance. The Salic games are said to have been instituted by the Veian king Morrius, a name pointing to Mars, the divinity of the Salli.—Kuhn, 488-493.]

[Footnote 19: The name Robin also appears to Kuhn worthy of notice, since the horseman in the May pageant is in some parts of Germany called Ruprecht (Rupert, Robert).]

[Footnote 20: *Edinburgh Review*, vol. 86, p. 123.]

[Footnote 21: See some sensible remarks in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for March, 1793, by D. H., that is, says the courteous Ritson, by Gough, "the scurrilous and malignant editor of that degraded publication."]

THE GHOST REDIVIVUS.

Page 49

One of those violent, though shortlived storms, which occasionally rage in southern climates, had blown all night in the neighborhood of the little town of San Cipriano, situated in a wild valley of the Apennines opening towards the sea. Under the olive-woods that cover those steep hills lay the olive-berries strewed thick and wide; here and there a branch heavy-laden with half-ripe fruit, torn by the blast from its parent tree, stretched its prostrate length upon the ground. An abundant premature harvest had fallen, but at present there were no means of collecting it; for the deluging rains of the night had soaked the ground, the grass, the dead leaves, the fruit itself, and the rain was still falling heavily. If gathered in that state, the olives are sure to rot.

"*Pazienza!*" in such disasters exclaim the inhabitants of the *Riviera*, with a melancholy shrug of the shoulders. And they needs must have patience until the weather clears and the ground dries, before they can secure such of the olives as may happily be uninjured.

On the day we speak of, the 21st of December, 1852, the proprietors of olive-grounds in San Cipriano wore very blank faces; they talked sadly of the falling prices of the fruit and oil, and the olive-pickers crossed their hands and looked vacantly at the gray sky.

In the spacious kitchen of Doctor Morani were assembled a body of young rosy lasses in laced bodices, and short, bright-colored petticoats, come down from the neighboring mountains for the olive-gathering, much as Irish laborers cross over to England for the hay-making season. These girls arrive in troops from their native villages among the hills, carrying on their heads a sackful of the flour of dried beans and a lesser quantity of dried chestnuts. They offer their services to the inhabitants of the valley at the rate of four pence English a day; about three pence less than the sum demanded by the women of the place. But the pretty mountaineers ask, in addition to their modest wages, a shelter for the night, a little straw or hay for their beds, and a small daily portion of oil and salt to season the bean-flour and chestnuts, which constitute their sole food. They are then perfectly contented.

The old Doctor had hired several of these damsels to assist in getting in his olive crop, with the customary additional compact to spin some of the unwrought flax of the household when bad weather prevented their out-of-door work, as well as regularly in the evening between early dusk and bed-time. Happy those to whose lot it fell to be employed by Dr. Morani! Besides not beating down their wages to the utmost, it was the Doctor's wont, out of the exuberance of a warm-hearted, joyous nature, unchilled even by his sixty winters, to give to his serving men and maidens not only kind words and encouraging looks, but also what made him perhaps still more popular, humorous jokes and droll stories.

The Doctor, indeed, concealed something of the philosopher under the garb of a wag. His quaint sayings and doings were frequently quoted with great relish among this rural population. He had a way of his own of shooting facts and truths into the uncultivated

understandings of these laborers,—facts and truths that never otherwise could have penetrated so far; he feathered his philosophical or moral arrows with a jest, and they stuck fast.

Page 50

Signora Martina, his wife, was a good soul, and, though a strict housewife, was yet not so thrifty but that she could allow a little of her abundance to overflow on those in her service; and these crumbs from her table added many delicious bits to the bean-flour repasts. So, as we have said, happy the mountain girls taken into Dr. Morani's service! But specially blest among the blest this year were two sisters, to whom was allotted a bed, a real bed, to sleep upon! How came they to be furnished with such a luxury? Why, this season the Doctor had hired more than the usual number of pickers. The outbuilding given them to sleep in was thus too small to accommodate all, so two were taken into the house, and a diminutive closet, generally used by the family as a bath-room, was turned into a bed-room for the lucky couple. Now for a description of the bed. Over the bath was placed an ironing-board, and upon this a mattress quite as narrow, almost as hard, and far less smooth than the narrow plank on which it lay. The width of the bed was just sufficient to admit the two sisters, packed close, each lying on her side. As to turning, that was simply out of the question; but "poor labor in sweet slumber lock'd" lay from night till morning without once dreaming of change of position.

Signora Martina, the first day or two, expressed some fear lest they might not rest well; but both girls averred they never in their lives had known so luxurious a bed,—and never should again, unless their good fortune brought them back another year to enjoy this sybarite couch at Dr. Morani's.

Though irrelevant to our story, this short digression may serve to illustrate the Arcadian simplicity of habits prevailing in these mountainous districts, and affords one more illustration of the axiom, not more trite than true, that human enjoyment and luxury are all comparative.

Well! the wet afternoon was wearing on, beguiled by the young girls as best it might be, with the spindle and distaff, and incessant chatter and laugh, save when they joined their voices in some popular chant. Signora Martina was delivering fresh flax to the spinners; Marietta, the maid, was busy about the fire, in provident forethought for supper; and Beppo, a barefooted, weather-beaten individual, was bringing in the wood he had been sawing this rainy day, which interfered with his more usual business at that season. For Beppo was one of the men whose task it was to climb the olive-trees and shake down the olives for the women gathering below. He was distinguished among many as a skilful and valiant climber; nor had his laurels been earned without perils and wounds. Occasionally he fell, and occasionally broke a bone or two,—episodes that had their compensation. Beppo, then, on this particular rainy afternoon, came in with a flat basket full of newly cut wood on his head, respectfully saluted the *Padrona*, and, after throwing down his load in a corner of the kitchen, leisurely turned his basket topsy-turvy, seated himself upon it, and prepared to take his part in the general conversation.

Page 51

At this moment the Doctor himself entered, his cloak and hat dripping.

“Heugh! heugh!” he exclaimed, in a voice of disgust, as his wife helped him out of his covering; “what weather!” He went towards the fire, and spread out his hands to catch the heat of the glowing embers, on which sat a saucepan. “Horrid weather! The wind played the very mischief with us last night!”

“Many branches broken, Padrone?” asked Beppo, eagerly.

“Branches, eh? Aye, aye; saw away; burn away; don’t be afraid of a supply failing,” said the Doctor, dryly.

“Oh, Santa Maria!” sighed Signora Martina, in sad presentiment.

“Plenty of firewood, my dear soul, for two years,” went on the Doctor. “The big tree near the pigeon-house is head down, root up, torn, smashed, prostrate, while good-for-nothing saplings are standing.”

“Oh Lord! such a tree! that never failed, bad year or good year, to give us a sack of olives, and often more!” cried Signora Martina, piteously. “More than three generations old it was!” And she began actually to weep. “Oil selling for nothing, and the tree, the best of trees, to be blown down!”

“Take care,” said the Doctor, “take care of repining! Little misfortunes are like a rash, which carries off bad humors from a too robust body. Suppose the storm had laid my head low, and turned up my toes; what then, eh, little girls?” turning to the group of young creatures standing with their eyes very wide open at the recital of the misdeeds of the turbulent wind, and now as suddenly off into a laugh at the image of the Doctor’s decease so represented. “Ah! you giggling set! Happy you that have no branches to be broken, and no olive-pickers to pay! *Per Bacco!* you are well off, if you only knew it!”

He walked over to where his weeping wife sat, laid his hand on her head, and stooping, kissed her brow. The girls laughed again.

“Be quiet, all of you! Do you think that only smooth brows and bright cheeks ought to be kissed? Be good loving wives, and I promise you your husbands will be blind to your wrinkles. I could not be happy without the sight of this well-known face; it is the record of happiness for me. I wish you all our luck, my dears!”

All simpered or laughed, and Martina’s brow smoothed.

“Now I see that I can still make you smile at misfortune,” continued the Doctor, “I will tell you something comforting. As I came along, I met Paolo, the olive-merchant, who offered me a franc more a sack than he did to any one else, because he knows our olives are of a superior quality.”

Signora Martina smiled rather a grim smile at this compliment to her olives.

“But I told him,” went on Doctor Morani, with a certain look of pride, “that we were not going to sell; we intended to make oil for ourselves. And so we will, Martina, with the olives that have been blown down, hoping the best for those still on the trees. Now let us talk of something more pleasant. Pasqualina, suppose you tell us a story; you are our best hand, I believe.”

Page 52

"I am sure, Signor Dottore, I have nothing worth your listening to," answered Pasqualina, blushing.

"Tell us about the ghost your uncle saw," suggested another of the girls.

"A ghost!" cried the Doctor. "Any one here seen a ghost? I wish I could have such a chance! What was it like?"

"I did not see it myself; I do but believe what my uncle told me," said Pasqualina, with a gravity that had a shade of resentment.

"If one is only to speak of what one has seen," urged the prompter of the uncle's ghost-story, "tell the Padrone of the witch that bewitched your sister."

"Ah! and so we have witches too?" groaned the Doctor.

"As to that," resumed Pasqualina, with a dignified look, "I can't help believing my own eyes, and those of all the people of our village."

"Well," exclaimed Doctor Morani, "let us hear all about the witch."

"You know, all of you," said Pasqualina, "what bad fits my sister had, and how she was cured by the miraculous Madonna del Laghetto. So my sister had no more fits, till Madalena, a spiteful old woman, and whom everybody in the village knows to be a witch, mumbled some of her spells and——"

"Hallo!" cried the Doctor, "do you mean that witches have more power than the Madonna?"

"Oh! Signor Dottore, you put things so strangely! just listen to the truth. So this old woman came and mumbled some of her spells, and then my poor sister fell down again, and has since had fits as bad as ever. But my father and brother were not going to take it so easily, and they beat the bad old witch till she couldn't move, and had to be carried to the hospital. I hope she may die, with all my heart I do!"

"You had better hope she will get well," observed the Doctor, coolly; "for if she should happen to die, my good Pasqualina, it would be very possible that your father and brother might be sent to the galleys."

Here Pasqualina set up a howl.

"Do not afflict yourself just now," resumed Doctor Morani; "for, with all their good-will, they have not quite killed the woman. I saw her myself at the hospital; she is getting better, and when cured, I shall take care that she does not return among such a set of savages as flourish in your village, Signorina Pasqualina. Excuse my boldness,"—and

the Doctor took off his skull-cap, in playful obeisance to the young girl,—“only advise your family another time to be less ready with their hands and their belief in every species of absurdity. Did not Father Tommaso tell you but yesterday, that it was not right to believe in ghosts or witches, save and except the peculiar one or two it is his business to know about, and who lived some thousand years ago? There have been none since, believe me.”

“Strange things do happen, however,” observed Signora Martina, thoughtfully,—“things that neither priest nor lawyer can explain. What was that thing which appeared, twenty years ago, on the tower of San Ciprano?” The Signora’s voice sent a shudder through all the women present.

Page 53

"A trick, and a stupid trick," persisted her husband.

"Not at all a trick, Doctor," said Martina, shaking her head.

"Did you see it yourself, Martina?"

"No; but I saw those who did with their own two blessed eyes."

"The Padrona is quite right," said Beppo, without leaving his basket. "I, for one, saw it."

This assertion produced such a hubbub as sent the Doctor growling from the room, and left Signora Martina at liberty to comply with the general petition for the story.

"It was twenty-five years last Easter since Hans Reuter came to San Cipriano with Carlo Boschi, the son of old Pietro, of our town. Carlo had gone away three years before to seek his fortune. He went to Switzerland, it seems, a distant country beyond the mountains, where the language is different from ours, and where it is said"—(here Martina lowered her voice)—"the people do not follow our holy religion, and are called, therefore, Protestants and heretics. They are industrious, notwithstanding, and clever in certain arts and manufactures, and it was from some of them that Carlo learned the watchmaking trade. After staying away three years, one fine day he came back, bringing with him one of these Swiss, Hans Reuter; and the two, being great friends, set up a shop together, where they made and sold watches and jewelry. There was not business enough in San Cipriano to maintain them, but they made it out by selling at wholesale in the neighboring towns.

"For years all went smoothly with the partners, and their good luck began to be wondered at, when one morning their shop was not open at the usual hour. What was the matter? what had happened? there was Carlo Boschi knocking and shouting to Hans, and all in vain. I must tell you that Carlo lived elsewhere, and Hans had the care of the premises at night, sleeping in a little room at the back of the shop. The neighbors went out and advised Carlo to force the door. Very well. When they got in, they found Hans bound hand and foot, and so closely gagged that he was almost stifled. As soon as he could speak, he said that just after he had shut up the previous evening, there was a knock at the door. He had scarcely opened it, when he was seized by two ruffians with blackened faces, who threw him down, gagged and tied him, and then coolly proceeded to ransack every place, packed up every bit of jewelry, every watch, and every piece of money, and then decamped with their booty, locking the door on the outside. The robbery took place on the third and last day of the Easter Fair, exactly when there was the greatest noise and bustle from the breaking up of booths, such an uproar of singing, brawling, and rolling of carts, and such a stream of people going in every direction, as made it easy for the thieves to escape detection. The police took a great many depositions, and made a great fuss; but there the matter ended.

Page 54

“To say the truth, it was like looking for a bird in a forest, considering the number of strangers who had attended the fair; besides, the police, you know, at that time, were too busy dogging and hunting down Liberals to care for tracking only thieves. That, however, is no business of mine or yours; and perhaps it would have done no good to poor Hans, even if the criminals had been discovered. He had got a great shock; he could not recover his spirits. Every one felt for him, because he was a kind, sociable man, as well as industrious; the only fault he had was being a Protestant. What that was no one exactly knew; but it was a great sin and a great pity, it seems. Sure it is that Hans never went to confession, or to the communion. However, as time passed and brought no tidings of the robbers, the poor man grew more thin and careworn every day. He would talk for hours about Switzerland, about his own village, his father’s house, his parents and relations. He had left them so thoughtlessly, he said, he had scarcely felt a regret; yet now a yearning grew within him to look once more upon those dear faces, and the verdant mountains of his country,—upon its cool, rushing streams, wide, green pastures, and the cows that grazed on them. He used to tell us, that, when he was alone, he heard their bells in the distance, and they seemed to call him home. My husband did not like all this, and said Hans ought to go at once, or it would be too late. But Hans delayed and delayed, in the hope of recovering some of his stolen property, till one day he was taken very ill and had to be carried to the hospital. The Doctor attended him two or three times every day, and on the third was summoned in a great hurry. Morani went and had a long conversation with the poor dying fellow, and then Padre Michele of the Capuchin Convent was sent for. It was some time before the good monk could be found, and then it took still longer, he being old and very infirm, before he could get to the hospital. When he did, it was too late; poor Hans was dead.

“This was a sad business; for, if the Padre had come in time, at all events Hans’s soul would have been safe, and his body buried in consecrated ground. My husband went to the Rector and told his Reverence that Hans had renounced his errors, and had made a full profession of the Catholic faith to him; but his Reverence shook his head, and said that was not the same thing as if Padre Michele had received Hans into the true fold. Then my husband said it was a pity Hans should suffer because the Padre had been out of the way; but his Reverence always answered, ‘No,’ and so ‘No’ it was. The clergy were not to attend, and the body was to be put into the ground just as you might bury a dog. What could my husband do more? So he went his way to his patients. It happened that he had to see several, far in the country, and so did not come home till late at night.

Page 55

“You all know the tower which stands upon the green knoll high above the town. It is a relic of very old times, when San Cipriano had fortifications. It has been a ruin for more than a century,—a mere shell, open to the sky, encircling a wide space of ground. A few days before Hans’s death, the Doctor had taken it into his head he would like to hire this tower of the municipality, to which it belongs, to make a garden within its walls. He had been to examine the place a week previous, and had brought home the key of the gate, being determined to take it. Now this very day after Hans died, and while my husband was away on his round of country visits, the Syndic sent to ask for the key, and I, thinking no harm, gave it. And now what do you think the Syndic wanted the key for? Just to dig a hole for poor Hans. Yes, the body was carried up there, and buried out of sight as quickly as possible.

“When the Doctor came home he was in a mighty passion with everybody;—with the Rector, for refusing Hans a place in the burial-ground; with the Syndic, for allowing the tower to be used for such a purpose; and most of all with me, for giving the key without asking why or wherefore.

“However, what was done could not be undone, and so no more was said about the matter. It might have been a week after, when some girls who had set out before daylight to go to the wood for leaves, came back much terrified, declaring they had seen an apparition on the tower wall. Not one had dared to go on to the wood, but all ran back to the town and spread the alarm. A dozen persons, at least, came to our house to tell us about it, and I promise you my husband did not call it a stupid trick, as he did today. He looked very grave, and exclaimed, ‘I don’t wonder at it. No doubt it is poor Hans, who does not like to lie in unconsecrated ground. Don’t come to me,—it’s none of my business,—I have only to do with the living,—the dead belong to the clergy,—this is the Rector’s affair. If ever a ghost had a right to walk, it is in such a case as this, when a poor, honest fellow is denied Christian burial because an old monk’s legs refuse to carry him fast enough. Had Padre Michele been a younger man, all would have been right.’

“There was quite a general commotion in the town, and at last, after a day or two, some of the young men determined they would go and watch the next night, to see if the thing appeared, or if it was mere women’s nonsense, and they went accordingly.”

“I was one of the party,” interrupted Beppo, taking the narrative out of his Padrona’s mouth, stirred by the high-wrought excitement of his recollections. “I went with ten others, and I had a good loaded gun with me. We hid ourselves behind some bushes, and watched and watched. Nothing appeared, until the girls, who had agreed to come at their usual hour for going to the wood, passed by; then, just at that moment, I swear I saw it. I felt all,—I can’t tell how,—a

Page 56

sort of hot cold, and as if my legs were water. I don't know how I managed to raise my gun,—I did it quite dreaming like; it went off with the biggest noise ever a gun made, and the bullet must have gone through the very head of the ghost, for it waved its thin arms fearfully. All the rest ran away, but I could not move a peg. Then a terrible voice roared out, 'I shall not forget thee, my friend! I will visit thee again before thy last hour! Now begone!'"

Beppo ceased speaking, and a shuddering silence fell on the listeners. Martina alone ventured on the awe-struck whisper of "What was it like, Beppo?"

"A tall, white figure; its arms spread out like a cross,—so," replied Beppo, rising from his basket, the better to personate the ghost. "*Jesu Maria!*" he shrieked, "there it is! O Lord, have mercy on us!"

And sure enough, standing against the door was a tall, white figure, its arms spread out like the limbs of a cross. Screams, both shrill and discordant, filled the room,—Martini, Beppo, Marietta, and the girls tumbling and rushing about distraught with terror. Such a mad-like scene! There was a trembling and a shaking of the white figure for a moment, then down it went in a heap to the floor, and out came the substantial proportions of Doctor Morani, looming formidable in the dusky light of the expiring embers. The sound of his well-known vigorous laugh resounded through the kitchen, as he flung a bunch of pine branches on the fire. The next moment a bright flame shot up, and the light as by magic brought the scared group to their senses. Each looked into the faces of the others with an expression of rising merriment struggling with ghastly fear, and first a long-drawn breath of relief, and then a burst of laughter broke from all.

"What a fright you have given us, Padrone!" Beppo was the first to say.

"I hope so," replied the Doctor,—"it has only paid you off for the one you gave me twenty years ago."

"I!—you!—but how, caro Padrone?"

"Ah! you haven't yet, I assure you, recognized your old acquaintance, the identical ghost which you favored with a bullet. Would you like to see it once more?"

"*Pazienza!*" exclaimed Beppo, "for once,—twice;—but three times,—no, that is more than enough. I am satisfied with what I have seen."

"Do you know what you have seen?" resumed the Doctor. "Very well, listen to me. When the Rector refused to let poor Hans lie in the same ground with many of our townspeople who (God rest their souls!) had lived scarcely so honest a life as he had done, I was far from imagining that he was to be thrust into the tower, of all places in the

world, and just when it was well known I had bargained for it. 'That's the way I am to be used, is it?' thought I. I'll play you a trick, my friends, worth two of yours,—one that will make you glad to give honest Hans hospitality in your churchyard.'

Page 57

"I waited a few days, till the moon should rise late, so as to be shining about one or two in the morning, the time when the girls set off for the woods. I provided myself with a sheet, and took care to be in the tower before midnight. I tied two long sticks together in the shape of a cross, stuck my hat on the top, and threw the linen over the whole; and a capital ghost it was. Then I got under the drapery, pushing up the stick, so as to give the idea of a gigantic human figure with extended arms. I had no fear of being discovered, for the Syndic had the key still in his possession, and I had made good my entrance through a gap in the wall sufficiently well concealed by brambles. I suppose I need not tell you, young women, how brave your mothers were. My ghostship heard of the young men's project, and encouraged them, never thinking there was one among them so stupid as to carry a gun to fight a ghost with; for how can you shoot a ghost, when it has neither flesh nor blood? It was impossible to suspect any one of being such a monstrous blockhead; so I was rather disagreeably startled at hearing the crack of a gun, and feeling the tingling of a bullet whizzing past my ear. You nearly made me into a real ghost, friend Beppo; for I assure you, you are a capital shot. Ever since that memorable aim, I have entertained the deepest respect for you as a marksman; it was not your fault that I am here now to make this confession. I ducked my head below the wall in case a volley was to follow the signal gun. When I peeped again, there remained one solitary figure before the tower, immovable as a stone pillar. O noble Beppo, it was thou!

"I must get rid of this fellow one way or other,' thought I, 'but not by shaking my stick-covered sheet, or I shall have another bullet.' So I raised myself breasthigh above the wall, made a trumpet of my hands, and roared out the fearful promise I have kept this evening. As soon as I saw my enemy's back, I left my station, and never played the ghost again."

"A pretty folly for a man of forty!" cried Signora Martina, still smarting under her late fright. "Why, a boy would be well whipped for such a trick. There's no knowing what to believe in a man like you, no saying when you are in earnest or in fun."

After a moment's silence, the lady asked in a softer tone, "Now do tell me, Morani, is it true that poor Hans recanted before he died?"

"My dear, if Padre Michele had been in time, we should have been sure of the fact. You see the Rector did not think I knew enough of theology to decide. I am a submissive child of the Church," replied the husband. "As for the ghost, I took care to provide against forgetting my folly. On the top shelf of the laboratory I hung up the bullet-pierced hat; and the bullet itself I ticketed with the date and kept in my desk. Who wants to see the ghost's hat?"—and the Doctor drew a hat from under the sheet still lying on the floor, and exhibited it to the curious eyes of all present, making them admire the neat hole in it. The bullet itself he took out of his waistcoat pocket, and holding it towards Beppo, asked, "Hadn't it a mark?"

Page 58

"Yes, sir, I cut a cross on it," replied the abashed climber of olive-trees; "and by all the Saints, there it is still! Pasqualina, my girl," turning to her, "your uncle's ghost will turn out to be somebody."

"Bravo! Beppo," cried the Doctor.

"Knowing what you know by experience, suppose you hint to any one inclined to spectre-shooting, that he runs the risk of killing a live man, and having two ghosts on his hands,—the ghost of the poor devil shot, and one of himself hanged for murder. As for you, young girls, remember that when you go forth to meet the perils of dark mornings, you are more likely to encounter dangers from flesh and blood than from spirits."

THE GOLDEN MILE-STONE.

[The *Milliorium Aureum*, or Golden Mile-Stone, was a gilt marble pillar in the Forum at Rome, from which, as a central point, the great roads of the empire diverged through the several gates of the city, and the distances were measured.]

Leafless are the trees; their purple branches
Spread themselves abroad, like reefs of coral
Rising silent
In the Red Sea of the winter sunset.

From the hundred chimneys of the village,
Like the Afreet in the Arabian story,
Smoky columns
Tower aloft into the air of amber.

At the window winks the flickering fire-light;
Here and there the lamps of evening glimmer,
Social watch-fires,
Answering one another through the darkness.

On the hearth the lighted logs are glowing,
And, like Ariel in the cloven pine-tree,
For its freedom
Groans and sighs the air imprisoned in them.

By the fireside there are old men seated,
Seeing ruined cities in the ashes,
Asking sadly
Of the Past what it can ne'er restore them.



By the fireside there are youthful dreamers,
Building castles fair with stately stairways,
Asking blindly
Of the Future what it cannot give them.

By the fireside tragedies are acted
In whose scenes appear two actors only,
Wife and husband,
And above them God, the sole spectator.

By the fireside there are peace and comfort,
Wives and children, with fair, thoughtful faces,
Waiting, watching
For a well-known footstep in the passage.

Each man's chimney is his Golden Mile-Stone,—
Is the central point from which he measures
Every distance
Through the gateways of the world around him.

In his farthest wanderings still he sees it;
Hears the talking flame, the answering night-wind,
As he heard them
When he sat with those who were, but are not.

Happy he whom neither wealth nor fashion,
Nor the march of the encroaching city,
Drives an exile
From the hearth of his ancestral homestead!

We may build more splendid habitations,
Fill our rooms with paintings and with sculptures,
But we cannot
Buy with gold the old associations.

Page 59

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN BOSWELL.

I really believe some people save their bright thoughts, as being too precious for conversation. What do you think an admiring friend said the other day to one that was talking good things,—good enough to print? “Why,” said he, “you are wasting merchantable literature, a cash article, at the rate, as nearly as I can tell, of fifty dollars an hour.” The talker took him to the window and asked him to look out and tell what he saw.

“Nothing but a very dusty street,” he said, “and a man driving a sprinkling-machine through it.”

“Why don’t you tell the man he is wasting that water? What would be the state of the highways of life, if we did not drive our *thought-sprinklers* through them with the valves open, sometimes?

“Besides, there is another thing about this talking, which you forget. It shapes our thoughts for us;—the waves of conversation roll them as the surf rolls the pebbles on the shore. Let me modify the image a little. I rough out my thoughts in talk as an artist models in clay. Spoken language is so plastic,—you can pat and coax, and spread and shave, and rub out, and fill up, and stick on so easily, when you work that soft material, that there is nothing like it for modelling. Out of it come the shapes which you turn into marble or bronze in your immortal books, if you happen to write such. Or, to use another illustration, writing or printing is like shooting with a rifle; you may hit your reader’s mind, or miss it;—but talking is like playing at a mark with the pipe of an engine; if it is within reach, and you have time enough, you can’t help hitting it.”

The company agreed that this last illustration was of superior excellence, or, in the phrase used by them, “Fust-rate.” I acknowledged the compliment, but gently rebuked the expression. “Fust-rate,” “prime,” “a prime article,” “a superior piece of goods,” “a handsome garment,” “a gent in a flowered vest,”—all such expressions are final. They blast the lineage of him or her who utters them, for generations up and down. There is one other phrase which will soon come to be decisive of a man’s social *status*, if it is not already: “That tells the whole story.” It is an expression which vulgar and conceited people particularly affect, and which well-meaning ones, who know better, catch from them. It is intended to stop all debate, like the previous question in the General Court. Only it don’t; simply because “that” does not usually tell the whole, nor one half of the whole story.

Page 60

—It is an odd idea, that almost all our people have had a professional education. To become a doctor a man must study some three years and hear a thousand lectures, more or less. Just how much study it takes to make a lawyer I cannot say, but probably not more than this. Now most decent people hear one hundred lectures or sermons (discourses) on theology every year,—and this, twenty, thirty, fifty years together. They read a great many religious books besides. The clergy, however, rarely hear any sermons except what they preach themselves. A dull preacher might be conceived, therefore, to lapse into a state of *quasi* heathenism, simply for want of religious instruction. And on the other hand, an attentive and intelligent hearer, listening to a succession of wise teachers, might become actually better educated in theology than any one of them. We are all theological students, and more of us qualified as doctors of divinity than have received degrees at any of the universities.

It is not strange, therefore, that very good people should often find it difficult, if not impossible, to keep their attention fixed upon a sermon treating feebly a subject which they have thought vigorously about for years, and heard able men discuss scores of times. I have often noticed, however, that a hopelessly dull discourse acts *inductively*, as electricians would say, in developing strong mental currents. I am ashamed to think with what accompaniments and variations and *fioriture* I have sometimes followed the droning of a heavy speaker,—not willingly,—for my habit is reverential,—but as a necessary result of a slight continuous impression on the senses and the mind, which kept both in action without furnishing the food they required to work upon. If you ever saw a crow with a king-bird after him, you will get an image of a dull speaker and a lively listener. The bird in sable plumage flaps heavily along his straight-forward course, while the other sails round him, over him, under him, leaves him, comes back again, tweaks out a black feather, shoots away once more, never losing sight of him, and finally reaches the crow's perch at the same time the crow does, having cut a perfect labyrinth of loops and knots and spirals while the slow fowl was painfully working from one end of his straight line to the other.

[I think these remarks were received rather coolly. A temporary boarder from the country, consisting of a somewhat more than middle-aged female, with a parchment forehead and a dry little “frisette” shingling it, a sallow neck with a necklace of gold beads, a black dress too rusty for recent grief, and contours in basso-rilievo, left the table prematurely, and was reported to have been very virulent about what I said. So I went to my good old minister, and repeated the remarks, as nearly as I could remember them, to him. He laughed good-naturedly, and said there was considerable truth in them. He

Page 61

thought he could tell when people's minds were wandering, by their looks. In the earlier years of his ministry he had sometimes noticed this, when he was preaching;—very little of late years. Sometimes, when his colleague was preaching, he observed this kind of inattention; but after all, it was not so very unnatural. I will say, by the way, that it is a rule I have long followed, to tell my worst thoughts to my minister, and my best thoughts to the young people I talk with.]

—I want to make a literary confession now, which I believe nobody has made before me. You know very well that I write verses sometimes, because I have read some of them at this table. (The company assented,—two or three of them in a resigned sort of way, as I thought, as if they supposed I had an epic in my pocket, and was going to read half a dozen books or so for their benefit.)—I continued. Of course I write some lines or passages which are better than others; some which, compared with the others, might be called relatively excellent. It is in the nature of things that I should consider these relatively excellent lines or passages as absolutely good. So much must be pardoned to humanity. Now I never wrote a “good” line in my life, but the moment after it was written it seemed a hundred years old. Very commonly I had a sudden conviction that I had seen it somewhere. Possibly I may have sometimes unconsciously stolen it, but I do not remember that I ever once detected any historical truth in these sudden convictions of the antiquity of my new thought or phrase. I have learned utterly to distrust them, and never allow them to bully me out of a thought or line.

This is the philosophy of it. (Here the number of the company was diminished by a small secession.) Any new formula which suddenly emerges in our consciousness has its roots in long trains of thought; it is virtually old when it first makes its appearance among the recognized growths of our intellect. Any crystalline group of musical words has had a long and still period to form in. Here is one theory.

But there is a larger law which perhaps comprehends these facts. It is this. The rapidity with which ideas grow old in our memories is in a direct ratio to the squares of their importance. Their apparent age runs up miraculously, like the value of diamonds, as they increase in magnitude. A great calamity, for instance, is as old as the trilobites an hour after it has happened. It stains backward through all the leaves we have turned over in the book of life, before its blot of tears or of blood is dry on the page we are turning. For this we seem to have lived; it was foreshadowed in dreams that we leaped out of in the cold sweat of terror; in the “dissolving views” of dark day-visions; all omens pointed to it; all paths led to it. After the tossing half-forgetfulness of the first sleep that follows such an event, it comes upon us afresh, as a surprise, at waking; in a few moments it is old again,—old as eternity.

Page 62

[I wish I had not said all this then and there. I might have known better. The pale schoolmistress, in her mourning dress, was looking at me, as I noticed, with a wild sort of expression. All at once the blood dropped out of her cheeks as the mercury drops from a broken barometer-tube, and she melted away from her seat like an image of snow; a slung-shot could not have brought her down better. God forgive me!

After this little episode, I continued, to some few that remained balancing teaspoons on the edges of cups, twirling knives, or tilting upon the hind legs of their chairs until their heads reached the wall, where they left gratuitous advertisements of various popular cosmetics.]

When a person is suddenly thrust into any strange, new position of trial, he finds the place fits him as if he had been measured for it. He has committed a great crime, for instance, and is sent to the State Prison. The traditions, prescriptions, limitations, privileges, all the sharp conditions of his new life, stamp themselves upon his consciousness as the signet on soft wax;—a single pressure is enough. Let me strengthen the image a little. Did you ever happen to see that most soft-spoken and velvet-handed steam-engine at the Mint? The smooth piston slides backward and forward as a lady might slip her delicate finger in and out of a ring. The engine lays one of *its* fingers calmly, but firmly, upon a bit of metal; it is a coin now, and will remember that touch, and tell a new race about it, when the date upon it is crusted over with twenty centuries. So it is that a great silent-moving misery puts a new stamp on us in an hour or a moment,—as sharp an impression as if it had taken half a lifetime to engrave it.

It is awful to be in the hands of the wholesale professional dealers in misfortune; undertakers and jailers magnetize you in a moment, and you pass out of the individual life you were living into the rhythmical movements of their horrible machinery. Do the worst thing you can, or suffer the worst that can be thought of, you find yourself in a category of humanity that stretches back as far as Cain, and with an expert at your elbow that has studied your case all out beforehand, and is waiting for you with his implements of hemp or mahogany. I believe, if a man were to be burned in any of our cities to-morrow for heresy, there would be found a master of ceremonies that knew just how many fagots were necessary, and the best way of arranging the whole matter.

—So we have not won the Good-wood cup; *au contraire*, we were a “bad fifth,” if not worse than that; and trying it again, and the third time, has not yet bettered the matter. Now I am as patriotic as any of my fellow-citizens,—too patriotic in fact, for I have got into hot water by loving too much of my country; in short, if any man, whose fighting weight is not more than eight stone four pounds, disputes it, I am ready to discuss the

Page 63

point with him. I should have gloried to see the stars and stripes in front at the finish. I love my country, and I love horses. Stubbs's old mezzotint of Eclipse hangs over my desk, and Herring's portrait of Plenipotentiary,—whom I saw run at Epsom,—over my fireplace. Did I not elope from school to see Revenge, and Prospect, and Little John, and Peacemaker run over the race-course where now yon suburban village flourishes, in the year eighteen hundred and ever-so-few? Though I never owned a horse, have I not been the proprietor of six equine females, of which one was the prettiest little "Morgin" that ever stepped? Listen, then, to an opinion I have often expressed long before this venture of ours in England. Horse-*racing* is not a republican institution; horse-*trotting* is. Only very rich persons can keep race-horses, and everybody knows they are kept mainly as gambling implements. All that matter about blood and speed we won't discuss; we understand all that; useful, very,—*of course*,—great obligations to the Godolphin "Arabian," and the rest. I say racing horses are essentially gambling implements, as much as roulette tables. Now I am not preaching at this moment; I may read you one of my sermons some other morning; but I maintain that gambling, on the great scale, is not republican. It belongs to two phases of society,—a cankered over-civilization, such as exists in rich aristocracies, and the reckless life of borderers and adventurers, or the semi-barbarism of a civilization resolved into its primitive elements. Real republicanism is stern and severe; its essence is not in forms of government, but in the omnipotence of public opinion which grows out of it. This public opinion cannot prevent gambling with dice or stocks, but it can and does compel it to keep comparatively quiet. But horse-racing is the most public way of gambling; and with all its immense attractions to the sense and the feelings,—to which I plead very susceptible,—the disguise is too thin that covers it, and everybody knows what it means. Its supporters are the Southern gentry,—fine fellows, no doubt, but not republicans exactly, as we understand the term,—a few Northern millionnaires more or less thoroughly millioned, who do not represent the real people, and the mob of sporting men, the best of whom are commonly idlers, and the worst very bad neighbors to have near one in a crowd, or to meet in a dark alley. In England, on the other hand, with its aristocratic institutions, racing is a natural growth enough; the passion for it spreads downwards through all classes, from the Queen to the costermonger. London is like a shelled corn-cob on the Derby day, and there is not a clerk who could raise the money to hire a saddle with an old hack under it that can sit down on his office-stool the next day without wincing.

Now just compare the racer with the trotter for a moment. The racer is incidentally useful, but essentially something to bet upon, as much as the thimble-rigger's "little joker." The trotter is essentially and daily useful, and only incidentally a tool for sporting men.

Page 64

What better reason do you want for the fact that the racer is most cultivated and reaches his greatest perfection in England, and that the trotting horses of America beat the world? And why should we have expected that the pick—if it was the pick—of our few and far-between racing stables should beat the pick of England and France? Throw over the fallacious time-test, and there was nothing to show for it but a natural kind of patriotic feeling, which we all have, with a thoroughly provincial conceit, which some of us must plead guilty to.

We may beat yet. As an American, I hope we shall. As a moralist and occasional sermonizer, I am not so anxious about it. Wherever the trotting horse goes, he carries in his train brisk omnibuses, lively bakers' carts, and therefore hot rolls, the jolly butcher's wagon, the cheerful gig, the wholesome afternoon drive with wife and child,—all the forms of moral excellence, except truth, which does not agree with any kind of horse-flesh. The racer brings with him gambling, cursing, swearing, drinking, the eating of oysters, and a distaste for mob-caps and the middle-aged virtues.

And by the way, let me beg you not to call a *trotting match* a *race*, and not to speak of a "thorough-bred" as a "*blooded*" horse, unless he has been recently phlebotomized. I consent to your saying "blood horse," if you like. Also, if, next year, we send out Posterior and Posterioress, the winners of the great national four-mile race in 7 18-1/2, and they happen to get beaten, pay your bets, and behave like men and gentlemen about it, if you know how.

[I felt a great deal better after blowing off the ill-temper condensed in the above paragraph. To brag little,—to show—well,—to crow gently, if in luck,—to pay up, to own up, and to shut up, if beaten, are the virtues of a sporting man, and I can't say that I think we have shown them in any great perfection of late.]

—Apropos of horses. Do you know how important good jockeying is to authors? Judicious management; letting the public see your animal just enough, and not too much; holding him up hard when the market is too full of him; letting him out at just the right buying intervals; always gently feeling his mouth; never slacking and never jerking the rein;—this is what I mean by jockeying.

—When an author has a number of books out, a cunning hand will keep them all spinning, as Signor Blitz does his dinner-plates; fetching each one up, as it begins to "wabble," by an advertisement, a puff, or a quotation.

—Whenever the extracts from a living writer begin to multiply fast in the papers, without obvious reason, there is a new book or a new edition coming. The extracts are *ground-bait*.

Page 65

—Literary life is full of curious phenomena. I don't know that there is anything more noticeable than what we may call *conventional reputations*. There is a tacit understanding in every community of men of letters that they will not disturb the popular fallacy respecting this or that electro-gilded celebrity. There are various reasons for this forbearance: one is old; one is rich; one is good-natured; one is such a favorite with the pit that it would not be safe to hiss him from the manager's box. The venerable augurs of the literary or scientific temple may smile faintly when one of the tribe is mentioned; but the farce is in general kept up as well as the Chinese comic scene of entreating and imploring a man to stay with you, with the implied compact between you that he shall by no means think of doing it. A poor wretch he must be who would wantonly sit down on one of these bandbox reputations. A Prince-Rupert's-drop, which is a tear of unannealed glass, lasts indefinitely, if you keep it from meddling hands; but break its tail off, and it explodes and resolves itself into powder. These celebrities I speak of are the Prince-Rupert's-drops of the learned and polite world. See how the papers treat them! What an array of pleasant kaleidoscopic phrases, that can be arranged in ever so many charming patterns, is at their service! How kind the "Critical Notices"—where small authorship comes to pick up chips of praise, fragrant, sugary, and sappy—always are to them! Well, life would be nothing without paper-credit and other fictions; so let them pass current. Don't steal their chips; don't puncture their swimming-bladders; don't come down on their pasteboard boxes; don't break the ends of their brittle and unstable reputations, you fellows who all feel sure that your names will be household words a thousand years from now.

"A thousand years is a good while," said the old gentleman who sits opposite, thoughtfully.

—Where have I been for the last three or four days? Down at the Island, deer-shooting.—How many did I bag? I brought home one buck shot.—The Island is where? No matter. It is the most splendid domain that any man looks upon in these latitudes. Blue sea around it, and running up into its heart, so that the little boat slumbers like a baby in lap, while the tall ships are stripping naked to fight the hurricane outside, and storm-stay-sails banging and flying in ribbons. Trees, in stretches of miles; beeches, oaks, most numerous;—many of them hung with moss, looking like bearded Druids; some coiled in the clasp of huge, dark-stemmed grape-vines. Open patches where the sun gets in and goes to sleep, and the winds come so finely sifted that they are as soft as swan's down. Rocks scattered about,—Stonehenge-like monoliths. Fresh-water lakes; one of them, Mary's lake, crystal-clear, full of flashing pickerel lying under the lily-pads like tigers in the jungle. Six pounds of ditto one morning for breakfast. EGO *fecit*.

Page 66

The divinity-student looked as if he would like to question my Latin. No, sir, I said,—you need not trouble yourself. There is a higher law in grammar, not to be put down by Andrews and Stoddard. Then I went on.

Such hospitality as that island has seen there has not been the like of in these our New England sovereignties. There is nothing in the shape of kindness and courtesy that can make life beautiful, which has not found its home in that ocean-principality. It has welcomed all who were worthy of welcome, from the pale clergyman who came to breathe the sea-air with its medicinal salt and iodine, to the great statesman who turned his back on the affairs of empire, and smoothed his Olympian forehead, and flashed his white teeth in merriment over the long table, where his wit was the keenest and his story the best.

[I don't believe any man ever talked like that in this world. I don't believe *I* talked just so; but the fact is, in reporting one's conversation, one cannot help *Blair*-ing it up more or less, ironing out crumpled paragraphs, starching limp ones, and crimping and plaiting a little sometimes; it is as natural as prinking at the looking-glass.]

—How can a man help writing poetry in such a place? Everybody does write poetry that goes there. In the state archives, kept in the library of the Lord of the Isle, are whole volumes of unpublished verse,—some by well-known hands, and others, quite as good, by the last people you would think of as versifiers,—men who could pension off all the genuine poets in the country, and buy ten acres of Boston common, if it was for sale, with what they had left. Of course I had to write my little copy of verses with the rest; here it is, if you will hear me read it. When the sun is in the west, vessels sailing in an easterly direction look bright or dark to one who observes them from the north or south, according to the tack they are sailing upon. Watching them from one of the windows of the great mansion, I saw these perpetual changes, and moralized thus:—

As I look from the isle, o'er its billows of green
To the billows of foam-crested blue,
Yon bark, that afar in the distance is seen,
Half dreaming, my eyes will pursue:
Now dark in the shadow, she scatters the spray
As the chaff in the stroke of the flail;
Now white as the sea-gull, she flies on her way,
The sun gleaming bright on her sail.

Yet her pilot is thinking of dangers to shun,—
Of breakers that whiten and roar;
How little he cares, if in shadow or sun
They see him that gaze from the shore!
He looks to the beacon that looms from the reef,
To the rock that is under his lee,

As he drifts on the blast, like a wind-wafted leaf,
O'er the gulfs of the desolate sea.

Page 67

Thus drifting afar to the dim-vaulted caves
Where life and its ventures are laid,
The dreamers who gaze while we battle the waves
May see us in sunshine or shade;
Yet true to our course, though our shadow grow dark,
We'll trim our broad sail as before,
And stand by the rudder that governs the bark,
Nor ask how we look from the shore!

—Insanity is often the logic of an accurate mind overtaken. Good mental machinery ought to break its own wheels and levers, if anything is thrust among them suddenly which tends to stop them or reverse their motion. A weak mind does not accumulate force enough to hurt itself; stupidity often saves a man from going mad. We frequently see persons in insane hospitals, sent there in consequence of what are called *religious* mental disturbances. I confess that I think better of them than of many who hold the same notions, and keep their wits and appear to enjoy life very well, outside of the asylums. Any decent person ought to go mad, if he really holds such or such opinions. It is very much to his discredit in every point of view, if he does not. What is the use of my saying what some of these opinions are? Perhaps more than one of you hold such as I should think ought to send you straight over to Somerville, if you have any logic in your heads or any human feeling in your hearts. Anything that is brutal, cruel, heathenish, that makes life hopeless for the most of mankind and perhaps for entire races,—anything that assumes the necessity of the extermination of instincts which were given to be regulated,—no matter by what name you call it,—no matter whether a fakir, or a monk, or a deacon believes it,—if received, ought to produce insanity in every well-regulated mind. That condition becomes a normal one, under the circumstances. I am very much ashamed of some people for retaining their reason, when they know perfectly well that if they were not the most stupid or the most selfish of human beings, they would become *non-compotes* at once.

[Nobody understood this but the theological student and the schoolmistress. They looked intelligently at each other; but whether they were thinking about my paradox or not, I am not clear.—It would be natural enough. Stranger things have happened. Love and Death enter boarding-houses without asking the price of board, or whether there is room for them. Alas, these young people are poor and pallid! Love *should* be both rich and rosy, but *must* be either rich or rosy. Talk about military duty! What is that to the warfare of a married maid-of-all-work, with the title of mistress, and an American female constitution, which collapses just in the middle third of life, and comes out vulcanised India-rubber, if it happen to live through the period when health and strength are most wanted?]

Page 68

—Have I ever acted in private theatricals? Often. I have played the part of the “Poor Gentleman,” before a great many audiences,—more, I trust, than I shall ever face again. I did not wear a stage-costume, nor a wig, nor moustaches of burnt cork; but I was placarded and announced as a public performer, and at the proper hour I came forward with the ballet-dancer’s smile upon my countenance, and made my bow and acted my part. I have seen my name stuck up in letters so big that I was ashamed to show myself in the place by daylight. I have gone to a town with a sober literary essay in my pocket, and seen myself everywhere announced as the most desperate of *buffos*,—one who was obliged to restrain himself in the full exercise of his powers, from prudential considerations. I have been through as many hardships as Ulysses, in the pursuit of my histrionic vocation. I have travelled in cars until the conductors all knew me like a brother. I have run off the rails, and stuck all night in snowdrifts, and sat behind females that would have the window open when one could not wink without his eyelids freezing together. Perhaps I shall give you some of my experiences one of these days;—I will not now, for I have something else for you.

Private theatricals, as I have figured in them in country lyceum-halls, are one thing,—and private theatricals, as they may be seen in certain gilded and frescoed saloons of our metropolis, are another. Yes, it is pleasant to see real gentlemen and ladies, who do not think it necessary to mouth, and rant, and stride, like most of our stage heroes and heroines, in the characters which show off their graces and talents; most of all to see a fresh, unrouged, unspoiled, highbred young maiden, with a lithe figure, and a pleasant voice, acting in those love-dramas that make us young again to look upon, when real youth and beauty will play them for us.

—Of course I wrote the prologue I was asked to write. I did not see the play, though. I knew there was a young lady in it, and that somebody was in love with her, and she was in love with him, and somebody (an old tutor, I believe) wanted to interfere, and, very naturally, the young lady was too sharp for him. The play of course ends charmingly; there is a general reconciliation, and all concerned form a line and take each others’ hands, as people always do after they have made up their quarrels,—and then the curtain falls,—if it does not stick, as it commonly does at private theatrical exhibitions, in which case a boy is detailed to pull it down, which he does, blushing violently.

Now, then, for my prologue. I am not going to change my caesuras and cadences for anybody; so if you do not like the heroic, or iambic trimeter brachycatalectic, you had better not wait to hear it.

THIS IS IT.

A Prologue? Well, of course the ladies know;—

I have my doubts. No matter,—here we go!

Page 69

What is a Prologue? Let our Tutor teach: *Pro* means beforehand; *logos* stands for speech. 'Tis like the harper's prelude on the strings, The prima donna's courtesy ere she sings;— Prologues in metre are to other *pros* As worsted stockings are to engine-hose.

"The world's a stage,"—as Shakspeare said, one day;
The stage a world—was what he meant to say.
The outside world's a blunder, that is clear;
The real world that Nature meant is here.
Here every foundling finds its lost mamma;
Each rogue, repentant, melts his stern papa;
Misers relent, the spendthrift's debts are paid,
The cheats are taken in the traps they laid;
One after one the troubles all are past
Till the fifth act comes right side up at last,
When the young couple, old folks, rogues, and all,
Join hands, so happy at the curtain's fall.
—Here suffering virtue ever finds relief,
And black-browed ruffians always come to grief.
—When the lorn damsel, with a frantic screech,
And cheeks as hueless as a brandy-peach,
Cries, "Help, kyind Heaven!" and drops upon her knees
On the green—baize,—beneath the (canvas) trees,—
See to her side avenging Valor fly:—
"Ha! Villain! Draw! Now, Terraitorr, yield or die!"
—When the poor hero flounders in despair,
Some dear lost uncle turns up millionaire,—
Clasps the young scapegrace with paternal joy,
Sobs on his neck, "My boy! My Boy!! MY BOY!!!"

Ours, then, sweet friends, the real world to-night
Of love that conquers in disaster's spite.
Ladies, attend! While woful cares and doubt
Wrong the soft passion in the world without,
Though fortune scowl, though prudence interfere,
One thing is certain: Love will triumph here!

Lords of creation, whom your ladies rule,—
The world's great masters, when you're out of school,—
Learn the brief moral of our evening's play:
Man has his will,—but woman has her way!
While man's dull spirit toils in smoke and fire,
Woman's swift instinct threads the electric wire,—
The magic bracelet stretched beneath the waves

Beats the black giant with his score of slaves.
All earthly powers confess your sovereign art
But that one rebel,—woman's wilful heart.
All foes you master; but a woman's wit
Lets daylight through you ere you know you're hit.
So, just to picture what her art can do,
Hear an old story made as good as new.

Rudolph, professor of the headsman's trade,
Alike was famous for his arm and blade.
One day a prisoner Justice had to kill
Knelt at the block to test the artist's skill.
Bare-armed, swart-visaged, gaunt, and shaggy-browed,
Rudolph the headsman rose

Page 70

above the crowd.

His falchion lightened with a sudden gleam,
As the pike's armor flashes in the stream.
He sheathed his blade; he turned as if to go;
The victim knelt, still waiting for the blow.
"Why strikest not? Perform thy murderous act,"
The prisoner said. (His voice was slightly cracked.)
"Friend, I *have* struck," the artist straight replied;
"Wait but one moment, and yourself decide."
He held his snuff-box,—*"Now then, if you please!"*
The prisoner sniffed, and, with a crashing sneeze,
Off his head tumbled,—bowled along the floor,—
Bounced down the steps;—the prisoner said no more!

Woman! thy falchion is a glittering eye;
If death lurks in it, oh, how sweet to die!
Thou takest hearts as Rudolph took the head;
We die with love, and never dream we're dead!

The prologue went off very well, as I hear. No alterations were suggested by the lady to whom it was sent, for as far as I know. Sometimes people criticize the poems one sends them, and suggest all sorts of improvements. Who was that silly body that wanted Burns to alter "*Scots wha hae,*" so as to lengthen the last line, thus?—

"Edward!". Chains and slavery!

Here is a little poem I sent a short time since to a committee for a certain celebration. I understood that it was to be a festive and convivial occasion, and ordered myself accordingly. It seems the president of the day was what is called a "teetotaller." I received a note from him in the following words, containing the copy subjoined, with the emendations annexed to it:

"Dear Sir,—Your poem gives good satisfaction to the committee. The sentiments expressed with reference to liquor are not, however, those generally entertained by this community. I have therefore consulted the clergyman of this place, who has made some slight changes, which he thinks will remove all objections, and keep the valuable portions of the poem. Please to inform me of your charge for said poem. Our means are limited, *etc.*, *etc.*, *etc.*

"Yours with respect."



HERE IT IS,—WITH THE SLIGHT ALTERATIONS!

Come! fill a fresh bumper,—for why should we go

logwood

While the *nectar* still reddens our cups as they flow?

decoction

Pour out the *rich juices* still bright with the sun,

dye-stuff

Till o'er the brimmed crystal the *rubies* shall run.

half-ripened apples

The *purple-globed-clusters* their life-dews have bled;

taste sugar of lead

How sweet is the *breath* of the *fragrance they shed!*

rank poisons *wines!!!*

For summer's *last roses* lie hid in the *wines*

stable-boys smoking long-nines.

That were garnered by *maidens who laughed through the vines.*



Page 71

scowl howl scoff sneer
Then a *smile*, and a *glass*, and a *toast*, and a *cheer*,

strychnine and whiskey, and ratsbane and beer!
For *all the good-wine*, and *we've some of it here*

In cellar, in pantry, in attic, in hall,

Down, down, with the tyrant that masters us all!
Long live the gay servant that laughs for us all!

The company said I had been shabbily treated, and advised me to charge the committee double,—which I did. But as I never got my pay, I don't know that it made much difference. I am a very particular person about having all I write printed as I write it, I require to see a proof, a revise, a re-revise, and a double re-revise, or fourth-proof rectified impression of all my productions, especially verse. Manuscripts are such puzzles! Why, I was reading some lines near the end of the last number of this journal, when I came across one beginning

“The *stream* flashes by,”—

Now as no stream had been mentioned, I was perplexed to know what it meant. It proved, on inquiry, to be only a misprint for “dream.” Think of it! No wonder so many poets die young.

I have nothing more to report at this time, except two pieces of advice I gave to the young women at table. One relates to a vulgarism of language, which I grieve to say is sometimes heard even from female lips. The other is of more serious purport, and applies to such as contemplate a change of condition,—matrimony, in fact.

—The woman who “calc'lates” is lost.

—Put not your trust in money, but put your money in trust.

THOMAS CARLYLE.

THOMAS CARLYLE is a name which no man of this generation should pronounce without respect; for it belongs to one of the high-priests of modern literature, to whom all contemporary minds are indebted, and by whose intellect and influence a new spiritual cultus has been established in the realm of letters. It is yet impossible to estimate either the present value or the remote issues of the work which he has accomplished. We see that a revolution in all the departments of thought, feeling, and literary enterprise has been silently achieved amongst us, but we are yet ignorant of its full bearing, and of the final goal to which it is hurrying us. One thing, however, is clear respecting it: that it

was not forced in the hot-bed of any possible fanaticism, but that it grew fairly out of the soil, a genuine product of the time and its circumstances. It was, indeed, a new manifestation of the hidden forces and vitalities of what we call Protestantism,—an assertion by the living soul of its right to be heard once more in a world which seemed to ignore its existence, and had set up a ghastly skeleton of dry bones for its oracle and God. It was that necessary return to health, earnestness, and virtuous endeavor which Kreeshna

Page 72

speaks of in the Hindoo Geeta: "Whenever vice and corruption have sapped the foundations of the world, and men have lost their sense of good and evil, I, Kreeshna, make myself manifest for the restoration of order, and the establishment of justice, virtue, and piety." And so this literary revolution, of which we are speaking, brought us from frivolity to earnestness, from unbelief and all the dire negations which it engenders, to a sublime faith in human duty and the providence of God.

We have no room here to trace either the foreign or the native influences which, operating as antagonism or as inspiration upon the minds of Coleridge, Carlyle, and others, produced finally these great and memorable results. It is but justice, however, to recognize Coleridge as the pioneer of the new era. His fine metaphysical intellect and grand imagination, nurtured and matured in the German schools of philosophy and theology, reproduced the speculations of their great thinkers in a form and coloring which could not fail to be attractive to all seeking and sincere minds in England. The French Revolution and the Encyclopedists had already prepared the ground for the reception of new thought and revelation. Hence Coleridge, as writer and speaker, drew towards his centre all the young and ardent men of his time,—and among others, the subject of the present article. Carlyle, however, does not seem to have profited much by the spoken discourses of the master; and in his "Life of Sterling" he gives an exceedingly graphic, cynical, and amusing account of the oracular meetings at Highgate, where the philosopher sat in his great easy-chair, surrounded by his disciples and devotees, uttering, amid floods of unintelligible, mystic eloquence, those radiant thoughts and startling truths which warrant his claim to genius, if not to greatness. It is curious to observe how at this early period of Carlyle's life, when all the talent and learning of England bowed at these levees before the gigantic speculator and dreamer, he, perhaps alone, stood aloof from the motley throng of worshippers,—*with* them, but not *of* them,—coolly analyzing every sentence delivered by the oracle, and sufficiently learned in the divine lore to separate the gold from the dross. What was good and productive he was ready to recognize and assimilate; leaving the opium poms and splendors of the discourse, and all the Oriental imagery with which the speaker decorated his bathos, to those who could find profit therein. It is still more curious and sorrowful to see this great Coleridge, endowed with such high gifts, of so various learning, and possessing so marvellous and plastic a power over all the forms of language, forsaking the true for the false inspiration, and relying upon a vile drug to stimulate his large and lazy intellect into action. Carlyle seems to have regarded him at this period as a sort of fallen demigod; and although he sneers, with an almost Mephistophelean distortion

Page 73

of visage, at the philosopher's half inarticulate drawling of speech, at his snuffy, nasal utterance of the ever-recurring "*omnject*" and "*sumnject*" yet gleams of sympathy and affection, not unmixed with sorrow, appear here and there in what he says concerning him. And indeed, although the immense fame of Coleridge is scarcely warranted by his printed performances, he was, nevertheless, worthy both of affection and homage. For whilst we pity the weakness and disease of his moral nature, under the influence of that dark and terribly enchanting weed, we cannot forget either his personal amiabilities or the great service which he rendered to letters and to society. Carlyle himself would be the last man to deny this laurel to the brows of "the poet, the philosopher, and the divine," as Charles Lamb calls him; and it is certain that the thinking of Coleridge helped to fashion Carlyle's mind, and not unlikely that it directed him to a profounder study of German writers than he had hitherto given to them.

Coleridge had already formed a school both of divinity and philosophy. He had his disciples, as well as those far-off gazers who looked upon him with amazement and trembling, not knowing what to make of the phenomenon, or whether to regard him as friend or foe to the old dispensation and the established order of things. He had written books and poems, preached Unitarian sermons, recanted, and preached philosophy and Church-of-Englandism. To the dazzled eyes of all ordinary mortals, content to chew the cud of parish sermons, and swallow, Sunday after Sunday, the articles of common belief, he seemed an eccentric comet. But a better astronomy recognized him as a fixed star, for he was unmistakable by that fitting Few whose verdict is both history and immortality.

But a greater than Coleridge, destined to assume a more commanding position, and exercise a still wider power over the minds of his age, arose in Thomas Carlyle. The son of a Scotch farmer, he had in his youth a hard student's life of it, and many severe struggles to win the education which is the groundwork of his greatness. His father was a man of keen penetration, who saw into the heart of things, and possessed such strong intellect and sterling common sense that the country people said "he always hit the nail on the head and clinched it." His mother was a good, pious woman, who loved the Bible, and Luther's "Table Talk," and Luther,—walking humbly and sincerely before God, her Heavenly Father. Carlyle was brought up in the religion of his fathers and his country; and it is easy to see in his writings how deep a root this solemn and earnest belief had struck down into his mind and character. He readily confesses how much he owes to his mother's early teaching, to her beautiful and beneficent example of goodness and holiness; and he ever speaks of her with affection and reverence. We once saw him at a friend's house take up a folio edition of the "Table Talk" alluded to, and turn

Page 74

over the pages with a gentle and loving hand, reading here and there his mother's favorite passages,—now speaking of the great historic value of the book, and again of its more private value, as his mother's constant companion and solace. It was touching to see this pitiless intellect, which had bruised and broken the idols of so many faiths, to which Luther himself was recommended only by his bravery and self-reliance and the grandeur of his aims,—it was touching, we say, and suggestive also of many things, to behold the strong, stern man paying homage to language whose spirit was dead to him, out of pure love for his dear mother, and veneration also for the great heart in which that spirit was once alive that fought so grand and terrible a battle. Carlyle likes to talk of Luther, and, as his "Hero-Worship" shows, loves his character. A great, fiery, angry gladiator, with something of the bully in him,—as what controversialist has not, from Luther to Erasmus, to Milton, to Carlyle himself?—a dread image-breaker, implacable as Cromwell, but higher and nobler than he, with the tenderness of a woman in his inmost heart, full of music, and glory, and spirituality, and power; his speech genuine and idiomatic, not battles only, but conquests; and all his highest, best, and gentlest thoughts robed in the divine garments of religion and poetry;—such was Luther, and as such Carlyle delights to behold him. Are they not akin? We assuredly think so. For the blood of this aristocracy refuses to mix with that of churls and bastards, and flows pure and uncontaminated from century to century, descending in all its richness and vigor from Piromis to Piromis. The ancient philosopher knew this secret well enough when he said a Parthian and a Libyan might be related, although they had no common parental blood; and that a man is not necessarily my brother because he is born of the same womb.

We find that Carlyle in his student-life manifested many of those strong moral characteristics which are the attributes of all his heroes. An indomitable courage and persistency meet us everywhere in his pages,—persistency, and also careful painstaking, and patience in sifting facts and gathering results. He disciplined himself to this end in early youth, and never allowed any study or work to conquer him. Speaking to us once in private upon the necessity of persevering effort in order to any kind of success in life, he said, "When I was a student, I resolved to make myself master of Newton's 'Principia,' and although I had not at that time knowledge enough of mathematics to make the task other than a Hercules-labor to me, yet I read and wrought unceasingly, through all obstructions and difficulties, until I had accomplished it; and no Tamerlane conqueror ever felt half so happy as I did when the terrible book lay subdued and vanquished before me." This trifling anecdote is a key to Carlyle's character. To achieve his object, he exhausts all the means within his command;

Page 75

never shuffles through his work, but does it faithfully and sincerely, with a man's heart and hand. This outward sincerity in the conduct of his executive faculty has its counterpart in the inmost recesses of his nature. We feel that this man and falsehood are impossible companions, and our faith in his integrity is perfect and absolute. Herein lies his power; and here also lies the power of all men who have ever moved the world. For it is in the nature of truth to conserve itself, whilst falsehood is centrifugal, and flies off into inanity and nothingness. It is by the cardinal virtue of sincerity alone—the truthfulness of deed to thought, of effect to cause—that man and nature are sustained. God is truth; and he who is most faithful to truth is not only likeliest to God, but is made a participator in the divine nature. For without truth there is neither power, vitality, nor permanence.

Carlyle was fortunate that he was comparatively poor, and never tempted, therefore, as a student, to dissipate his fine talents in the gay pursuits of university life. Not that there would have been any likelihood of his running into the excesses of ordinary students, but we are pleased and thankful to reflect that he suffered no kind of loss or harm in those days of his novitiate. It is one of the many consolations of poverty that it protects young men from snares and vices to which the rich are exposed; and our poor student in his garret was preserved faithful to his vocation, and laid up day by day those stores of knowledge, experience, and heavenly wisdom which he has since turned to so good account. It would be deeply interesting, if we could learn the exact position of Carlyle's mind at this time, with respect to those profound problems of human nature and destiny which have occupied the greatest men in all ages, ceaselessly and pertinaciously urging their dark and solemn questions, and refusing to depart until their riddles were in some sort solved. That Carlyle was haunted by these questions, and by the pitiless Sphinx herself who guards the portals of life and death,—that he had to meet her face to face, staring at him with her stony, passionless eyes,—that he had to grapple and struggle with her for victory,—there are proofs abundant in his writings. The details of the struggle, however, are not given us; it is the result only that we know. But it is evident that the progress of his mind from the bog-region of orthodoxy to the high realms of thought and faith was a slow proceeding,—not rolled onward as with the chariot-wheels of a fierce and sudden revolution, but gradually developed in a long series of births, growths, and deaths. The theological phraseology sticks to him, indeed, even to the present time, although he puts it to new uses; and it acquires in his hands a power and significance which it possessed only when, of old, it was representative of the divine.

Page 76

Carlyle was matured in solitude. Emerson found him, in the year 1833, on the occasion of his first visit to England, living at Craigenputtock, a farm in Nithsdale, far away from all civilization, and “no one to talk to but the minister of the parish.” He, good man, could make but little of his solitary friend, and must many a time have been startled out of his canonicals by the strange, alien speeches which he heard. It is a pity that this minister had not had some of the Boswell faculty in him, that he might have reported what we should all be so glad to hear. Over that period of his life, however, the curtain falls at present, to be lifted only, if ever, by Carlyle himself. Through the want of companionship, he fell back naturally upon books and his own thoughts. Here he wrote some of his finest critical essays for the reviews, and that “rag of a book,” as he calls it, the “Life of Schiller.” The essays show a catholic, but conservative spirit, and are full of deep thought. They exhibit also a profoundly philosophical mind, and a power of analysis which is almost unique in letters. They are pervaded likewise by an earnestness and solemnity which are perfectly Hebraic; and each performance is presented in a style decorated with all the costly jewels of imagination and fancy,—a style of far purer and more genuine English than any of his subsequent writings, which are often marred, indeed, by gross exaggerations, and still grosser violations of good taste and the chastities of language. What made these writings, however, so notable at the time, and so memorable since, was that sincerity and deep religious feeling of the writer which we have already alluded to. Here were new elements introduced into the current literature, destined to revivify it, and to propagate themselves, as by seminal vitality, in myriad minds and forms. These utterances were both prophetic and creative, and took all sincere minds captive. Dry and arid in comparison as Egyptian deserts, lay all around him the writings of his contemporaries. No living waters flowed through them; all was sand, and parch, and darkness. The contrast was immense: a living soul and a dead corpse! Since the era of the Commonwealth,—the holy, learned, intellectual, and earnest age of Taylor, Barrow, Milton, Fuller,—no such pen of fire had wrought its miracles amongst us. Writers spoke from the intellect, believed in the intellect, and divorced it from the soul and the moral nature. Science, history, ethics, religion, whenever treated of in literary form, were mechanized, and shone not with any spiritual illumination. There was abundance of lawyer-like ability,—but of genius, and its accompanying divine afflatus, little. Carlyle is full of genius; and this is evidenced not only by the fine aroma of his language, but by the depths of his insight, his wondrous historical pictures,—living cartoons of persons, events, and epochs, which he paints often in single sentences,—and the rich mosaic of truths with which every page of his writings is inlaid.

Page 77

That German literature, with which at this time Carlyle had been more or less acquainted for ten years, had done much to foster and develop his genius there can be no doubt; although the book which first created a storm in his mind, and awoke him to the consciousness of his own abundant faculty, was the “Confessions” of Rousseau,—a fact which is well worthy of record and remembrance. He speaks subsequently of poor Jean Jacques with much sympathy and sorrow; not as the greatest man of his time and country, but as the sincerest,—a smitten, struggling spirit,—

“An infant crying in the night,
An infant crying for the light,
And with no language but a cry.”

From Rousseau, and his strange thoughts, and wild, ardent eloquence, the transition to German literature was easy. Some one had told Carlyle that he would find in this literature what he had so long sought after,—truth and rest,—and he gladly learned the language, and addressed himself to the study of its masters; with what success all the world knows, for he has grafted their thoughts upon his own, and whoever now speaks is more or less consciously impregnated by his influence. Who the man was that sent Carlyle to them does not appear, and so far as he is concerned it is of little moment to inquire; but the fact constitutes the grand epoch in Carlyle’s life, and his true history dates from that period.

It was natural that he should be deeply moved on his introduction to German literature. He went to it with an open and receptive nature, and with an earnestness of purpose which could not fail to be productive. Jean Paul, the beautiful!—the good man, and the wise teacher, with poetic stuff in him sufficient to have floated an argosy of modern writers,—this great, imaginative Jean Paul was for a long time Carlyle’s idol, whom he reverently and affectionately studied. He has written a fine paper about him in his “Miscellanies,” and we trace his influence not only in Carlyle’s thought and sentiment, but in the very form of their utterance. He was, indeed, warped by him, at one period, clear out of his orbit, and wrote as he inspired. The dazzling sunbursts of Richter’s imagination, however,—its gigantic procession of imagery, moving along in sublime and magnificent marches from earth to heaven, from heaven to earth,—the array, symbolism, and embodiment of his manifold ideas, ceased in the end to enslave, though they still captivated Carlyle’s mind; and he turns from him to the thinkers who deal with God’s geometry, and penetrate into the abysses of being,—to primordial Kant, and his behemoth brother, Fichte. Nor does Hegel, or Schelling, or Schlegel, or Novalis escape his pursuit, but he hunts them all down, and takes what is needful to him, out of them, as his trophy. Schiller is his king of singers, although he does not much admire his “Philosophical Letters,” or his “Aesthetic Letters.” But his grandest modern man is the calm and plastic Goethe,

Page 78

and the homage he renders him is worthy of a better and a holier idol. Goethe's "Autobiography," in so far as it relates to his early days, is a bad book; and Wordsworth might well say of the "Wilhelm Meister," that "it was full of all manner of fornication, like the crossing of flies in the air." Goethe, however, is not to be judged by any fragmentary estimate of him, but as an intellectual whole; for he represented the intellect, and grasped with his selfish and cosmical mind all the provinces of thought, learning, art, science, and government, for purely intellectual purposes. This entrance into, and breaking up of, the minds of these distinguished persons was, however, a fine discipline for Carlyle, who is fully aware of its value; and whilst holding communion with these great men, who by their genius and insight seemed to apprehend the essential truth of things at a glance, it is not wonderful that he should have been so merciless in his denunciations of the mere logic-ability of English writers, as he shows himself in the essays of that period. Logic, useful as it is, as a help to reasoning, is but the dead body of thought, as Novalis designates it, and has no place in the inspired regions where the prophets and the bards reside.

Carlyle's fame, however, had not reached its culminating point when Emerson visited him. The English are a slow, unimpressionable people, not given to hasty judgments, nor too much nor too sudden praise; requiring first to take the true altitude of a man, to measure him by severe tests; often grudging him his proper and natural advantages and talents, buffeting and abusing him in a merciless and sometimes an unreasoning and unreasonable manner, allowing him now and then, however, a sunbeam for his consolation, until at last they come to a settled understanding of him, and he is generously praised and abused into the sanctuary of their worthies. This was not the case, however, at present, with Carlyle; for although he had the highest recognitions from some of those who constitute the flower and chivalry of England, he was far better known and more widely read in America than in his own country. Emerson, then a young man, with a great destiny before him, was attracted by his writings, and carried a letter of introduction to him at Craigenputtock. "He was tall and gaunt, with a cliff-like brow; self-possessed, and holding his extraordinary powers of conversation in easy command; clinging to his northern accent with evident relish; full of lively anecdote, and with a streaming humor which floated everything he looked upon." He is the same man, in his best moods, in the year 1857, as he was in 1833. His person, except that he stoops slightly, is tall, and very little changed. He is thinner, and the once ruddy hues of his cheek are dying away like faint streaks of light in the twilight sky of a summer evening. But he is strong and hearty on the whole; although the excitement of continuous writing keeps him in

Page 79

a perpetual fever, deranges his liver, and makes him at times acrid and savage as a sick giant. Hence his increased pugnacity of late,—his fierceness, and angry hammering of all things sacred and profane. It is but physical and temporary, however, all this, and does not affect his healthy and serene moments. For no man lives who possesses greater kindness and affection, or more good, noble, and humane qualities. All who know him love him, although they may have much to pardon in him; not in a social or moral sense, however, but in an intellectual one. His talk is as rich as ever,—perhaps richer; for his mind has increased its stores, and the old fire of geniality still burns in his great and loving heart. Perhaps his conversation is better than his printed discourse. We have never heard anything like it. It is all alive, as if each word had a soul in it.

How characteristic is all that Emerson tells us of him in his “English Traits”!—a book, by the way, concerning which no adequate word has yet been spoken; the best book ever written upon England, and which no brave young Englishman can read, and ever after commit either a mean or a bad action. We are therefore doubly thankful to Emerson, both for what he says of England, and for what he relates of Carlyle, whose independent speech upon all subjects is one of his chief charms. He reads “Blackwood,” for example, and has enjoyed many a racy, vigorous article in its pages; but it does not satisfy him, and he calls it “Sand Magazine.” “Fraser’s” is a little better, but not good enough to be worthy of a higher nomenclature than “Mud Magazine.” Excessive praise of any one’s talents drives him into admiration of the parts of his own learned pig, now wallowing in the sty. The best thing he knew about America was that there a man could have meat for his labor. He did not read Plato, and he disparaged Socrates. Mirabeau was a hero; Gibbon the splendid bridge from the old world to the new. It is interesting also to hear that “Tristram Shandy” was one of the first books he read after “Robinson Crusoe,” and that Robertson’s “America” was an early favorite. Rousseau’s “Confessions” had discovered to him that he was not a dunce. Speaking of English pauperism, he said that government should direct poor men what to do. “Poor Irish folks come wandering over these moors. My dame makes it a rule to give to every son of Adam bread to eat, and supplies his wants to the next house. But here are thousands of acres which might give them all meat, and nobody to bid those poor Irish go to the moor and till it. They burned the stacks, and so found a way to force the rich people to attend to them.” Here is the germ of his book on “Chartism.” Emerson and he talk of the immortality of the soul, seated on the hill-tops near Old Criffel, and looking down “into Wordsworth’s country.” Carlyle had the natural disinclination of every nimble spirit to bruise itself against walls, and did not like to place himself where no step can be taken; but he was honest and true, and cognizant of the subtle links that bind ages together, and saw how every event affects all the future. “Christ died on the tree; that built Dunscore Kirk yonder; that brought you and me together. Time has only a relative existence.”

Page 80

Such is Emerson's account of his first visit to our author, whose eyes were already turned towards London as the heart of the world, whither he subsequently went, and where he now abides.

From Craigenputtock, with its savage rocks and moorlands, its sheepwalk solitudes, its isolation and distance from all the advantages of civil and intellectual life, to London and the living solitude of its unnumberable inhabitants, its activities, polity, and world-wide ramifications of commerce, learning, science, literature, and art, was a change of great magnitude, whose true proportions it took time to estimate. Carlyle, however, was not afraid of the huge mechanism of London life, but took to it bravely and kindly, and was soon at home amidst the everlasting whirl and clamor, the roar and thunder of its revolutions. For although a scholar, and bred in seclusion, he was also a genuine man of the world, and well acquainted with its rough ways and Plutonic wisdom. This knowledge, combined with his strong "common sense,"—as poor Dr. Beattie calls it, fighting for its supremacy with canine ferocity,—gave Carlyle high vantage-ground in his writings. He could meet the world with its own weapons, and was cunning enough at that fence, as the world was very shortly sensible. He was saved, therefore, from the contumely which vulgar minds are always ready to bestow upon saints and mystics who sit aloof from them, high enthroned amidst the truths and solemnities of God. The secluded and ascetic life of most scholars, highly favorable as it undoubtedly is to contemplation and internal development, has likewise its disadvantages, and puts them, as being undisciplined in the ways of life, at great odds, when they come to the actual and practical battle. A man should be armed at all points, and not subject himself, like good George Fox, Jacob Behmen, and other holy men, to the taunts of the mob, on account of any awkward gait, mannerism, or ignorance of men and affairs. Paul had none of these absurdities about him; but was an accomplished person, as well as a divine speaker. His doctrine of being all things to all men, that he might win souls to Christ, is, like good manners and politeness, a part of that mundane philosophy which obtains in every society, both as theory and performance; not, however, in its literal meaning, which would involve all sorts of hypocrisy and lies as its accessories, but in the sense of ability to meet all kinds of men on their own grounds and with their own enginery of warfare.

Strength, whether of mind or body, is sure to command respect, even though it be used against ourselves; for we Anglo-Saxons are all pugilists. A man, therefore, who accredits his metal by the work he accomplishes, will be readily enough heard when he comes to speak and labor upon higher platforms. This was the case with Carlyle; and when he published that new Book of Job, that weird and marvellous Pilgrim's Progress of a modern cultivated soul, the "Sartor

Page 81

Resartus," in "Fraser's Magazine," strange, wild, and incomprehensible as it was to most men, they did not put it contemptuously aside, but pondered it, laughed at it, trembled over it and its dread apocalyptic visions and revelations, respecting its earnestness and eloquence, although not comprehending what manner of writing it essentially was. Carlyle enjoyed the perplexity of his readers and reviewers, neither of whom, with the exception of men like Sterling, and a writer in one of the Quarterlies, seemed to know what they were talking about when they spoke of it. The criticisms upon it were exceedingly comical in many instances, and the author put the most notable of these together, and always alluded to them with roars of laughter. The book has never yet received justice at the hands of any literary tribunal. It requires, indeed, a large amount of culture to appreciate it, either as a work of art, or as a living flame-painting of spiritual struggle and revelation. In his previous writings he had insisted upon the sacredness and infinite value of the human soul,—upon the wonder and mystery of life, and its dread surroundings,—upon the divine significance of the universe, with its star pomp, and overhanging immensities,—and upon the primal necessity for each man to stand with awe and reverence in this august and solemn presence, if he would hope to receive any glimpses of its meaning, or live a true and divine life in the world; and in the "Sartor" he has embodied and illustrated this in the person and actions of his hero. He saw that religion had become secular; that it was reduced to a mere Sunday holiday and Vanity Fair, taking no vital hold of the lives of men, and radiating, therefore, none of its blessed and beautiful influences about their feet and ways; that human life itself, with all its adornments of beauty and poetry, was in danger of paralysis and death; that love and faith, truth, duty, and holiness, were fast losing their divine attributes in the common estimation, and were hurrying downwards with tears and a sad threnody into gloom and darkness. Carlyle saw all this, and knew that it was the reaction of that intellectual idolatry which brought the eighteenth century to a close; knew also that there was only one remedy which could restore men to life and health,—namely, the quickening once again of their spiritual nature. He felt, also, that it was his mission to attempt this miracle; and hence the prophetic fire and vehemence of his words. No man, and especially no earnest man, can read him without feeling himself arrested as by the grip of a giant,—without trembling before his stern questions, inculcations, and admonitions. There is a God, O Man! and not a blind chance, as governor of this world. Thy soul has infinite relations with this God, which thou canst never realize in thy being, or manifest in thy practical life, save by a devout reverence for him, and his miraculous, awful universe. This reverence, this deep, abiding

Page 82

religious feeling, is the only link which binds us to the Infinite. That severed, broken, or destroyed, and man is an alien and an orphan; lost to him forever is the key to all spiritual mystery, to the hieroglyph of the soul, to the symbolism of nature, of time, and of eternity. Such, as we understand it, is Carlyle's teaching. But this is not all. Man is to be man in that high sense we have spoken his robes of immortality around him, as if God had done with him for all practical purposes, and he with God,—but for action,—action in a world which is to prove his power, his beneficence, his usefulness. That spiritual fashioning by the Great Fashioner of all things is so ordained that we ourselves may become fashioners, workers, makers. For it is given to no man to be an idle cumberer of the ground, but to dig, and sow, and plant, and reap the fruits of his labor for the garner. This is man's first duty, and the diviner he is the more divinely will he execute it.

That such a gospel as this could find utterance in the pages of the "Edinburgh Review" is curious enough; and it is scarcely less surprising that the "Sartor Resartus" should make its first appearance in the somewhat narrow and conservative pages of Fraser. Carlyle has clearly written his own struggles in this book,—his struggles and his conquests. From the "Everlasting No,"—that dreadful realm of enchantment, where all the forms of nature are frozen forever in dumb imprisonment and despair,—the great vaulted firmament no longer serene and holy and loving as God's curtain for his children's slumbers, but flaming in starry portents, and dropping down over the earth like a funeral pall; through this region of life-semblance and death-reality the lonely and aching pilgrim wanders,—questioning without reply,—wailing, broken, self-consuming,—looking with eager eyes for the waters of immortality, and finding nothing but pools of salt and Marahs of bitterness. Herein is no Calvary, no Cross-symbolism, by whose miraculous power he is relieved of his infinite burden of sorrow, starting onward with hope and joy in his heart; nor does he ever find his Calvary until the deeps of his spiritual nature are broken up and flooded with celestial light, as he knocks reverently at the portals of heaven for communion with his Father who is in heaven. Then bursts upon him a new significance from all things; he sees that the great world is but a fable of divine truth, hiding its secrets from all but the initiated and the worthy, and that faith, and trust, and worship are the cipher, which unlocks them all. He thus arrives at the plains of heaven in the region of the "Everlasting Yes." His own soul lies naked and resolved before him,—its unspeakable greatness, its meaning, faculty, and destiny. Work, and dutiful obedience to the laws of work, are the outlets of his power; and herein he finds peace and rest to his soul.

Page 83

That Carlyle is not only an earnest, but a profoundly religious man, these attempted elucidations of his teachings will abundantly show. His religion, however, is very far remote from what is called religion in this day. He has no patience with second-hand beliefs,—with articles of faith ready-made for the having. Whatsoever is accepted by men because it is the tradition of their fathers, and not a deep conviction arrived at by legitimate search, is to him of no avail; and all merely historical and intellectual faith, standing outside the man, and not absorbed in the life as a vital, moving, and spiritual power, he places also amongst the chaff for burning. This world is a serious world, and human life and business are also serious matters,—not to be trifled with, nor cheated by shams and hypocrisies, but to be dealt with in all truth, soberness, and sincerity. No one can thus deal with it who is not himself possessed of these qualities, and the result of a life is the test of what virtue there is in it. False men leave no mark. It is truth alone which does the masonry of the world,—which founds empires, and builds cities, and establishes laws, commerce, and civilization. And in private life the same law abides, indestructible as God. Carlyle's teaching tends altogether in this direction; and whilst he belongs to no church and no creed, he is tolerant of all, and of everything that is heartily and unfeignedly believed in by his fellows. He is no Catholic; and yet for years he read little else than the forty volumes of the "Acta Sanctorum," and found, he says, all Christian history there, and much of profane history. Neither is he a Mahometan; but he nevertheless makes a hero of Mahomet, whom he loves for his Ishmaelite fierceness, bravery, and religious sincerity,—and because he taught deism, or the belief in one God, instead of the old polytheism, or the belief in many gods,—and gave half the East his very good book, called the Koran, for his followers to live and die by.

Whether this large catholicism, this worship of heroes, is the best of what now remains of religion on earth is certainly questionable enough; and if we regard it in no other light than merely as an idolatry of persons, there is an easy answer ready for it. But considering that religion is now so far dead that it consists in little else than formalities, and that its divine truth is no longer such to half the great world, which lies, indeed, in dire atrophy and wickedness,—and if we further consider and agree that the awakened human soul is the divinest thing on earth, and partakes of the divine nature itself, and that its manifestations are also divine in whomsoever it is embodied, we can see some apology for its adoption; inasmuch as it is the divine likeness to which reverence and homage are rendered, and not the person merely, but only so far as he is the medium of its showing. Christianity, however, will assuredly survive, although doubtless in a new form, preserving all the integrity of its message,—and be once more faith and life to men, when the present old, established, decaying cultus shall be venerated only as history.

Page 84

Carlyle clings to the Christian formulary and the old Christian life in spite of himself. He is almost fanatical in his attachment to the mediaeval times,—to the ancient worship, its ceremonial, music, and architecture, its monastic government, its saints and martyrs. And the reason, as he shows in the “Past and Present,” is, that all this array of devotion, this pomp and ceremony, this music and painting, this gorgeous and sublime architecture, this fasting and praying, were *real*,—faithful manifestations of a religion which to that people was truly genuine and holy. They who built the cathedrals of Europe, adorned them with carvings, pictures, and those stately windows with their storied illuminations which at this day are often miracles of beauty and of art, were not frivolous modern conventicle-builders, but poets as grand as Milton, and sculptors whose genius might front that of Michel Angelo. It was no dead belief in a dead religion which designed and executed these matchless temples. Man and Religion were both alive in those days; and the worship of God was so profound a prostration of the inmost spirit before his majesty and glory, that the souls of the artists seem to have been inspired, and to have received their archetypes in heavenly visions. Such temples it is neither in the devotion nor the faculty of the modern Western world to conceive or construct. Carlyle knows all this, and he falls back in loving admiration upon those old times and their worthies, despising the filigree materials of which the men of to-day are for the most part composed. He revels in that picture of monastic life, also, which is preserved in the record of Jocelyn de Brakelonde. He sees all men at work there, each at his proper vocation;—and he praises them, because they fear God and do their duty. He finds them the same men, although with better and devouter hearts, as we are at this day. Time makes no difference in this verdant human nature, which shows ever the same in Catholic monasteries as in Puritan meeting-houses. We have a wise preachment, however, from that Past, to the Present, in Carlyle’s book, which is one of his best efforts, and contains isolated passages which for wisdom and beauty, and chastity of utterance, he has never exceeded.

We have no space to speak here of all his books with anything like critical integrity. The greatest amongst them, however, is, perhaps, his “French Revolution, a History,”—which is no history, but a vivid painting of characters and events as they moved along in tumultuous procession. No one can appreciate this book who is not acquainted with the history in its details beforehand. Emerson once related to us a striking anecdote connected with this work, which gives us another glimpse of Carlyle’s character. He had just completed, after infinite labor, one of the three volumes of his History, which he left exposed on his study table when he went to bed. Next morning he sought in vain for the manuscript, and had wellnigh concluded with Robert Hall, who was once in a similar dilemma, that the Devil had run away with it, when the servant-girl, on being questioned, confessed that she had burnt it to kindle the fire. Carlyle neither stamped nor raved, but sat down without a word and rewrote it.

Page 85

In summing up the present results of Carlyle's labor, foolish men of the world and small critics have not failed to ask what it all amounts to,—what the great Demiurgus is aiming at in his weary battle of life; and the question is significant enough,—one more proof of that Egyptian darkness of vision which he is here to dispel. "He pulls down the old," say they; "but what does he give us in place of it? Why does he not strike out a system of his own? And after all, there is nothing new in him." Such is the idle talk of the day, and such are the men who either guide the people, or seek to guide them. Poor ignorant souls! who do not know the beginning of the knowledge which Carlyle teaches, nor its infinite importance to life and all its concerns:—this, namely, as we have said before, that the soul should first of all be awakened to the consciousness of its own miraculous being, that it may be penetrated by the miracles of the universe, and rise by aspiration and faith to the knowledge and worship of God, in whom are all things; that this attitude of the soul, and its accompanying wisdom, will beget the strength, purity, virtue, and truth which can alone restore order and beauty upon the earth; that all "systems," and mechanical, outward means and appliances to the end, will but increase the Babel of confusion, as things unfitted to it, and altogether extraneous and hopeless. "Systems!" It is living, truthful men we want; these will make their own systems; and let those who doubt the truth humbly watch and wait until it is manifest to them, or go on their own arid and sorrowful ways in what peace they can find there.

The catholic spirit of Carlyle's works cannot be better illustrated than by the fact that he has received letters from all sorts and conditions of men, Methodists and Shakers, Churchmen and Romanists, Deists and Infidels, all claiming his fellowship, and thinking they find their peculiarities of thought in him. This is owing partly, perhaps, to the fact that in his earlier writings he masked his sentiments both in Hebraic and Christian phraseology; and partly to the lack of vision in his admirers, who could not distinguish a new thought in an old garment. His "Cromwell" deceived not a few in this respect; and we were once asked in earnest, by a man who should have been better informed, if Carlyle was a Puritan. Whatever he may be called, or believed to be, one thing is certain concerning him: that he is a true and valiant man,—all out a man!—and that literature and the world are deeply indebted to him. His mission, like that of Jeremy Collier in a still baser age, was to purge our literature of its falsehood, to recreate it, and to make men once more believe in the divine, and live in it. So earnest a man has not appeared since the days of Luther, nor any one whose thoughts are so suggestive, germinal, and propagative. All our later writers are tinged with his thought, and he has to answer for such men as Kingsley, Newman, Froude, and others who will not answer for him, nor acknowledge him.

Page 86

In private life Carlyle is amiable, and often high and beautiful in his demeanor. He talks much, and, as we have said, well; impatient, at times, of interruption, and at other times readily listening to those who have anything to say. But he hates babblers, and cant, and sham, and has no mercy for them, but sweeps them away in the whirlwind and terror of his wrath. He receives distinguished men, in the evening, at his house in Chelsea; but he rarely visits. He used occasionally to grace the saloons of Lady Blessington, in the palmy days of her life, when she attracted around her all noble and beautiful persons, who were distinguished by their attainments in literature, science, or art; but he rarely leaves his home now for such a purpose. He is at present engaged in his "Life of Frederick the Great," whom he will hardly make a hero of, and with whom, we learn, he is already very heartily disgusted. The first volume will shortly appear.

And now we must close this imperfect paper,—reserving for a future occasion some personal reminiscences of him, which may prove both interesting and illustrative.

THE BUTTON-ROSE.

CHAPTER I.

I fear I have not what is called "a taste for flowers." To be sure, my cottage home is half buried in tall shrubs, some of which are flowering, and some are not. A giant woodbine has wrapped the whole front in its rich green mantle; and the porch is roofed and the windows curtained with luxuriant honeysuckles and climbing wild-roses. But, though I have tried for it many times, I never yet had a successful bed of flowers. My next neighbor, Mrs. Smith, is "a lady of great taste"; and when she leads me proudly through her trim alleys edged with box, and displays her hyacinths and tulips, her heliotropes, cactuses, and gladioluses, her choice roses, "so extremely double," and all the rare plants which adorn her parterre, I conclude it must be that I have no taste at all. I beg her to save me seeds and bulbs, get fresh directions for laying down, and inoculating, grafting, and potting, and go home with my head full of improvements. But the next summer comes round with no change, except that the old denizens of the soil (like my maids and my children) have grown more wild and audacious than ever, and I find no place for beds of flowers. I must e'en give it up; I have no taste for flowers, in the common sense of the words. In fact, they awaken in me no sentiment, no associations, as they stand, marshalled for show, "in beds and curious knots"; and I do not like the care of them.

Page 87

Yet let me find these daughters of the early year in their native haunts, scattered about on hillside and in woody dingle, half hidden by green leaves, starting up like fairies in secluded nooks, nestling at the root of some old tree, or leaning over to peep into some glassy bit of water, and no heart thrills quicker than mine at the sight. There they seem to me to enjoy a sweet wild life of their own; nodding and smiling in the sunshine or verdant gloom, caring not to see or to be seen. Some of the loveliest of my early recollections are of rambles after flowers. There was a certain “little pink and yellow flower” (so described to me by one of my young cousins) after which I searched a whole summer with unabated eagerness. I was fairly haunted by its ideal image. Henry von Ofterdingen never sought with intenser desire for his wondrous blue flower, nor more vainly; for I never found it. One day, this same cousin and myself, while wandering in the woods, found ourselves on the summit of a little rocky precipice, and at its foot, lo! in full bloom, a splendid variety of the orchis, (a flower I had never seen before,) looking to my astonished eyes like an enchanted princess in a fairy tale. With a scream of joy we both sprang for the prize. Harriet seized it first, but after gazing at it a moment with a quiet smile, presented it to me. “Kings may be blest, but I was glorious!” I never felt so rich before or since.

But there was one flower,—and I must confess that I made acquaintance with it in a garden, but at an age when I thought all things grew out of the blessed earth of their own sweet will,—which, as it is the first I remember to have loved, has maintained the right of priority in my affections to this day. Nay, many an object of deep, absorbing interest, more than one glowing friendship, has meantime passed away, leaving no memorial but sad and bitter thoughts; while this wee flower still lives and makes glad a little green nook in my heart. It was a Button-Rose of the smallest species, the outspread blossom scarce exceeding in size a shilling-piece. It stood in my grandfather’s garden,—that garden which, at my first sight of it, (I was then about five years old,) seemed to me boundless in extent, and beautiful beyond aught that I had seen or thought before. It was a large, old-fashioned kitchen-garden, adorned and enriched, however, as then the custom was, with flowers and fruit-trees. Several fine old pear-trees and a few of the choicest varieties of plum and cherry were scattered over it; currants and gooseberries lined the fences; the main alley, running through its whole extent, was thickly bordered by lilacs, syringas, and roses, with many showy flowers intermixed, and terminated in a very pleasant grape-arbor. Behind this rose a steep green hill covered with an apple-orchard, through which a little thread of a footpath wound up to another arbor which stood on the summit relieved against the sky. It was but little

Page 88

after sunrise, the first morning of my visit, when I timidly opened the garden gate and stood in full view of these glories. All was dewy, glittering, fragrant, musical as a morn in Eden. For a while I stood still, in a kind of enchantment. Venturing, at length, a few steps forward, gazing eagerly from side to side, I was suddenly arrested by the most marvellously beautiful object my eyes had ever seen,—no other than the little Button-Rose of our story! So small, so perfect! It filled my infant sense with its loveliness. It grew in a very pretty china vase, as if more precious than the other flowers. Several blossoms were fully expanded, and many tiny buds were showing their crimson tips. As I stood lost in rapture over this little miracle of beauty, a humming-bird, the smallest of its fairy tribe, darted into sight, and hung for an instant, its ruby crest and green and golden plumage flashing in the sun, over my new-found treasure. Were it not that the emotions of a few such moments are stamped indelibly on the memory, we should have no conception in maturer life of the intenseness of childish enjoyment. Oh for one drop of that fresh morning dew, that pure nectar of life, in which I then bathed with an unconscious bliss! Methinks I would give many days of sober, thoughtful, *rational* enjoyment for one hour of the eager rapture which thrilled my being as I stood in that enchanted garden, gazing upon my little rose, and that gay creature of the elements, that winged blossom, that living fragment of a rainbow, that glanced and quivered and murmured over it.

But, dear as the Button-Rose is to my memory, I should hardly think of obtruding it on the notice of others, were it not for a little tale of human interest connected with it. While I yet stood motionless in the ecstasy of my first wonder, a young man and woman entered the garden, chatting and laughing in a very lively manner. The lady was my Aunt Caroline, then in the fresh bloom of seventeen; the young man I had never seen before. Seeing me standing alone in the walk, my aunt called me; but as I shrunk away shy and blushing at sight of the stranger, she came forward and took hold of my hand.

“This is our little Katy, Cousin Harry,” said she, leading me towards him.

“Our little Katy’s most obedient!” replied he, taking off his broad-brimmed straw hat, and making a flourishing bow nearly to the ground.

“Don’t be afraid of him, Katy dear; he’s nobody,” said my aunt, laughing.

At these encouraging words I glanced up at the merry pair, and thought them almost as pretty as the rose and hummingbird. My Aunt Caroline’s beauty was of a somewhat peculiar character,—if beauty that can be called which was rather spirit, brilliancy, geniality of expression, than symmetrical mould of features. The large, full eye was of the deepest violet hue; the finely arched forehead, a little too boldly cast for feminine beauty, was shaded by masses of rich chestnut hair; the mouth,—but

Page 89

who could describe that mouth? Even in repose, some arch thought seemed ever at play among its changeful curves; and when she spoke or laughed, its wonderful mobility and sweetness of expression threw a perfect witchery over her face. She was quite short, and, if the truth must be told, a little too stout in figure; but this was in a great measure redeemed by a beautifully moulded neck, on which her head turned with the quickness and grace of a wild pigeon. Every motion was rapid and decided, and her whole aspect beamed with genius, gayety, and a cordial friendliness, which took the heart at first sight. And then, her voice, her laugh!—not so low as Shakspeare commends in woman, but clear, musical, true-hearted, making one glad like the song of the lark at sunrise.

Cousin Harry was a very tall, very pale, very black-haired and black-eyed young gentleman, with a high, open brow, and a very fascinating smile.

The remainder of the garden scene was to me but little more than dumb show. Perhaps it was more vividly remembered for that very reason. I recollect being busy filling a little basket with strawberries, while I watched with a pleased, childish curiosity the two young people, as they passed many times up and down the gravelled walk between the rows of flowers. I was not far from the Button-Rose, and I had nearly filled my basket, when my aunt came to the spot and stooped over the little plant. Her face was towards me, and I saw several large tears fall from her eyes upon the leaves. She broke off the most beautiful blossom, and tying it up with some sprigs of mignonette, presented it to Cousin Harry. They then left the garden.

The next day I heard it said that Cousin Harry was gone away. The little rose was brought into the house and installed in the bow-window of my aunt's room, where it was watched and tended by us both with the greatest care.

Some time after this, the news came that Cousin Harry was married. The next morning I missed my little favorite from the window. My aunt was reading when I waked.

"Oh, Aunt!" I cried, "where is our little rose?"

"It was too much trouble, Katy," said she, quietly; "I have put it into the garden."

"But isn't it going to stand in our window any more?"

"No, dear, I am tired of it."

"Oh, do bring it back! I will take the whole care of it," said I, beginning to cry.



“Katy,” said my aunt, taking me into her lap, and looking steadily, but kindly, into my face, “listen to me. I do not wish to have that rose in my room any more; and if you love me, you will never mention it again.”

Something in her manner prevented my uttering a word more in behalf of the poor little exile. As soon as I was dressed, I ran down into the garden to visit it. It looked very lonely, I thought; I could hardly bear to leave it. The day following, it disappeared from the garden, and old Nanny, the housemaid, told me that my aunt had given it away. I never saw it again.

Page 90

Thus ended my personal acquaintance with the little Button-Rose. But that first strong impression on my fancy was indelible. The flower still lived in my memory, surrounded by associations which gave it a mystic charm. By degrees I ceased to miss it from the window; but that strange garden scene grew more and more vivid, and became a cabinet picture in one of the little inner chambers of memory, where I often pondered it with a delicious sense of mystery. The rose and humming-bird seemed to me the chief actors in the magic pantomime, and they were some way connected with my dear Aunt Linny and the black-eyed young man; but what it all meant was the great puzzle of my busy little brain. It has sometimes been a matter of curious speculation to me, what share that diminutive flower had in the development of my mind and character. With it, so it seems to me, began the first dawn of a conscious inner life. I can still recollect with wonderful distinctness what I have thought and felt since that date, while all the preceding years are vague and shadowy as an ill-remembered dream. From them I can only conjure up, as it were, my outward form,—a happy animal existence, with which scarce a feeling of self is connected; but from the time when I bore a part in this little fragment of a romance the current of identity flows on unbroken. From that light waking touch, perchance, the whole subsequent development took form and tone.—But, gentle reader, your pardon! This is nothing to my story.

CHAPTER II.

Ten years had slipped away, and I was now in my sixteenth year. Of course, my little cabinet picture had been joined by many others. It was now but one in an extensive gallery; and the modest little gem, dimmed with dust, and hidden by larger pieces, had not been thought of for many a day.

External circumstances had remained much the same with us; only one great change, the death of my dear grandmother, having occurred in the family. My aunt presided over her father's household, and the admirable order and good taste which pervaded every department bore witness how well she understood combining the elements of a home.

Aunt Linny, now twenty-seven years of age, had lost nothing of her former attractiveness. The brilliant, impulsive girl had but ripened into the still more lovely woman. Her cheek was not faded nor her eye dimmed. There was the same frankness, the same heart in her glance, her smile, the warm pressure of her hand, but tempered by experience, reflection, and self-control. One felt that she could be loved and trusted with the whole heart and judgment. Her personal attractions, and yet more the charm of her sensible, genial, and racy conversation, brought to our house many pleasant visitors, and made her the sparkling centre of every circle into which she could be drawn. But it was rarely that she could be beguiled from home; for, since her mother's death, she had devoted herself heart and soul to her widowed father.

Page 91

The relation between myself and my aunt was somewhat peculiar. Neither of us having associates of our own age in the family, I had become her companion, and even friend, to a degree which would have been impossible in other circumstances. She had scarcely outgrown the freshness and simplicity of childhood when I first came to live with her, and my mind and feelings had expanded rapidly under the constant stimulus of a nature so full of rich life; so that at the date I now speak of, we lived together more as sisters than as aunt and niece. An inexpressible charm rests on those days, when we read, wrote, rambled together, shared the same room, and had every pleasure, every trouble in common. All show of authority over me had gradually melted away; but her influence with me was still unbounded, for I loved her with the passionate earnestness of a first, full-hearted friendship.—But to proceed with my story.

One sweet afternoon in early summer, we two were sitting alone. The windows towards the garden were open, and the breath of lilacs and roses stole in. I had been reading to her some verses of my own, celebrating the praise of first love as an imperishable sentiment. My fancy had just been crazed with the poetry of L.E.L., who was then shining as the “bright particular star” in the literary heavens.

“The lines are very pretty,” said my aunt, “but I trust it’s only poetizing, Kate; I should be sorry indeed to have you join the school of romantic misses who think first love such a killing matter.”

“But, Aunt,” I cried, “what a horribly prosy, matter-of-fact affair life would be in any other view! I believe poetry itself would become extinct.”

“So, then, if a woman is disappointed in first love, she is bound to die for the benefit of poetry!”

“But just think, Aunt Linny—if Ophelia, instead of going mad so prettily, and dying in a way to break everybody’s heart, had soberly set herself to consider that there were as fine fish yet in the sea as ever were caught, and that it was best, therefore, to cheer up and wait for better times! Frightful!”

“Never trouble your little head, Kate, with fear that there will not be Ophelias enough, as long as the world stands. But I wouldn’t be one, if I were you, unless I could bespeak a Shakspeare to do me into poetry. That would be an inducement, I allow. How would you fancy being a Sukey Fay, Kate?”

“Oh, the poor old wretch, with her rags and dirt and gin-bottle! Has she a story?”

“Just as romantic a one as Ophelia, only she lacks a poet. But, in sober truth, Katy, why is there not as true poetry in battling with feeling as in yielding to it? To me there seems something far more lofty and beautiful in bearing to live, under certain circumstances, than in daring to die.”

“If you only spoke experimentally, dear Aunty! Oh that Plato, or John Milton, or Sir Philip Sydney would reappear, and lay all his genius and glory at your feet! I wonder if you’d be of the same mind then!”

Page 92

"And then, of course, this sublime suitor must die, or desert me, to show how I would behave under the trial.—Katy," continued my aunt, after a little pause, with a smile and slight blush, "I have half a mind to tell you a little romance of my early days, when I was just your age. It may be useful to you at this point of your life."

"Is it possible?" cried I,—“a romance of your early days! Quick, let me hear!"

"I shouldn't have called it a romance, Katy; for as a story, it is just nothing. It has no interest except as marking the beginning of my education,—the education, I mean, of real life."

"But let me hear; there's some spice of poetry in it, I know."

"Well, then, it's like many another story of early fancy. In my childhood I had a playmate. Our fathers' houses stood but a few rods apart, and the families lived in habits of the closest intimacy. From my earliest remembrance, the brave little boy, four years older than I, was my sworn friend and protector; and as we increased in years, an affection warm and frank as that of brother and sister grew up between us. A love of nature and of poetry, and a certain earnestness and enthusiasm of character, which separated us both from other children, drew us closely together. At fifteen he left us to fit for college at a distant school, and thenceforward he was at home only for brief visits, till he was graduated with distinguished honor at the age of twenty-one. During those six years of separation our relation to each other had suffered no change. We had corresponded with tolerable regularity, and I had felt a sister's pride in his talents and literary honors. When, therefore, he returned home to recruit his health, which had been seriously impaired by study and confinement, I welcomed him with great joy, and with all the frankness of former times.

"Again we read, chatted, and rambled together. I found him unchanged in character, but improved, cultivated, to a degree which delighted, almost awed me. When he read our favorite authors with his rich, musical voice, and descanted on their beauties with discriminating taste and fervent poetic feeling, a new light fell on the page. Through his eyes I learned to behold in nature a richness, a grace, a harmony, a meaning, only vaguely felt before. It was as if I had just received the key to a mysterious cipher, unlocking deep and beautiful truths in earth and sea and sky, by which they were invested with a life and splendor till now unseen. But it was his noble sentiments, his generous human sympathies, his ardent aspirations after honorable distinction to be won by toil and self-denial, which woke my heart as by an electric touch. My own unshaped, half-conscious aims and aspirations, stirred with life, took wing and soared with his into the pure upper air. Ah! it was a bright, beautiful dream, Kate, the life of those few months. I never once thought of love, nor of the possibility of separation. All flowed

Page 93

so naturally from our life-long intimacy, that I had not the slightest suspicion of the change which had come over me. But the hour of waking was at hand. We had looked forward to the settled summer weather for a marked improvement in his health. But June had come and he still seemed very delicate. His physician prescribed travelling and change of climate; and though his high spirits had deceived me as to his real danger, I urged him to go. He left us to visit an elder brother residing in one of the Middle States. Ten years this very month!" added Aunt Linny, with an absent air.

"Ten years ago this very month," I exclaimed, "did my distinguished self arrive at this venerable mansion. What a singular conjunction of events! No doubt our horoscopes would reveal some strange entanglement of destinies at this point. Perchance I, even I, was 'the star malign' whose rising disturbed the harmonious movement of the spheres!"

"No doubt of it; the birth of a mouse once caused an earthquake, you know."

"But could I have seen him? Did I arrive before he had left?"

"Oh, yes, very likely; but of course you can have no recollection of him, such a chit as you were then."

"What was his name?" I cried, eagerly. A long-silent chord of memory began to give forth a vague, uncertain murmur.

"Oh, no matter, Kate. I would a little rather you shouldn't know. It doesn't affect the moral of the story, which was all I had in view in relating it."

"A plague take the moral, Auntie! The romance is what I want; and what's that without 'the magic of a name'?"

"Excuse me."

"Tell me his Christian name, then,—just for a peg to hang my ideas on; that is, if it's meat for romance. If it is Isaac or Jonathan, you needn't mention it."

"Well, then, you tease,—I called him Cousin Harry."

"Cousin Harry!" I screamed, starting forward, and staring at her with eyes wide open.

"Yes; but what ails you, child? You glare upon me like a maniac."

"Hush! hush! don't speak!" said I.

As I sunk back, in a sort of dream, into the rocking-chair in which I had been idling, the garden caught my eye through the open window. The gate overarched with honeysuckle, the long alley with its fragrant flowering border, the grape arbor, the steep green hill behind, lay before me in the still, rich beauty of June. In a twinkling, memory had swept the dust from my little cabinet picture, and let in upon it a sudden light. The ten intervening years vanished like a dream, and that long-forgotten garden scene started up, vivid as in the hour when it actually passed before my eyes. The clue to that mystery which had so spellbound my childish fancy was at length found. I sat for a time in silence, lost in a delicious, confused reverie.

“The Button-Rose was a gift from him, then?” were my first words.

“What, Kate?” said Aunt Linny, now opening her large blue eyes with a strange look.

Page 94

"Did you give away the flower-pot too? That was so pretty! Whom did you give it to?"

"Incredible!" she exclaimed, coloring, and with the strongest expression of surprise. "Truly, little pitchers have not been slandered!"

"But the wonderful humming-bird, Aunty! What had that to do with it?"

"Kate," said my aunt, "you talk like one in sleep. Wake up, and let me know what all this means."

"I see it all now!" I rattled on, more to myself than her. "First young love,—parting gift, —Cousin Harry proves fickle,—Aunt Linny banishes the Button-Rose from her window, —takes to books, and educating naughty nieces, and doing good to everybody,—'bearing to live,' as more heroic than 'daring to die,'—in ten years gets so that she can speak of it with composure, as a lesson to romantic girls. So?"

"Even so, Katy!" she replied, quietly; "and to that early disappointment I owe more than to anything that ever befell me."

She said this with a smile; but her voice trembled a little, and I perceived that a soft dew had gathered over her eyes. By an irresistible impulse I rose, and stealing softly behind her, clasped my arms round her neck, and kissing her forehead whispered, "Forgive me, sweet Aunty!"

"Not a bit of harm, Katy," she replied, drawing me down for a warm kiss. "But what a gypsy you must be," she added, in her usually lively tone, "to have trudged along so many years with this precious little bundle, and said never a word to anybody!"

"I've not thought of it myself, these ever so many years," said I, "and it seems like witchwork that it should all have come to me at this moment."

I then related to her my childish reminiscences and speculations, which amused her not a little. Her hearty, mirthful zest showed that the theme was not a disquieting one. I now begged her to proceed with her story.

"But stay a moment," said I; "let me fetch our garden bonnets, that we may enjoy it in the very scene of the romance."

"Ah, Kate, you are bent on making a heroine of me!" was the reply, as she took her seat in the grape arbor; "but there are really no materials. I shall finish in fifteen minutes by my watch, and you'll drop me as an Ophelia, I venture to say. Cousin Harry had left us, as I told you, to visit his brother. For some months his letters were very frequent, and as the time approached for his return they grew increasingly cheerful, and—Katy, I cannot but excuse myself in part, when I recall the magic charm of those letters. But no matter; all of a sudden they ceased, and for several weeks not a word was heard from

him by his own family. At length, when my anxiety had become wellnigh intolerable, there came a brief letter to his father, announcing his marriage with the sister of his brother's wife, and his decision to enter into business with his brother."

"Did you know anything of the young lady?"

Page 95

"He had once or twice mentioned her in his letters as a beautiful, amiable creature, whose education had been shamefully neglected. Her kindness to him in his illness and loneliness, added to her natural charms, won his heart, no doubt many a wise man has been caught in that snare."

"But what base conduct towards you!"

"Not at all, my dear! My dream had suffused his words with its own coloring,—that was all. As soon as reason could make her voice heard, I acquitted him of all blame. His feelings towards me had been those of a brother,—no more."

"But why, then, did he cease to write? why not share his new happiness with so dear a friend?"

"That was not unnatural, after what he had said of the young lady's deficiencies. Probably the awkwardness of the thing led him to defer writing from time to time, till he had become so absorbed in his domestic relations and his business, that he had ceased to think of it. Life's early dewdrops often exhale in that way, Kate!"

"Then life is a hateful stupidity!"

"Yes; if it could be morning all day, and childhood could outlast our whole lives, it would be very charming. But life has jewels that don't exhale, Kate, but sparkle brightest in the hottest sun. These lie deep in the earth, and to dig them out requires more than a child's strength of heart and arm. One must be well inured to toil and weather before he can win these treasures; but when once he wears these in his bosom he doesn't sigh for dewdrops."

"Well, let me hear how you were inured."

"The news of this marriage revealed to me, as by a flash of lightning, my whole inner world of feeling. When I knew that he was forever lost, I first knew what he had become to me. The pangs of disappointment, of self-humiliation,—I hardly know which were the stronger,—were like poisoned arrows in my heart. It was my first trouble, and I had to bear it in silence and alone. Not for worlds would I have had it guessed that I had cherished an unreturned affection, and it would have killed me to hear him blamed. Towards him I had, in my most secret heart, no emotion of resentment or reproach. A feeling of dreary loss, of a long, weary life from which all the flowers had vanished, a sort of tender self-pity, filled my heart. It is not worth while to detail the whole process by which I gradually forced myself out of this miserable state. One thing helped me much. As soon as the first bitterness of my heart was passed, I saw clearly that the indulgence of such a sentiment towards one who was now the husband of another could not be innocent. It must not be merely concealed; it must be torn up, root and branch. With this steadily before my mind as the central point of my efforts, I worked

my way step by step. First came the removal of the numerous little mementos of those happy days in dreamland, the sight of which softened my heart into weakness and vain regret. Next I threw aside my favorite

Page 96

works of imagination and feeling, and for two years read scarcely a book which did not severely task my mind. I devoted myself more to my mother, and interested myself in the poor and sick. Last, not least, I resolved on taking the whole charge of your education, Katy; and of my various specifics, I think I would recommend the training of such an elf as the 'sovereignest remedy' for first love. The luxuriant growth of your character interested, stimulated, kept me perpetually on the alert. I soon began to work *con amore* at this task; my spirits caught at times the contagious gayety of yours; my poor heart was refreshed by your warm childish love. In short, I began to live again. But, ah! dear Kate, it was a long, stern conflict. Many, many months, yes, years, passed by, ere those troubled waters became clear and still. But I held firmly on my way, and the full reward came at last. By degrees I had created within and around me a new world of interest and activity, in which this little whirlpool of morbid feeling became an insignificant point. I was conscious of the birth of new energies, of a bolder and steadier sweep of thought, of fuller sympathies, of that settled quiet and harmony of soul which are to be gained only in the school of self-discipline. That dream of my youth now lies like a soft cloud far off in the horizon, beautiful with the morning tints of memory, but casting no shadow."

She paused; then added, in a lively tone: "Well, Kate, the fifteen minutes are not out, and yet my story is done. Think you now it would really have been better to go a-swinging on a willow-tree over a pond, and so have made a good poetical end?"

"Oh, I am so glad you were not such a goose as to make a swan of yourself, like poor Ophelia!" said I, throwing my arms around her, and giving her half a dozen kisses. "But tell me truly, was I indeed such a blessing to you, 'the very cherubim that did preserve thee'? To think of the repentance I have wasted over my childish naughtiness, when it was all inspired by your good angel! I shall take heed to this hint."

"Do so, Kate, and your good angel will doubtless inspire in me a suitable response."

"But tell me now, Aunt Linny, who the living man was. Was he a real cousin?"

"I may as well tell you, Kate, or you will get it from your 'familiar.' You have heard of our rich cousin in Cuba, Henry Morrison?"

"Oh, yes; I have heard grandfather speak of him. So, then, he was Cousin Harry! I should like one chance at his hair, for all his goodness. Did you ever meet again?"

"Never. His father's family soon removed to a distant place, so that there was no necessity for visiting the old home. But I have always heard him spoken of as an upright merchant and a cultivated and generous man. He has resided several years in Cuba. A year or two since, he went to Europe for his wife's health, and there she died."

Rumor now reports him as about to become the husband of an Englishwoman of high connections. I should be very glad to see him once more.—But come now, Kate, let's have a decennial celebration of our two anniversaries. Lay the tea-table in the grape arbor, and then invite grandpapa to a feast of strawberries and cream."

Page 97

I hastily ornamented our rural banquet-hall with long branches of roses and honeysuckles in full bloom, stuck into the leafy roof. As we sat chatting and laughing over our simple treat, a humming-bird darted several times in and out. "A messenger!" whispered I to Aunt Linny. "Depend upon it, Cousin Harry didn't marry the English lady."

CHAPTER III.

The next morning I slept late. Fancy had all night been busy, combining her old and new materials into many a wild shape. After my aunt had risen at her usual early hour, I fell into one of those balmy morning-naps which make up for a whole night's unrest. I dreamed still, but the visions floated by with that sweet changeful play which soothes rather than fatigues the brain. The principal objects were always the same; but the combination shifted every instant, as by the turn of a kaleidoscope. At length they arranged themselves in a lovely miniature scene in a convex mirror. There bloomed the little Button-Rose in the centre, and above it the humming-bird glanced and murmured, and now and then darted his slender bill deep into the bosom of the flowers. With hands clasped above this central object, as if exchanging vows upon an altar, stood the young human pair. Of a sudden, old Cornelius Agrippa was in the room, robed in a black scholar's-gown, over which his snowy beard descended nearly to his knees. Stretching forth a long white wand, he touched the picture, and immediately a wedding procession began to move out of the magic crystal, the figures, as they emerged, assuming the size of life. First tripped a numerous train of white-robed little maidens, scattering flowers; then came a priest in surplice and bands, holding before him a great open service-book; after him, the bridal pair, attended by their friends. But by an odd trick of fancy, the bridegroom, who looked very stately and happy, appeared with the china flower-pot containing the Button-Rose balanced on the end of his nose! Awaked by my own laughter at this comical sight, I opened my eyes and found Aunt Linny sitting on the bedside and laughing with me.

"I should have waked you before, Katy," said she, "if you had not seemed to be enjoying yourself so much. Come, unfold your dream. I presume it will save me the trouble of telling you the contents of this wonderful epistle which I hold in my hand."

"It's from Cousin Harry! Huzza!" cried I, springing up to snatch it.

But she held it out of my reach. "Softly! good Mistress Fortuneteller," said she. "Read me the letter without seeing it, and then I shall know that you can tell the interpretation thereof."

"Of course it's from Cousin Harry. That's what the humming-bird came to say last night. As for the contents,—he's not married,—his heart turns to the sister-friend of his youth, —he yearns to look into her lustrous orbs once more,—she alone, he finds, is the

completion of his '*Ich*'. He hastens across the dark blue sea; soon will she behold him at her feet."

Page 98

"Alas, poor gypsy, thou hast lost thy silver penny this time. The letter is indeed from Cousin Harry, and that of itself is one of life's wonders. But it is addressed with all propriety to his 'venerable uncle.' He arrived from Europe a month since, and being now on a tour for health and pleasure, proposes to make a hasty call on his relatives and visit the old homestead. He brings his bride with him. Now, Kate, be stirring; they will be here to-night, and we must look our prettiest."

"The hateful, prosy man! I'll not do anything to make his visit agreeable," said I, pettishly.

"Why, Kate, what are you conjuring up in your foolish little noddle?"

"Oh, I supposed an *eclaircissement* would come round somehow, and we should finish the romance in style."

"Why, Kate, do you really wish to get rid of me?"

"No, indeed! I wouldn't have you accept his old withered heart for the world. But I wanted you to have the triumph of rejecting it. 'Indeed, my dear cousin,'—thus you should have said,—'I shall always be interested in you as a kinsman, but I can never love you.'"

"Kate is crazed!" she exclaimed, in a voice of despair. "Why, dear child, there is not a shadow of foundation for this nonsense. I am heartily glad at the thought of seeing my cousin once more, and all the gladder that he brings a wife with him. Will you read the letter?"

I read it twice, and then asked,—“Where does he mention his wife?”

"Why, there,—don't you see? 'I shall bring with me a young lady, whom, though a stranger and a foreigner, I trust you will be pleased to welcome.' Isn't that plain?"

The inference seemed sufficiently natural; but the slight uncertainty was the basis of many entertaining dreams through the day. I resolved to hold fast my faith in romance till the last moment. Towards evening, when the parlors and guest-chambers had received the last touches, when the silver had been polished, the sponge-cake and tarts baked, and our own toilette made,—when, in short, nothing remained to be done, my excitement and impatience rose to the highest pitch. I ran repeatedly down the avenue, and finally mounted with a pocket-telescope to the top of the house for a more extensive survey.

"See you aught, Sister Annie?" called my aunt from below.

"Nothing yet, good Fatima!—spin out thy prayers a little longer. Stay! a cloud of dust, a horseman!—no doubt an outrider hastening on to announce his approach. Ah! he



passes, the stupid clown! Another! Nay, that was only a Derby wagon; the stars forbid that our deliverer should come in a Derby! But now, hush! there's a *bona fide* barouche, two black horses, black driver and all. Almost at the turn! O gentle Ethiopian, tarry! this is the castle! Go, then, false man! Fatima, thy last hope is past! No, they stop! the gentleman looks out! he waves his hand this way! Aunt Linny, 'tis he! the carriage is coming up the avenue!" So saying, I threw down the telescope and flew to her room.

Page 99

"You are right, Kate, it must be he," said she, glancing through the window, and then following me quietly down stairs.

The carriage stopped, and we all went down the steps to receive our long absent relative. A tall, pale gentleman in black sprang out and came hurriedly towards us. He looked much older than I had expected; but the next instant the flash of his black eye, and the eloquent smile which lighted up his pensive countenance as with a sunbeam, brought back the Cousin Harry of ten years ago. He returned my grandfather's truly paternal greeting with the most affectionate cordiality; but with scarce a reply to my aunt's frank welcome, gave her his arm, and made a movement towards the house.

"But, cousin," said she, smiling, "what gem have you there, hidden in the carriage, too precious to be seen? We have a place in our hearts for the fair stranger, I assure you."

"Ah, poor thing! I had quite forgotten her," said he, coloring and laughing, as he turned towards the carriage.

Aunt Linny and I exchanged mirthful glances at this treatment of a bride; but the next instant he had lifted out and led towards us a small female personage, who, when her green veil was thrown aside, proved to be a lovely girl of some seven or eight years.

"Permit me," said he, smiling, "to present Miss Caroline Morrison, 'sole daughter of my house and heart.'"

"But the stranger, the foreign lady?" inquired Aunt Linny, as she kissed and welcomed the child.

"Why, this is she,—this young Cuban! Whom else did you look for?" was the reply, in a tone of surprise, and, as it seemed to me, of slight vexation.

"We expected a lady with a few more years on her head," interposed grandpapa; "but the little pet is just as welcome. There, Katy, this curly-pate will answer as well as a wax doll for you."

The dear old gentleman could never realize that I was grown up to be a woman. Of course, I was now introduced in due form, and we went together up the steps.

"How pleasant, how familiar all things look!" said our visitor, pausing and gazing round him. "Why, uncle, you must have had your house, and yourself, and everything about you insured against old age. Nothing has changed except to improve. I see the very picture I carried with me ten years ago."

The tears stood in my grandfather's eyes. "You have forgotten one great change, dear nephew," said he; "against that we could find no insurance."

“How could I forget?” was the answer, in a low tone, full of feeling, his own eyes filling with moisture. “My dear aunt! I shed many tears with and for you, when I heard of her death.” He looked extremely amiable at this moment; I knew that I should love him.

My aunt smiled through her tears, and said, very sweetly, “The thought of her should cheer, and not cloud our meeting. Her presence never brought me sorrow, nor does her remembrance. Come, dear,” she added, cheerfully, taking the child’s hand, “come in and rest your poor little tired self. Kate, find the white kitten for her. A prettier one you never saw in France or Cuba, Miss Carrie,—that’s what papa calls you, I suppose?”



Page 100

"It used to be my name," said the little smiler; "but papa always calls me Linny now, because he thinks it sweeter."

* * * * *

"What say you to the humming-bird now?" I whispered to my aunt, as we were a moment alone in the tea-room.

"Kate, I wish you were fifty miles off at this moment! It was no good angel that deluded me into telling you that foolish tale last evening. Indeed, Kate," added she, earnestly, "you will seriously compromise me, if you are not more careful. Promise me that you will not make one more allusion of this kind, even to me, while they remain!"

"But I may give you just a look, now and then?"

"Do you wish me to repent having trusted you, Kate?"

"I promise, aunty,—by my faith in first love!"

"Nonsense! Go, call them to tea."

CHAPTER IV.

Our kinsman had been easily persuaded to remain with us a week, and a charming week it had been to all of us. He had visited all the West India Islands, and the most interesting portions of England and the Continent. My grandfather, who, as the commander of his own merchant-ship, had formerly visited many foreign countries, was delighted to refresh his recollections of distant scenes, and to live over again his adventures by sea and land. The conversation of our guest with his uncle was richly instructive and entertaining; for he had a lively appreciation of national and individual character, and could illustrate them by a world of amusing anecdote. The old veteran's early fondness for his nephew revived in full force, and his enjoyment was alloyed only by the dread of a new separation. "What shall I do when you are gone, Harry!" was his frequent exclamation; and then he would sigh and shake his head, and wish he had one son left.

But the richest treat for my aunt and me was reserved till the late evening, when the dear patriarch had retired to rest. Those warm, balmy nights on the piazza, with the moonlight quivering through the vines, and turning the terraced lawn with fantastic mixture of light and shadow into a fairy scene, while the cultivated traveller discoursed of all things beautiful in nature and art, were full of witchery. Mont Blanc at sunrise, the wild scenery of the Simplon, the exhumed streets of Pompeii, the Colosseum by moonlight, those wondrous galleries of painting and sculpture of which I had read as I had read of the palace of Aladdin and the gardens of the genii,—the living man before

me had seen all these! I looked upon him as an ambassador from the world of poetry. But even this interested me less than the tone of high and manly sentiment by which his conversation was pervaded, the feeling reminiscences of endeared friendships formed in those far-off lands, the brief glimpses of deep sorrows bravely borne; and I watched with a sweet, sly pleasure my aunt's quiet surrender to the old spell.

Page 101

"It makes me very happy, Kate," said she one day, "to have found my cousin and friend again. I am glad to feel that friendships springing from the pure and good feelings of the heart are not so transient as I have sometimes been tempted to think them. They may be buried for years under a drift of new interests; but give them air, and they will live again."

"What is that remark of Byron about young ladies' friendship? Take care, take care!" said I, shaking my head, gravely; "receive the warning of a calm observer!"

"Oh, no, Kate! this visit is but a little green oasis in the desert. In a day or two we shall separate, probably forever; but both, I doubt not, will be happier through life for this brief reunion. His plan is to make his future residence in France."

At the end of the week our kinsman left us for a fortnight's visit to the metropolis. Intending to give us a call on his return south, he willingly complied with our desire to leave his little girl with us. As we were sitting together in my aunt's room after his departure, the child brought her a small packet which her father had intrusted to her. "I believe," said the little smiler, "he said it was a story for you to read. Won't you please to read it to me?" She took it with a look of surprise and curiosity, and immediately opened it and began to read. But her color soon began to vary, her hand trembled, and presently laying down the sheets in her lap, she sat lost in thought.

"It seems a moving story!" I remarked, dryly.

"Kate, this is the strangest affair!—But I can't tell you now; I must read it first alone."

She left the room, and I heard the key turn in the lock as she entered another chamber. In about an hour she came out very composedly, and said nothing more on the subject.

After our little guest was asleep at night, I could restrain myself no longer. "You are treating me shabbily, aunty," said I. "See if I am ever a good girl again to please you!"

"You shall know it all, Katy; I only wished to think it over first by myself. There, take the letter; but make no note or comment till I mention it again."

* * * * *

The letter of Cousin Harry seemed to me rather matter-of-fact, I must confess, till near the end, where he spoke of a little nosegay which he enclosed, and which would speak to her of dear old times.

"But where is the nosegay, aunty?"

With a beautiful flush, as if the sunset of that vanished day were reddening the sky of memory, she drew a small packet from her bosom, and in it I found a withered rose-bud tied up with a shrivelled sprig of mignonette.

I am afraid that my Aunt Linny's answer was a great deal more proper than I should have wished; and yet, with all its emphatic expressions of duty towards her father and the impossibility of leaving him, there must have been something between the lines which I could not read. I have since discovered that all such epistles have their real meaning concealed in some kind of more rarefied sympathetic ink, which betrays itself only under the burning hands of a lover.

Page 102

“So, then,” said Aunt Linny, as she was sealing this letter, “you see, Katy, that your romance has come to an untimely end.”

I turned round her averted face with both my hands, and looked in her eyes till she blushed and laughed in spite of herself.

“My knowledge of symptoms is not large,” said I, “but I have a conviction that his health will now endure a northern climate.”

“Let’s talk no more of this!” said she, putting me aside with a gentle gravity, which checked my nonsense. But as I was unable to detect in her, on this or the following day, the slightest depression of spirits, I shrewdly guessed that our anticipations of the result were not very dissimilar.

The next return post brought, not the expected letter, but our hero himself. I was really amazed at the change in his appearance. Erect, elastic, his face radiant with expression, he looked years younger than at his first arrival. I caught Aunt Linny’s eloquent glance of surprise and pleasure as they met. For a moment the bridal pair of my dream stood living before me; then vanished even more suddenly than that fancy show of the old magician. When we again met, two or three hours after, my aunt’s serene smile and dewy eyes told me that all was right.

* * * * *

In a month the wedding took place, and the “happy pair” started off on a few weeks’ excursion. As I was helping my aunt exchange her bridal for her travelling attire, I whispered, “What say you to my doctrine of first love, aunty?”

“That it finds its best refutation in my experience. No, believe me, dearest Katy, the true jewel of life is a spirit that can rule itself, that can subject even the strongest, dearest impulses to reason and duty. Without it, indeed,” she added, with a soft earnestness, “affection towards the worthiest object becomes an unworthy sentiment—And besides, Kate,”—here her eye gleamed with girlish mirth—“you see, if I had made love my all, I should have missed it all. Not even Cousin Harry’s constancy would have been proof against a withered, whining, sentimental old maid.”

“Well, you will allow that it’s a great paradox, aunty! If you believe in my doctrine, it turns out a mere delusion; if you don’t believe in it, ’tis sure to come true.”

“Take care, then, and disbelieve in it with all your might!” said she, laughing, and kissing me, as we left her room,—my room alone henceforth. A shadow seemed to fill it, as she passed the threshold.

OUR BIRDS, AND THEIR WAYS.

Among our summer birds, the vast majority are but transient visitors, born and bred far to the northward, and returning thither every year. The North, then, is their proper domicile, their legal “place of residence,” which they have never renounced, but only temporarily desert, for special reasons. Their sojourn with us, or farther south, is merely an exile by stress of climate, like the flitting of the Southern planters from the rice-fields to the mountains in summer, or the pleasure tour or watering-place visit customary with the citizens of Boston and New York.

Page 103

The lower orders, such as the humming-bird with his insect-like stomach and sucking-tube, and so on up through the warblers and flycatchers, more strictly bound by the necessities of their life, closely follow the sun,—while the upper-ten-thousand, the robins, cedar-birds, sparrows, *etc.*, like man, omnivorous in their diet and their attendant *chevaliers d'industrie*, the rapacious birds, allow themselves greater latitude, and go and come occasionally at all seasons, though in general tending to the south in winter and north in summer. But precedence before all is due to permanent residents, with whom our intercourse is not of this transitory and fair-weather sort. Such are the crow, the blue jay, the chickadee, the partridge, and the quail, who may be called regular inhabitants, though perhaps all of them wander occasionally from one district to another. Besides these, perhaps some of the hawks and owls remain here throughout the year. But the species I have named are the only ones that occur to me as equally numerous at all seasons in the immediate vicinity of Boston, and never out of town, whether you take the census in May or in January.

In spite of our uninterrupted acquaintance with them, however, there are still many of the nearest questions concerning these birds for which I find no sufficient answers. Even to the first question—How do they get their living?—there are only vague replies in the books.

There is the crow, for example. I have seen crows in the neighborhood of Boston every week of the year, and in not very different numbers. My friend the ornithologist said to me last winter, “You will see that they will be off as soon as the ground is well covered with snow.” But on the contrary, when the snow came, and after it had lain deep on the fields for many days, I saw more than before,—probably because they found it easier to get food in the neighborhood of the houses and cultivated grounds.

A crow must require certainly half a pound of animal food, or its equivalent, daily, in order to keep from starving. Yet they not only do not starve that I hear of, but seem to keep in as good case in winter as in summer, though what they find to eat is not immediately apparent. The vague traditional suggestion of “carrion,” as of dead horses and the like, does not help us much. Some scraps doubtless may be left lying about, but any reliable stores of this kind are hardly to be looked for in this neighborhood. A few scattered kernels of corn, perhaps on a pinch a few berries, he may pick up; though I suspect the crow is somewhat human in his tastes, and, besides animal food, affects only the cereals. The frogs are deep in the mud. Now and then a squirrel or a mouse may be had; but they are mostly dozing in their holes. As for larger game, rabbits and the like, the crow is hardly nimble enough for them, nor are his claws well adapted for seizing; anything of this kind he will scarcely get, except as the leavings

Page 104

of the weasel or skunk. These he will not refuse; for though he is of a different species from the carrion crow of Europe, with whom he was formerly confounded, yet he is of similar, though perhaps less extreme, tastes as to his food. But when the ground is freshly covered with snow, all supplies of this sort would seem to be cut off, for the time at least. Yet who ever found a starved crow, or even saw one driven by hunger from any of his accustomed caution? He is ever the same alert, vivacious, harsh-tongued wanderer over the white fields as over the summer meadows.

A partial solution of the mystery is to be found in the habit which the bird has in common with most of the crow kind, of depositing any surplus food in a place of safety for future use. A tame crow that I saw last year was constantly employed in this way. As soon as his hunger was satisfied, if a piece of meat was given to him, he flew off to some remote spot, and there covered it up with twigs and leaves. I was told that the woods were full of these caches of his. Bits of bread and the like he was too well-fed to care much about, but he would generally go through the form of covering them, at your very feet, with a little rubbish, not taking the trouble to hide them. Meanwhile his hunting went on as if he still had his living to get, and he would watch for field-mice, or come flying in from the woods with a squirrel swinging from his claws, either for variety's sake, or because he had really forgotten the stores he had laid up. Scattered magazines of this kind, established in times of accidental plenty, may render life during our winters possible to the crow.

But why should he give himself so much trouble to subsist here, when a few hours' work with those broad wings would bear him to a land of tropical abundance? The crow, it seems, is not a mere eating and drinking machine, drawn hither and thither by the balance of supply and demand, but has his motives of another sort. Is it, perhaps, some local attachment, so that a crow hatched in Brookline, for example, would be more loath than another to quit that neighborhood,—a sort of crow patriotism, akin to that which keeps the Greenlanders slowly starving of cold and hunger on that awful coast of theirs.

It is not probable, however, that the crow allows himself to suffer much from these causes; he is far too knowing for that, and shows his position at the head of the bird kind by an almost total emancipation from scruples and prejudices, and by the facility with which he adapts himself to special cases. Instinct works by formulas, which, as it were, make up the animal, so that the ant and the bee are atoms of incarnate constructiveness and acquisitiveness, and nothing else. And as intelligence, when its action is too narrowly concentrated, whether upon pin-making or money-making, tends to degenerate into mere instinct,—so instinct, when it begins to compare, and to except, and to vary its action according to circumstances,

Page 105

shows itself in the act of passing into intelligence. This marks the superiority of the crow over birds it often resembles in its actions. Most birds are wary. The crow is wary, and something more. Other shy birds, for instance ducks, avoid every strange object. The crow considers whether there be anything dangerous in the strangeness. An ordinary scarecrow will not keep our crow from anything worth a little risk. He fathoms the scarecrow, compares its behavior, under various circumstances, with that of the usual wearer of its garments, and decides to take the risk. To protect his corn, the farmer takes advantage of this very discursiveness, and stretches round the field a simple line, nothing in itself, but hinting at some undeveloped mischief which the bird cannot penetrate.

Again, the crow is sometimes looked upon as a mere marauder; but this description also is much too narrow for him. He is anxious only for his dinner, and swallows seed-corn and noxious grubs with perfect impartiality. He is not a mere pirate, living by plunder alone, but rather like the old Phoenician sea-farer, indifferently honest or robber as occasion serves,—and robber not from fierceness of disposition, but merely from utter unscrupulousness as to means.

This is shown in his docility. A hawk or an eagle is never tamed, but a crow is more easily and completely tamable than the gentlest singing-bird. The one I have just spoken of, though hardly six months from the nest, would allow himself to be handled by his owner, and would suffer even a stranger to touch him. When I first came near the house, he greeted me with a suppressed caw, and flew along some hundred yards just over my head, looking down, first with one eye and then with the other, to get a complete view of the stranger. Next morning I became aware, when but half awake, of a sort of mewing sound in the neighborhood, and at last looking around, I saw through the window, which opened to the floor, my new acquaintance perched on the porch roof, which was at the same level, turning his head from side to side, and eyeing me through the glass with divers queer contortions and gesticulations, reminding me of some odd, old, dried-up French dancing-master, and with a varied succession of croakings, now high, now low, evidently bent upon attracting my attention. When he had succeeded, he flew off with loud, joyous caws to the top of the house, where I heard him rolling nuts or acorns from the ridge, and flying to catch them before they fell off.

Their independence of seasons is shown also in their habit of associating in about equal numbers throughout the year. In the spring the flocks are more noticeable, hovering about some grove of pines, flying straight up in the air and swooping down again with an uninterrupted cawing,—seemingly a sort of crow ball, with a view to match-making. Afterwards they become more silent, and apparently more solitary, but still fly out to their feeding-grounds morning and evening; and if you sit down in the woods near one of their nests, the uneasy choking chuckle, ending at last in the outright cawing of the

disturbed owner, will generally be answered from every point, and crow after crow come edging up from tree to tree to see what is the matter.

Page 106

Though all of the crow tribe are notorious for their harsh voices, yet if the power of mimicry be considered as a mark of superiority, the crow has claims to high rank in this department also. The closest imitators of the human voice are birds of this family: for instance, the Mino bird. Our crow also is a vocal mimic, and that not in the matter-of-course way of the mocking-bird, but, as it were, more individual and spontaneous. He is not merely an imitator of the human voice, like the parrots, (and a better one as regards tone,) nor of other birds, like the thrushes, but combines both. The tame crow already mentioned very readily undertook extempore imitations of words, and with considerable success. I once heard a crow imitate the warbling of a small bird, in a tone so entirely at variance with his ordinary voice, that, though assured by one who had heard him before, that it was a crow and nothing else, it was only on the clearest proof that I could satisfy myself of the fact. It seemed to be quite an original and individual performance.

The blue jay is a near relative of the crow, and, like him, omnivorous, harsh-voiced, predaceous, a robber of birds' nests; so that if you hear the robins during their nesting-time making an unusual clamor about the house, the chances are you will get a glimpse of this brilliant marauder, sneaking away with a troop of them in pursuit. His usual voice is a harsh scream, but he has some low flute-like notes not without melody. The presence of a hawk, or more particularly an owl in the woods, is often made known by the screaming of the jays, who flock together about him with ever-increasing noise, like a troop of jackals about a lion, pressing in upon him closer and closer in a paroxysm of excitement, while the owl, thus taken at disadvantage, sidles along his bough seeking concealment, and at length softly flaps off to some more undisturbed retreat.

The blue jay is a shy bird, but he is enough of a crow to take a risk where anything is to be had for it, and in winter will come close to the house for food. In his choice of a nesting-place he seems at first sight to show less than his usual caution; for, though the nest is a very conspicuous one, it is generally made in a pine sapling not far from the ground, and often on a path or other opening in the woods. But perhaps, in the somewhat remote situations where he builds, the danger is less from below than from birds of prey sailing overhead. I once found a blue jay's nest on a path in the woods somewhat frequented by me, but not often trodden by any one else, and passed it twice on different days, and saw the bird sitting, but took some pains not to alarm her. The next time, and the next, she was not there; and on examination I found the nest empty, though with no marks of having been robbed. There was not time for the eggs to have hatched, and it was plain, that, finding herself observed, she had carried them off.

Page 107

As a general thing, the severity of our winters does not seem much to affect the birds that stay with us. I have found chickadees and some of the smaller sparrows apparently frozen to death, but the extravasation of blood usual in such cases leaves us in doubt whether some accident may not have first disabled the bird; and if dead birds are more often found in winter than in summer, it may be only that the body keeps longer, and, from the absence of grass and leaves, and the white covering of the ground, is more readily seen. At all events, such specimens are not usually emaciated, and sometimes they are in remarkably good case, which, considering the rapid circulation and the corresponding waste of the body, shows that the cold had not affected their activity and their power of obtaining food.

The truth is, that birds are remarkably well guarded against cold by their quick circulation, their dense covering of down and feathers, and the ease with which they can protect their extremities. The chickadee is never so lively as in clear, cold weather;—not that he is absolutely insensible to cold; for on those days, rare in this neighborhood, when the mercury falls to fifteen degrees or more below zero, the chickadee shows by his behavior that he, too, feels it to be an exceptional state of things. Of such a morning I have seen a small flock of them collected on the sunny side of a thick hemlock, rather silent and quiet, with ruffled plumage, like balls of gray fur, waiting, with an occasional chirp, for the sun's rays to begin to warm them up, and meanwhile not depressed, but only a little sobered in their deportment, and ready, if the cold continued, to get used to that too.

The matter of food-supply during the winter for the smaller birds is more easily understood than in the case of the crow. The seeds of grasses and the taller summer flowers, and of the birches, alders, and maples, furnish supplies that are not interfered with by cold or snow; also the buds of various trees and shrubs,—for the buds do not first come into existence in the spring, as our city friends suppose, but are to be found all winter. Nor is insect-life suspended at this season to the extent that a careless observer might suppose. A sunny, sheltered nook, at any time during the winter, will show you a variety of two-winged flies, and several species of spiders, often in considerable abundance, and as brisk as ever. And the numbers of eggs, and larvae, and of the lurking tenants of crevices in tree-bark and dead wood, may be guessed by the incessant and assuredly not aimless activity of the chickadees and gold-crests and their associates.

This winter activity of the birds ought to be taken into account by those who accuse them of mischief-doing in summer. In winter, at least, no mischief can be done; there is no fruit to steal; and even sap-sucking, if such a practice at any time be not altogether fabulous, certainly cannot be carried on now. Nothing can be destroyed now except the farmer's enemies, or at best neutrals. Yet the birds keep at work all the time.

Page 108

The only bird that occurs to me as a proved sufferer from famine in the winter is the quail. This is the most limited in its range of all our birds. Not only does it not migrate, (or only exceptionally,) but it does not even wander much,—the same covey keeping all the year, and even year after year, to the same feeding-ground. Nor does it ever seek its food upon trees, like the partridge, but solely upon the ground.

The quail is our nearest representative of the common barn-yard fowl. This it resembles in many respects, and among others, in its habit of going a-foot, except when the covey crosses from one feeding or roosting ground to another, or when the cock-bird mounts upon a rail-fence or stone-wall to sound his call in the spring. This persistence exposes the quail to hardship when the ground is covered with snow, and the fruit of the skunk-cabbage and all the berries and grain are inaccessible. He takes refuge at such times in the smilax-thickets, whose dense, matted covering leaves an open feeding-ground below. But a snowy winter always tells upon their numbers in any neighborhood. Whole coveys are said to have been found dead, frozen stiff, under the bush where they had huddled together for warmth; and even before this extremity, their hardships lay them open to their enemies, and the fox and the weasel, and the farmer's boy with his box-trap, destroy them by wholesale. The deep snows of 1856 and 1857 have nearly exterminated them hereabouts; and I was told at Vergennes, in Vermont, that there were quails there many years ago, but that they had now entirely disappeared.

The appearance and disappearance of species within our experience teach us that Nature's lists are not filled once for all, but that the changes which geology shows in past ages continue into the present. Sometimes we can trace the immediate cause, or rather occasion, as in the case of the quail's congeners, the pinnated grouse, and the wild turkey, both of them inhabitants of all parts of the State in the early times. The pinnated grouse has been seen near Boston within the present century, but is now exterminated, I believe, except in Martha's Vineyard. The wild turkey was to be found not long since in Berkshire, but probably it has become extinct there too. Sometimes, for no reason that we can see, certain species forsake their old abodes, as the purple martin, which within the last quarter-century has receded some twenty miles from the seaboard,—or appear where they were before unknown, as the cliff swallow, which was first seen in the neighborhood of the Rocky Mountains, but within about the same space of time has become as common hereabouts as any of the genus. In examples so conspicuous the movement is obvious enough; but in the case of rarer species, for instance, the olive-sided flycatcher, who can tell whether, when first observed, it was new to naturalists merely, or to this part of the country, or to the earth generally? The distinction sometimes

Page 109

made in such cases between accidental influences and the regular course of nature is a superficial one. The regular course of nature is in itself a series of accidental influences; that is, the particular occasion is subservient to a general law with which it does not seem at first sight to have any connection. A severe winter may be sufficient to kill the quails, just as the ancient morass was sufficient to drown the mastodon. But the question is, why these causes began to operate just at these times. We may as well stop with the evident fact, that the unresting circulation is forever going on in the universe.

But if the quail, who is here very near his northern limits, has a hard time of it in the winter, and is threatened with such “removal” as we treat the Indians to, his relative, the partridge, our other gallinaceous or hen-like bird, is of a tougher fibre, as you see when you come upon his star-like tracks across the path, eight or nine inches apart, and struck sharp and deep in the snow, or closer together among the bushes, where he stretched up for barberries or buds, and ending on either side with a series of fine parallel cuts, where the sharp-pointed quills struck the snow as he rose,—a picture of vigor and success. He knows how to take care of himself, and to find both food and shelter in the evergreens, when the snow lies fresh upon the ground. There, in some sunny glade among the pines, he will ensconce himself in the thickest branches, and whirl off as you come near, sailing down the opening with his body balancing from side to side.

The partridge is altogether a wilder and more solitary bird than the quail, and does not frequent cultivated fields, nor make his nest in the orchard, as the quail does, but prefers the shelf of some rocky ledge under the shadow of the pines in remote woods. He is one of the few birds found in the forest; for it is a mistake to suppose that birds abound in the forest, or avoid the neighborhood of man. On the contrary, you may pass days and weeks in our northern woods without seeing more than half a dozen species, of which the partridge is pretty sure to be one. All birds increase in numbers about settlements,—even the crow, though he is a forest bird too. Hence, no doubt, has arisen the notion that the crow (supposed to be of the same species with the European) made his appearance in this country first on the Atlantic coast, and gradually spread westward, passing through the State of New York about the time of the Revolution. I was told some years since by a resident of Chicago, that the quails had increased eight-fold in that vicinity since he came there. The fact is, that the bird population, like the human, in the absence of counteracting causes, will continue to expand in precise ratio to the supply of food. The partridge goes farther north than the quail, and is found throughout the United States. With us he affects high and rocky ground, but northward he keeps at a lower level. At the White Mountains, the regions of this species and of the Canada grouse or spruce partridge are as well defined in height as those of the maples and the “black growth.” Still farther north I have observed that our partridge frequents the lowest marshy ground, thus equalizing his climate in every latitude.

Page 110

There are few of our land-birds that flock together in summer, and few that are solitary in winter,—none that I recollect, except birds of prey. And not only do birds of the same kind associate, but certain species are almost always found together. Thus, the chickadee, the golden-crested wren, the white-breasted nuthatch, and, less constantly, the brown creeper and the downy woodpecker, form a little winter clique, of which you do not often see one of the members without one or more of the others. No sound in nature more cheery and refreshing than the alternating calls of a little troop of this kind echoing through the glades of the woods on a still, sunny day in winter: the vivacious chatter of the chickadee, the slender, contented pipe of the gold-crest, and the emphatic, business-like *hank* of the nuthatch, as they drift leisurely along from tree to tree. The winter seems to be the season of holiday enjoyment to the chickadee, and he is never so evidently and conspicuously contented as in very cold weather. In summer he withdraws to the thickets, and becomes less noisy and active. His plumage becomes dull, and his brisk note changes to a fine, delicate *pee-peh-wy*, or oftenest a mere whisper. They are so much less noticeable at this season that one might suppose they had followed their gold-crest companions to the North, as some of them doubtless do, but their nests are not uncommon with us. Fearless as the chickadee is in winter,—so fearless, that, if you stand still, he will alight upon your head or shoulder,—in summer he becomes cautious about his nest, and will desert it, if much watched. They build here, generally, in a partly decayed white-birch or apple-tree, excavating a hole eighteen inches or two feet deep,—the chips being carefully carried off a short distance, so as not to betray the workman,—and lining the bottom of it with a felting of soft materials, generally rabbits' fur, of which I have taken from one hole as much as could be conveniently grasped with the hand.

Besides the species that we regularly count upon in winter, there are more or less irregular visitors at this season, some of them summer birds also,—as the purple finch, cedar-bird, gold-finch, robin, the flicker, or pigeon woodpecker, and the yellow-bellied and hairy woodpeckers. Others, again, linger on from the autumn, and sometimes through the winter,—as the snow-bird, song-sparrow, tree-sparrow. Still others are seen only in winter,—as the brown and shore larks, the crossbills, redpolls, snow-buntings, pine grosbeak, and some of the hawks and owls; and of these some are merely accidental,—as the pine grosbeak, which in 1836 appeared here in great numbers in October, and remained until May. This beautiful and gentle bird (a sweet songster too) is doubtless a permanent resident within the United States, for I have seen them at the White Mountains in August. What impels them to these occasional wanderings it is difficult to guess; it is obviously not mere stress of weather; for in 1836, as I have remarked, they came early in autumn and continued resident until late in the spring; and their food, being mainly the buds of resinous trees, must have been as easy to get elsewhere as here. Their coming, like the crow's staying, is a mystery to us.

Page 111

I have spoken only of the land-birds; but the position of our city, so embraced by the sea, affords unusual opportunities for observing the sea-birds also. All winter long, from the most crowded thoroughfares of the city, any one, who has leisure enough to raise his eyes over the level of the roofs to the tranquil air above, may see the gulls passing to and fro between the harbor and the flats at the mouth of Charles River. The gulls, and particularly that cosmopolite, the herring gull, are met with in this neighborhood throughout the year, though in summer most of them go farther north to breed. On a still, sunny day in winter, you may see them high in the air over the river, calmly soaring in wide circles, a hundred perhaps at a time, or pluming themselves leisurely on the edge of a hole in the ice. When the wind is violent from the west, they come in over the city from the bay outside, strong-winged and undaunted, breasting the gale, now high, now low, but always working to windward, until they reach the shelter of the inland waters.

In the spring they come in greater numbers, and other species arrive: the great saddle-back, from the similarity of coloring almost to be mistaken for the white-headed eagle, as he sits among the broken ice at the edge of the channel; and the beautiful little Bonaparte's gull.

The ducks, too, still resort to our rivermouth, in spite of the railroads and the tall chimneys by which their old feeding-grounds are surrounded. As long as the channel is open, you may see the golden-eyes, or "whistlers," in extended lines, visible only as a row of bright specks, as their white breasts rise and fall on the waves; and farther than you can see them, you may hear the whistle of their wings as they rise. Spring and fall the "black ducks" still come to find the brackish waters which they like, and to fill their crops with the seeds of the eel-grass and the mixed food of the flats. In the late twilight you may sometimes catch sight of a flock speeding in, silent and swift, over the Mill-dam, or hear their sonorous quacking from their feeding-ground.

At least, these things were,—and not long since,—though I cannot answer for a year or two back. The birds long retain the tradition of the old places, and strive to keep their hold upon them; but we are building them out year by year. The memory is still fresh of flocks of teal by the "Green Stores" on the Neck; but the teal and the "Stores" are gone, and perhaps the last black duck has quacked on the river, and the last whistler taken his final flight. Some of us, who are not yet old men, have killed "brown-backs" and "yellow-legs" on the marshes that lie along to the west and south of the city, now cut up by the railroads; and you may yet see from the cars an occasional long-booted individual, whose hopes still live on the tales of the past, stalking through the sedge with "superfluous gun," or patiently watching his troop of one-legged wooden decoys.

Page 112

The sea keeps its own climate, and keeps its highways open, after all on the land is shut up by frost. The sea-birds, accordingly, seem to lead an existence more independent of latitude and of seasons. In midwinter, when the seashore watering-places are forsaken by men, you may find Nahant or Nantasket Beach more thronged with bipeds of this sort than by the featherless kind in summer. The Long Beach of Nahant at that season is lined sometimes by an almost continuous flock of sea-ducks, and a constant passing and repassing are kept up between Lynn Bay and the surf outside.

Early of a winter's morning at Nantasket I once saw a flock of geese, many hundreds in number, coming in from the Bay to cross the land in their line of migration. They advanced with a vast, irregular front extending far along the horizon, their multitudinous *honking* softened into music by the distance. As they neared the beach the clamor increased and the line broke up in apparent confusion, circling round and round for some minutes in what seemed aimless uncertainty. Gradually the cloud of birds resolved itself into a number of open triangles, each of which with its deeper-voiced leader took its way inland; as if they trusted to their general sense of direction while flying over the water, but on coming to encounter the dangers of the land, preferred to delegate the responsibility. This done, all is left to the leader; if he is shot, it is said the whole flock seem bewildered, and often alight without regard to place or to their safety. The selection of the leader must therefore be a matter of deliberation with them; and this, no doubt, was going on in the flock I saw at Nantasket during their pause at the edge of the beach. The leader is probably always an old bird. I have noticed sometimes that his *honking* is more steady and in a deeper tone, and that it is answered in a higher key along the line.

THE INDIAN REVOLT.

For the first time in the history of the English dominion in India, its power has been shaken from within its own possessions, and by its own subjects. Whatever attacks have been made upon it heretofore have been from without, and its career of conquest has been the result to which they have led. But now no external enemy threatens it, and the English in India have found themselves suddenly and unexpectedly engaged in a hand-to-hand struggle with a portion of their subjects, not so much for dominion as for life. There had been signs and warnings, indeed, of the coming storm; but the feeling of security in possession and the confidence of moral strength were so strong, that the signs had been neglected and the warnings disregarded.

Page 113

No one in our time has played the part of Cassandra with more foresight and vehemence than the late Sir Charles Napier. He saw the quarter in which the storm was gathering, and he affirmed that it was at hand. In 1850, after a short period of service as commander-in-chief of the forces in India, he resigned his place, owing to a difference between himself and the government, and immediately afterwards prepared a memoir in justification of his course, accompanied with remarks upon the general administration of affairs in that country. It was written with all his accustomed clearness of mind, vigor of expression, and intensity of personal feeling,—but it was not published until after his death, which took place in 1853, when it appeared under the editorship of his brother, Lieutenant-General Sir W.F.P. Napier, with the title of “Defects, Civil and Military, of the Indian Government.” Its interest is greatly enhanced when read by the light of recent events. It is in great part occupied with a narrative of the exhibition of a mutinous spirit which appeared in 1849 in some thirty Sepoy battalions, in regard to a reduction of their pay, and of the means taken to check and subdue it. On the third page is a sentence which read now is of terrible import: “Mutiny with [among?] the Sepoys is the *most* formidable danger menacing our Indian empire.” And a few pages farther on occurs the following striking passage: “The ablest and most experienced civil and military servants of the East India Company consider mutiny as one of the greatest, if not *the* greatest danger threatening India,—a danger also that may come unexpectedly, and, if the first symptoms be not carefully treated, with a power to shake Leadenhall.”

The anticipated mutiny has now come, its first symptoms were treated with utter want of judgment, and its power is shaking the whole fabric of the English rule in India.

One day toward the end of January last, a workman employed in the magazine at Barrackpore, an important station about seventeen miles from Calcutta, stopped to ask a Sepoy for some water from his drinking-vessel. Being refused, because he was of low caste, and his touch would defile the vessel, he said, with a sneer, “What caste are you of, who bite pig’s grease and cow’s fat on your cartridges?” Practice with the new Enfield rifle had just been introduced, and the cartridges were greased for use in order not to foul the gun. The rumor spread among the Sepoys that there was a trick played upon them,—that this was but a device to pollute them and destroy their caste, and the first step toward a general and forcible conversion of the soldiers to Christianity. The groundlessness of the idea upon which this alarm was founded afforded no hindrance to its ready reception, nor was the absurdity of the design attributed to the ruling powers apparent to the obscured and timid intellect of the Sepoys. The consequences of loss of caste are so feared,—and are in reality of so

Page 114

trying a nature,—that upon this point the sensitiveness of the Sepoy is always extreme, and his suspicions are easily aroused. Their superstitions and religious customs “interfere in many strange ways with their military duties.” “The brave men of the 35th Native Infantry,” says Sir Charles Napier, “lost caste because they did their duty at Jelalabad; that is, they fought like soldiers, and ate what could be had to sustain their strength for battle.” But they are under a double rule, of religious and of military discipline,—and if the two come into conflict, the latter is likely to give way.

The discontent at Barrackpore soon manifested itself in ways not to be mistaken. There were incendiary fires within the lines. It was discovered that messengers had been sent to regiments at other stations, with incitements to insubordination. The officer in command at Barrackpore, General Hearsay, addressed the troops on parade, explained to them that the cartridges were not prepared with the obnoxious materials supposed, and set forth the groundlessness of their suspicions. The address was well received at first, but had no permanent effect. The ill-feeling spread to other troops and other stations. The government seems to have taken no measure of precaution in view of the impending trouble, and contented itself with despatching telegraphic messages to the more distant stations, where the new rifle-practice was being introduced, ordering that the native troops were “to have no practice ammunition served out to them, but only to watch the firing of the Europeans.” On the 26th of February, the 19th regiment, then stationed at Berhampore, refused to receive the cartridges that were served out, and were prevented from open violence only by the presence of a superior English force. After great delay, it was determined that this regiment should be disbanded. The authorities were not even yet alarmed; they were uneasy, but even their uneasiness does not seem to have been shared by the majority of the English residents in India. It was not until the 3d of April that the sentence passed upon the 19th regiment was executed. The affair was dallied with, and inefficiency and dilatoriness prevailed everywhere.

But meanwhile the disaffection was spreading. The order for confining the use of the new cartridges to the Europeans seems to have been looked upon by the native regiments as a confirmation of their suspicions with regard to them. The more daring and evil-disposed of the soldiers stimulated the alarm, and roused the prejudices of their more timid and unreasoning companions. No general plan of revolt seems to have been formed, but the materials of discontent were gradually being concentrated; the inflammable spirits of the Sepoys were ready to burst into a blaze. Strong and judicious measures, promptly put into action, might even now have allayed the excitement and dissipated the danger. But the imbecile commander-in-chief was enjoying himself

Page 115

and shirking care in the mountains; and Lord Canning and his advisers at Calcutta seem to have preferred to allow to take the initiative in their own way. Generally throughout Northern India the common routine of affairs went on at the different stations, and the ill-feeling and insubordination among the Sepoys scarcely disturbed the established quiet and monotony of Anglo-Indian life. But the storm was rising,—and the following extracts from a letter, hitherto unpublished, written on the 30th of May, by an officer of great distinction, and now in high command before Delhi, will show the manner of its breaking.

“A fortnight ago no community in the world could have been living in greater security of life and property than ours. Clouds there were that indicated to thoughtful minds a coming storm, and in the most dangerous quarter; but the actual outbreak was a matter of an hour, and has fallen on us like a judgment from Heaven,—sudden, irresistible as yet, terrible in its effects, and still spreading from place to place. I dare say you may have observed among the Indian news of late months, that here and there throughout the country mutinies of native regiments had been taking place. They had, however, been isolated cases, and the government thought it did enough to check the spirit of disaffection by disbanding the corps involved. The failure of the remedy was, however, complete, and, instead of having to deal now with mutinies of separate regiments, we stand face to face with a general mutiny of the Sepoy army of Bengal. To those who have thought most deeply of the perils of the English empire in India this has always seemed the monster one. It was thought to have been guarded against by the strong ties of mercenary interest that bound the army to the state, and there was, probably, but one class of feelings that would have been strong enough to have broken these ties,—those, namely, of religious sympathy or prejudice. The overt ground of the general mutiny was offence to caste feelings, given by the introduction into the army of certain cartridges said to have been prepared with hog’s lard and cow’s fat. The men must bite off the ends of these cartridges; so the Mahometans are defiled by the unclean animal, and the Hindoos by the contact of the dead cow. Of course the cartridges are *not* prepared as stated, and they form the mere handle for designing men to work with. They are, I believe, equally innocent of lard and fat; but that a general dread of being Christianized has by some means or other been created is without doubt, though there is still much that is mysterious in the process by which it has been instilled into the Sepoy mind, and I question if the government itself has any accurate information on the subject.

Page 116

"It was on the 10th of the present month [May] that the outburst of the mutinous spirit took place in our own neighborhood,—at Meerut. The immediate cause was the punishment of eighty-five troopers of the 3d Light Cavalry, who had refused to use the obnoxious cartridges, and had been sentenced by a native court-martial to ten years' imprisonment. On Saturday, the 9th, the men were put in irons, in presence of their comrades, and marched off to jail. On Sunday, the 10th, just at the time of evening service, the mutiny broke out. Three regiments left their lines, fell upon every European, man, woman, or child, they met or could find, murdered them all, burnt half the houses in the station, and, after working such a night of mischief and horror as devils might have delighted in, marched off to Delhi *en masse*, where three other regiments ripe for mutiny were stationed. On the junction of the two brigades, the horrors of Meerut were repeated in the imperial city, and every European who could be found was massacred with revolting barbarity. In fact, the spirit was that of a servile war. Annihilation of the ruling race was felt to be the only chance of safety or impunity; so no one of the ruling race was spared. Many, however, effected their escape, and, after all sorts of perils and sufferings, succeeded in reaching military stations containing European troops. * * *

"From the crisis of the mutiny our local anxieties have lessened. The country round is in utter confusion. Bands of robbers are murdering and plundering defenceless people. Civil government has practically ceased from the land. The most loathsome irresolution and incapacity have been exhibited in some of the highest quarters. A full month will elapse before the mutineers are checked by any organized resistance. A force is, or is supposed to be, marching on Delhi; but the outbreak occurred on the 10th of May, and this day is the first of June, and Delhi has seen no British colors and heard no British guns as yet. * * *

"As to the empire, it will be all the stronger after this storm. It is not five or six thousand mutinous mercenaries, or ten times the number, that will change the destiny of England in India. Though we small fragments of the great machine may fall at our posts, there is that vitality in the English people that will bound stronger against misfortunes, and build up the damaged fabric anew."

So far the letter from which we have quoted.—It was not until the 8th of June that an English force appeared before the walls of Delhi. For four weeks the mutineers had been left in undisturbed possession of the city, a possession which was of incalculable advantage to them by adding to their moral strength the prestige of a name which has always been associated with the sceptre of Indian empire. The masters of Delhi are the masters not only of a city, but of a deeply rooted tradition of supremacy. The delay had told. Almost every day in the latter half

Page 117

of May was marked by a new mutiny in different military stations, widely separated from each other, throughout the North-Western Provinces and Bengal. The tidings of the possession of Delhi by the mutineers stimulated the daring madness of regiments that had been touched by disaffection. Some mutinied from mere panic, some from bitterness of hate. Some fled away quietly with their arms, to join the force that had now swelled to an army in the city of the Great Moghul; some repeated the atrocities of Meerut, and set up a separate standard of revolt, to which all the disaffected and all the worst characters of the district flocked, to gratify their lust for revenge of real or fancied wrongs, or their baser passions for plunder and unmeaning cruelty. The malignity of a subtle, acute, semi-civilized race, unrestrained by law or by moral feeling, broke out in its most frightful forms. Cowardice possessed of strength never wreaked more horrible sufferings upon its victims, and the bloody and barbarous annals of Indian history show no more bloody and barbarous page.

The course of English life in those stations where the worst cruelties and the bitterest sufferings have been inflicted on the unhappy Europeans has been for a long time so peaceful and undisturbed, it has gone on for the most part in such pleasant and easy quiet and with such absolute security, that the agony of sudden alarm and unwarned violence has added its bitterness to the overwhelming horror. It is not as in border settlements, where the inhabitants choose their lot knowing that they are exposed to the incursions of savage enemies,—but it is as if on a night in one of the most peaceful of long-settled towns, troops of men, with a sort of civilization that renders their attack worse than that of savages, should be let loose to work their worst will of lust and cruelty. The details are too recent, too horrible, and as yet too broken and irregular, to be recounted here.

Although, at the first sally of the mutineers from Delhi against the force that had at length arrived, a considerable advantage was gained by the Europeans, this advantage was followed up by no decisive blow. The number of troops was too small to attempt an assault against an army of thirty thousand men, each man of whom was a trained soldier. The English force was unprovided with any sufficient siege battery. It could do little more than encamp, throw up intrenchments for its own defence, and wait for attacks to be made upon it,—attacks which it usually repulsed with great loss to the attackers. The month of June is the hottest month of the year at Delhi; the average height of the thermometer being 92 deg.. There, in such weather, the force must sit still, watch the pouring in of reinforcements and supplies to the city which it was too small to invest, and hear from day to day fresh tidings of disaster and revolt on every hand,—tidings of evil which there could scarcely be any hope of checking, until this central point of the mutiny had fallen before the British arms. A position more dispiriting can scarcely be imagined; and to all these causes for despondency were added the incompetency and fatuity of the Indian government, and the procrastination of the home government in the forwarding of the necessary reinforcements.

Page 118

Delhi has been often besieged, but seldom has a siege been laid to it that at first sight would have appeared more desperate than this. The city is strong in its artificial defences, and Nature lends her force to the native troops within the walls. If they could hold out through the summer, September was likely to be as great a general for them as the famous two upon whom the Czar relied in the Crimea. A wall of gray stone, strengthened by the modern science of English engineers, and nearly seven miles in circumference, surrounds the city upon three sides, while the fourth is defended by a wide offset of the Jumna, and by a portion of the high, embattled, red stone wall of the palace, which almost equals the city wall in strength, and is itself more than a mile in length. Few cities in the East present a more striking aspect from without. Over the battlements of the walls rise the slender minarets and shining domes of the mosques, the pavilions and the towers of the gates, the balustraded roofs of the higher and finer houses, the light foliage of acacias, and the dark crests of tall date-palms. It is a new city, only two hundred and twenty-six years old. Shah Jehan, its founder, was fond of splendor in building, was lavish of expense, and was eager to make his city imperial in appearance as in name. The great mosque that he built here is the noblest and most beautiful in all India. His palace might be set in comparison with that of Aladdin; it was the fulfilment of an Oriental voluptuary's dream. All that Eastern taste could devise of beauty, that Eastern lavishness could fancy of adornment, or voluptuousness demand of luxury, was brought together and displayed here. But its day of splendor was not long; and now, instead of furnishing a home to a court, which, if wicked, was at least magnificent, it is the abode of demoralized pensioners, who, having lost the reality, retain the pride and the vices of power. For years it has been utterly given over to dirt and to decay. Its beautiful halls and chambers, rich with marbles and mosaics, its "Pearl" *musjid*, its delicious gardens, its shady summer-houses, its fountains, and all its walks and pleasure-grounds, are neglected, abused, and occupied by the filthy retainers of an effete court.

The city stands partly on the sandy border of the river, partly on a low range of rocks. With its suburbs it may contain about one hundred and sixty thousand inhabitants, a little more than half of whom are Hindoos, and the remainder nominally Mahometans, in creed. Around the wall stretches a wide, barren, irregular plain, covered, mile after mile, with the ruins of earlier Delhis, and the tombs of the great or the rich men of the Mahometan dynasty. There is no other such monumental plain as this in the world. It is as full of traditions and historic memories as of ruins; and in this respect, as in many others, Delhi bears a striking resemblance to Rome,—for the Roman Campagna is the only field which in its crowd of memories may be compared with it, and the imperial city of India holds in the Mahometan mind much the same place that Rome occupies in that of the Christian.

Page 119

Before these pages are printed it is not unlikely that the news of the fall of Delhi will have reached us. The troops of the besiegers amounted in the middle of August to about five thousand five hundred men. Other troops near them, and reinforcements on the way, may by the end of the month have increased their force to ten thousand. At the last accounts a siege train was expected to arrive on the 3d of September, and an assault might be made very shortly afterwards. But September is an unhealthy month, and there may be delays. *Dehli door ust*,—"Delhi is far off,"—is a favorite Indian proverb. But the chances are in favor of its being now in British hands.[1] With its fall the war will be virtually ended,—for the reconquest of the disturbed territories will be a matter of little difficulty, when undertaken with the aid of the twenty thousand English troops who will arrive in India before the end of the year.

The settlement of the country, after these long disturbances, cannot be expected to take place at once; civil government has been too much interrupted to resume immediately its ordinary operation. But as this great revolt has had in very small degree the character of a popular rising, and as the vast mass of natives are in general not discontented with the English rule, order will be reestablished with comparative rapidity, and the course of life will before many months resume much of its accustomed aspect.

The struggle of the trained and ambitious classes against the English power will but have served to confirm it. The revolt overcome, the last great danger menacing English security in India will have disappeared. England will have learnt much from the trials she has had to pass through, and that essential changes will take place within a few years in the constitution of the Indian government there can be no doubt. But it is to be remembered that for the past thirty years, English rule in India has been, with all its defects, an enlightened and beneficent rule. The crimes with which it has been charged, the crimes of which it has been guilty, are small in amount, compared with the good it has effected. Moreover, they are not the result of inherent vices in the system of government, so much as of the character of exceptional individuals employed to carry out that system, and of the native character itself.—But on these points we do not propose now to enter.

If the close of this revolt be not stained with retaliating cruelties, if English soldiers remember mercy, then the whole history of this time will be a proud addition to the annals of England. For though it will display the incompetency and the folly of her governments, it will show how these were remedied by the energy and spirit of individuals; it will tell of the daring and gallantry of her men, of their patient endurance, of their undaunted courage, and it will tell, too, with a voice full of tears, of the sorrows, and of the brave and tender hearts, and of the unshaken religious faith supporting them to the end, of the women who died in the hands of their enemies. The names of Havelock and Lawrence will be reckoned in the list of England's worthies, and the story of the garrison of Cawnpore will be treasured up forever among England's saddest and most touching memories.

Page 120

[Footnote 1: It is earnestly to be hoped that the officers in command of the British force will not yield to the savage suggestions and incitements of the English press, with regard to the fate of Delhi. The tone of feeling which has been shown in many quarters in England has been utterly disgraceful. Indiscriminate cruelty and brutality are no fitting vengeance for the Hindoo and Mussulman barbarities. The sack of Delhi and the massacre of its people would bring the English conquerors down to the level of the conquered. Great sins cry out for great punishments,—but let the punishment fall on the guilty, and not involve the innocent. The strength of English rule in India must be in her justice, in her severity,—but not in the force and irresistible violence of her passions. To destroy the city would be to destroy one of the great ornaments of her empire,—to murder the people would be to commence the new period of her rule with a revolting crime.

“For five days,” says the historian, “Tamerlane remained a tranquil spectator of the sack and conflagration of Delhi and the massacre of its inhabitants, while he was celebrating a feast in honor of his victory. When the troops were wearied with slaughter, and nothing was left to plunder, he gave orders for the prosecution of his march, and on the day of his departure he offered up to the Divine Majesty the sincere and humble tribute of grateful praise.”

“It is said that Nadir Shah, during the massacre that he had commanded, sat in gloomy silence in the little mosque of Rokn-u-doulah, which stands at the present day in the Great Bazaar. Here the Emperor and his nobles at length took courage to present themselves. They stood before him with downcast eyes, until Nadir commanded them to speak, when the Emperor burst into tears and entreated Nadir to spare his subjects.”]

SKIPPER IRESON'S RIDE.

Of all the rides since the birth of time,
Told in story or sung in rhyme,—
On Apuleius's Golden Ass,
Or one-eyed Calendar's horse of brass,
Witch astride of a human hack,
Islam's prophet on Al-Borak,—
The strangest ride that ever was sped
Was Ireson's out from Marblehead!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Body of turkey, head of owl,
Wings a-droop like a rained-on fowl,
Feathered and ruffled in every part,



Captain Ireson stood in the cart.
Scores of women, old and young,
Strong of muscle, and glib of tongue,
Pushed and pulled up the rocky lane,
Shouting and singing the shrill refrain:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"



Page 121

Girls in bloom of cheek and lips,
Wrinkled scolds with hands on hips,
Wild-eyed, free-limbed, such as chase
Bacchus round some antique vase,
Brief of skirt, with ankles bare,
Loose of kerchief and loose of hair,
With conch-shells blowing and fish-horns' twang,
Over and over the Maenads sang:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Small pity for him!—He sailed away
From a leaking ship in Chaleur Bay,—
Sailed away from a sinking wreck,
With his own town's-people on her deck!
"Lay by! lay by!" they called to him.
Back he answered, "Sink or swim!
Brag of your catch of fish again!"
And off he sailed through the fog and rain!
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Fathoms deep in dark Chaleur
That wreck shall lie forevermore.
Mother and sister, wife and maid,
Looked from the rocks of Marblehead
Over the moaning and rainy sea,
Looked for the coming that might not be!
What did the winds and the sea-birds say
Of the cruel captain who sailed away?—
Old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Through the street, on either side,
Up flew windows, doors swung wide;
Sharp-tongued spinsters, old wives gray,
Treble lent the fish-horn's bray.
Sea-worn grandsires, cripple-bound,
Hulks of old sailors run aground,
Shook head, and fist, and hat, and cane,
And cracked with curses the hoarse refrain:



"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

Sweetly along the Salem road
Bloom of orchard and lilac showed.
Little the wicked skipper knew
Of the fields so green and the sky so blue.
Riding there in his sorry trim,
Like an Indian idol glum and grim,
Scarcely he seemed the sound to hear
Of voices shouting far and near:
"Here's Flud Oirson, fur his horrd horrt,
Torr'd an' futherr'd an' corr'd in a corrt
By the women o' Morble'ead!"

"Hear me, neighbors!" at last he cried,—
"What to me is this noisy ride?
What is the shame that clothes the skin,
To the nameless horror that lives within?
Waking or sleeping, I see a wreck
And hear a cry from a reeling deck!
Hate me and curse me,—I only dread
The hand of God and the face of the dead!"
Said old Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Then the wife of the skipper lost at sea
Said, "God has touched him!—why should we?"
Said an old wife mourning her only son,
"Cut the rogue's tether and let him run!"
So with soft relentings and rude excuse,
Half scorn, half pity, they cut him loose,
And gave him cloak to hide him in,
And left him alone with his shame and sin.
Poor Floyd Ireson, for his hard heart,
Tarred and feathered and carried in a cart
By the women of Marblehead!

Page 122

SOLITUDE AND SOCIETY.

I fell in with a humorist, on my travels, who had in his chamber a cast of the Rondanini Medusa, and who assured me that the name which that fine work of art bore in the catalogues was a misnomer, as he was convinced that the sculptor who carved it intended it for Memory, the mother of the Muses. In the conversation that followed, my new friend made some extraordinary confessions. "Do you not see," he said, "the penalty of learning, and that each of these scholars whom you have met at S., though he were to be the last man, would, like the executioner in Hood's poem, guillotine the last but one?" He added many lively remarks, but his evident earnestness engaged my attention, and, in the weeks that followed, we became better acquainted. He had great abilities, a genial temper, and no vices; but he had one defect,—he could not speak in the tone of the people. There was some paralysis on his will, that, when he met men on common terms, he spoke weakly, and from the point, like a flighty girl. His consciousness of the fault made it worse. He envied every daysman and drover in the tavern their manly speech. He coveted Mirabeau's *don terrible de la familiarite*, believing that he whose sympathy goes lowest is the man from whom kings have the most to fear. For himself, he declared that he could not get enough alone to write a letter to a friend. He left the city; he hid himself in pastures. The solitary river was not solitary enough; the sun and moon put him out. When he bought a house, the first thing he did was to plant trees. He could not enough conceal himself. Set a hedge here; set oaks there,—trees behind trees; above all, set evergreens, for they will keep a secret all the year round. The most agreeable compliment you could pay him was, to say that you had not observed him in a house or a street where you had met him. Whilst he suffered at being seen where he was, he consoled himself with the delicious thought of the inconceivable number of places where he was not. All he wished of his tailor was, to provide that sober mean of color and cut which would never detain the eye for a moment. He went to Vienna, to Smyrna, to London. In all the variety of costumes, a carnival, a kaleidoscope of clothes, to his horror he could never discover a man in the street who wore anything like his own dress. He would have given his soul for the ring of Gyges. His dismay at his visibility had blunted the fears of mortality. "Do you think," he said, "I am in such great terror of being shot,—I, who am only waiting to shuffle off my corporeal jacket, to slip away into the back stars, and put diameters of the solar system and sidereal orbits between me and all souls,—there to wear out ages in solitude, and forget memory itself, if it be possible?" He had a remorse running to despair of his social *gaucheries*, and walked miles and miles to get the twitchings out of his face, the starts and shrugs out of his arms and shoulders. "God may forgive sins," he said, "but awkwardness has no forgiveness in heaven or earth." He admired in Newton, not so much his theory of the moon, as his letter to Collins, in which he forbade him to insert his name with the solution of the problem in the "Philosophical Transactions": "It would perhaps increase my acquaintance, the thing which I chiefly study to decline."

Page 123

These conversations led me somewhat later to the knowledge of similar cases, existing elsewhere, and to the discovery that they are not of very infrequent occurrence. Few substances are found pure in nature. Those constitutions which can bear in open day the rough dealing of the world must be of that mean and average structure,—such as iron and salt, atmospheric air, and water. But there are metals, like potassium and sodium, which, to be kept pure, must be kept under naphtha. Such are the talents determined on some specialty, which a culminating civilization fosters in the heart of great cities and in royal chambers. Nature protects her own work. To the culture of the world, an Archimedes, a Newton is indispensable; so she guards them by a certain aridity. If these had been good fellows, fond of dancing, Port, and clubs, we should have had no “Theory of the Sphere,” and no “Principia.” They had that necessity of isolation which genius feels. Each must stand on his glass tripod, if he would keep his electricity. Even Swedenborg, whose theory of the universe is based on affection, and who reprobates to weariness the danger and vice of pure intellect, is constrained to make an extraordinary exception: “There are also angels who do not live consociated, but separate, house and house; these dwell in the midst of heaven, because they are the best of angels.”

We have known many fine geniuses have that imperfection that they cannot do anything useful, not so much as write one clean sentence. 'Tis worse, and tragic, that no man is fit for society who has fine traits. At a distance, he is admired; but bring him hand to hand, he is a cripple. One protects himself by solitude, and one by courtesy, and one by an acid, worldly manner,—each concealing how he can the thinness of his skin and his incapacity for strict association. But there is no remedy that can reach the heart of the disease, but either habits of self-reliance that should go in practice to making the man independent of the human race, or else a religion of love. Now he hardly seems entitled to marry; for how can he protect a woman, who cannot protect himself?

We pray to be conventional. But the wary Heaven takes care you shall not be, if there is anything good in you. Dante was very bad company, and was never invited to dinner. Michel Angelo had a sad, sour time of it. The ministers of beauty are rarely beautiful in coaches and saloons. Columbus discovered no isle or key so lonely as himself. Yet each of these potentates saw well the reason of his exclusion. Solitary was he? Why, yes; but his society was limited only by the amount of brain Nature appropriated in that age to carry on the government of the world. “If I stay,” said Dante, when there was question of going to Rome, “who will go? and if I go, who will stay?”

Page 124

But the necessity of solitude is deeper than we have said, and is organic. I have seen many a philosopher whose world is large enough for only one person. He affects to be a good companion; but we are still surprising his secret, that he means and needs to impose his system on all the rest. The determination of each is *from* all the others, like that of each tree up into free space. 'Tis no wonder, when each has his whole head, our societies should be so small. Like President Tyler, our party falls from us every day, and we must ride in a sulky at last. Dear heart! take it sadly home to thee, there is no cooeperation. We begin with friendships, and all our youth is a reconnoitring and recruiting of the holy fraternity that shall combine for the salvation of men. But so the remoter stars seem a nebula of united light, yet there is no group which a telescope will not resolve, and the dearest friends are separated by impassable gulfs. The cooeperation is involuntary, and is put upon us by the Genius of Life, who reserves this as a part of his prerogative. 'Tis fine for us to talk: we sit and muse, and are serene, and complete; but the moment we meet with anybody, each becomes a fraction.

Though the stuff of tragedy and of romances is in a moral union of two superior persons, whose confidence in each other for long years, out of sight, and in sight, and against all appearances, is at last justified by victorious proof of probity to gods and men, causing joyful emotions, tears, and glory,—though there be for heroes this *moral union*, yet they, too, are as far off as ever from an intellectual union, and the moral union is for comparatively low and external purposes, like the cooeperation of a ship's company, or of a fire-club. But how insular and pathetically solitary are all the people we know! Nor dare they tell what they think of each other, when they meet in the street. We have a fine right, to be sure, to taunt men of the world with superficial and treacherous courtesies!

Such is the tragic necessity which strict science finds underneath our domestic and neighborly life, irresistibly driving each adult soul as with whips into the desert, and making our warm covenants sentimental and momentary. We must infer that the ends of thought were peremptory, if they were to be secured at such ruinous cost. They are deeper than can be told, and belong to the immensities and eternities. They reach down to that depth where society itself originates and disappears,—where the question is, Which is first, man or men?—where the individual is lost in his source.

Page 125

But this banishment to the rocks and echoes no metaphysics can make right or tolerable. This result is so against nature, such a half-view, that it must be corrected by a common sense and experience. "A man is born by the side of his father, and there he remains." A man must be clothed with society, or we shall feel a certain bareness and poverty, as of a displaced and unfurnished member. He is to be dressed in arts and institutions, as well as body-garments. Now and then a man exquisitely made can live alone, and must but coop up most men, and you undo them. "The king lived and ate in his hall with men, and understood men," said Selden. When a young barrister said to the late Mr. Mason, "I keep my chamber to read law." "Read law!" replied the veteran, "'tis in the courtroom you must read law." Nor is the rule otherwise for literature. If you would learn to write, 'tis in the street you must learn it. Both for the vehicle and for the aims of fine arts, you must frequent the public square. The people, and not the college, is the writer's home. A scholar is a candle, which the love and desire of all men will light. Never his lands or his rents, but the power to charm the disguised soul that sits veiled under this bearded and that rosy visage is his rent and ration. His products are as needful as those of the baker or the weaver. Society cannot do without cultivated men. As soon as the first wants are satisfied, the higher wants become imperative.

'Tis hard to mesmerize ourselves, to whip our own top; but through sympathy we are capable of energy and endurance. Concert exasperates people to a certain fury of performance they can rarely reach alone. Here is the use of society: it is so easy with the great to be great! so easy to come up to an existing standard!—as easy as it is to the lover to swim to his maiden, through waves so grim before. The benefits of affection are immense; and the one event which never loses its romance is the alighting of superior persons at our gate.

It by no means follows that we are not fit for society, because *soirees* are tedious, and because the *soiree* finds us tedious. A backwoodsman, who had been sent to the university, told me, that when he heard the best-bred young men at the law-school talk together, he reckoned himself a boor; but whenever he caught them apart, and had one to himself alone, then they were the boors, and he the better man. And if we recall the rare hours when we encountered the best persons, we then found ourselves, and then first society seemed to exist. That was society, though in the transom of a brig, or on the Florida Keys.

Page 126

A cold, sluggish blood thinks it has not facts enough to the purpose, and must decline its turn in the conversation. But they who speak have no more,—have less. 'Tis not new facts that avail, but the heat to dissolve everybody's facts. Heat puts you in right relation with magazines of facts. The capital defect of cold, arid natures is the want of animal spirits. They seem a power incredible, as if God should raise the dead. The recluse witnesses what others perform by their aid with a kind of fear. It is as much out of his possibility, as the prowess of Coeur-de-Lion, or an Irishman's day's work on the railroad. 'Tis said, the present and the future are always rivals. Animal spirits constitute the power of the present, and their feats are like the structure of a pyramid. Their result is a lord, a general, or a boon-companion. Before these, what a base mendicant is Memory with his leathern badge! But this genial heat is latent in all constitutions, and is disengaged only by the friction of society. As Bacon said of manners, "To obtain them, it only needs not to despise them," so we say of animal spirits, that they are the spontaneous product of health and of a social habit. "For behavior, men learn it, as they take diseases, one of another."

But the people are to be taken in very small doses. If solitude is proud, so is society vulgar. In society, high advantages are set down to the individual as disadvantages. We sink as easily as we rise, through sympathy. So many men whom I know are degraded by their sympathies, their native aims being high enough, but their relation all too tender to the gross people about them. Men cannot afford to live together on their merits, and they adjust themselves by their demerits,—by their love of gossip, or sheer tolerance and animal good-nature. They untune and dissipate the brave aspirant.

The remedy is, to reinforce each of these moods from the other. Conversation will not corrupt us, if we come to the assembly in our own garb and speech, and with the energy of health to select what is ours and reject what is not. Society we must have; but let it be society, and not exchanging news, or eating from the same dish. Is it society to sit in one of your chairs? I cannot go to the houses of my nearest relatives, because I do not wish to be alone. Society exists by chemical affinity, and not otherwise.

Put any company of people together with freedom for conversation, and a rapid self-distribution takes place into sets and pairs. The best are accused of exclusiveness. It would be more true to say, they separate as oil from water, as children from old people, without love or hatred in the matter, each seeking his like; and any interference with the affinities would produce constraint and suffocation. All conversation is a magnetic experiment. I know that my friend can talk eloquently; you know that he cannot articulate a sentence: we have seen him in different company. Assort your party, or invite none. Put Stubbs and Byron, Quintilian and Aunt Miriam, into pairs, and you make them all wretched. 'Tis an extempore Sing-Sing built in a parlor. Leave them to seek their own mates, and they will be as merry as sparrows.

Page 127

A higher civility will reestablish in our customs a certain reverence which we have lost. What to do with these brisk young men who break through all fences, and make themselves at home in every house? I find out in an instant if my companion does not want me, and ropes cannot hold me when my welcome is gone. One would think that the affinities would pronounce themselves with a surer reciprocity.

Here again, as so often, Nature delights to put us between extreme antagonisms, and our safety is in the skill with which we keep the diagonal line. Solitude is impracticable, and society fatal. We must keep our head in the one, and our hands in the other. The conditions are met, if we keep our independence, yet do not lose our sympathy. These wonderful horses need to be driven by fine hands. We require such a solitude as shall hold us to its revelations when we are in the street and in palaces; for most men are cowed in society, and say good things to you in private, but will not stand to them in public. But let us not be the victims of words. Society and solitude are deceptive names. It is not the circumstance of seeing more or fewer people, but the readiness of sympathy, that imports; and a sound mind will derive its principles from insight, with ever a purer ascent to the sufficient and absolute right, and will accept society as the natural element in which they are to be applied.

AKIN BY MARRIAGE.

[Continued.]

CHAPTER III

When little Helen was not far from nine years old, her mother, (as she had learned to call Mrs. Bugbee,) whose health for a long time had been failing, fell sick and took to her bed. Sometimes, for a brief space, she would seem to mend a little; and a council of doctors, convened to consider her case,—though each member differed from all the others touching the nature of her malady,—unanimously declared she would ultimately recover. But her disease, whatever it was, proved to be her mortal illness; for the very next night she came suddenly to her end. Her loss was a heavy one, especially to her own household. She had always been a quiet person, of rather pensive humor, whose native diffidence caused her to shrink from observation; and after Amelia's death she was rarely seen abroad, except at meeting, on Sundays, or when she went to visit the poor, the sick, or the grief-stricken. It was at home that her worth was most apparent; for plain domestic virtues, such as hers, seldom gain wide distinction. Her children's sorrow was deep and lasting, and the badge of mourning which her husband wore for many months after her death was a truthful symbol of unaffected grief. From the beginning, he was warmly attached to his wife, whose affection for him was very great indeed. It would have been strange if he had been unhappy, when she, who made his tastes her study, also made it the business of her life to please him. Besides, his

cheerful temper enabled him to make light of more grievous misfortunes than the getting of a loving wife and thrifty helpmeet ten years older than himself.

Page 128

When a widower, like the Doctor, is but fifty, with the look of a much younger man, people are apt to talk about the chances of his marrying again. Before Mrs. Bugbee had been dead a twelve-month, rumors were as plenty as blackberries that the Doctor had been seen, late on Sunday evenings, leaving this house, or that house, the dwelling-place of some marriageable lady; and if he had finally espoused all whom the gossips reported he was going to marry, he would have had as many wives as any Turkish pasha or Mormon elder. It was doubtless true that he called at certain places more frequently than had been his custom in Mrs. Bugbee's lifetime. This, he assured Cornelia, to whom the reports I have mentioned occasioned some uneasiness, was because he was more often summoned to attend, in a professional way, at those places, than he had ever been of old; which was true enough, I dare say, for more spinsters and widows were taken ailing about this time than had ever been ill at once before. Be that as it may, certain arrangements which the Doctor presently made in his domestic affairs did not seem to foretoken an immediate change of condition.

Miss Statira Blake, whom the Doctor engaged as housekeeper, was the youngest daughter of an honest shoemaker, who formerly flourished at Belfield Green, where he was noted for industry, a fondness for reading, a tenacious memory, a ready wit, and a fluent tongue. In politics he was a radical, and in religion a schismatic. The little knot of Presbyterian Federalist magnates, who used to assemble at the tavern to discuss affairs of church and state over mugs of flip and tumblers of sling, regarded him with feelings of terror and aversion. The doughty little cobbler made nothing of attacking them single-handed, and putting them utterly to rout; for he was a dabster at debate, and entertained as strong a liking for polemics as for books. Nay, he was a thorn in the side of the parson himself, for whom he used to lie in wait with knotty questions,—snarles set to entrap the worthy divine, in the hope of beguiling him into a controversy respecting some abstruse point of doctrine, in which the cobbler, who had every verse of the Bible at his tongue's end, was not apt to come off second best.

But one day, Tommy Blake, being at a raising where plenty of liquor was furnished, (as the fashion used to be,) slipped and fell from a high beam, and was carried home groaning with a skinful of broken bones. He died the next day, poor man, and his bedridden widow survived the shock of witnessing his dreadful agonies and death but a very little while. Her daughters, two young girls, were left destitute and friendless. But Major Bugbee, to whom the cobbler's wife had been remotely akin, and who was at that time first selectman of the town, took the orphans with him to his house, where they tarried till he found good places for them. Roxana, the elder girl, went to live with a reputable farmer's wife, whose only son

Page 129

she afterwards married. Statira remained under the shelter of the good Major's hospitable roof much longer than her sister did, and would have been welcome to stay, but she was not one of those who like to eat the bread of dependence. With the approval of the selectmen, she bound herself an indentured apprentice to Billy Tuthill, the little lame tailor, for whom she worked faithfully four years, until she had served out her time and was mistress of her trade, even to the recondite mystery of cutting a double-breasted swallow-tail coat by rule and measure. Then, at eighteen, she set up business for herself, going from house to house as her customers required, working by the day. Her services were speedily in great demand, and she was never out of employment. Many a worthy citizen of Belfield well remembers his first jacket-and-trowsers, the handiwork of Tira Blake. The Sunday breeches of half the farmers who came to meeting used to be the product of her skilful labor. Thus for many years (refusing meanwhile several good offers of marriage) she continued to ply her needle and shears, working steadily and cheerfully in her vocation, earning good wages and spending but little, until the thrifty sempstress was counted well to do, and held in esteem according. Sometimes, when she got weary, and thought a change of labor would do her good, she would engage with some lucky dame to help do housework for a month or two. She was a famous hand at pickling, preserving, and making all manner of toothsome knick-knacks and dainties. Nor was she deficient in the pleasure walks of the culinary art. Betsey Pratt, the tavernkeeper's wife, a special crony of Statira's, used always to send for her whenever she was in straits, or when, on some grand occasion, a dinner or supper was to be prepared and served up in more than ordinary style. So learned was she in all the devices of the pantry and kitchen, that many a young woman in the parish would have given half her setting-out, and her whole store of printed cookery-books, to know by heart Tira Blake's unwritten lore of rules and recipes. So, wherever she went, she was welcome, albeit not a few stood in fear of her; for though, when well treated, she was as good-humored as a kitten, when provoked, especially by a slight or affront, her wrath was dangerous. Her tongue was sharper than her needle, and her pickles were not more piquant than her sarcastic wit. Tira, the older people used to remark, was Tommy Blake's own daughter; and truly, she did inherit many of her father's qualities, both good and bad, and not a few of his crotchets and opinions. In fine, she was a shrewd, sensible, Yankee old maid, who, as she herself was wont to say, was as well able to take care of 'number one' as e'er a man in town.

Page 130

Statira never forgot Major Bugbee's kindness to her in her lonely orphanhood. She preserved for him and for every member of his family a grateful affection; but her special favorite was James, the Doctor's brother, who was a little younger than she, and who repaid this partiality with hearty good-will and esteem. When he grew up and married, his house became one of Statira's homes; the other being at her sister's house, which was too remote from Belfield Green to be at all times convenient. So she had rooms, which she called alike her own, at both these places, in each of which she kept a part of her wardrobe and a portion of her other goods and chattels. The children of both families called her Aunt Statira, but, if the truth were known, she loved little Frank Bugbee, James's only son, better than she did the whole brood of her sister Roxy's flaxen-pated offspring. Nay, she loved him better than all the world besides. Statira used to call James her right-hand man, asking for his advice in every matter of importance, and usually acting in accordance with it. So, when Doctor Bugbee invited her to take charge of his household affairs, Cornelia joining in the request with earnest importunity, she did not at once return a favorable reply, though strongly inclined thereto, but waited until she had consulted James and his wife, who advised her to accept the proffered trust, giving many sound and excellent reasons why she ought to do so.

Accordingly, a few months after Mrs. Bugbee's death, Statira began to sway the sceptre where she had once found refuge from the poor-house; for though Cornelia remained the titular mistress of the mansion, Statira was the actual ruler, invested with all the real power. Cornelia gladly resigned into her more experienced hands the reins of government, and betook herself to occupations more congenial to her tastes than housekeeping. Whenever, afterwards, she made a languid offer to perform some light domestic duty, Statira was accustomed to reply in such wise that the most perfect concord was maintained between them. "No, my dear," the latter would say, "do you just leave these things to me. If there a'n't help enough in the house to do the work, your pa'll get 'em; and as for overseein', one's better than two." But sometimes, when little Helen proffered her assistance, Tira let the child try her hand, taking great pains to instruct her in housewifery, warmly praising her successful essays, and finding excuses for every failure. It was not long before a cordial friendship subsisted between the teacher and her pupil.

The Doctor, of course, experienced great contentment at beholding his children made happy, his house well kept and ordered, his table spread with plentiful supplies of savory victuals, and all his domestic concerns managed with sagacity and prudence, by one upon whose goodwill and ability to promote his welfare he could rely with implicit confidence. Even the servants shared in the general satisfaction; for

Page 131

though, under Tira's vigorous rule, no task or duty could be safely shunned or slighted, she proved a kind and even an indulgent mistress to those who showed themselves worthy of her favor. Old Violet, the mother of Dinah, the little black girl elsewhere mentioned, yielded at once to Tira Blake the same respectful obedience that she and her ancestors, for more than a century in due succession, had been wont to render only to dames of the ancient Bugbee line. Dinah herself, now a well-grown damsel, black, but comely, who, during Cornelia's maladministration, had been suffered to follow too much the devices and desires of her own heart, setting at naught alike the entreaties and reproofs of her mistress and her mother's angry scoldings,—even Dinah submitted without a murmur to Tira's wholesome authority, and abandoned all her evil courses. Bildad Royce, a crotchety hired-man, whom the Doctor kept to do the chores and till the garden, albeit at first inclined to be captious, accorded to the new housekeeper the meed of his approbation.

"I like her well enough to hope she'll stay, mum," quoth he, in reply to an inquisitive neighbor. "And for my part, Miss Prouty," he added, nodding and winking at his questioner, "I'd like to see it fixed so she'd alwus stay; and if the Doctor *doos* think he can't do no better'n to have her bimeby, when the time comes, who's a right to say a word agin it?"

"Goodness me!" exclaimed the unwary Mrs. Prouty,—“do you mean to say you think he's got any idea of such a thing, Bildad?"

"Yes, I *don't* mean to say I think he's got any idee of sich a thing, Bildad," replied Bildad himself, who took great delight in mystifying people, and who sometimes, in order to express the most unqualified negation, was accustomed to employ this apparently ambiguous form of speech. "I said for *my* part, Miss Prouty,—for *my* part. As for the Doctor, he'll prob'bly have his own notions, and foller 'em."

Besides these already mentioned, there was another person, who sat so often at the Doctor's board and spent so many hours beneath his roof, that, for the nonce, I shall reckon her among his family. Indeed, Laura Stebbins was almost as much at home in the Bugbee mansion as at the parsonage, and she used to regard the Doctor and his wife with an affection quite filial in kind and very ardent in degree. For this she had abundant reason, the good couple always treating her with the utmost kindness, frequently making her presents of clothes and things which she needed, besides gifts of less use and value. These tokens of her friends' good-will she used to receive with many sprightly demonstrations of thankfulness; sometimes, in her transports of gratitude, distributing between the Doctor and his wife a number of delicious kisses, and telling the latter that her husband was the best and most generous of men. After Mrs. Bugbee's death, the Doctor's manner, as was to be expected, became more grave and sober, and

Page 132

he very wisely thought proper to treat Laura with a kindness less familiar than before, which perceiving with the quickness of her sex, she also practised a like reserve. But notwithstanding this prudent change in his demeanor, his good-will for Laura was in no wise abated. At all events, the friendship between Cornelia and Laura suffered no decay or diminution. Indeed, it increased in fervency and strength. For Laura, having finished her course of study at the Belfield Academy, had now more time to devote to Cornelia than when she had had lessons to get and recitations to attend. The parsonage stood next to the Bugbee mansion, and in the paling between the two gardens there was a wicket, through which Cornelia, Laura, and Helen used to run to and fro a dozen times a day. The females of the Doctor's family made nothing of scudding, bareheaded, across to the parsonage by this convenient back-way, and bolting into the kitchen without so much as knocking at the door; and Laura's habits at the Bugbee mansion were still more familiar. Mrs. Jaynes, though not the most affable of womankind, gave this close intimacy much favor and encouragement; for she bore in mind that Cornelia's father was the richest and most influential member of her husband's church and parish.

At first, Laura was a little shy of the plain-spoken old maid, for whose person, manners, and opinions she had often heard Mrs. Jaynes express, in private, a most bitter dislike. But Statira had been regnant in the Bugbee mansion less than a week, when Laura began to make timid advances towards a mutual good understanding, of which for a while Statira affected to take no heed; for having formed a resolution to maintain a strict reserve towards every inmate of the parsonage, she was not disposed to break it so soon, even in favor of Laura, whose winsome overtures she found it difficult to resist.

"If it wa'n't for her bein' Miss Jaynes's sister," said she, one day, to Cornelia, who had been praising her friend,— "if it wa'n't for that one thing, I should like her remarkable well,—a good deal more'n common."

"Pray, what have you got such a spite against the Jayneses for?" asked Cornelia.

"What do you mean by askin' such a question as that, Cornele?" said Tira, in a tone of stern reproof. "Who's got a spite against 'em? Not I, by a good deal! As for the parson himself, he's a well-meanin' man, and does as near right as he knows how. If you could say as much as that for everybody, there wouldn't be any need of parsons any more."

"But you don't like Mrs. Jaynes," persisted Cornelia.

"I ha'n't got a spite against her, Cornele,—though, I confess, I don't love the woman," replied Statira. "But I always treat her well; though, to be sure, I don't curchy so low and keep smilin' so much as most folks do, when they meet a minister's wife and have talk with her. Even when she comes here a-borrowin' things she knows will be giv' to her

when she asks for 'em, which makes it so near to beggin' that she ought to be ashamed on't, which I only give to her because it's your father's wish for me to do so, and the things are his'n; but I always treat her well, Cornele."

Page 133

“But why don’t you like her, Tira?” asked Helen.

“My dear, I’ll tell you,” said Statira; “for I don’t want you to think I’m set against any person unreasonable and without cause. You see Miss Jaynes is a nateral-born beggar. I don’t say it with any ill-will, but it’s a fact. She takes to beggin’ as naterally as a goslin’ takes to a puddle; and when she first come to town she commenced a-beggin’, and has kep’ it up ever since. She used to tackle me the same as she does everybody else, askin’ me to give somethin’ to this, and to that, and to t’other pet humbug of her’n, but I never would do it; and when she found she could’nt worry me into it, like the rest of ’em, it set her very bitter against me; and I heard of her tellin’ I’d treated her with rudeness, which I’d always treated her civilly, only when I said ‘No,’ she found coaxin’ and palaverin’ wouldn’t stir me. So it went on for a year or two, till, one fall, I was stayin’ here to your ma’s,—Cornele, I guess you remember the time,—helpin’ of her make up her quinces and apples. We was jest in the midst of bilin’ cider, with one biler on the stove and the biggest brass kittle full in the fireplace, when in comes boltin’ Miss Jaynes, dressed up as fine as a fiddle. She set right down in the kitchen, and your ma rolled her sleeves down and took off her apurn, lookin’ kind o’ het and worried. After a few words, Miss Jaynes took a paper out of her pocket, and says she to your ma, ‘Miss Bugbee,’ says she, ‘I’m a just startin’ forth on the Lord’s business, and I come to you as the helpmate and pardner of one of his richest stewards in this vineyard.’—‘What is it now?’ says your ma, lookin’ out of one eye at the brass kittle, and speakin’ more impatient than I ever heard her speak to a minister’s wife before. Well, I can’t spend time to tell all that Miss Jaynes said in answer, but it seemed some of the big folks in New York had started a new society, and its object was to provide, as near as ever I could find out, such kind of necessary notions for indigent young men studyin’ to be ministers as they couldn’t well afford to buy for themselves,—such as steel-bowed specs for the near-sighted ones, and white cravats, black silk gloves, and linen-cambric handkerchiefs for ’em all,—in order, as Miss Jaynes said, these young fellers might keep up a respectable appearance, and not give a chance for the world’s people to get a contemptible idee of the ministry, on account of the shabby looks of the young men that had laid out to foller that holy callin’. She said it was a cause that ought to lay near the heart of every evangelical Christian man, and especially the women. ‘We mothers in Israel,’ says Miss Jaynes, ‘ought to feel for these young Davids that have gone forth to give battle to the Goliaths of sin that are a-stalkin’ and struttin’ round all over the land.’ She said the society was goin’ to be a great institution, with an office to New York, with an executive committee and three secretaries in attendance there,

Page 134

and was a-goin' to employ a great number of clergymen, out of a parish, to travel as agents collecting funds; 'but,' says she, 'I've a better tack for collectin' than most people, and I've concluded to canvass this town myself for donations to this noble and worthy cause; and I've come to you, Miss Bugbee,' says she, 'to lead off with your accustomed liberality.'—Well, what does your ma do, but go into her room, to her draw, I suppose, and fetch out a five-dollar bill, and give it to Miss Jaynes, which I'd 'a' had to work a week, stitchin' from mornin' to night, to have earnt that five-dollar bill; though, of course, your ma had a right to burn it up, if she'd 'a' been a mind to; only it made me ache to see it go so, when there was thousands of poor starvin' ragged orphans needin' it so bad. All to once Miss Jaynes wheeled and spoke to me: 'Well, Miss Tira,' says she, 'can I have a dollar from you?'—'No, ma'am,' says I.—'I supposed not,' says she; which would have been sassy in anybody but the parson's wife. But I held my tongue, and out she went, takin' no more notice of me than she did of Vi'let, nor half so much,—for I see her kind o' look towards the old woman, as if she was half a mind to ask her for a fourpence-ha'penny. Well, that was the last on't for a spell, until after New Year's. I was stayin' then at your Uncle James's, and one afternoon your ma sent for your Aunt Eunice and me to come over and take tea. So we went over, and there was several of the neighbors invited in,—Squire Bramhall's wife, and them your ma used to go with most, and amongst the rest, of course, Miss Jaynes. There had just before that been a donation party, New Year's night, to the parson's, and the Dorcas Society had bought Miss Jaynes a nice new Brussels carpet for her parlor, all cut and fitted and made up. In the course of the afternoon Miss Bramhall spoke and asked if the new carpet was put down, and if it fitted well. 'Oh, beautiful!' says she, 'it fits the room like a glove; somebody must have had pretty good eyes to took the measure so correct, and I not know anything what was a-comin'; and I hope,' says she, 'ladies, you'll take an early opportunity to drop in and see it; for there a'n't one of you but what I'm under obligation to for this touchin' token of your love,' (that's what she called it,)—'except,' says she, of a sudden, 'except Miss Blake, whom, really, I hadn't noticed before!'—I tell ye, Cornele, my ebenezzer was up at this; for you can't tell how mean and spiteful she spoke and looked, pretendin' as if I was so insignificant a critter she hadn't taken notice of my bein' there before, which, to be sure, she hadn't even bid me good afternoon; and for my part, I hadn't put myself forward among such women as was there, though I didn't feel beneath 'em, nor they didn't think so, except Miss Jaynes.—Then she went on. 'Miss Blake,' says she, 'I believe didn't mean no slight for not helpin' towards the carpet; for she never gives to anything, as I

Page 135

know of,' says she. 'I've often asked her for various objects, and have been as often refused. The last time,' says she, 'I did expect to get somethin'; for I asked only for a dollar to that noble society for providin' young men, a-strugglin' to prepare themselves for usefulness in the ministry, with some of the common necessities of life, but she refused me. I expect,' says she, a-sneerin' in such a way that I couldn't stand it any longer, 'I expect Miss Blake is a-savin' all her money to buy her settin'-out and furniture with; for I suppose,' says she, lookin' more spiteful than ever, 'I suppose Miss Blake thinks that as long as there's life there's hope for a husband.'—I happen to know what all the ladies thought of this speech, for every one of 'em afterwards told me; but, if you'll believe me, one or two of the youngest of 'em kind of pretended to smile at the joke on't, when Miss Jaynes looked round as if she expected 'em to laugh; for she thought, I suppose, I was really and truly no account, bein' a cobbler's daughter and a tailoress,—and that when the minister's wife insulted me, I dars'n't reply, and all hands would stand by and applaud. But she found out her mistake, and she begun to think so, when she see how grave your ma and all the rest of the older ladies looked, for they knew what was comin'. I'd bit my lips up till now, and held in out of respect to the place and the company, but I thought it was due to myself to speak at last. Says I, 'Miss Jaynes, I've always treated you with civility and the respect due to your place; though I own I ha'n't felt free to give my hard-earned wages away to objects I didn't know much about, when, with my limited means, I could find places to bestow what little I could spare without huntin' 'em up. I don't mean to boast,' says I, 'of my benevolence, and I don't have gilt-framed diplomas hung up in my room to certify to it, to be seen and read of all men, as the manner of some is,—but,' says I, 'I *will* say that I've given this year twenty-five dollars to the Orphan Asylum, to Hartford, and I've a five-dollar gold-piece in my puss,' says I, 'that I can spare, and will give that more to the same charity, for the privilege of tellin' before these ladies, that heard me accused of being stingy, why I don't give to you when you ask me to, and especially why I didn't give the last time you asked me. I would like to tell why I didn't help sew in the Dorcas Society, to buy the new carpet,' says I, 'but I don't want to hurt anybody's feelin's that ha'n't hurt mine, and I'll forbear.'—By this time Miss Jaynes was pale as a sheet. 'I'm sure,' says she, 'I don't care why you don't choose to give, and I don't suppose any one else does. It's your own affair,' says she, 'and you a'n't compelled to give unless you're a mind to.'—'You should have thought of that before you twitted me,' says I, 'before all this company.'—'Oh, Tira, never mind,' says Miss Bramhall, 'let it all go!' But up spoke your Aunt Eunice, and says she, 'It's no more than fair to hear Tira's reasons, after what's been said.'"

Page 136

“Good!” said little Helen; “hurrah for Aunt Eunice!”

“And your ma,” resumed Statira, “I knew by her looks she was on my side, though, it bein’ her own house, she felt less free to say as much as your Aunt Eunice did.—‘In the first place,’ says I, ‘if I did want to keep my money to buy furniture with, in case I should get a husband, I expect I’ve a right to, for ‘ta’n’t likely,’ says I, ‘I shall be lucky enough to have my carpets giv’ to me. But that wa’n’t the reason I didn’t put my name down for a dollar on that subscription. One reason was, I knew the upshot on’t would be that somebody would be put up to suggestin’ that the money should go for a life-membership in the society for Miss Jaynes,’ says I; ‘and I don’t like to encourage anybody in goin’ round beggin’ for money to buy her own promotion to a high seat in the synagogue.’—You ought to seen Miss Jaynes’s face then! It was redder’n any beet, for I’d hit the nail square on the head, as it happened, and the ladies could scurcelly keep from smilin’.—‘Then,’ says I, ‘I shouldn’t be my father’s daughter, if I’d give a cent for a preacher that isn’t smart enough to get his own livin’ and pay for his own clothes and eddication. To ask poor women to pay for an able-bodied man’s expenses,’ says I, ‘seems to me like turnin’ the thing wrong end foremost. A young feller that a’n’t smart enough to find himself in victuals and clothes won’t be of much help in the Lord’s vineyard,’ says I.”

“And what did Mrs. Jaynes say?” asked little Helen, when Tira finally came to a pause.

“Well, really, my dear,” replied Miss Blake, “the woman had nothin’ to say, and so she said it. When I got through my speech I handed the five-dollar gold-piece to your Aunt Eunice, to send to the Asylum, and that ended it; for just then Dinah come in and said tea was ready, and we all went out. It was rather stiff for a while, and after tea we all went home; and for three long years Miss Jaynes never opened her face to me, until I came here to live, this time. Now she finds it’s for her interest to make up, and so she tries to be as good as pie. But though I mean to be civil, I’m no hypocrite, and I can’t be all honey and cream to them I don’t like; and besides, it a’n’t right to be.”

“But you ought not to blame Laura because her sister affronted you,” said Helen.

“I know that, my dear,” replied Miss Blake; “and if I’ve hurt the girl’s feelin’s, I’m sorry for’t. She’s tried hard to be friends with me, but I’ve pushed her off; for, not bein’ much acquainted, I was jealous, at first, that Miss Jaynes had put her up to it, to try to get round me in some way.”

“Never!” cried Cornelia,—“my Laura is incapable of such baseness!”

“Well,” said Statira, smiling, “come to know her, I guess you can’t find much guile in her, that’s a fact. If I did her wrong by mistrustin’ her without cause, I’ll try to make amends. It a’n’t in me to speak ha’sh even to a dog, if the critter looks up into my face and wags his tail in honest good-nater. And I’ll say this for Laura Stebbins, anyhow, if she *is* Miss

Jaynes's sister,—she's got the most takin' ways of 'most any grown-up person I ever see."

Page 137

The reflection is painful to a generous mind, that, by harboring unjust suspicions of another, one has been led to repel friendly advances with indifference or disdain. In order to assuage some remorseful pangs, Miss Blake began from this time to treat Laura with distinguished favor. On the other hand, Laura, delighted at this pleasant change in Miss Blake's demeanor, sought frequent opportunities of testifying her joy and gratitude. In this manner an intimacy began, which ripened at length into a firm and enduring friendship. Laura soon commenced the practice of applying to her more experienced friend for advice and direction in almost every matter, great or small, and of confiding to her trust divers secrets and confessions which she would never have ventured to repose even in Cornelia's faithful bosom. This prudent habit Tira encouraged.

"I know, my dear," said she, one day, "I know what it is to be almost alone in the world, and what a comfort it is to have somebody you can rely on to tell your griefs and troubles to, and, as it were, get 'em to help you bear 'em. So, my dear child, whenever you want to get my notions on any point, just come right straight to me, if you feel like it. I may not be able to give you the best advice, for I a'n't so wise as you seem to think I be; however, I ha'n't lived nigh fifty years in the world for naught, I trust, and without havin' learnt some things worth knowin'; and though my counsel mayn't be worth much, still you shall have the best I can give."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" cried Laura, with such a burst of passionate emotion that Miss Blake's eyes watered at the sight of it. "My dear, dear, dear good friend! you don't know how glad I shall be, if you will let me do as you say, and tell me what to do, and scold me, and admonish and warn me! Oh, it will be such happiness to have somebody to tell all my *real* secrets and troubles to! I do so need such a friend sometimes!"

"Don't I know it, you poor dear?" said Miss Blake, wiping her eyes. "Ha'n't I been through the same straits myself? None but them that's been a young gal themselves, an orphan without a mother to confide in and to warn and guide 'em, knows what it is. But I do, my dear; and though I shall be a pretty poor substitute for an own mother, I'll do the best I can."

"Tira," said Laura, with a tearful and blushing cheek held up to the good spinster's, "kiss me, won't you?—you never have."

"My dear," said Miss Blake, preparing to comply with this request by wiping her lips with her apron, "you see I a'n't one of the kissin' sort, and I scurcely ever kiss a grown-up person; but here's my hand, and here's a kiss,"—with an old-fashioned smack that might have been heard in the next room,—“for a token that you may always come to me as freely as if I was your mother, relyin' upon my givin' you my honest advice and opinion concernin' any affair that you may ask for counsel upon. And furthermore, as girls naterally have a wish that the very things they need some one to direct 'em the most in sha'n't be known except by them they tell the secret to, I promise you, my dear,

that I'll be as close as a freemason concernin' any privacy that you may trust me with, about any offer or courtin' matter of any kind."

Page 138

“Oh, I shall never have any such secrets,” said Laura, blushing; “my sister never lets the beaux come to see me, you know. I’m going to be an old maid.”

“Well, perhaps you will be,” said Miss Blake; “only they gen’ally don’t make old maids of such lookin’ girls as you be.”

But though Miss Blake took Laura into favor, she was by no means inclined to do the same by Mrs. Jaynes, who, having found to her cost that the ill-will of the humble sempstress was not to be lightly contemned, was now plainly anxious to conciliate her. But Statira was proof against all the wheedling and flattery of the parson’s wife, behaving towards her always with the same cool civility, and with great self-control,—using none of the frequent opportunities afforded her to make some taunt, or fling, or reproachful allusion to Mrs. Jaynes’s former conduct. Once, to be sure, when urged by the parson’s wife and a committee of the Dorcas Society to invite that respectable body to convene at the Bugbee mansion for labor and refreshment, Statira returned a reply so plainly spoken that it was deemed rude and ungracious.

“Cornelia is mistress of this house, Miss Jaynes,” said she, “and if she belonged to your society, and wanted to have its weekly meetin’s here in turn, I’d do my best to give ’em somethin’ good to eat and drink. But as she has left the matter to me, I say ‘No,’ without any misgivin’ or doubt; and for fear I may be called stingy or unsociable, I’ll tell the reason why I say so,—and besides, it’s due to you to tell it. There’s poor women, even in this town, put to it to get employment by which they can earn bread for themselves and their children. They can’t go out to do housework, for they’ve got young ones too little to carry with ’em, and maybe a whole family of ’em. Takin’ in sewin’ is their only resource. Well, ma’am, for ladies, well-to-do and rich, to get together, under pretence of good works and charity, and take away work from these poor women, by offerin’ to do it cheaper, underbiddin’ of ’em for jobs, which I’ve known the thing to be done, and then settin’ over their ill-gotten tasks, sewin’, and gabblin’ slander all the afternoon, to get money to buy velvet pulpit-cushions or gilt chandeliers with, or to help pay some missionary’s passage to the Tongoo Islands, is, in my opinion, a humbug, and, what’s worse, a downright breach of the Golden Rule. At any rate, with my notions, it would be hypocrisy in me to join in, and that’s why I don’t invite the society here. I don’t know but I have spoke too strong; if so, I’m sorry; but I’ve had to earn my own livin’, ever since I was a girl, with my needle, and I know how hard the lot of them is that have to do so too. Besides, I can’t help thinkin’, what, perhaps, you never thought of, yourselves, ladies, that every person, who, while they can just as well turn their hands to other business, yet, for their own whim, or pleasure, or convenience, or profit, chooses to do work, of which there a’n’t

Page 139

enough now in the world to keep in employment them that must get such work to do, or else beg, or sin, or starve,—when I think, I say, that every such person helps some poor cretur into the grave, or the jail, or a place worse than both, I feel that strong talk isn't out of place; and I've known this very Dorcas Society to send to Hartford and get shirts to make, under price, and spend their blood-money afterwards to buy a new carpet for the minister's parlor. That was a fact, Miss Jaynes, though perhaps it wa'n't polite in me to speak on't; and so for fear of worse, I'll say no more."

When this speech of his housekeeper came to the Doctor's ears, he expressed so warm an approval of its sentiments, that several who heard him began to be confirmed in suspicions they had previously entertained, the nature of which may be inferred from a remark which Mrs. Prouty confided to the ear of a trusty friend and crony. "Now do you mind what I say, Miss Baker," said she, shaking her snuffy forefinger in Mrs. Baker's face; "Doctor Bugbee'll marry Tira Blake yet. Now do you just stick a pin there."

But the revolving seasons twice went their annual round, the great weeping-willow-tree in the burying-ground twice put forth its tender foliage in the early spring, and twice in autumn strewed with yellow leaves the mound of Mrs. Bugbee's grave, while the predictions of many, who, like Mrs. Prouty, had foretold the Doctor's second wedding, still remained without fulfilment. Nay, at the end of two years after his wife's death, Doctor Bugbee seemed to be no more disposed to matrimony than in the first days of his bereavement. There were, to be sure, floating on the current of village gossip, certain rumors that he was soon to take a second wife; but as none of these reports agreed touching the name of the lady, each contradicted all the others, and so none were of much account. Besides, there was nothing in the Doctor's appearance or behavior that seemed to warrant any of these idle stories. It is the way with many hopeful widowers (as everybody knows) to become, after an interval of decorous sadness, more brisk and gay than even in their youthful days; bestowing unusual care upon their attire and the adornment of their persons, and endeavoring, by a courteous and gallant demeanor towards every unmarried lady, to signify the great esteem in which they hold the female sex. But these signs, and all others which betoken an ardent desire to win the favor of the fair, were wanting in the Doctor's aspect and deportment. Though, as my reader knows, he was by nature a man of lively temper, he was now grown more sedate than he had ever been before; and instead of attiring himself more sprucely than of old, he neglected his apparel to such a degree, that, although few would have noticed the untidy change, Statira was filled with continual alarms, lest some invidious housewife should perceive it, and lay the blame at her door. Except when called abroad to perform some professional duty, he

Page 140

spent his time at home, although his family observed that he secluded himself in his office, among his books and gallipots, more than had been his wont, and that he sometimes indulged in moods of silent abstraction, which had never been noticed in his manner until of late. But these changes of demeanor seemed to betoken an enduring sorrow for the loss of his wife, rather than to indicate a desire or an intention to choose a successor to her. My readers, therefore, will not be surprised to learn, by a plain averment of the simple truth, that not one of all the score of ladies, whose names had been coupled with his own, would Doctor Bugbee have married, if he could, and that to none of them had he ever given any good reason for believing that she stood especially high in his esteem.

[To be continued in the next Number.]

WHERE WILL IT END?

Wise men of every name and nation, whether poets, philosophers, statesmen, or divines, have been trying to explain the puzzles of human condition, since the world began. For three thousand years, at least, they have been at this problem, and it is far enough from being solved yet. Its anomalies seem to have been expressly contrived by Nature to elude our curiosity and defy our cunning. And no part of it has she arranged so craftily as that web of institutions, habits, manners, and customs, in which we find ourselves enmeshed as soon as we begin to have any perception at all, and which, slight and almost invisible as it may seem, it is so hard to struggle with and so impossible to break through. It may be true, according to the poetical Platonism of Wordsworth, that "heaven lies about us in our infancy"; but we very soon leave it far behind us, and, as we approach manhood, sadly discover that we have grown up into a jurisdiction of a very different kind.

In almost every region of the earth, indeed, it is literally true that "shades of the prison-house begin to close upon the growing boy." As his faculties develop, he becomes more and more conscious of the deepening shadows, as well as of the grim walls that cast them on his soul, and his opening intelligence is earliest exercised in divining who built them first, and why they exist at all. The infant Chinese, the baby Calmuck, the suckling Hottentot, we must suppose, rest unconsciously in the calm of the heaven from which they, too, have emigrated, as well as the sturdy new-born Briton, or the freest and most independent little Yankee that is native and to the manner born of this great country of our own. But all alike grow gradually into a consciousness of walls, which, though invisible, are none the less impassable, and of chains, though light as air, yet stronger than brass or iron. And everywhere is the machinery ready, though different in its frame and operation in different torture-chambers, to crush out the budding skepticism, and to mould the mind into the monotonous decency of general conformity.

Foe or Fetish, King or Kaiser, Deity itself or the vicegerents it has appointed in its stead, are answerable for it all. God himself has looked upon it, and it is very good, and there is no appeal from that approval of the Heavenly vision.

Page 141

In almost every country in the world this deification of institutions has been promoted by their antiquity. As nobody can remember when they were not, and as no authentic records exist of their first establishment, their genealogy can be traced direct to Heaven without danger of positive disproof. Thus royal races and hereditary aristocracies and privileged priesthoods established themselves so firmly in the opinion of Europe, as well as of Asia, and still retain so much of their *prestige* there, notwithstanding the turnings and overturnings of the last two centuries. This northern half of the great American continent, however, seems to have been kept back by Nature as a *tabula rasa*, a clean blackboard, on which the great problem of civil government might be worked out, without any of the incongruous drawbacks which have cast perplexity and despair upon those who have undertaken its solution in the elder world. All the elements of the demonstration were of the most favorable nature. Settled by races who had inherited or achieved whatever of constitutional liberty existed in the world, with no hereditary monarch, or governing oligarchy, or established religion on the soil, with every opportunity to avoid all the vices and to better all the virtues of the old polities, the era before which all history had been appointed to prepare the way seemed to have arrived, when the just relations of personal liberty and civil government were to be established forever.

And how magnificent the field on which the trophy of this final victory of a true civilization was to be erected! No empire or kingdom, at least since imperial Rome perished from the earth, ever unrolled a surface so vast and so variegated, so manifold in its fertilities and so various in its aspects of beauty and sublimity. From the Northern wastes, where the hunter and the trapper pursue by force or guile the fur-bearing animals, to the ever-perfumed latitudes of the lemon and the myrtle,—from the stormy Atlantic, where the skiff of the fisherman rocks fearlessly under the menace of beetling crags amid the foam of angry breakers, to where the solemn surge of the Pacific pours itself around our Western continent, boon Nature has spread out fields which ask only the magic touch of Labor to wave with every harvest and blush with every fruitage. Majestic forests crown the hills, asking to be transformed into homes for man on the solid earth, or into the moving miracles in which he flies on wings of wind or flame over the ocean to the ends of the earth. Exhaustless mineral treasures offer themselves to his hand, scarce hidden beneath the soil, or lying carelessly upon the surface,—coal, and lead, and copper, and the “all-worshipped ore” of gold itself; while quarries, reaching to the centre, from many a rugged hill-top, barren of all beside, court the architect and the sculptor, ready to give shape to their dreams of beauty in the palace or in the statue.

Page 142

The soil, too, is fitted by the influences of every sky for the production of every harvest that can bring food, comfort, wealth, and luxury to man. Every family of the grasses, every cereal that can strengthen the heart, every fruit that can delight the taste, every fibre that can be woven into raiment or persuaded into the thousand shapes of human necessity, asks but a gentle solicitation to pour its abundance bounteously into the bosom of the husbandman. And men have multiplied under conditions thus auspicious to life, until they swarm on the Atlantic slope, are fast filling up the great valley of the Mississippi, and gradually flow over upon the descent towards the Pacific. The three millions, who formed the population of the Thirteen States that set the British empire at defiance, have grown up into a nation of nearly, if not quite, ten times that strength, within the duration of active lives not yet finished. And in freedom from unmanageable debt, in abundance and certainty of revenue, in the materials for naval armaments, in the elements of which armies are made up, in everything that goes to form national wealth, power, and strength, the United States, it would seem, even as they are now, might stand against the world in arms, or in the arts of peace. Are not these results proofs irrefragable of the wisdom of the government under which they have come to pass?

When the eyes of the thoughtful inquirer turn from the general prospect of the national greatness and strength, to the geographical divisions of the country, to examine the relative proportions of these gifts contributed by each, he begins to be aware that there are anomalies in the moral and political condition even of this youngest of nations, not unlike what have perplexed him in his observation of her elder sisters. He beholds the Southern region, embracing within its circuit three hundred thousand more square miles than the domain of the North, dowered with a soil incomparably more fertile, watered by mighty rivers fit to float the argosies of the world, placed nearer the sun and canopied by more propitious skies, with every element of prosperity and wealth showered upon it with Nature's fullest and most unwithdrawing hand, and sees, that, notwithstanding all this, the share of public wealth and strength drawn thence is almost inappreciable by the side of what is poured into the common stock by the strenuous sterility of the North. With every opportunity and means that Nature can supply for commerce, with navigable rivers searching its remotest corners, with admirable harbors in which the navies of the world might ride, with the chief articles of export for its staple productions, it still depends upon its Northern partner to fetch and carry all that it produces, and the little that it consumes. Possessed of all the raw materials of manufactures and the arts, its inhabitants look to the North for everything they need from the cradle to the coffin. Essentially agricultural in its constitution, with every blessing Nature can bestow upon it, the gross value of all its productions is less by millions than that of the simple grass of the field gathered into Northern barns. With all the means and materials of wealth, the South is poor. With every advantage for gathering strength and self-reliance, it is weak and dependent.—Why this difference between the two?

Page 143

The *why* is not far to seek. It is to be found in the reward which Labor bestows on those that pay it due reverence in the one case, and the punishment it inflicts on those offering it outrage and insult in the other. All wealth proceeding forth from Labor, the land where it is honored and its ministers respected and rewarded must needs rejoice in the greatest abundance of its gifts. Where, on the contrary, its exercise is regarded as the badge of dishonor and the vile office of the refuse and offscouring of the race, its largess must be proportionably meagre and scanty. The key of the enigma is to be found in the constitution of human nature. A man in fetters cannot do the task-work that one whose limbs are unshackled looks upon as a pastime. A man urged by the prospect of winning an improved condition for himself and his children by the skill of his brain and the industry of his hand must needs achieve results such as no fear of torture can extort from one denied the holy stimulus of hope. Hence the difference so often noticed between tracts lying side by side, separated only by a river or an imaginary line; on one side of which, thrift and comfort and gathering wealth, growing villages, smiling farms, convenient habitations, school-houses, and churches make the landscape beautiful; while on the other, slovenly husbandry, dilapidated mansions, sordid huts, perilous wastes, horrible roads, the rare spire, and rarer village school betray all the nakedness of the land. It is the magic of motive that calls forth all this wealth and beauty to bless the most sterile soil stirred by willing and intelligent labor; while the reversing of that spell scatters squalor and poverty and misery over lands endowed by Nature with the highest fertility, spreading their leprous infection from the laborer to his lord. All this is in strict accordance with the laws of God, as expounded by man in his books on political economy.

Not so, however, with the stranger phenomenon to be discerned inextricably connected with this anomaly, but not, apparently, naturally and inevitably flowing from it. That the denial of his natural and civil rights to the laborer who sows and reaps the harvests of the Southern country should be avenged upon his enslaver in the scanty yielding of the earth, and in the unthrift, the vices, and the wretchedness which are the only crops that spring spontaneously from soil blasted by slavery, is nothing strange. It is only the statement of the truism in moral and in political economy, that true prosperity can never grow up from wrong and wickedness. That pauperism, and ignorance, and vice, that reckless habits, and debasing customs, and barbarous manners should come of an organized degradation of labor, and of cruelty and injustice crystallized into an institution, is an inevitable necessity, and strictly according to the nature of things. But that the stronger half of the nation should suffer the weaker to rule over

Page 144

it in virtue of its weakness, that the richer region should submit to the political tyranny of its impoverished moiety because of that very poverty, is indeed a marvel and a mystery. That the intelligent, educated, and civilized portion of a race should consent to the sway of their ignorant, illiterate, and barbarian companions in the commonwealth, and this by reason of that uncouth barbarism, is an astonishment, and should be a hissing to all beholders everywhere. It would be so to ourselves, were we not so used to the fact, had it not so grown into our essence and ingrained itself with our nature as to seem a vital organism of our being. Of all the anomalies in morals and in politics which the history of civilized man affords, this is surely the most abnormous and the most unreasonable.

The entire history of the United States is but the record of the evidence of this fact. What event in our annals is there that Slavery has not set her brand upon it to mark it as her own? In the very moment of the nation's birth, like the evil fairy of the nursery tale, she was present to curse it with her fatal words. The spell then wound up has gone on increasing in power, until the scanty formulas which seemed in those days of infancy as if they would fade out of the parchment into which they had been foisted, and leave no trace that they ever were, have blotted out all beside, and statesmen and judges read nothing there but the awful and all-pervading name of Slavery. Once intrenched among the institutions of the country, this baleful power has advanced from one position to another, never losing ground, but establishing itself at each successive point more impregnably than before, until it has us at an advantage that encourages it to demand the surrender of our rights, our self-respect, and our honor. What was once whispered in the secret chamber of council is now proclaimed upon the housetops; what was once done by indirection and guile is now carried with the high hand, in the face of day, at the mouth of the cannon and by the edge of the sabre of the nation. Doctrines and designs which a few years since could find no mouthpiece out of a bar-room, or the piratical den of a filibuster, are now clothed with power by the authentic response of the bench of our highest judicatory, and obsequiously iterated from the oracular recesses of the National Palace.

And the events which now fill the scene are but due successors in the train that has swept over the stage ever since the nineteenth century opened the procession with the purchase of Louisiana. The acquisition of that vast territory, important as it was in a national point of view,—but coveted by the South mainly as the fruitful mother of slaveholding States, and for the precedent it established, that the Constitution was a barrier only to what should impede, never to what might promote, the interests of Slavery,—was the first great stride she made as she stalked to her design. The admission of Missouri as a slaveholding

Page 145

State, granted after a struggle that shook American society to the centre, and then only on the memorable promises now broken to the ear as well as to the hope, was the next vantage-ground seized and maintained. The nearly contemporary purchase of Florida, though in design and in effect as revolutionary an action as that of Louisiana, excited comparatively little opposition. It was but the following up of an acknowledged victory by the Slave Power. The long and bloody wars in her miserable swamps, waged against the humanity of savages that gave shelter to the fugitives from her tyranny,—slave-hunts, merely, on a national scale and at the common expense,—followed next in the march of events. Then Texas loomed in the distance, and, after years of gradual approach and covert advances, was first wrested from Mexico. Slavery next indissolubly chained to her, and then, by a *coup d'état* of astonishing impudence, was added, by a flourish of John Tyler's pen, in the very article of his political dissolution, to "the Area of Freedom!" Next came the war with Mexico, lying in its pretences, bloody in its conduct, triumphant in its results, for it won vast regions suitable for Slavery now, and taught the way to win larger conquests when her ever-hungry maw should crave them. What need to recount the Fugitive-Slave Bill, and the other "Compromises" of 1850? or to recite the base repeal of the Missouri Compromise, showing the slaveholder's regard for promises to be as sacred as that of a pettifogger for justice or of a dicer for an oath? or to point to the plains of Kansas, red with the blood of her sons and blackened with the cinders of her towns, while the President of the United States held the sword of the nation at her throat to compel her to submission?

Success, perpetual and transcendent, such as has always waited on Slavery in all her attempts to mould the history of the country and to compel the course of its events to do her bidding, naturally excites a measure of curiosity if not of admiration, in the mind of every observer. Have the slave-owners thus gone on from victory to victory and from strength to strength by reason of their multitude, of their wealth, of their public services, of their intelligence, of their wisdom, of their genius, or of their virtue? Success in gigantic crime sometimes implies a strength and energy which compel a kind of respect even from those that hate it most. The right supremacy of the power that thus sways our destiny clearly does not reside in the overwhelming numbers of those that bear rule. The entire sum of all who have any direct connection with Slavery, as owners or hirers, is less than THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND,—not half as many as the inhabitants of the single city of New York! And yet even this number exaggerates the numerical force of the dominant element in our affairs. To approximate to the true result, it would be fair to strike from the gross sum those owning or employing less than ten slaves, in order to arrive

Page 146

at the number of slave-owners who really compose the ruling influence of the nation. This would leave but a small fraction over NINETY THOUSAND, men, women, and children, owning slaves enough to unite them in a common interest. And from this should be deducted the women and minors, actually owning slaves in their own right, but who have no voice in public affairs. These taken away, and the absentees flying to Europe or the North from the moral contaminations and material discomforts inseparable from Slavery, and not much more than FIFTY THOUSAND voting men will remain to represent this mighty and all-controlling power!—a fact as astounding as it is incontrovertible.

Oligarchies are nothing new in the history of the world. The government of the many by the few is the rule, and not the exception, in the politics of the times that have been and of those that now are. But the concentration of the power that determines the policy, makes the laws, and appoints the ministers of a mighty nation, in the hands of less than the five-hundredth part of its members, is an improvement on the essence of the elder aristocracies; while the usurpation of the title of the Model Republic and of the Pattern Democracy, under which we offer ourselves to the admiration and imitation of less happy nations, is certainly a refinement on their nomenclature.

This prerogative of power, too, is elsewhere conceded by the multitude to their rulers generally for some especial fitness, real or imaginary, for the office they have assumed. Some services of their own or of their ancestors to the state, some superiority, natural or acquired, of parts or skill, at least some specialty of high culture and elegant breeding, a quick sense of honor, a jealousy of insult to the public, an impatience of personal stain, —some or all of these qualities, appealing to the gratitude or to the imagination of the masses, have usually been supposed to inhere in the class they permit to rule over them. By virtue of some or all of these things, its members have had allowed to them their privileges and their precedency, their rights of exemption and of preeminence, their voice potential in the councils of the state, and their claim to be foremost in its defence in the hour of its danger. Some ray of imagination there is, which, falling on the knightly shields and heraldic devices that symbolize their conceded superiority, at least dazzles the eyes and delights the fancy of the crowd, so as to blind them to the inhering vices and essential fallacies of the Order to whose will they bow.

But no such consolations of delusion remain to us, as we stand face to face with the Power which holds our destinies in its hand. None of these bleary illusions can cheat our eyes with any such false presentments. No antiquity hallows, no public services consecrate, no gifts of lofty culture adorn, no graces of noble breeding embellish the coarse and sordid oligarchy that gives law to us. And in the blighting shadow

Page 147

of Slavery letters die and art cannot live. What book has the South ever given to the libraries of the world? What work of art has she ever added to its galleries? What artist has she produced that did not instinctively fly, like Allston, to regions in which genius could breathe and art was possible? What statesman has she reared, since Jefferson died and Madison ceased to write, save those intrepid discoverers who have taught that Slavery is the corner-stone of republican institutions, and the vital element of Freedom herself? What divine, excepting the godly men whose theologic skill has attained to the doctrine that Slavery is of the essence of the Gospel of Jesus Christ? What moralist, besides those ethic doctors who teach that it is according to the Divine Justice that the stronger race should strip the weaker of every civil, social, and moral right? The unrighteous partiality, extorted by the threats of Carolina and Georgia in 1788, which gives them a disproportionate representation because of their property in men, and the unity of interest which makes them always act in behalf of Slavery as one man, have made them thus omnipotent. The North, distracted by a thousand interests, has always been at the mercy of whatever barbarian chief in the capital could throw his slave whip into the trembling scale of party. The government having been always, since this century began, at least, the creature and the tool of the slaveholders, the whole patronage of the nation, and the treasury filled chiefly by Northern commerce, have been at their command to help manipulate and mould plastic Northern consciences into practicable shapes. When the slave interest, consisting, at its own largest account of itself, of less than THREE HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND souls, has *thirty* members of the Senate, while the free-labor interest, consisting of at least TWENTY-FOUR MILLIONS, SIX HUNDRED AND FIFTY THOUSAND souls, has but *thirty-two*, and when the former has a delegation of some score of members to represent its slaves in the House, besides its own fair proportion, can we marvel that it has achieved the mastery over us, which is written in black and bloody characters on so many pages of our history?

Such having been the absolute sway Slavery has exercised over the facts of our history, what has been its influence upon the characters of the men with whom it has had to do? Of all the productions of a nation, its men are what prove its quality the most surely. How have the men of America stood this test? Have those in the high places, they who have been called to wait at the altar before all the people, maintained the dignity of character and secured the general reverence which marked and waited upon their predecessors in the days of our small things? The population of the United States has multiplied itself nearly tenfold, while its wealth has increased in a still greater proportion, since the peace of 'Eighty-Three. Have the Representative

Page 148

Men of the nation been made or maintained great and magnanimous, too? Or is that other anomaly, which has so perplexed the curious foreigner, an admitted fact, that in proportion as the country has waxed great and powerful, its public men have dwindled from giants in the last century to dwarfs in this? Alas, to ask the question is to answer it. Compare Franklin, and Adams, and Jay, met at Paris to negotiate the treaty of peace which was to seal the recognition of their country as an equal sister in the family of nations, with Buchanan, and Soule, and Mason, convened at Ostend to plot the larceny of Cuba! Sages and lawgivers, consulting for the welfare of a world and a race, on the one hand, and buccaneers conspiring for the pillage of a sugar-island on the other!

What men, too, did not Washington and Adams call around them in the Cabinet!—how representative of great ideas! how historical! how immortal! How many of our readers can name the names of their successors of the present day? Inflated obscurities, bloated insignificances, who knows or cares whence they came or what they are? We know whose bidding they were appointed to obey, and what manner of work they are ready to perform. And shall we dare extend our profane comparisons even higher than the Cabinet? Shall we bring the shadowy majesty of Washington's august idea alongside the microscopic realities of to-day? Let us be more merciful, and take our departure from the middle term between the Old and the New, occupied by Andrew Jackson, whose iron will and doggedness of purpose give definite character, if not awful dignity, to his image. In his time, the Slave Power, though always the secret spring which set events in motion, began to let its workings be seen more openly than ever before. And from his time forward, what a graduated line of still diminishing shadows have glided successively through the portals of the White House! From Van Buren to Tyler, from Tyler to Polk, from Polk to Fillmore, from Fillmore to Pierce! "Fine by degrees and beautifully less," until it at last reached the vanishing point!

The baleful influence thus ever shed by Slavery on our national history and our public men has not yet spent its malignant forces. It has, indeed, reached a height which a few years ago it was thought the wildest fanaticism to predict; but its fatal power will not be stayed in the mid-sweep of its career. The Ordinance of 1787 torn to shreds and scattered to the winds,—the line drawn in 1820, which the slaveholders plighted their faith Slavery should never overstep, insolently as well as infamously obliterated,—Slavery presiding in the Cabinet, seated on the Supreme Bench, absolute in the halls of Congress,—no man can say what shape its next aggression may not take to itself. A direct attack on the freedom of the press and the liberty of speech at the North, where alone either exists, were no more incredible than the later insolences of its tyranny. The battle

Page 149

not yet over in Kansas, for the compulsory establishment of Slavery there by the interposition of the Federal arm, will be renewed in every Territory as it is ripening into a State. Already warning voices are heard in the air, presaging such a conflict in Oregon. Parasites everywhere instinctively feel that a zeal for the establishment of Slavery where it has been abolished, or its introduction where it had been prohibited, is the highest recommendation to the Executive favor. The rehabilitation of the African slave-trade is seriously proposed and will be furiously urged, and nothing can hinder its accomplishment but its interference with the domestic manufactures of the breeding Slave States. The pirate Walker is already mustering his forces for another incursion into Nicaragua, and rumors are rife that General Houston designs wresting yet another Texas from Mexico. Mighty events are at hand, even at the door; and the mission of them all will be to fix Slavery firmly and forever on the throne of this nation.

Is the success of this conspiracy to be final and eternal? Are the States which name themselves, in simplicity or in irony, the Free States, to be always the satrapies of a central power like this? Are we forever to submit to be cheated out of our national rights by an oligarchy as despicable as it is detestable, because it clothes itself in the forms of democracy, and allows us the ceremonies of choice, the name of power, and the permission to register the edicts of the sovereign? We, who broke the sceptre of King George, and set our feet on the supremacy of the British Parliament, surrender ourselves, bound hand and foot in bonds of our own weaving, into the hands of the slaveholding Philistines! We, who scorned the rule of the aristocracy of English acres, submit without a murmur, or with an ineffectual resistance, to the aristocracy of American flesh and blood! Is our spirit effectually broken? is the brand of meanness and compromise burnt in uneffaceably upon our souls? and are we never to be roused, by any indignities, to fervent resentment and effectual resistance? The answer to these grave questions lies with ourselves alone. One hundred thousand, or three hundred thousand men, however crafty and unscrupulous, cannot forever keep under their rule more than twenty millions, as much their superiors in wealth and intelligence as in numbers, except by their own consent. If the growing millions are to be driven with cartwhips along the pathway of their history by the dwindling thousands, they have none to blame for it but themselves. If they like to have their laws framed and expounded, their presidents appointed, their foreign policy dictated, their domestic interests tampered with, their war and peace made for them, their national fame and personal honor tarnished, and the lie given to all their boastings before the old despotisms, by this insignificant fraction of their number,—scarcely visible to the naked eye in the assembly of the whole people,—none can gainsay or resist their pleasure.

Page 150

But will the many always thus submit themselves to the domination of the few? We believe that the days of this ignominious subjection are already numbered. Signs in heaven and on earth tell us that one of those movements has begun to be felt in the Northern mind, which perplex tyrannies everywhere with the fear of change. The insults and wrongs so long heaped upon the North by the South begin to be felt. The torpid giant moves uneasily beneath his mountain-load of indignities. The people of the North begin to feel that they support a government for the benefit of their natural enemies; for, of all antipathies, that of slave labor to free is the most deadly and irreconcilable. There never was a time when the relations of the North and the South, as complicated by Slavery, were so well understood and so deeply resented as now. In fields, in farmhouses, and in workshops, there is a spirit aroused which can never be laid or exorcised till it has done its task. We see its work in the great uprising of the Free States against the Slave States in the late national election. Though trickery and corruption cheated it of its end, the thunder of its protest struck terror into the hearts of the tyrants. We hear its echo, as it comes back from the Slave States themselves, in the exceeding bitter cry of the whites for deliverance from the bondage which the slavery of the blacks has brought upon them also. We discern the confession of its might in the very extravagances and violences of the Slave Power. It is its conscious and admitted weakness that has made Texas and Mexico and Cuba, and our own Northwestern territory, necessary to be devoured. It is desperation, and not strength, that has made the bludgeon and the bowie-knife integral parts of the national legislation. It has the American Government, the American Press, and the American Church, in its national organizations, on its side; but the Humanity and the Christianity of the Nation and the World abhor and execrate it. They that be against it are more than they that be for it.

It rages, for its time is short. And its rage is the fiercer because of the symptoms of rebellion against its despotism which it discerns among the white men of the South, who from poverty or from principle have no share in its sway. When we speak of the South as distinguished from the North by elements of inherent hostility, we speak only of the governing faction, and not of the millions of nominally free men who are scarcely less its thralls than the black slaves themselves. This unhappy class of our countrymen are the first to feel the blight which Slavery spreads around it, because they are the nearest to its noxious power. The subjects of no European despotism are under a closer *espionage*, or a more organized system of terrorism, than are they. The slaveholders, having the wealth, and nearly all the education that the South can boast of, employ these mighty instruments of power to create the public sentiment and to control

Page 151

the public affairs of their region, so as best to secure their own supremacy. No word of dissent to the institutions under which they live, no syllable of dissatisfaction, even, with any of the excesses they stimulate, can be breathed in safety. A Christian minister in Tennessee relates an act of fiendish cruelty inflicted upon a slave by one of the members of his church, and he is forced to leave his charge, if not to fly the country. Another in South Carolina presumes to express in conversation his disapprobation of the murderous assault of Brooks on Senator Sumner, and his pastoral relations are broken up on the instant, as if he had been guilty of gross crime or flagrant heresy. Professor Hedrick, in North Carolina, ventures to utter a preference for the Northern candidate in the last presidential campaign, and he is summarily ejected from his chair, and virtually banished from his native State. Mr. Underwood, of Virginia, dares to attend the convention of the party he preferred, and he is forbidden to return to his home on pain of death. The blackness of darkness and the stillness of death are thus forced to brood over that land which God formed so fair, and made to be so happy.

That such a tyranny should excite an antagonistic spirit of resistance is inevitable from the constitution of man and the character of God. The sporadic cases of protest and of resistance to the slaveholding aristocracy, which lift themselves occasionally above the dead level of the surrounding despotism, are representative cases. They stand for much more than their single selves. They prove that there is a wide-spread spirit of discontent, informing great regions of the slave-land, which must one day find or force an opportunity of making itself heard and felt. This we have just seen in the great movement in Missouri, the very nursing-mother of Border-Ruffianism itself, which narrowly missed making Emancipation the policy of the majority of the voters there. Such a result is the product of no sudden culture. It must have been long and slowly growing up. And how could it be otherwise? There must be intelligence enough among the non-slaveholding whites to see the difference there is between themselves and persons of the same condition in the Free States. Why can they have no free schools? Why is it necessary that a missionary society be formed at the North to furnish them with such ministers as the slave-master can approve? Why can they not support their own ministers, and have a Gospel of Free Labor preached to them, if they choose? Why are they hindered from taking such newspapers as they please? Why are they subjected to a censorship of the press, which dictates to them what they may or may not read, and which punishes booksellers with exile and ruin for keeping for sale what they want to buy? Why must Northern publishers expurgate and emasculate the literature of the world before it is permitted to reach them? Why is it that the value of acres increases in a geometrical

Page 152

ratio, as they stretch away towards the North Star from the frontier of Slavery? These questions must suggest their sufficient answer to thousands of hearts, and be preparing the way for the insurrection of which the slaveholders stand in the deadliest fear,—that of the whites at their gates, who can do with them and their institutions what seems to them good, when once they know their power, and choose to put it forth. The unity of interest of the non-slaveholders of the South with the people of the Free States is perfect, and it must one day combine them in a unity of action.

The exact time when the millions of the North and of the South shall rise upon this puny mastership, and snatch from its hands the control of their own affairs, we cannot tell,—nor yet the authentic shape which that righteous insurrection will take unto itself. But we know that when the great body of any nation is thoroughly aroused, and fully in earnest to abate a mischief or to right a wrong, nothing can resist its energy or defeat its purpose. It will provide the way, when its will is once thoroughly excited. Men look out upon the world they live in, and it seems as if a change for the better were hopeless and impossible. The great statesmen, the eminent divines, the reverend judges, the learned lawyers, the wealthy landholders and merchants are all leagued together to repel innovation. But the earth still moves in its orbit around the sun; decay and change and death pursue their inevitable course; the child is born and grows up; the strong man grows old and dies; the law of flux and efflux never ceases, and lo! ere men are aware of it, all things have become new. Fresh eyes look upon the world, and it is changed. Where are now Calhoun, and Clay, and Webster? Where will shortly be Cass, and Buchanan, and Benton, and their like? Vanished from the stage of affairs, if not from the face of Nature. Who are to take their places? God knows. But we know that the school in which men are now in training for the arena is very different from the one which formed the past and passing generations of politicians. Great ideas are abroad, challenging the encounter of youth. Angels wrestle with the men of this generation, as with the Patriarch of old, and it is our own fault if a blessing be not extorted ere they take their flight. Principles, like those which in the earlier days of the republic elevated men into statesmen, are now again in the field, chasing the policies which have dwarfed their sons into politicians. These things are portentous of change,—perhaps sudden, but, however delayed, inevitable.

Page 153

And this change, whatever the outward shape in which it may incarnate itself, in the fulness of time, will come of changed ideas, opinions, and feelings in the general mind and heart. All institutions, even those of the oldest of despotisms, exist by the permission and consent of those who live under them. Change the ideas of the thronging multitudes by the banks of the Neva, or on the shores of the Bosphorus, and they will be changed into Republicans and Christians in the twinkling of an eye. Not merely the Kingdom of Heaven, but the kingdoms of this world, are within us. Ideas are their substance; institutions and customs but the shadows they cast into the visible sphere. Mould the substance anew, and the projected shadow must represent the altered shape within. Hence the dread despots feel, and none more than the petty despots of the plantation, of whatever may throw the light of intelligence across the mental sight of their slaves. Men endure the ills they have, either because they think them blessings, or because they fear lest, should they seek to fly them, it might be to others that they know not of. The present Bonaparte holds France in a chain because she is willing that he should. Let her but breathe upon the padlock, and, like that in the fable, it will fade into air, and he and his dynasty will vanish with it. So the people of the North submit to the domination of the South because they are used to it, and are doubtful as to what may replace it. Whenever the millions, North and South, whom Slavery grinds under her heel, shall be resolutely minded that her usurpation shall cease, it will disappear, and forever. As soon as the stone is thrown the giant will die, and men will marvel that they endured him so long. But this can only come to pass by virtue of a change yet to be wrought in the hearts and minds of men. Ideas everywhere are royal;—here they are imperial. It is the great office of genius, and eloquence, and sacred function, and conspicuous station, and personal influence to herald their approach and to prepare the way before them, that they may assert their state and give holy laws to the listening nation. Thus a glorious form and pressure may be given to the coming age. Thus the ideal of a true republic, of a government of laws made and executed by the people, of which bards have sung and prophets dreamed, and for which martyrs have suffered and heroes died, may yet be possible to us, and the great experiment of this Western World be indeed a Model, instead of a Warning to the nations.

MY PORTRAIT GALLERY.

Oft round my hall of portraiture I gaze,
By Memory reared, the artist wise and holy,
From stainless quarries of deep-buried days.
There, as I muse in soothing melancholy,
Your faces glow in more than mortal youth,
Companions of my prime, now vanished wholly,—
The loud, impetuous boy, the

Page 154

low-voiced maiden.

Ah, never master that drew mortal breath
Can match thy portraits, just and generous Death,
Whose brush with sweet regretful tints is laden!
Thou paintest that which struggled here below
Half understood, or understood for woe,
And, with a sweet forewarning,
Mak'st round the sacred front an aureole glow
Woven of that light that rose on Easter morning.

LITERARY NOTICES.

Homoeopathic Domestic Physician, etc., etc. By J. H. PULTE, M.D., Author of "Woman's Medical Guide," etc. Twenty-fourth thousand. Cincinnati: Moore, Wiltach, Keys, & Co. London: James Epps, 170, Piccadilly, 1857.

Of course the reader understands the following notice to be written by a venerable practitioner, who carries a gold-headed cane, and does not believe in any medical authority later than Sydenham. Listen to him, then, and remember that if anything in the way of answer, or remonstrance, or controversial advertisement is sent to the headquarters of this periodical, it will go directly into the basket, which, entering, a manuscript leaves all hope behind. The "old salts" of the "Atlantic" do not go for non-committal and neutrality, or any of that kind of nonsense. Our oracle with the gold stick must have the ground to himself, or keep his wisdom for another set of readers. A quarrel between "Senex" and "Fairplay" would be amusing, but expensive. We have no space for it; and the old gentleman, though he can use his cane smartly for one of his age, positively declines the game of single-stick. Hear him.

—The book mentioned above lies before us with its valves open, helpless as an oyster on its shell, inviting the critical pungent, the professional acid, and the judicial impaling trident. We will be merciful. This fat little literary mollusk is well-conditioned, of fair aspect, and seemingly good of its kind. Twenty-four thousand individuals,—we have its title-page as authority,—more or less lineal descendants of Solomon, have become the fortunate possessors of this plethoric guide to earthly immortality. They might have done worse; for the work is well printed, well arranged, and typographically creditable to the great publishing-house which honors Cincinnati by its intelligent enterprise. The purchasers have done very wisely in buying a book which will not hurt their eyes. Mr. Otis Clapp, biblioplist, has the work, and will be pleased to supply it to an indefinite number of the family above referred to.

—Men live in the immediate neighborhood of a great menagerie, the doors of which are always open. The beasts of prey that come out are called diseases. They feed upon



us, and between their teeth we must all pass sooner or later,—all but a few, who are otherwise taken care of. When these animals attack a man, most of them give him a scratch or a bite, and let him go. Some hold on a little while; some are carried about for weeks or months, until the carrier drops down, or they drop off. By and by one is sure to come along that drags down the strongest, and makes an end of him.

Page 155

Most people know little or nothing of these beasts, until all at once they find themselves attacked by one of them. They are therefore liable to be frightened by those that are not dangerous, and careless with those that are destructive. They do not know what will soothe, and what will exasperate them. They do not even know the dens of many of them, though they are close to their own dwellings.

A physician is one that has lived among these beasts, and studied their aspects and habits. He knows them all well, and looks them in the face, and lays his hand on their backs daily. They seem, as it were, to know him, and to greet him with such *risus sardonicus* as they can muster. He knows that his friends and himself have all got to be eaten up at last by them, and his friends have the same belief. Yet they want him near them at all times, and with them when they are set upon by any of these their natural enemies. He goes, knowing pretty well what he can do and what he cannot.

He can talk to them in a quiet and sensible way about these terrible beings, concerning which they are so ignorant, and liable to harbor such foolish fancies. He can frighten away some of the lesser kind of animals with certain ill-smelling preparations he carries about him. Once in a while he can draw the teeth of some of the biggest, or throttle them. He can point out their dens, and so keep many from falling into their jaws.

This is a great deal to promise or perform, but it is not all that is expected of him. Sick people are very apt to be both fools and cowards. Many of them confess the fact in the frankest possible way. If you doubt it, ask the next dentist about the wisdom and courage of average manhood under the dispensation of a bad tooth. As a tooth is to a liver, so are the dentists' patients to the doctors', in the want of the two excellences above mentioned.

Those not over-wise human beings called patients are frequently a little unreasonable. They come with a small scratch, which Nature will heal very nicely in a few days, and insist on its being closed at once with some kind of joiner's glue. They want their little coughs cured, so that they may breathe at their ease, when they have no lungs left that are worth mentioning. They would have called in Luke the physician to John the Baptist, when his head was in the charger, and asked for a balsam that would cure cuts. This kind of thing cannot be done. But it is very profitable to lie about it, and say that it can be done. The people who make a business of this lying, and profiting by it, are called quacks.

—But as patients wish to believe in all manner of “cures,” and as all doctors love to believe in the power of their remedies and as nothing is more open to self-deception than medical experience, the whole matter of therapeutics has always been made a great deal more of than the case would justify. It has been an inflated currency,—fifty pretences on paper, to one fact of true, ringing metal.

Page 156

Many of the older books are full of absurd nostrums. A century ago, Huxham gave messes to his patients containing more than four hundred ingredients. Remedies were ordered that must have been suggested by the imagination; things odious, abominable, unmentionable; flesh of vipers, powder of dead men's bones, and other horrors, best mused in expressive silence. Go to the little book of Robert Boyle,—wise man, philosopher, revered of cures for the most formidable diseases, many of them of this fantastic character, that disease should seem to have been a thing that one could turn off at will, like gas or water in our houses. Only there were rather too many specifics in those days. For if one has “an excellent approved remedy” that never fails, it seems unnecessary to print a list of twenty others for the same purpose. This is wanton excess; it is gilding the golden pill, and throwing fresh perfume on the *Mistura Assafoetidae*.

As the observation of nature has extended, and as mankind have approached the state of only *semi*-barbarism in which they now exist, there has been an improvement. The *materia medica* has been weeded; much that was worthless and revolting has been thrown overboard; simplicity has been introduced into prescriptions; and the whole business of *drugging* the sick has undergone a most salutary reform. The great fact has been practically recognized, that the movements of life in disease obey laws which, under the circumstances, are on the whole salutary, and only require a limited and occasional interference by any special disturbing agents. The list of specifics has been reduced to a very brief catalogue, and the delusion which had exaggerated the power of drugging for so many generations has been tempered down by sound and systematic observation.

Homoeopathy came, and with one harlequin bound leaped out of its century backwards into the region of quagmires and fogs and mirages, from which true medical science was painfully emerging. All the trumpery of exploded pharmacopoeias was revived under new names. Even the domain of the loathsome has been recently invaded, and simpletons are told in the book before us to swallow serpents' poison; nay, it is said that the *pediculis capitis* is actually prescribed in infusion,—hunted down in his capillary forest, and transferred to the digestive organs of those he once fed upon.

It falsely alleged one axiom as the basis of existing medical practice, namely, *Contraria contrarues curantur*,—“Contraries are cured by contraries.” No such principle was ever acted upon, exclusively, as the basis of medical practice. The man who does not admit it as *one* of the principles of practice would, on *medical* principles, refuse a drop of cold water to cool the tongue of Dives in fiery torments. The only unconditional principle ever recognized by medical science has been, that diseases are to be treated by the remedies that experience shows to be useful. The universal use of both *cold* and *hot* external and internal remedies in various inflammatory states puts the garrote at once on the babbling throat of the senseless assertion of the homaeopathists, and stultifies for all time the nickname “allopathy.”

Page 157

It falsely alleged a second axiom, *Similia similibus curantur*,—"Like is cured by like,"—as the basis of its own practice; for it does not keep to any such rule, as every page of the book before us abundantly shows.

It subjected credulous mankind to the last of indignities, in forcing it to listen to that doctrine of infinitesimals and potencies which is at once the most epigrammatic of paradoxes, and the crowning exploit of pseudo-scientific audacity.

It proceeded to prove itself true by juggling statistics; some of the most famous of which, we may remark, are very well shown up by Professor Worthington Hooker, in a recent essay. And having done all these things, it sat down in the shadow of a brazen bust of its founder, and invited mankind to join in the Barmecide feast it had spread on the coffin of Science; who, however, proved not to have been buried in it,—indeed, not to have been buried at all.

Of course, it had, and has, a certain success. Its infinitesimal treatment being a nullity, patients are never hurt by drugs, *when it is adhered to*. It pleases the imagination. It is image-worship, relic-wearing, holy-water-sprinkling, transferred from the spiritual world to that of the body. Poets accept it; sensitive and spiritual women become sisters of charity in its service. It does not offend the palate, and so spares the nursery those scenes of single combat in which infants were wont to yield at length to the pressure of the spoon and the imminence of asphyxia. It gives the ignorant, who have such an inveterate itch for dabbling in physic, a book and a doll's medicine-chest, and lets them play doctors and doctresses without fear of having to call in the coroner. And just so long as unskilful and untaught people cannot tell coincidences from cause and effect in medical practice,—which to do, the wise and experienced know how difficult!—so long it will have plenty of "facts" to fall back upon. Who can blame a man for being satisfied with the argument, "I was ill, and am well,—great is Hahnemann!"? Only this argument serves all impostors and impositions. It is not of much value, but it is irresistible, and therefore quackery is immortal.

Homoeopathy is one of its many phases; the most imaginative, the most elegant, and, it is fair to say, the least noxious in its direct agencies. "It is melancholy,"—we use the recent words of the world-honored physician of the Queen's household, Sir John Forbes,—"to be forced to make admissions in favor of a system so utterly false and despicable as Homoeopathy." Yet we must own that it may have been indirectly useful, as the older farce of the weapon ointment certainly was, in teaching medical practitioners to place more reliance upon nature. Most scientific men see through its deceptions at a glance. It may be practised by shrewd men and by honest ones; rarely, it must be feared, by those who are both shrewd and honest. As a psychological experiment on the weakness of cultivated minds, it is the best trick of the century.

Page 158

—Here the old gentleman took his cane and walked out to cool himself.

FOREIGN.

It is an old remark of Lessing, often repeated, but nevertheless true, that Frenchmen, as a general rule, are sadly deficient in the mental powers suited to *objective* observation, and therefore eminently disqualified for reliable reports of travels. Among the host of French writing travellers or travelling writers, on whatever foreign countries, there have always been very few who looked at foreign countries, nations, institutions, and achievements, with anything like fairness of judgment and capacity of understanding. For an average Frenchman, Moliere's renowned juxtaposition of

“Paris, la cour, le monde, l'univers,”

is a gospel down to this day; and no country can so justly complain of being constantly misunderstood and misrepresented by French tourists as ours. The more difficult it is for a Frenchman not to glance through colored spectacles from the Palais Royal at whatever does not belong to “the Great Nation,” the more praise those few of them deserve who give to the world correct and impartial impressions of travel and reliable ethnological works.

Such is the case with two works which we are glad to recommend to our readers. The first is

La Norwege, par LOUIS ENAULT. Paris: Hachette. 1857.

Norway, though a member of the European family, with a population once so influential in the world's history, is comparatively the least known of all civilized countries to the world at large, and what little we know of it is of a very recent date,—Stephens's and Leopold von Buch's works being not much more than a quarter of a century old, while Bayard Taylor's lively sketches in the “New York Tribune” are almost wet still, and not yet complete. The latter and M. Enault's book, when compared with each other, leave not the slightest doubt that each observes carefully and conscientiously in his own way, that both possess peculiar gifts for studying and describing correctly what there is worth studying and describing in this *terra incognita*, and that we can rely on both. Mr. Taylor is more picturesque, lively, fascinating, and drastic; M. Enault more thorough, quiet, and reserved in the expression of his opinions. The parts seem to be interchanged,—the Frenchman exhibiting more of the Anglo-Saxon, the American more of the French genius; but both confirm each other's statements admirably, and should be read side by side. If our readers wish to make themselves thoroughly acquainted with the workings of the laws and institutions, with the statistical, economical, and geographical facts, the society and manners, the later history and future prospects of Norway, they will find here a work trustworthy in every respect.

Les Anglais et l'Inde, avec Notes, Pieces justificatives et Tableaux statistiques, par E. DE VALBEZEN. Paris. 1857.

Page 159

This is no narrative of travel, though evidently written by one who has been for a considerable time an eyewitness of Indian affairs, and by a man of acute mind and quick and comprehensive perception, thoroughly versed in the history and condition of India. It is a treatise on all those topics bearing upon the present political, social, and commercial state of things there, beginning with the exposition of the English governmental institutions there existing, describing the country, its productions and resources, its various populations, its social relations, its agriculture, commerce, and wealth, and concluding with statistical and other documents in support of the author's statements. It gives a nearly systematical and complete picture of Indian affairs, enabling the reader to understand the present situation of the country and its foreign rulers, and to form a judgment on all corresponding topics. The style is classical, though somewhat concise and epigrammatic, giving proof everywhere of a mind that forms its own conclusions and takes independent, statesmanlike views. The author refrains from obtruding his own opinions on the reader, leaving things to speak for themselves. He is not ostensibly antagonistic to the English, as we should expect from a true Frenchman,—is no cordial hater of "*perfidie Albion*." You cannot, from his book, with any show of reason, infer that he is a Jesuit, a French missionary, a merchant, a governmental employe, or a simple traveller; but you feel instinctively that he is wide-awake, shrewd, and reserved, and that you may trust his reports in the main. He refers, for proof of his statements, mostly to English documents, and does not try to preoccupy your mind. Particularly noteworthy is what he says of the political economy of India; he controverts effectively the prevailing opinion that it is the richest country in the world,—showing its real poverty, in spite of its great natural resources, and the almost hopeless task of improving these resources. For the American merchant this is a very readable book, warning him to refrain from too hastily investing his capital and enterprise in Indian commerce,—India being the most insecure of all countries for foreign commercial undertakings; and in general, there are so many entirely new and startling revelations in it, that, to any one interested in Indian matters, it well repays reading.

Histoire de la Revolution Francaise, (1789-1799,) Par THEOD. H. BARRAU. Paris: Hachette. 1857.

We cannot vouch that we have here a new, original history of this important epoch, based on an independent study of historical sources; but it is the very first history of the French Revolution we have known, not written in a partisan spirit, and bent on falsifying the facts in order to make political capital or to flatter national prejudices. It bears no evidence of any tendency whatever,—perhaps only because, with its more than five hundred pages, it is too short for that.

Page 160

Histoire de France au XVI. Siecle, par MICHELET. Tom. 10. *Henri IV. et Richelieu*.

Michelet is too well known as a truly Republican historiographer and truly humane and noble writer, and the former volumes of this history have been too long before the public, to require for this volume a particular recommendation. It begins with the last *decade* of the sixteenth century, and concludes with the year 1626. We are no particular admirers of Michelet's historical style and method of delineation, but we acknowledge his sense of historical justice, his unprejudiced mind, and his Republicanism, even when treating a subject so delicate, and so dear to Frenchmen, as Henry IV. Doing justice to whatever was really admirable in the character of this much beloved king, he overthrows a good many superstitious ideas current concerning him even down to our days. He shows that the Utopian, though benevolent project, ascribed to Henry, of establishing an everlasting peace by revising the map of Europe and constituting a political equilibrium between the several European powers, never in fact existed in the king's mind, nor even in Sully's, whom he equally divests of much unfounded glory and fictitious greatness. No doubt, but for his fickleness and inconsistency, Henry could have done a good deal toward realizing such ideas and reforming European politics; but it is saying too much for Henry's influence on the popular opinions of Europe, to affirm, what Michelet gives us to understand, that he could have combined the nations of Europe against all their depraved rulers together.

La Liberte, par EMILE DE GIRARDIN. Paris. 1857.

This book contains a discussion between the author and M. de Lourdoueix, ex-editor of the "Gazette de France," written in the form of letters, on the various topics connected with the notion of Liberty. Girardin is, no doubt, the most genial of all living French writers on Socialism and Politics. He belongs neither to the fanatical school of Communists and Social Equalizers by force and "*par ordre da Mufti*," nor to the class of pliable tools of Imperial or Royal Autocracy. He is the only writer who, in the face of the prevailing restrictions upon the press in France, dares to speak out his whole mind, and to preach the Age of Reason in Politics and in the Social System. He is full of new ideas, which should, we think, be very attractive to American readers; and it is, indeed, strange that his writings are so little read and reviewed on this side of the ocean. His ideas on general education, on the total extinction of authority or government, on the abolition of public punishments of every kind, on the doing away with standing armies, war, and tyranny, and on making the State a great Assurance Company against all imaginable misfortunes and their consequences, are a fair index of the best philosophemes of the European mind since the last Revolution. We do not say that we approve every one of his issues and

Page 161

conclusions, but we insist most earnestly, that this book and similar ones, bearing testimony to what the political and social thinkers of the day in Europe are revolving in their minds, should be read and reviewed under the light of American institutions and ideas. The reader enjoys in the present book the great advantage of seeing the ideas of the Social Reformers discussed *pro* and *contra*,—M. Lourdoueix being their obstinate adversary.

Memoires de M. Joseph Prudhomme, par HENRI MONNIER. 2 vols. Paris. 1857.

This is not what is commonly called *memoires*,—to wit, historical recollections modified by the subjective impressions of eyewitnesses to the past; it is rather a novel or romance in the form of *memoires*, ridiculing the predominant *bourgeoisie* of the Old World, and sketching the whole life of a *bourgeois*, from infancy to green old age. For readers, who, through travel in Europe and acquaintance with French literature and tastes, are enabled to understand the many nice allusions contained in this novel, it is a very entertaining book.

1. *Kraft und Stoff*. By G. BUECHNER. Fourth edition. 1857.

2. *Materie und Geist*. By the same. 1857.

It is certainly a remarkable sign of the times, that a book treating of purely scientific matters,—physiological facts and ideas,—like the first of these, of which the second is the complement, should in a very few years have attained to its fourth edition in Germany. All those works on Natural Science, by Alexander von Humboldt, Oersted, Du Bois-Raymond, Cotta, Vogt, Moleschott, Buechner, Rossmassler, Ule, Mueller, and others, which have appeared since the Revolution of 1848, uniting a more popular and intelligible style with a purely scientific treatment of the matter-of-fact, irrespective of the religious and political dogmas that conflict with the results of natural science, have met with decided success in Germany and France. They are extensively read and appreciated, even by the less educated and learned classes. Among these works, that of Buechner ranks high, and it is therefore strange that we have seen it hitherto reviewed in no American journal. This may serve us as an excuse for noticing this fourth edition, though it is little improved over the former ones. It exhibits the last results of the science of physiology, in a scientific, but rather popular method of exposition. There is quite a hive of new ideas and intuitions contained in it,—ideas conflicting, it is true, with many received dogmas, and irreconcilable with orthodoxy; but it is of no use to shut our eyes to these ideas, as though the danger threatening from this side could be averted by imitating the policy of the ostrich. They should be faced and examined; the danger is far greater from ignoring them. It is impossible that ideas, largely entertained and cultivated by a nation so expert in thinking, so versed in science and literature as the Germans, should have no interest for the great, intelligent American

public. Natural Science may be said to form, at present, an integral portion of the religion of the Germans. It is, at least, a matter of ethnological and historical interest to learn in what regions of thought and speculation our German contemporaries are at home, and wherein they find their mental happiness and delight.

Page 162

Die deutsche komische und humoristische Dichtung seit Beginn des 16. Jahrhunderts bis auf unsere Zeit. Von IGNAZ HUB. Nuernberg: Ebner. 1857.

Two volumes of this interesting work are coming out at the same time,—one containing the second of the five parts into which the prose anthology is divided, with comical and humorous pieces from the sixteenth century, (for instance, extracts from “Fortunatus,” the “Historia” of Dr. J. Faust, “Die Schildbuerger,” Desid, Erasmus’s “Gespraeche,” etc.,) —the other containing a collection of poetry of the same kind, belonging to the present century, and forming part of the third volume, with pieces by Uhland, Eichendorff, Rueckert, Sapphir, Wm. Mueller, Immermann, Palten, Hoffmann, Kopisch, Heine, Lenau, Moericke, Gruen, Wackernagel, and many others. The anthology is accompanied with biographical and historical notes, and explanations of provincialisms and such words as to the American reader of German would be likely to be otherwise unintelligible; so that he may thus, without too much trouble, satisfactorily enjoy this treasury of entertainment. The Germans may well be proud of such literary riches, in which England alone surpasses them.

Thueringer Naturen, Charakter-und Sittenbilder in Erzaehlungen. Von OTTO LUDWIG. Erster Band. *Die Heiterethei und ihr Widerspiel.* Frankfurt. 1857.

This is one of the numerous imitations of the celebrated “Dorfgeschichten,” by Berthold Auerbach. The latter introduced, in a time of literary poverty, a wide range of new subjects for epical treatment,—the life of German peasants, with their simple, healthy, vigorous natures undepraved by a spurious civilization. In painting these sinewy figures, full of a character of their own, he was very felicitous, had an enormous success, and drew a host of less gifted followers after him. Herr Ludwig is one of these. We shall not despair of his becoming, at some future time, a second Auerbach; but he is not one yet. There is, in this work, too much spreading out and extenuation of a material which, in itself not very rich and varied, requires great skill to mould into an epic form. But the author has a remarkable power of drawing true, lifelike characters, and developing them psychologically. It is refreshing to see that the German literary taste is becoming gradually more *realistic*, pure, and natural, turning its back on the romantic school of the French.

May Carols. By AUBREY DE VERE. London. 1857.

The name of Aubrey de Vere has for some years past been familiar to the lovers of poetry, as that of a scholarly and genial poet. His successive volumes have shown a steady growth in poetic power and elevation of spirit. While gaining a firmer mastery over the instruments of poetry he has struck from them a deeper, fuller, and more significant tone. In this his last volume, which has lately appeared, his verse is brought completely into the service of

Page 163

the Church. The “May Carols” are poems celebrating the Virgin Mary in her month of May. For that month, and for the Roman church, Mr. De Vere has done in this volume what Keble did for the festivals of the year, and the English church, in his “Christian Year.” Catholicism in England has produced no poet since the days of Crashaw so sincere in his piety, so sweet in his melody, so pure in spirit as De Vere. And the volume is not for Roman Catholic readers alone. Others may be touched by its religious fervor, and charmed with its beauties of description or of feeling. It is full and redolent of spring. The sweetness of the May air flows through many of its verses,—of that season when

Trees, that from winter’s gray eclipse
Of late but pushed their topmost plume,
Or felt with green-touched finger-tips
For spring, their perfect robes assume.

While, vague no more, the mountains stand
With quivering line or hazy hue;
But drawn with finer, firmer, hand,
And settling into deeper blue.

Mr. De Vere is an exquisite student of nature, with fine perceptions that have been finely cultivated. Take this picture of the lark:—

From his cold nest the skylark springs;
Sings, pauses, sings; shoots up anew;
Attains his topmost height, and sings
Quiescent in his vault of blue.

And here is a description of the later spring:—

Brow-bound with myrtle and with gold,
Spring, sacred now from blasts and blights,
Lifts in a firm, untrembling hold
Her chalice of fulfilled delights.

Confirmed around her queenly lip
The smile late wavering, on she moves;
And seems through deepening tides to step
Of steadier joys and larger loves.

The little volume contains many passages such as these. We have space to quote but one of the poems complete, to show the manner in which Mr. De Vere unites the real,

the symbolic, and the external, with the spiritual. Like most of his poems, it is marked by artistic finish and grace, and many of the lines have a natural beauty of unsought alliteration and assonance.

When all the breathless woods aloof
Lie hushed in noontide's deep repose
The dove, sun-warmed on yonder roof,
With what a grave content she coos!

One note for her! Deep streams run smooth:
The ecstatic song of transience tells.
O, what a depth of loving truth
In thy divine contentment dwells!

All day with down-dropt lids I sat
In trance; the present scene foregone.
When Hesper rose, on Ararat,
Methought, not English hills, he shone.

Back to the Ark, the waters o'er,
The primal dove pursued her flight:
A branch of that blest tree she bore
Which feeds the Church with holy light.

Page 164

I heard her rustling through the air
With sliding plume,—no sound beside,
Save the sea-sobblings everywhere,
And sighs of the subsiding tide.